SPIRIT-LED LEADERSHIP:

A NEW WAY OF LEADERSHIP FOR A

MISSIONAL PEOPLE

by

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A Thesis Submitted to the Faculty of

Luther Seminary

In Partial Fulfillment of

The Requirements for the Degree of

DOCTOR OF MINISTRY

ST. PAUL, MINNESOTA

2013

ABSTRACT

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Participatory Action interventions facilitated transformation of an evangelical congregation toward a collaborative decision-making culture. Research, informed by the missional conversation, emphasized Trinitarian mutuality, kingdom of God, pneumatology, and cruciform stewardship. Jürgen Habermas' communicative-action theory informs a Spirit-led theory of action that characterizes a deliberative, Spirit-led community. Acts 15 is the primary biblical example. Findings elicit a new (renewed) model of leadership—Spirit-led leadership—reframing leader-centric (hierarchical) and people-centric (democratic) models. Leaders are described as meaning-makers who facilitate diversity, reciprocity, and shared actions in God's mission. The Eucharist embodies such a leadership paradigm inviting the church to lead differently and prophetically.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This work represents the support, encouragement, and patience of many people in my life: church, school, friends, and family.

I have been a pastor at Cloverdale Community Church (CCC) for nearly thirteen years; five of those years included my time of studies. The church made room for me to study while I worked. They provided financial resources and time to allow me to travel, read, and write. Although I made every effort to maintain levels of competence in my pastoral duties, I know very well that some things suffered while I strove to finish another school project. I only hope that the return of my studies into CCC's ministry at least equals the investment you put into me. The church also provided the raw material out of which this thesis emerged—a truly generous gift. Together, we travelled through a transformative season of ministry that has set us on a new trajectory in God's mission. Thank you, Board, for granting me these studies and allowing me to integrate my studies with my work. Thank you, Staff, for bearing with me, covering the gaps, and enduring seasons where I was not fully present—in mind or body. Thank you, Brian, for being such an encouragement and cheerleader—most of this, I think, would not have happened without Brian's constant support.

The five years of doctoral studies at Luther Seminary provided me a valuable opportunity to focus specifically on congregational leadership and mission. Luther Seminary's Doctor of Ministry program is, perhaps, one of the most rigorous, demanding,

and fruitful in North America. Their primary goal is to reshape the traditional leader into a missional leader. It is uncommon for an evangelical, within the Christian and Missionary Alliance (CMA), to enter a mainline institution like Luther Seminary. I am glad I did. Luther Seminary welcomed me and provided a thrilling theological, biblical, and liturgically rich environment to thrive as a leader in formation. The academic journey allowed me to expand my understanding, reorient my perspective, and increase my capacity as a leader in a Christian community. Thank you, Professors. Thank you, Scott Frederickson, for leading me to the table. Thank you, Gary Simpson, for expanding the prophetic reality of God's Kingdom through your teaching on Global Civil Society. Thank you, Craig Van Gelder, for pushing me deeply into the primacy of God's divine initiative and the profound reality of the Spirit's work in the world. Thank you, Alvin Luedke, for equipping me as a contextual leader able to navigate the chaotic oceans of data. The give-and-take of student, professor, and institution blessed me with a creative context to grow in strength and health.

Friends watched from the sidelines as I made my way to the finish line. It was hard for them to know what I was up to. At times, I found it hard to understand what I was doing. I had to forsake the spontaneous outings and missed the little opportunities that sustain and deepen friendships. Often, I was distracted by the demands of writing and pressing due dates intermingled with home and church responsibilities. But, along that often-lonely way, you encouraged me in many ways—the cup of coffee; the word of encouragement; your prayers. I thank you for cheering me on. Thank you for asking about my studies. Thank you for being there for my family when I was away. Thank you,

Jason, for driving me to Seattle to catch a plane. You did not have to, but it was nice that you did. You all did not have to do it, but you did. Thank you.

My cohort of fellow students, who travelled with me in the past five years, shaped and improved this work—thank-you! Thanks Ron, especially, for your great diligence in providing a multitude of valuable edits—that was an unexpected gift! Your knowledge and skill made my work better.

Luther staff also made this research and writing better. Katie Dahl, Associate Director of the Graduate Theological Department, and all of her staff colleagues are perhaps unmatched in providing invaluable direction for all the mechanical aspects of thesis writing. More than once, you simplified the overwhelming task of putting together this work. Specifically, Kristin Payne, thank you for fixing my bibliography after I lost all my endnote data when updating my computer. The staff's heroism in helping students cross the line with clean and orderly manuscripts is amazing.

My family required the greatest resources of patience, as I spent many hours behind the laptop monitor. My regular trips to Minnesota required my young family to keep the household together in my absence. My journey was not possible without them. Monica, Eric, and Iain, thank you. This journey encompasses almost all the days of Iain's life thus far. It is half the years of Eric's life. It is one-fifth of my married years with Monica. Very few evenings passed without me sitting at the table or reclined on the couch preoccupied with my laptop. You did not ask me to stop school, though at times you did ask me stop for a night. Boys, thank you for the laughs, the hugs, and the invitations to play. You helped Mom make it through the weeks of my absence. One of the things I decided, early on, was to write on the middle floor of our three-floor home. It

put me right into the midst of Mom making dinner, piano practices, reading time, and exasperating math homework. This was the best! These chapters, written in the heart of our home, are dedicated to you along with your mother.

Monica, thank you for supporting me even as the months and years accumulated. You are my partner in ministry and life. Together we have travelled through confusion and challenge. Together we have wrestled with God, each other, and others. You rightly deserve to be the co-author of this thesis. The thoughts and themes of this thesis arise out of the life that we have lived. Your faithfulness, convictions, and determined persistence are interwoven in every sentence. Thank you.

This journey represents a *Jacob-like* wrestling match. It is a search to discover and understand Christian leadership. It is about my identity in Christ and Christ's mission. I wanted to make sense of some things. Perhaps I did. Perhaps I did not. The best of this work is the result of God's Spirit leading me, through others, to embrace God's ways. The weaker part of this work indicates the work yet to be done—*semper reformanda.*

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Why Would I do a Research Project?

I am an associate pastor in the Christian & Missionary Alliance Church (CMA), presently fulfilling a role as executive pastor at Community Church, Canada.[1] My ecclesial roots, since birth, are in the North American Christian Reformed tradition (CRC). I am a bit of a theological alien in a fundamentalist, evangelical tradition. I made the denominational switch a few years after being ordained in the CRC, and entered into a relationship with Cloverdale Community Church (CCC), a member of the Christian and Missionary Alliance.[2] The switch was inspired, I believe, by a personal struggle to find a context where Christian leadership and God's mission might find more congruity. The more historic CRC represented, to me, an organizational context where leadership and mission were limited by dated polity and ethnic preoccupation. By contrast, the younger CMA, as reflected in CCC's early history, represented a context that was less constrained by a particular ethnicity and more freely released God's people to actively engage a missionary role in its local community.

[1] Pastoral titles are a little cumbersome as they mean different things in different contexts. My role includes some preaching and teaching, along with focused attention on staff management, financial systems, facilities, leadership development, and general oversight of CCC's ministries. I am directly responsible to the Senior Pastor but also sit on the Board as an observer and contributor to decisions being made.

[2] Cloverdale Community Church (CCC) is a pseudonym of a church in British Columbia, Canada.

The combination of a reformed theological heritage and experience in a pragmatic evangelical tradition provided me a challenging and invigorating pastoral context. Reformed theology and Dutch ethnicity characterize the Canadian CRC since most of its members were the result of post-World War II immigration. Resistance to liberalizing trends, participation in the Pentecostal and charismatic movement, and commitment to global mission efforts characterized the CMA which emerged at the turn of the twentieth century. The two traditions are historically distinct in terms of their theological grounding and their ecclesiological practice. The CRC is more theologically developed with a church-state bias, and the CMA is more pragmatically developed with a bias toward church and state separation. The CRC tends to equip capable theologians to serve as pastors; the CMA tends to equip capable evangelistic leaders to grow and plant churches. The two traditions combined to shape my journey as a pastor and informed the focus of this research.

The heart of this research, which emerged out of the context of my pastoral ministry, is focused on existing practices of leadership. I believe that existing models of leadership need to be re-considered over against an alternative model of leadership that I call Spirit-led Leadership. Such a model, I argue, can help CCC and other churches become a more collaborative and participative Spirit-led missionary people. Three descriptors highlight my understanding of what defines a Spirit-led missionary people. First, they are *collaborative* because they make decisions together. Second, they are *participative* because they combine the varied capacities of many to be active agents (witnesses, ambassadors, co-laborers, etc.) in the work of God in the world. Lastly, they

are *Spirit-led* because God's people are distinguished as a people led and directed by God.

As my journey progressed in the CMA, my CRC theological heritage intersected with the practices of a pragmatic, leader-oriented denomination that prioritizes enlarging and planting churches. The deeper I entered into the life of the CMA, the more I was inclined to reconsider seriously my reformed inheritance. The research betrays an autobiographical process of theological reflection and integration of leadership practice. Perhaps, like Saint Augustine, whose autobiography, *The Confessions,* records his theological development, this study, in part, reflects in many ways my personal confessions (beliefs) in the midst of ongoing ministry.

Luther Seminary's Doctor of Ministry in Congregational Leadership and Mission provided an attractive educational environment in which to journey and reflect more deeply. Craig Van Gelder, an ordained minister in the CRC, oversees Luther's Doctoral program and provided a direct link back to my early theological roots. In 1993, I graduated from the denominational seminary, Calvin Theological, where Van Gelder served as Professor of Domestic Missiology until 1998. He introduced me to the missional conversation. He continues to contribute significantly to the ongoing conversation through his teaching, writing, and consulting. He became Professor of Congregational Mission at Luther Seminary in 1998. His emphasis on practical theology, combining the strengths of theology and social science, shapes Luther's educational program. It provided an opportunity to further my understanding of the missional perspective and to evaluate my previous experience—and present practice—in the light

of that perspective. Luther Seminary seemed to be engaging a similar evaluation as it too was reflecting on its own ecclesial tradition within the broader missional conversation.

It was, perhaps, a young, naïve and upstart inner attitude that motivated me to switch denominational tribes. Alternatively, perhaps, it was the blurred pursuit of a curious pastor, groomed in a theologically shaped Dutch sub-culture, who sought an authentic Christian identity in the midst of a Canadian society. Who knows? At this point, I assume that such a journey is either the result of the Spirit's leading or a journey that by God's mercy, seeks to make good. The deeper motivations of this project are the result of a personal journey to understand and practice a way of leadership that understands contemporary challenges, address existing church models that may undermine God's mission for today, and explore a leadership paradigm that is centered on the work and ministry of the Spirit.

Why Include My Church in the Project?

CCC's attendance reached into the 800s within ten years of its start. The school gym was problematic for regular worship and weekly ministry realities. The church community purchased a 27,000 square foot warehouse to renovate for the burgeoning community. I became a part-time pastor of community life in 2000 as the church transitioned into the new place of worship and ministry. The expectant enthusiasm ended distressingly as the story of two consecutive senior leaders set off a season of what has been named the G*reat Sadness*.

I believe that CCC's present openness to Spirit-led direction resulted from traveling through a season of considerable organizational and community trauma. Leadership and organizational structures collapsed, as pastoral and board leadership

faltered and failed. Remarkably, out of this disturbing context emerged a renewed perspective on church and leadership among the leaders of CCC. It initiated new collaborative models of leadership in contrast to more hierarchal models of leadership.

In their recent book, *The Missional Church in Perspective: Mapping Trends and Shaping the Conversation*, Craig Van Gelder and Dwight J. Zscheile express the sort of renewed hopefulness that CCC is experiencing. "The missional church conversation," they state, unleashes "a great deal of energy and hopefulness among churches stuck in patterns of church life that have become disconnected from a changing world."[3] They specifically address "leaders weary of trying the latest strategy or technique, burdened by the impossible expectation of entertaining and satisfying fickle spiritual consumers, and staggering under the weight of collapsing church institutions," can awaken "to a new sense of possibility as they explore what it means to rediscover their identities within God's larger mission."[4]

As CCC negotiated through those difficult days in 2003-2005, its Board of Elders confessed, "There are some things in our past that need to be humbly and honestly addressed [which] have not contributed to the health of the church. . . . From this day forward," they asserted, "and in total dependence on God, we seek to pursue Christ-like leadership by: Humbly and wholeheartedly pursuing God's best ways for leadership . . . and developing a healthier and more biblical community of accountable, servant-leadership." They envisioned their future to include "creating a safe and healthy Christ-

[3] Craig Van Gelder and Dwight J. Zscheile, *The Missional Church in Perspective: Mapping Trends and Shaping the Conversation*, The Missional Network (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2011), 169.

[4] Ibid.

centered community where the spiritual gifts of each person will be free to be expressed with purpose and celebration."[5]

The confession planted the seeds of a new resolve. Michael Welker's biblical insights in his book, *God the Spirit*, suggest that the new leadership orientation CCC is experiencing is a reflection of the Spirit's primary work within a community. "According to the testimony of the biblical traditions," he writes, "the Spirit of God has been experienced as a power that restores a community in the midst of distress and disintegration, reactivating solidarity, loyalty, and the capacity for action in this community."[6] This insight provides a renewed way to understand CCC's story. The Spirit can do this, Welker asserts, by leading and bringing people "into a remarkable, indeed, dismaying condition hovering between power and powerlessness."[7] Through such a Spirit-led direction, in which a church is in the "midst of being torn apart and laden with conflict," they become open to "God's creative power and effectiveness—an openness that can also be recognized by other people."[8] The primary work of the Spirit is the restoration of communities. CCC's history, framed through the lens of the Spirit's work, provides a valuable way to retell the story and draw out insights useful in the specific situation, but also for other situations. The reframing of CCC's story illustrates that the work of the Spirit and the mission and ministry of the church are bound together in good times and, specifically, if not preferentially, bad times.

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[5] This is taken from a written confession by the Board and was presented at three forums to reconcile and restore the brokenness experienced among key leaders, past and present members, and other churches in British Columbia in 2006.

[6] Michael Welker, *God the Spirit*, trans. John F. Hoffmeyer (MN: Fortress Press, 1994), 274.

[7] Ibid., 99.

[8] Ibid.

To understand the story of CCC from this biblical perspective is to understand the story of CCC in a very particular way—one less scripted or controlled by leaders and more shaped by the Spirit. The trauma, *the dismaying condition* (the Great Sadness), of CCC's past does not indicate the absence of God, but rather, the presence of the Spirit working redemptively at CCC. The dismantling of demeaning structures and systems and their replacement with collaborative and participative structures and systems are perceptible evidences of the Spirit's work. CCC's story reflects, in a microscopic way, the grander and cosmic story of God's redemptive purposes in the world. A study of the Spirit's activities at CCC may enable us to understand the work of the Spirit in other times and other contexts.

The new weekly practice of communion, begun over three years ago, perhaps, embodies the shift in CCC's new orientation. The weekly celebration, an uncommon practice in a CMA church, seems to have contributed deeply to a renewed understanding of worship, community, mission, and the ways and work of the Spirit in CCC. "We behave our way into new thinking," say Van Gelder and Zscheile, "even as we think our way into new behaving."[9] CCC's weekly practice of communion is a new behavior that is cultivating a new imagination. The church began the weekly practice because it desired to highlight the presence and centrality of Christ. Since becoming the center and the summit of CCC's weekly worship, the table now evokes new perspectives about the nature of a Spirit-led leadership and community. Thinking led to new behavior; new behavior is leading to new thinking.

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[9] Van Gelder and Zscheile, *The Missional Church in Perspective: Mapping Trends and Shaping the Conversation*, 5.

What is the Research About?

The research design seeks to stimulate continuing change toward a fuller missional, Spirit-directed understanding of a participative and collaborative community and leadership at CCC. The specific question I pursued is this: *To what extent will a series of missional interventions help CCC adapt to being more collaborative and participative as a Spirit-led missionary people?* Implicit in this question, and considered throughout the research, is the premise that a missional church is a Spirit-led community evidenced in collaborative and participatory models of leadership.

Seven inter-related concepts shape the research question. Each of these concepts are developed, operationalized, and reflected upon in this research, with a specific goal to understand more fully how these seven concepts relate. The first concept, *missional interventions*, are intentional actions specifically influenced by the thinking and practices that are emerging from the missional conversation. Second, *adaptation*, indicates that the interventions applied are intended to create a change—particularly a transformative change that shifts a community from being spectators to participants in God's mission. Third, *collaborative*, expresses a leadership paradigm that values shared decision-making practices in contrast to top-down decision-making processes. Fourth, *participation*, although closely related to collaboration, indicates a community that is actively engaged in the shared and agreed-upon actions. In other words, a participative community expresses high degrees of ownership and responsibility in the ongoing life of the church—perhaps best related to the concept of discipleship, which defines the lives of those who align their lives with Jesus Christ.

Fifth, *Spirit*, is a foundational concept since the research assumes, at a fundamental level, that an understanding of the ways and work of the Holy Spirit (pneumatology), in the community and in the world, shapes the core identity of a prophetic and practicing community of Christian faith. Sixth, *leadership*, is intentionally linked to the Spirit because a Christian community's understanding of leadership, a necessary function in a community, requires a broader understanding of the Spirit's work in contrast to understandings that are more individualistic and top-down (hierarchical). Implicit is the belief that Spirit-led leadership can be differentiated from other models of leadership. Finally, the church is conceived as a *missionary people* because, it is asserted, a church's actions must be rooted in the *missio Dei*—as God is on a mission in the world, so the church, likewise, should participate with God in that mission.

Social scientists usually frame research questions in terms of variables in order to clarify the direction of influence that the study proposes. Three key variables should be considered: independent, dependent, and intervening. [10] In this project, the independent variable is the series of missional interventions that sought to engender collaboration and participation in the mission of God. The dependent variable is the subject of the change—the primary focus of attention: how CCC's leadership, and, by extension, the whole congregation develops its capacity to be more collaborative and participative in a Spirit-led mission.

Intervening variables include demographic realities such as age and gender that have appreciable, if not significant, effects on the change hoped for in the study. The researcher needs to recognize these influences in order to understand and explore the

[10] John W. Creswell and Vicki L. Plano Clark, *Designing and Conducting Mixed Methods Research*, 2nd ed. (Los Angeles, CA: SAGE, 2011), 94.

correlations between the interventions and the potential missional shift and adaptations at CCC.

Why Is the Research Significant?

This research project is significant in a number of ways. First, it provided an opportunity for me, as the researcher, leaders, and the congregation to develop their missional understanding and to engage intentional practices that helped CCC lean more fully into the leading of the Spirit. Second, it helped CCC adapt to the realities of today's context and culture by reframing leadership within a Spirit-led missional perspective. Third, it cultivated a new imagination and new frameworks as CCC continues to develop its missional understanding. Fourth, it inspired ongoing resolve to develop collaborative and participative leadership structures and ministry initiatives consistent with a Spirit-led community. Fifth, because the project was embedded in the tradition of the CMA, it provided learning that can be transferred to other like-minded and similarly shaped churches seeking to re-imagine and reorient their ministry. Sixth, this research provided a localized context to reflect theologically and biblically about the ways of the Spirit and how that context contrasts to alternative ways and models of leadership and community in the world. Finally, Participatory Action Research (PAR), the chosen research method, revealed its usefulness, not simply as an academic method, but as a valuable ongoing methodology to disciple the church into becoming a discerning community competent to *plan, act, observe, and reflect* with the direction and participation of the Holy Spirit.[11]

[11] David Coghlan and Teresa Brannick, *Doing Action Research in Your Own Organization*, 3rd ed. (London: SAGE, 2009), 9.

What are the Primary Resources?

A broad range of literature and resources served to orient, shape, and inform the research. First, I provide a brief description of the CMA denomination and its particular situation in the North American context. Second, I provide a quick sketch of relevant Christian and non-Christian literature as it relates to leadership and organization. Finally, this chapter provides a number of key theoretical lenses and a number of key biblical and theological lenses that inform and interpret the research and its findings.

Community Church and the Christian & Missionary Alliance

George Marsden describes the CMA as a conservative evangelical denomination that resulted from "complex and tangled roots in the nineteenth-century traditions of revivalism, evangelicalism, pietism of Americanism, and variant orthodoxies."[12] The movement emerged at the turn of the nineteenth century when Canadian Albert Simpson, a Presbyterian pastor in New York City, resigned from a prominent pulpit role to address the lack of evangelism in the Presbyterian Church and to participate in developing ministries to *the least, the last, and the lost*. The ministry initially targeted Italian shipping crews whose presence the Presbyterian Church resisted. Numerous ministries to New York's poor and needy developed, evidencing a tangible focus on addressing relevant societal concerns ignored, at the time, by the Presbyterian Church.

The CMA also demonstrated a missionary zeal influenced by the likes of J. Hudson Taylor who promoted the evangelization of China before Christ returned. Matthew 24:14 functioned as the major missionary text: "And this gospel of the kingdom

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[12] George M. Marsden, *Fundamentalism and American Culture: The Shaping of Twentieth Century Evangelicalism, 1870-1925* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1980), 201.

will be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come." Leaders interpreted the passage to mean that Christ's return is dependent on the church's successful completion of the missionary task. "Bring back the King," a sentiment of Simpson, inspired the motivating vision of the CMA's orientation. The zeal was indicative of a premillennialist eschatology. The orientation emphasized the priority of preaching, conversion as a crisis experience, and a concentration on "*personal* rather than *structural* sins" (emphasis in original).[13]

Evangelicalism, in reaction to the emerging social gospel movement, slowly adopted premillennialism. David Bosch comments that the "emphasis shifted away from social involvement to an exclusively *verbal* evangelism" (emphasis in original).[14] Dwight L. Moody's famous quotation embodied the denominational spirit: "I look upon this world as a wrecked vessel. God has given me a lifeboat and said to me, 'Moody, save all you can.'"[15] The result, suggests Bosch, was an *inward* separation from the world yet, strangely, because of their modern pragmatism, they unintentionally espoused middle class American culture: "materialism, capitalism, patriotism, respectability." Ironically, Bosch points out, "nobody saw any incongruence in preaching withdrawal from the world while at the same time managing the church as if it were a secular corporation."[16]

Contrary to its intentions, evangelicalism is indebted to the Enlightenment. Moody, evangelicalism's exemplar, adopted the assumptions of individualism in which

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[13] David Jacobus Bosch, *Transforming Mission: Paradigm Shifts in Theology of Mission*, American Society of Missiology Series 16 (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1991), 318.

[14] Ibid.

[15] Marsden, *Fundamentalism and American Culture: The Shaping of Twentieth Century Evangelicalism, 1870-1925*, 38.

[16] Bosch, *Transforming Mission: Paradigm Shifts in Theology of Mission*, 318.

the individual's choices became decisive for salvation. "The church was no longer regarded primarily as a body but was made up of free individuals who had freely chosen to join this specific denomination."[17] When he preached, Moody viewed the individual as standing alone and directly before the face of God. With regard to the Holy Spirit, Bosch comments that the Spirit "was understood as working only in the hearts of individuals and was known primarily through personal experience."[18]

Two current theological voices familiar with the CMA, Gordon Smith and David Fitch, became important to the research. Smith authored valuable material—although not in the mainstream of the missional conversation—that provides a helpful bridge to engage the missional conversation in the context of the CMA.[19] In particular, he develops important connections between CMA ecclesiology, the doctrine of the Holy Spirit, and the practice of weekly communion.

Fitch, the second voice, is a CMA Lead Pastor at Life on the Vine Church in Long Grove, Illinois, and a theological professor at Northern Seminary in Chicago. His book, *The End of Evangelicalism: Discerning a New Faithfulness for Mission*, explores three main questions about evangelical communal formation that have shaped an ecclesiology that is "against the world."[20] Fitch asserts, "evangelicalism is behaving like an ideology

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[17] Ibid., 317.

[18] Ibid., 319.

[19] Gordon T. Smith, *A Holy Meal: The Lord's Supper in the Life of the Church* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2005); Gordon T. Smith, *The Voice of Jesus: Discernment, Prayer, and the Witness of the Spirit* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2003); Gordon T. Smith, "The Sacraments and the Embodiment of Our Trinitarian Faith," in *Trinitarian Theology for the Church* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2009); Gordon T. Smith and Jeffrey Gros, *The Lord's Supper: Five Views* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2008).

[20] David E. Fitch, *The End of Evangelicalism? Discerning a New Faithfulness for* Mission*: Towards an Evangelical Political Theology*, Theopolitical Visions 8 (Eugene, OR: Cascade Books, 2011).

that is unraveling."[21] Specifically, he highlights how the evangelical emphases of biblical inerrancy, decisions for Christ, and the notion of a Christian nation have combined to cultivate a church mission inconsistent with the mission of God.

The Missional Conversation

The research draws deeply from the missional conversation that focuses on the church's organizational understanding (ecclesiology) and its understanding of leadership. Starting from the more recent publication, *The Missional Church in Perspective,* by Van Gelder and Zscheile, and working back to the seminal text, *Missional Church,* edited by Darrell Guder, the research will describe a missional perspective in terms of how a church collaborates and participates as a community created and directed by the Holy Spirit.[22]

The missional conversation represents a collaborative effort among many participants of varying traditions who seek to understand and develop a missiological ecclesiology for today's context. The result is varied understandings, definitions, and ideas about what is missional. Van Gelder and Zscheile point out that the weakness of *Missional Church* was the book's inability to help leaders of varying ecclesiologies translate the perspectives of the missional church into their tradition.[23] The unfortunate consequence is that the term "missional church was left "hanging out there," resulting in

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[21] David E. Fitch, "Reclaiming the Mission," http://www.reclaimingthemission.com/the-end-of-evangelicalism/ (accessed August 22, 2011).

[22] Darrell L. Guder, ed. *Missional Church: A Vision for the Sending of the Church in North America*, The Gospel and Our Culture Series (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1998); Van Gelder and Zscheile, *The Missional Church in Perspective: Mapping Trends and Shaping the Conversation*.

[23] Van Gelder and Zscheile, *The Missional Church in Perspective: Mapping Trends and Shaping the Conversation*, 63.

the word "missional" being defined in a variety of ways.[24] Denominations, like the CMA, who do not attend to historical ecclesiologies and comfortably function within a *Church Effectiveness* model, tend to co-opt the missional concept without adequate reflection and adjustment to one's functioning ecclesiology.[25] Van Gelder and Zscheile, as a result, provide a Spirit-led, missional framework that challenges co-opting tendencies and, for this particular research, pushes the CMA toward a more developed Spirit-led ecclesiology in keeping with God's mission in the world.

The Leadership Conversation

Margaret Wheatley, in *Leadership and the New Science*, provides an energetic stimulus to re-imagine organizations and leadership. Wheatley invites readers to move beyond the mechanical confines of the predictable cause-and-effect universe of Newtonian physics to encounter the world of quantum physics that describes the world as a chaotic but self-organizing, learning system of interrelated parts.[26] She points out that existing assumptions of leadership and organizations "come to us from seventeenth-century physics—Newtonian physics." "Intentionally or not," says Wheatley, "we work from a world view that is strongly anchored in the natural sciences."[27] Joseph Rost's book, *Leadership for the Twenty-First Century,* becomes particularly helpful to describe

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[24] Ibid.

[25] Ibid., 8. Van Gelder and Zscheile use terms to describe churches of the 1980s to 1990s that "focused primarily on strategy and reflect a deep pragmatism . . . that tends to concentrate heavily on technique." I use the category more loosely to describe the CMA's pragmatism as characteristic of their historic ecclesiology.

[26] Margaret J. Wheatley, *Leadership and the New Science: Discovering Order in a Chaotic World*, 3rd ed. (San Francisco, CA: Berrett-Koehler, 2006), 15.

[27] Ibid., 7.

the need to move from an *industrial paradigm* of leadership (Newtonian) to a *postindustrial paradigm* of leadership.[28]

Wilfred Drath and Charles Palus, in their paper, "Making Common Sense: Leadership as Meaning-making in a Community of Practice," explore the implications of a new leadership paradigm by providing a new perspective to understand leadership as a social process. They assert that the leadership process is not dependent on leaders making meaning on behalf of the community, but in a distributed process where leaders and followers participate together.[29] The perspective clarifies a new way to conceive leadership at CCC and provides insights into construing a new understanding of leadership in the life of CCC. Second, it opens up some helpful territory to consider the insights of Jürgen Habermas who highlights the collaborative nature of followers and leaders who together make sense of their lives and act accordingly. Gerben Heitink, in his book, *Practical Theology: History, Theory, Action Domains*, provides a helpful theoretical framework to integrate these contributions.[30] Van Gelder introduces the Five-'A' model (attending, asserting, agreeing, acting, assessing) which serves to provide a working model for leadership decision-making.[31]

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[28] Joseph C. Rost, *Leadership for the Twenty-First Century* (New York: Praeger, 1991).

[29] Wilfred H. Drath and Charles J. Palus, "Making Common Sense: Leadership as Meaning-Making in a Community of Practice," (Greensboro, NC: Center for Creative Leadership, 1994), 7.

[30] Gerben Heitink, *Practical Theology: History, Theory, Action Domains: Manual for Practical Theology*, Studies in Practical Theology (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co., 1999).

[31] Craig Van Gelder, *The Ministry of the Missional Church: A Community Led by the Spirit* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2007).

What Were the Guiding Perspectives Shaping the Research?

The literature has provided a number of specific theoretical and biblical lenses that inform and shape the research. Three theoretical lenses and four biblical lenses guide the research.

Theoretical Perspectives in the Research

I believe that leadership today requires a paradigmatic shift. Rost frames it helpfully by describing it as a shift from an *industrial paradigm* to a *postindustrial leadership*. The shift is critical as existing understandings of leadership shaped within an industrial paradigm struggle to embrace the collaborative and participatory reality of a Spirit-led leadership model. Second, I believe that leadership is less about authoritative individuals compelling others to do what is important, but more about a community that together shares in a process of leadership. Leadership requires both leaders and followers to participate in a mutual process of meaning-making. Leaders, therefore, are described as *managers of meaning* who specifically facilitate opportunities for a community to discern and make action-oriented decisions. The third lens, *leadership and a theory of action,* is about how communities and organizations, specifically a missional community, are communities of action. Building upon the two previous lenses, I believe, because of the collaborative and participatory nature of the church, it is constantly in the process of change and is seeking to be a transforming reality in its specific context. This lens is critical to understand since community members and leaders need to participate in the ongoing process of transformation. Peter Senge reinforces this in his book, the *The Fifth*

Discipline: The Art and Practice of a Learning Organization.[32] Fundamentally, I believe that a church community is a learning community that engages in an ongoing, action-oriented dialogue that seeks to understand how they can live and mediate God's mission in the world.

Biblical and Theological Perspectives in the Research

The Eucharist is a primary metaphor grounding my theological and biblical perspective. The Lord's Supper is a shared practice of the church that embodies the mission of God to the world. Jesus' earthly ministry was occupied with eating meals, telling stories and parables about meals, completing his earthly ministry with a meal, and appearing, post-resurrection, in shared meals among his followers and disciples. The Church gathers continuously at a table of bread and wine because it highlights the place where the world encounters God's glory. Gordon Smith comments, "The holy meal profiles the relationship of the Christian church to a Triune God and is also a means by which God is experienced as Father, Son, and Spirit."[33] Not only is the table the place where the congregation encounters God, it is also the place where the people of God are nourished and become active in the kingdom of God. The Table provides four significant lenses to develop an understanding of a Spirit-led community that is collaborative and participatory.

The first lens is the *Trinity.* The table invites people into participation with the Trinity's mission. Smith argues that we will not understand the doctrine of the Trinity

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[32] Peter M. Senge, *The Fifth Discipline: The Art and Practice of the Learning Organization* (New York: Doubleday/Currency, 1990).

[33] Smith, *A Holy Meal: The Lord's Supper in the Life of the Church*, 9.

"unless and until it is embodied" in the sacramental practices of the Church.[34] A Trinitarian renewal, demonstrated at the table, will shape a fuller understanding of the mission of God, how the church can participate in the mission of God, and how the church operationalizes itself for mission by the power of the Spirit.

The second lens is the *Kingdom of God.* The World Council's, *Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry* paper describes the Eucharist as the meal of the kingdom. "It is the feast at which the church gives thanks to God for these signs and joyfully celebrates and anticipates the coming of the Kingdom in Christ."[35] The meal celebrates the past, present, and future as the church recognizes God's redemptive acts in the past, Christ's rule in the present, and the Spirit-led community anticipating the consummation of God's mission. The meal demonstrates the redemptive activity of God in the world, and, through it, shapes the activity of the church in the world. Just as Jesus demonstrated grace, forgiveness, and divine hospitality by eating with sinners and tax collectors, so the church, in its specific time and place, demonstrates the kingdom through radical hospitality and generosity with the world.

The third lens is the *Holy Spirit.* The Table connects us also to the presence and work of the Holy Spirit. Jesus directs us to the Spirit and the Spirit directs us to the life of Christ who embodied fully and demonstrated majestically the pattern and power of Spirit-filled ministry. Most church traditions have fashioned their ecclesiology primarily, if not exclusively, in relation to Christ and his ministry. A Christological emphasis has tended

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[34] Smith, "The Sacraments and the Embodiment of Our Trinitarian Faith," 1.

[35] World Council of Churches Faith and Order Committee, "Baptism, Eucharist, and Ministry," (Geneva: World Council of Churches, 1982), E, 22.

to reinforce hierarchical models while a pneumtalogical emphasis inspires more democratic models.

The fourth lens is the *Cruciform Stewardship.* At the table, we are invited into God's household, and, also, to be stewards of God's ongoing work in the world. I believe that the biblical concept of stewardship is a powerful way to understand the nature and character of Christian leadership. I draw substantially from Thomas Frank and Scott Cormode who make a compelling case to embed our notions in the biblically relevant language of stewardship (*oikonomia*).[36]

The table is a symbolic centerpiece of a home's activity and the church's activity. How we live around the table indicates the values and practices that shape home and church. The values and practices might be called management, which is what a steward does. The table provided Jesus a compelling frame of reference, not only to understand who he is but also the life to be followed. The gospels confront us with Jesus who describes himself not as a leader but as a servant (a waiter). In this setting, as the disciples are fighting over who is the most important, Jesus proclaims, "We do not lead as the world leads" (Luke 22:24-26).

How Was the Research Done?

This research combines two often unrelated worlds—theology and social science—in order to think practically and reflect thoughtfully about the church and its ministry. Included in the research is a biblically and theologically informed approach to using the strengths of social science and its instruments (see chapter three). Since the

[36] Thomas Edward Frank, "The Discourse of Leadership and the Practice of Administration," *Journal of Religious Leadership* 1, no. 1 (2002): 26.

church is both a divine and a human organization, the research assumes a community of faith can be the focus of empirically grounded research (social science) that is reflected upon and interpreted from a biblically and theologically informed perspective (biblical and theological).

The research used Participatory Action Research (PAR) because it promised to be the most conducive method to help cultivate a transformative context to engender new learning as a missional community.[37] It is a mixed-method research methodology approach, a somewhat new approach, which utilizes quantitative and qualitative methods within an overarching transformative goal to evoke change in an organization or society more broadly. The term *Participatory* implies that the research will be collaborative, involving in a variety of ways, congregational members and leaders. *Action* implies that something is being acted upon for the sake of changing something. *Research* implies that the process of action and reflection is interested in learning from the change that resulted from the series of intentional missional interventions.

PAR practitioners describe their methodology as an iterative cycle of *planning, acting, observing, and reflecting*.[38] The research done at CCC includes a series of interventions that followed the iterative process. The quantitative and qualitative instruments not only helped to observe, reflect, and plan toward the next set of actions in the ongoing interventions, it also provided an overarching process to measure how a community adapted to new insights and directions that influenced the actions and steps

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[37] Kathryn Herr and Gary L. Anderson, *The Action Research Dissertation: A Guide for Students and Faculty* (Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE, 2005); Davydd J. Greenwood and Morten Levin, *Introduction to Action Research: Social Research for Social Change*, 2nd ed. (Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE, 2007); Coghlan and Brannick, *Doing Action Research in Your Own Organization*.

[38] Coghlan and Brannick, *Doing Action Research in Your Own Organization*, 5.

agreed upon. The iterative cycle summarizes the dynamic nature of the research that is developed and explained in chapter four.

Participants Involved in Study

The congregation and the leaders of CCC were involved in the research. Specifically, I worked with key leaders including staff, board, and ministry team leaders in the congregation. The research launched and initiated specific missional interventions that had the transformative goal of increasing the congregation's collaboration and participation in the mission of God. The primary intervention, a major one, focused on the congregational mission and vision process. A few minor interventions are included in the research as they mirrored a similar methodology used in the major intervention. The interventions are more fully explained in chapter four.

Research Instruments

The research design included two nearly identical quantitative surveys administered prior to the interventions (baseline) and after the interventions were completed (endline). They were designed to measure any changes that may have occurred as a result of the interventions. Qualitative interviews with a variety of groups were done with those who had participated in the interventions. The interviews were recorded, transcribed, coded, and analyzed. The qualitative research provided specific data to examine people's experience as a result of the interventions. The data from both the qualitative interviewing and the quantitative survey are analyzed and interpreted in chapters five and six.

Research Design

By its nature, PAR is evolutionary. "You are designing the plane as you are flying it," claim Herr and Anderson.[39] So it has been. For instance, after the approval of this thesis proposal, CCC embarked on a mission and vision process. As a result, it became the study's major intervention. A number of minor interventions were accomplished. Together, they provided rich feedback and renewed action that have shaped the findings of this research.

Addressing Ethical Concerns

Ethical concerns arise in this AR research because of my *permanent insider role*.[40] As an Executive Pastor in the church, I have considerable political and relational influence in the church. As an insider involved in multi-leadership levels in the church, I was responsible to address and manage these concerns appropriately throughout the course of the research. Sensitivity to the ethical framework outlined by Luther Seminary's Institutional Review Board (IRB) shaped the research. The IRB seeks to ensure the protection of human rights and welfare.

Three values undergird Luther's IRB: respect for persons, benefice, and justice. This research project adhered to these three values. The ethical principles are important as each of the research participants are known to me, the researcher. The research maintained each person's dignity and allowed them independent autonomy to participate. The research did not coerce participants, or knowingly diminish subjects who did not

[39] Herr and Anderson, *The Action Research Dissertation: A Guide for Students and Faculty*, 69.

[40] David Coghlan and Mary Casey, "Action Research from the Inside: Issues and Challenges in Doing Action Research in Your Own Hospital," *Journal of Advanced Nursing* 35, no. 5 (2001).

actively participate, or reward those who did. Participants signed a letter of consent to indicate their willing participation and understanding of the research. The data gathered through the research maintained people's privacy and confidentiality. All the data were stored in secured locations that were not accessible to any other person but the researcher. Quantitative reporting maintained people's anonymity. Qualitative reporting utilized pseudonyms to reference people's comments.

Benefice ensures participants are protected from harm. The research explained the value of the research, the risks of the research, and the benefits of the research. The anonymous reproduction of the quantitative research is provided to any of the participants on request.

The value of justice seeks to ensure that the research is done in a way that distributes the benefits and burdens of the research evenly. The quantitative surveys were administered to the whole of the church using web page hyperlinks, emails, and paper printouts. Qualitative research, in teams and individuals, was preceded with explanations of the research, the use of audio-recordings, and the integration of the data into the research. Agreement to the research was received from each participant before proceeding.

Summary

The primary audience of this research is CCC. Secondarily, the audience is the Graduate Studies Office of Luther Seminary. Although this thesis is an academic submission, and as such seeks to achieve the highest standards of the academy, the goal remained congregational missional development in the life of CCC. In my view, the faculty at Luther Seminary provided a *coaching* context by which intended research and

reflections were accomplished with diligence and particular rigor so that the project, beyond the academic requirements, became not only a transformative possibility for CCC and for me, but also useful for future research and study.

The research sought to engender change, but also to reflect on the change process. As CCC celebrated its twentieth anniversary on September 18, 2011, it identified the faithfulness of God, who lifted the church up out of dismay and despair, and who is now leading them, by the Spirit, in new ways. The proposed research sought to come alongside CCC as it seeks to engender Spirit-directed participation in God's mission. Beyond CCC, the research hopefully shares CCC's journey as a Spirit-led church and perhaps will inform and inspire others to abandon ways that diminish a church's capacity, and to embrace ministry models that shape a collaborative, participatory, and Spirit–led community. The research will also provide an active and reflective opportunity for the researcher to grow into a Spirit-led leader who is more competent and capable in leading congregations to discern the Spirit and acting upon the Spirit's leading.

Chapter two explores relevant literature that informs and shapes the research. Chapter three describes significant biblical and theological lenses that will serve to provide an interpretive framework. Chapter four describes the research methodology used and what happened. Chapter five describes the results of the study. Chapter six provides a focused reflection on the findings. I conclude with an epilogue that addresses how the study and research has shaped me as a leader.

CHAPTER TWO

THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES IN THE RESEARCH

Scientific knowledge informs our leadership perspectives. "Intentionally or not," says Margaret Wheatley, "we work from a world view that is strongly anchored in the natural sciences."[1] We cannot escape science's influence or "deny the images it plants deep in the public imagination," she argues. A scientific understanding of the world deeply informs how we think and make sense of our world. Wheatley's book illustrates how the old "Newtonian science" shaped a *mechanical* understanding of organization and how "New Science" inspires a *relational* understanding. These two primary paradigms—Newtonian and New Science—sets up three interrelated theoretical perspectives that inform the research: post-industrial paradigm of leadership, leaders as managers of meaning, and a Spirit-led theory of action for leaders.

A Newtonian world view describes a clock-like universe that embodies principles of determinism, predictability, and control. Metaphorically, it understands the world as a machine. You can take the world apart, put it back together again, and, assume that once you know the parts, you understand the whole. "We organized work and knowledge based on our beliefs about this predictable universe."[2] Organizational behavior, mirroring the clock-like universe, reflected top-down management strategies reinforcing a

[1] Wheatley, *Leadership and the New Science: Discovering Order in a Chaotic World*, 7.

[2] Ibid., 28.

Newtonian world view. Leaders were put in positions to maintain a smooth and predictable operation. Plans, policies, and procedures were established with the basic assumption that the unknowable future could be conformed to manageable and achievable strategic objectives. The prevailing notion was *getting work done through others*. *Work* was the emphasis; *others* were the distraction.

New Science describes a vastly different world. "Everywhere in the new sciences, in living systems theory, quantum physics, chaos and complexity theory, we observe life's dependence on participation."[3] New science inspires new images of leadership. It positions the leader in a web of relationships that include new metaphors of leadership: gardeners, midwives, stewards, servants, missionaries, facilitators, conveners.[4] "If nature uses certain principles to create her infinite diversity and her well-organized systems, it is highly probable that those principles apply to human life and organizations as well," argues Wheatley.[5]

The shift in scientific metaphors, as she describes it, opens up new, imaginative territory to understand the world in different ways, inviting us to reconsider our understanding of leadership. This chapter builds upon Wheatley's suggestive work by focusing on three theoretical perspectives that provide a helpful way to re-imagine leadership. First, I differentiate industrial and postindustrial leadership paradigms. The postindustrial paradigm is important to the research because it provides a theoretical framework to understand how organizations can thrive by replacing command and

[3] Ibid., 163.

[4] Ibid., 165.

[5] Ibid., 162.

control structures with participatory and collaborative structures. Second, this shift in leadership paradigms requires a reframing of leadership. I define leaders as *managers of meaning* whose role is to facilitate a community's understanding of itself and its mission in the world. Finally, I provide a biblically-framed theory of action, based on Jürgen Habermas' theory of communicative action, but established on an essential pneumtalogical orientation. A theory of action that is congruent with a missiological ecclesiology is helpful in developing a participative and collaborative leadership process that leads to meaningful action in the world. This chapter focuses primarily on the theoretical lenses adopted in the research, while the following chapter develops the biblical and theological lenses. These two chapters, combined, represent the core convictions that shaped the research.

A Post-Industrial Leadership Paradigm

Thomas Frank, professor of Leadership and Administration and director of Methodist studies at Candler School of theology, describes leadership as an *emerging*, *open*, and *broad-ranging* field in contrast to a "clear and differentiated academic discipline, despite the volume of leadership material in the last number of decades."[6] Christian leadership and administration "has yet to develop," he argues, "a consistent method or even to define more clearly the subjects or practices such a method would address."[7] He illustrates. The Academy of Religious Leadership, in 2005, polled its members as to which three major books on leadership they used from three publication

[6] Thomas Edward Frank, "Leadership and Administration: An Emerging Field in Practical Theology," *International Journal of Practical Theology* 10, no. 1 (2006): 113.

[7] Ibid.

periods: pre 1985, 1986-1999, and 2000 to the present. "Little consensus emerged about what literature shapes the field…No definite classics came to the forefront."[8] Frank attributes the lack of a "coherent scholarly voice" to a tendency toward "faddishness that typifies popular business writing" and a "willful" entrepreneurialism that has "little interest in exploring or acknowledging the sources from which their ideas have come, or in connecting with past ideas in the way that builds consistency in the field."[9] The result, in his opinion, is that "leadership and administration as an academic field of practical theology" has become conversationally hobbled. Church leaders and administrators are ill-equipped to probe leadership ideas and methods.[10]

The lack of coherence among Christians is indicative of a broader confusion about leadership. John Rost, in *Leadership for the Twenty-First Century*, argues that leadership scholars and practitioners since 1910 (perhaps longer) who have attempted to develop an understanding of leadership have ended up providing a wide variety of definitions that are "confusing, varied, disorganized, idiosyncratic, muddled, and, according to conventional wisdom, quite unrewarding."[11] "Most," he argues, "agree that a school of leadership has not been established because there is no agreed-upon understanding of leadership that is clear, concise, understandable, researchable, practically relevant, and persuasive."[12] Rost moves beyond James McGregor Burn's book, *Transforming Leadership*, which describes leaders as agents of positive social change. Rost seeks to

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[8] Ibid., 117.

[9] Ibid., 116.

[10] Ibid.

[11] Rost, *Leadership for the Twenty-First Century*, 99.

[12] Ibid.

diminish the priority given to leaders as independent change agents and to expand an understanding of transformative leadership as a relational and mutual process.[13] His concern is that leadership theorists, including Burn's understanding, which he celebrates as a significant advancement in leadership studies, remain confused because of the significance and priority attributed to a leader's agency at the expense of the role of followers or subordinates in the process of leadership.

The confusion is entrenched in a preoccupation with the industrial paradigm of leadership, which Rost summarizes as "good management." Good management "is the apex of industrial organizations, the epitome of an industrial society, [and] the consummate embodiment of an industrial culture."[14] It is identified by an understanding of leadership that is "rational…male, technocratic, quantitative, goal dominated, cost-benefit driven, personalistic, hierarchical, short term, pragmatic, and materialistic."[15] As such, the industrial paradigm inspired a mythology of leadership that commonly understands leadership as "getting followers to do the leader's wishes."[16] Warren Bennis and Burt Nanus exemplify the paradigm by describing leaders as "taking charge and doing the right thing."[17]

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[13] James MacGregor Burns, *Leadership*, 1st ed. (New York: Harper & Row, 1978); James MacGregor Burns, *Transforming Leadership: A New Pursuit of Happiness* (New York: Atlantic Monthly Press, 2003).

[14] Rost, *Leadership for the Twenty-First Century*, 94.

[15] Ibid.

[16] Ibid., 75.

[17] See Warren G. Bennis and Burt Nanus, *Leaders: The Strategies for Taking Charge*, 1st ed. (New York: Harper & Row, 1985).

The paradigm tended to view followers as passive recipients of a leader's direction. They are part of the "sweaty masses" who let others take control because they are unable to act intelligently and be productive without the guidance and direction of expert leaders.[18] A top-down chain of command shapes leaders and followers. Leaders establish goals and followers automatically accept duties to accomplish the goals. Communication is primarily one-way. Leaders are required to have the right answers.[19] "These notions of leadership do not come out of thin air," argues Rost, "they come out of the lived experience of the people in the United States and other Western societies."[20] Mythology is the folklore with which people make sense out of life. "These notions of leadership are simplistic," and, if scholars and practitioners want to make sense of leadership today, a more sophisticated definition of leadership is required to understand the complex reality people face in their organizations and communities.[21]

The postindustrial paradigm elevates the participation of followers in the leadership process; "followers do not do followership, they do leadership."[22] It asserts that both leaders and followers are in a relationship called leadership. "Followers are active agents in the leadership relationship, not passive recipients of the leader's influence."[23] The paradigm will insist that leadership is the "sum total of all the interactions among all the leaders and followers in that relationship, not the individual

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[18] Rost, *Leadership for the Twenty-First Century*, 107.

[19] Ibid., 120.

[20] Ibid., 98.

[21] Ibid.

[22] Ibid., 108.

[23] Ibid., 112.

interactions between one leader and one follower in that relationship."[24] "As the postindustrial paradigm becomes more and more accepted in mainstream thought and practice," argues Rost, "leadership will lose its Lone Ranger or Pied Piper of Hamlin image—the idea that there is one person who is out in front taking charge and everyone else is following, more or less blindly, toward leader-initiated goals."[25]

Rost defines postindustrial leadership as "*an influence relationship among leaders and followers who intend real changes that reflect their mutual purposes*" (emphasis added).[26] "The concept of mutuality" argues Rost, "has been deeply eroded by two of the central strands of American culture called utilitarian individualism and expressive individualism."[27] He draws from Robert Bellah, who laments that American society has a diminished capacity to participate effectively in democratic processes. Institutions established to preserve the freedom of individuals ended up invading and displacing people's capacity to shape society together.[28] Bellah recommends restoring the deliberative and participatory principles by drawing from the participatory principles embedded in the church's Eucharistic practice—more of this in chapter three. Rost builds on Bellah's emphasis, "We must learn to think of leadership as a 'communal relationship,' as a 'community of believers,'" which is something more extensive than

[24] Ibid., 111.

[25] Ibid., 111-2.

[26] Ibid., 102.

[27] Ibid., 120.

[28] Robert Neelly Bellah, *The Good Society*, 1st ed. (New York: Knopf, 1991); Robert Neelly Bellah, *Habits of the Heart: Individualism and Commitment in American Life*, 1st Calif. pbk. ed. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996).

one leader and one follower, and even more than a number of loosely connected dyadic relationships.[29]

Rost highlights the "trend in leadership literature" toward "shared and collaborative leadership."[30] Peter G. Northouse, in his book *Leadership: Theory and Practice,* defines leadership as "a process whereby an individual influences a group of individuals to achieve a common goal."[31] "Leaders and followers must be understood in relation to each other and collectively," he argues, "They are in the leadership relationship together—two sides of the same coin."[32] Gary Yukl concludes that, though there are many leadership definitions, most "share the assumption that it involves an influence process concerned with facilitating the performance of a collective task."[33] He differentiates the two paradigms in terms of defining leadership as "a specialized role" or as a "shared influence process."[34] Theorists emphasizing a specialized role would focus on traits, attributes, behaviours, and the selection of, and the effects on, followers; whereas, the shared-influence theorists "pay more attention to the complex influence processes that occur among members, the conditions that determine when and how they occur and the consequences for the group or organization."[35]

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[29] Rost, *Leadership for the Twenty-First Century*, 111.

[30] Ibid.

[31] Peter Guy Northouse, *Leadership: Theory and Practice*, 4th ed. (Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE, 2007), 3.

[32] Ibid., 4.

[33] Gary A. Yukl, *Leadership in Organizations*, 5th ed. (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall, 2002), 19.

[34] Ibid., 3.

[35] Ibid., 4.

Likewise, Bernard Bass and Ruth Bass comment, "in the first several decades of the twentieth century, leadership was considered a matter of impressing the will of the leader and inducing obedience."[36] More recently, in the age of information, definitions of leadership have expanded to see the leader more as a facilitator who engenders shared decision-making processes. For instance, social scientists from fifty-six countries met in Calgary, Canada, in 1994, and defined a shared understanding of leadership that encompassed a combination of both universal and particular themes. They stated that leadership is "the ability to influence, motivate, and enable others to contribute to the effectiveness and success of the organizations of which they are members."[37]

Manuel Castells, in *The Rise of the Network Society*, describes how the information revolution is giving birth to a network society, which is revolutionizing our understanding of economic systems, changing relationships people have with work, and altering the way people communicate with each other.[38] "Conversation," describes Alan Roxburgh in *Missional Map-Making*, "moves in multiple directions at once, including a diversity of people with a variety of opinions, creating [a] far more open, diffuse sense of authority or the sources of knowledge."[39] The massive shifts in understanding combined with the rapid speed of these changes creates a context of disruption and confusion as industrial models of leadership are found wanting in a networked society.

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[36] Bernard M. Bass and Ruth Bass, *The Bass Handbook of Leadership: Theory, Research, and Managerial Applications*, 4th ed. (New York: Free Press, 2008), 24.

[37] Ibid., 23.

[38] Manuel Castells, *The Rise of the Network Society*, 2nd ed., Information Age 1 (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishers, 2000).

[39] Alan J. Roxburgh, *Missional Map-Making: Skills for Leading in Times of Transition*, 1st ed., Leadership Network (San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, 2010), 15.

Clay Shirky, in *Here Comes Everybody*, underscores the relevance of making a paradigmatic shift because of information technology. Referring to Ronald Coase's 1937 article, "The Nature of the Firm*"* he argues that the expense of large-scale bureaucratic coordination has been seriously reduced by the low expense and ease of coordination accomplished by the internet and social media.[40] The capacity of loosely organized groups increased exponentially due to the coordinating potential of inexpensive communication technologies. Bureaucratic systems, in an era without social technologies, required significant human resources (employees) and corresponding work environments (office buildings) to consolidate and disseminate information in the most effective way. Social technologies eliminate dependence on large workforces and workplaces and provide immediate and responsive communication systems that more effectively and efficiently adapt to unforeseen and unexpected realities.

The *Occupy Wall Street Movement* is a good example of a network's power and influence. *Adbusters*, a contrarian Vancouver magazine, frustrated by the growing disparity in wealth and the absence of legal repercussions for bankers, suggested that people protest on Wall Street on September 17, 2011.[41] "We came up with the idea," describes Micah White, senior editor, "but independent activists just made it their own. They set up an organizing website, started holding weekly meetings and these are the people who are now pulling it off. They made it their own and ran with it."[42] Worldwide interest and support emerged without the resources of any central office and its support.

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[40] Ronald Coase, "The Nature of the Firm," *Economica* 4, no. 16 (1937).

[41] Andrew Fleming, "Adbusters Sparks Wall Street Protest: Vancouver-Based Activitists Behind Street Actions in the U.S.," *The Vancouver Courier*(2011)(accessed August 3, 2012).

[42] Ibid.

Independent and self-sustaining protests occurred in cities around the world. The increase in the power of both individuals and groups, outside traditional organizational structures, is unprecedented," claims Shirky. "Many institutions will not survive this change without significant alteration…."[43] Communities and leaders will be challenged in their capacity to make decisions and lead organizations as the influence of social media grows and directly influences people's lives.

Dwight Zscheile in his article, "Social Networking and Church Systems," argues that, "If the internet is the central cultural metaphor, the network is the underlying architecture for how we relate and structure our lives together."[44] Networks are at the heart of the postindustrial shift and are "rapidly becoming the basic organizational paradigm of twenty-first-century Western culture."[45] The bureaucratic model of the industrial paradigm is giving way to "higher levels of reciprocity, grassroots innovation, localized diversity and co-creation linked by technology across often vast geographical spaces."[46] What characterizes a postindustrial paradigm is decentralized action. New, coordinated, and cooperative action can occur through radically distributed mechanisms within a network, instead of action determined by a centralized system. "These emerging forms of networked life," argues Zscheile, "while destabilizing, also invite a fresh theological imagination for being God's called, gathered, and sent people in a new age."[47]

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[43] Clay Shirky, *Here Comes Everybody: The Power of Organizing without Organizations* (New York: Penguin Press, 2008), 107.

[44] Dwight J. Zscheile, "Social Networking and Church Systems," *Word & World* 30, no. 3 (2010): 37.

[45] Ibid., 247.

[46] Ibid., 249.

[47] Ibid., 248.

The substantial shift from an industrial to a postindustrial understanding of leadership demands a new understanding of what leadership is about. A new paradigm provides promise of a new vision for leadership and people's involvement in the leadership process. A common lament in churches is that fewer and fewer people assume leadership roles in the church, with the result that fewer people are engaged in the decision-making of the church. People regularly resist roles of leadership by stating that they are not leaders. Recruiting capable people into leadership is challenging because most volunteers assume an industrial perspective. In the context of the church, volunteers dodge leadership roles because they personally do not feel expert enough and do not want to bear the responsibilities of decisions made. The weight of responsibility, the levels of accountability, and the obvious sacrifices required to make things happen is an overwhelming reality that is passed to another willing to bear that responsibility or to assume the privileges associated with leadership. Utilizing a worn out leadership paradigm for communal decision-making in today's context is overwhelming for followers and frustrating for leaders. The new paradigm of leadership reduces the pressure for leaders to be isolated experts and prevents followers from being irritated compliants.

Jim Horsthuis, CMA pastor and doctoral Student at McMaster Divinity in 2011, challenges what he describes as an "inflated emphasis on leadership." For instance, evangelical leadership gurus Aubrey Malphurs and Will Mancini, among others, assert that leadership remains the hope of the church and that leaders can grow to new levels of effectiveness by cultivating a personal life of visionary leadership.[48] "I do believe,"

[48] Jim Horsthuis, "Participants with God: A Perichoretic Theology of Leadership," *Journal of Religious Leadership* 10, no. 1 (2011): 82.

Horsthuis says, "that the promise they offer through leadership is disproportionate to the experience of most pastors." Christians have neglected necessary and critical reflection to understand the assumptions inherent in accepted models of leadership and management theories. Stephen Pattison, a pastoral theologian, summarizes three basic assumptions to address:

> Human beings can control the world and colonize the future effectively so long as they have the right techniques; Individuals should be subservient to organizational goals and to their superiors; Relationships are fundamentally hierarchical and require clear lines of upward accountability and downward responsibility.[49]

Christians need to address these assumptions "with a view to using them judiciously and with full awareness of their implications," Pattison comments.[50] Moreover, as leadership shifts from centralized and hierarchical models to more pluralistic and networking models, the reality of divergent hermeneutics and varied interpretations of what is happening and what actions are to be taken becomes very apparent. Instead of a leader asserting a persuasive interpretation and action within a hierarchical paradigm, a leader needs to facilitate shared interpretations and meaning among a more collaborative and participatory constituency.

Dave Daubert, in relation to the visionary task of the church, argues, "…*only in community* is it possible for this work [vision] to be done with any real *integrity* (emphasis in the original)."[51] Many denominations, he claims, use a behavioral

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[49] Stephen Pattison, "Management and Pastoral Theology," in *The Blackwell Reader in Pastoral and Practical Theology*, ed. James Woodward and Stephen Pattison (Oxford: Blackwell, 2000), 289.

[50] Ibid., 290.

[51] Dave Daubert, "Vision-Discerning Vs. Vision-Casting: How Shared Vision Can Raise up Communities of Leaders Rather Than Mere Leaders of Communities," in *The Missional Church and Leadership Formation: Helping Congregations Develop Leadership Capacity*, ed. Craig Van Gelder, Missional Church Series 3 (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2009), 150.

interviewing process to identify missional leaders for strategic growth related pastoral positions. One of the key identifiers is a leader's visionary capacity to "project a vision into the future beyond the present" and "persuasively sell it to other people."[52] The task of visioning needs to move beyond the frameworks that reduce vision capacity to the unique traits of the leader, and to develop a framework that recognizes that vision is a community's capacity to discern and participate in God's activity in their present context. I share Daubert's contention that "if we place missional impulses deeper within the system than traditional leadership models have often permitted, we will mobilize the church for mission in new ways."[53] Vision arises from the community's engagement with its context. Clarifying vision is a communal task. The role of leadership is to facilitate communal conversations that seek to discern what God is doing and where he is leading. I like to describe these types of leaders as managers of meaning.

Leaders as Managers of Meaning

Psychologist Karl Weick's concept of "sensemaking" helps to reframe the role of a leader in the context of a collaborative and participatory environment.[54] "In Weick's theory of organizing," explain Mary Jo Hatch and Ann Cunliffe, "organizational realities are socially constructed by organizational members as they try to make sense of what is

[52] Robert Logan and Charles Ridley, *Training for Selection Interviewing* (St. Charles, IL: ChurchSmart, 1998), 92.

[53] Daubert, "Vision-Discerning Vs. Vision-Casting: How Shared Vision Can Raise up Communities of Leaders Rather Than Mere Leaders of Communities," 160.

[54] Karl E. Weick, *Sensemaking in Organizations*, Foundations for Organizational Science (Thousand Oaks: SAGE, 1995).

happening both as it occurs and in retrospect, and then act on that understanding."[55] "The environment of the organization does not exist independently of the organization," explain Hatch and Cunliffe, "rather it is socially constructed and reconstructed as people gather and analyze information, make decisions, and take action based on their analysis."[56] Sensemaking is the activity of humans who, Weick argues, create maps and/or select images to help them make meaning out of their world. "When people enact laws, they take undefined space, time, and action and draw lines, establish categories, and coin labels that create new features of the environment that did not exist before."[57] Meaning-making is less about finding the truth behind things than it is about making sense of the lived experience.

Lisa Berlinger and Thomas Tumblin suggest that Weick's descriptive model can aid Christian communities in understanding the discernment process. "[T]he implications of the model and using the techniques that take into account the implications of the model," they argue, "can lead to improved discernment."[58] Improved discernment leads to improved decision-making. Weick's framework helps to design processes that mitigate common barriers and facilitate a fruitful process of collective decision-making. The process is neither prescriptive nor seeks to ensure accurate explanations and the best decisions. Rather, it seeks to illuminate what happens when a group gathers to interpret a

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[55] Mary Jo Hatch and Ann L. Cunliffe, *Organization Theory: Modern, Symbolic, and Postmodern Perspectives*, 2nd ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006), 45.

[56] Ibid.

[57] Weick, *Sensemaking in Organizations*, 30-31.

[58] Lisa R. Berlinger and Thomas Tumblin, "Sensemaking, Discernment, and Religious Leadership," *Journal of Religious Leadership* 3, no. 1-2 (2004): 76.

situation. Weick delineates seven characteristics (properties) that describe people as they engage in a sense-making process.

- First, sensemaking happens in the presence of others and is, by definition, a collective and social action. Others influence how one makes sense of a situation and acts in response to a situation. "What I say and do is affected by the audience that I anticipate will audit the conclusion that I reach" (social context).[59]

- Second, the sensemaking process is a transformative process that can result in substantial shifts in one's identity (identity).

- Third, sensemaking is a retrospective activity and addresses situations, events, or behaviors that have occurred (retrospect).

- Fourth, sensemaking is done on extracted or salient cues. We single out facts from what has been said and done but it does not include all the possible things that may exist (cues).

- Fifth, sensemaking needs to recognize that the situation and the ones making sense are doing so from a historical perspective. The event has a history and the sense-makers have a history that informs how sense is being made. This time frame can be expansive but it also includes the time it might take to understand a specific situation. One's sense of something may develop as one extracts more cues (ongoing flows).

- Sixth, sensemaking does not seek accurate explanations but rather plausible explanations (plausibility).

- Seventh, the process of participating and speaking about an event is also constructive—people produce part of the environment they face (enactment).

Each of these properties has implications for collective discernment and decision-making. Individuals in a group will extract a variety of cues and assert contrasting explanations. A dominant person, because of a set of chosen cues, can propose a particular understanding while less dominant people suppress their understanding of the situation because of different cues. Sensemaking requires people to assert different

[59] Ibid., 84.

understandings of their situation. Different understandings lead to different actions. Innovative and productive sensemaking can be shortchanged. Weick offers a number of cautions about a collective process:

- One, when sensemaking is part of an action oriented process it will not be neat and tidy. We should expect to see "divergent, antagonistic, and imbalanced forces woven throughout acts of sensemaking."[60] A process that does not allow contrarian perspectives and consideration of different or unnoticed cues will incur vulnerabilities that may undermine any actions taken.

- Second, we should be suspicious of quick agreement and continue to expose disagreements, manipulations, coercions, or other issues that need to be addressed. It is easier to find plausible accounts than necessarily accurate ones. An engaged, free, and discerning dialogue is critical in order to move beyond inaccurate accounts to appraisals that are more accurate.

- Third, he warns that many meanings exist and, therefore, the problem is confusion, not ignorance.[61] People with the same beliefs, creeds, and values reduce confusion. High levels of agreement about foundational orientations will decrease confusion, which can undermine or impede sensemaking.

- Finally, the sophistication of people's perceptual skills and their capacity to engage effectively directly affects collective sensemaking.

Wilfred Drath and Charles Palus, in their paper, "Making Common Sense: Leadership as Meaning-making in a Community of Practice," incorporate sensemaking into their understanding of leadership. Meaning-making leadership, they argue, is a "social meaning-making process that occurs in groups of people who are engaged in some activity together."[62] They reinforce Weick's understanding of sensemaking by describing meaning-making as an internal structure of ideas and feelings that provides a

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[60] Weick, *Sensemaking in Organizations*, 136.

[61] Ibid., 27.

[62] Drath and Palus, "Making Common Sense: Leadership as Meaning-Making in a Community of Practice," 1.

cognitive and emotional framework to interpret their world. The framework is a "representation of the way things are and the way they ought to be." They call this representation the person's "world version." This world version places that person into an interpreted context that gives meaning to their life and their relationship to their world.[63] They suggest a number of key shifts in terms of understanding leadership.

"Communities of practice embed people in commitments," say Darth and Palus. "In a community of practice, people are united by more than membership in a group or category; they are involved with one another in action."[64] The Christian authors of two related books, *Practicing our Faith: A Way of Life for Searching People* and *Practicing Theology; Beliefs and Practices in Christian Life* share a similar perspective but include God as a leading player.[65] The Trinity, their relations, their practice, their character, contributes to the Christian community's decision-making since the Trinity's mission (*missio-Dei)* establishes the overarching world version (world view) of the community's life. The Trinity provides a world of meaning and identity. With regard to the practice of Christian leadership, Larry Rasmussen, one of the contributors, writes, "The shaping of communities is the practice by which we agree to be reliable, personally and organizationally."[66] The Christian community finds its validation in conforming to the way of the Trinity revealed in scripture. A community's leadership practice reflects how

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[63] Ibid., 4.

[64] Ibid., 11.

[65] Dorthy C. ed. Bass, *Practicing Our Faith: A Way of Life for a Searching People* (San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, 1997); Miroslav Volf, "Theology for a Way of Life," in *Practicing Theology: Beliefs and Practices in Christian Life*, ed. Miroslav Volf and Dorothy C. Bass (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2002).

[66] Larry Rasmussen, "Shaping Communities," in *Practicing Faith: A Way of Life for a Searching People*, ed. Dorothy C. Bass (San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, 1997), 120.

a community understands its world and how it chooses to live in the world. Sensemaking and action are deeply related. A Christian community makes sense by finding its identity in the Trinity's mission to the world.

For instance, Aaron, Moses' articulate brother, was compelled by the newly liberated but impatient Hebrews to make some meaning and purpose of their situation. God had called Moses up the mountain, leaving Aaron to address the loosely coordinated community. Together, they formed a golden calf and a celebration ensued. God angrily dismissed the golden calf alternative and set out punitive actions. Aaron's plausible meaning-making attempt lacked meaningful engagement with God—a necessary voice in understanding the community's identity and purpose. The story of God's people, in scripture and since scripture, reflects the continuing struggle of understanding and interpreting God's ways to live in the world. Israel's capacity to make decisions was dependent on a faithful interpretation of their identity in the world.

Rasmussen describes leadership as involving the coordination of "a community's practices through good governance," which helps the community, "to make its way of life clear, visible, and viable."[67] Theology and Christian practice are woven into a continuing process of making decisions about how to live life. Theology is not so much about the accumulation of raw data, but, as Miroslav Volf argues in the book, *Practicing Theology: Beliefs and Practices in Christian Life*, Christian beliefs (theology) are "intended to guide Christian practices by situating the practitioner within the overarching narrative of God's dealings with humanity and by offering an account of his or her constitution as an

[67] Ibid., 121.

agent."[68] "Christian practices," Volf defines, "are things Christian people do together over time in response to and in the light of God's active presence for the life of the world."[69] Christian practices, as such, embody the continual learning process of functioning in an ever-changing world that requires ongoing sensemaking and decision-making.

Unlike other practices addressed (hospitality, household economics, keeping Sabbath, healing, etc.), the practice of leadership, particularly, Rasmussen argues, "provides the choreography for all the other practices of a community or society."[70] The capacity of church leaders to make sense collaboratively and to mutually engage in shared decision-making processes is critical to the health and sustainability of a community's witness in the world.

Draft and Palus delineate five shifts required in facilitating meaning-making leadership. The first shift is *toward greater ownership.* Typically, we measure a take-charge leader's success by their capacity to elicit a group's commitment to a vision and accomplishment of that vision through achieved goals. The measure of effectiveness from a meaning-making perspective will be how involved is the community in the leadership process. The term, *ownership*, although not used by the authors, is a useful word for this shift. CCC uses this concept to describe the type of commitment and engagement participants (leaders and volunteers) demonstrate in their roles. Low ownership indicates a general lack of concern and commitment to shared outcomes and thus, a corresponding

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[68] Volf, "Theology for a Way of Life," 255.

[69] Craig Dykstra and Dorothy C. Bass, "Times of Yearning, Practices of Faith," in *Practicing Our Faith*, ed. Dorothy C. Bass (San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, 1997), 5.

[70] Rasmussen, "Shaping Communities," 120.

lack of participation. High ownership indicates greater levels of participation and concern about the outcomes people have committed to do.

The shift that the authors are describing is the degree of involvement and the number of participants who become involved in the leadership process. As people move close to the center of a community of practice, they naturally participate more in "creating, nurturing, and evolving the meanings of the community."[71] When more people demonstrate ownership by engaging in deliberative meaning-making and in establishing shared practices, it indicates that they are part of the leadership process. When fewer people demonstrate ownership of decisions made, it can indicate the lack of an effective leadership process.

The second shift is *toward people participating in a shared process*. A leader's authority and influence is not entirely dependent on a particular set of leadership attributes they may possess, but includes the authority a community grants to the person. A group who chooses a leader affirms the attributes demonstrated by the leader. An example from CCC illustrates. CCC needed to address the next steps after two Senior Pastors ended their ministries in devastating fashion. One approach was to blame the Senior Pastors for their lack of leadership and immediately start a search process to find a more competent leader to replace them. A second approach, and the one chosen, was to see that the community and the two leaders were part of a problematic leadership relationship. The church, choosing the latter alternative, spent a season questioning leadership styles and sought to understand what happened and what it meant for the

[71] Drath and Palus, "Making Common Sense: Leadership as Meaning-Making in a Community of Practice," 17.

future in terms of the church's life and practice. It resulted in a public confession and openness to a renewed leadership culture.

The third shift is *toward shared meaning that motivates action*. The basic assumption underlying the take-charge perspective is that "people are essentially inert and require some reason for acting."[72] The meaning-making perspective suggests that people are already "in motion, already acting, doing, and behaving, and that what they need is not to be prodded but to have some way of guiding their action toward the creation of significance."[73] The leadership process is not about creating motivation, but about creating and structuring opportunities for people to "increase their *feelings of significance* and their *actual importance* to the community"(emphasis mine).[74] The problem with take-charge models of leadership is that take-charge leaders continually need to demonstrate their capacities of leadership by taking charge. Although this model of leadership has its place and role, especially for times of crisis and instability, the take-charge model tends to diminish the capacity of the followers in the leadership process. Take-charge leadership is less about a shared process and more of an "are you with me or are you against me?" type of process. "The question, then, for an individual in a position of authority is no longer how to get people to do what is needed, but how to participate in a process of structuring the activity and practice of the community so that people marginal to its practice are afforded the means to move toward the center of that practice."[75] Instead of investing time motivating people to do more of what they know to

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[72] Ibid.

[73] Ibid.

[74] Ibid., 18.

[75] Ibid.

be important, the meaning-making perspective suggests a shift toward creating legitimate opportunities to collaborate and participate together in the mission of God.

The fourth shift is *toward leaders understanding that they are a part of the leadership process*. The take-charge view tends to see leadership as what a leader does. When leadership is seen as meaning-making, leadership is understood as the dynamic relationship of mutual members of a community, including individuals with authority, who are committed to shared actions. A meaning-making leader recognizes that they are one part of the overall leadership process.

The fifth shift is *toward how do we together make things happen* instead of *how do I make things happen.* "The key movement," Drath and Palus state, "is from *I* need to make things happen to *we* need to make things happen and *I* need to figure out how best to participate in the process of *us* making things happen."[76] Individual performance characterized leadership in terms of taking charge and making things happen. Leadership today requires new capacities that engender greater participation and collaboration. Indeed, there are times when authoritative decision-making is required—and it is very necessary and effective, at times. However, the model becomes questionable in a complex organization engaged in difficult and multifaceted activity.

Drath and Palus suggest four key lessons if leadership is to move beyond the take-charge model to a shared-process model: (1) the capacity to understand oneself as both an individual and as a socially embedded being; (2) the capacity to understand systems in general as mutually related and interacting and continually changing; (3) the capacity to

[76] Ibid., 19.

take the perspective of another; and (4) the capacity to engage in dialogue.[77] The development of these capacities can result as Christian communities explore more deeply how to collaborate and participate in the mission of God.

Scott Cormode, in "Multilayered Leadership," describes three models of Christian leadership that he describes as layers of leadership: the pastoral Shepherd who empowers people, the productive Builder who makes decisions, and the meaning-making Gardener who cultivates congregational cultures (see table one).[78] Each competes for the pastor's attention and advanced leaders, he argues, "must work in each layer simultaneously because each is present in every ministering situation."[79] Nevertheless, he argues that the prevalent Builder and Shepherd models "deteriorate under certain organizational conditions, conditions that, unfortunately, are quite common in churches and seminaries." Those conditions are what scholars describe as ambiguity and adaptive change.

Table 1. Scott Cormode's Three Leadership Models[80]

	Builder	**Shepherd**	**Gardener**
Inspires action by	Making decisions	Empowering people	Making meaning
Approach to leadership	Organizational approach	Pastoral care approach	Homiletic approach
Emphasizes	Roles and Structure	Relationships Responsibilities	Vocabulary and stories
View of congregation	Structure	Community	Culture
Biblical precedents	Nehemiah, Jethro	Jesus as Good Shepherd	Nathan with David

[77] Ibid., 23.

[78] Scott Cormode, "Multi-Layered Leadership: The Christian Leader as Builder, Shepherd and Gardener," *Journal of Religious Leadership* 1, no. 2 (2002): 72-73.

[79] Ibid., 73.

[80] Ibid., 93.

The Builder and Shepherd models assume that leaders can set clear goals to shape a community's life. The trouble with ambiguity, however, is that stated goals are difficult to understand (i.e., what is social justice), strategic initiatives do not guarantee predictable results (i.e., will Alpha grow our church?), and a church's different constituents (i.e., youth, seniors) will have conflicting interpretations of success and failure.[81] Further, the two models do not thrive when faced with adaptive change, he argues. Ronald Heifetz describes *adaptive change* by contrasting it to *technical problems*. Technical problems have known solutions and experts who can address the problems. Adaptive change is what occurs when "our deeply held beliefs are challenged, when the values that made us successful become less relevant, and when legitimate yet competing perspectives emerge."[82] Technical fixes do not repair adaptive challenges. Adaptive change requires difficult adjustments, as it demands that people alter behaviors or beliefs that no longer make sense of their present situation. "Adaptive change undermines the Builder and Shepherd models," argues Cormode, "because each one tends to enable people to escape the adaptive work."[83]

The only way to tackle adaptive change is to engage in the inevitable conflict indicative of communities who seriously engage the challenge of adaptive change. They need to embrace conflict, to struggle through alternative interpretations, and to participate

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[81] Ibid., 81.

[82] Ronald Heifetz and Donald Laurie, "The Work of Leadership," *Harvard Buisness Review* January-February(1997), http://hbr.org/2001/12/the-work-of-leadership/ar/1(accessed August 3, 2012).

[83] Cormode, "Multi-Layered Leadership: The Christian Leader as Builder, Shepherd and Gardener," 90.

together in a process of new meaning-making.[84] Cormode describes the Gardener model as a homiletic approach to leadership. "It sees the leader as theological interpreter, a prophet who points to God…plants vocabulary, sows stories, cultivates theological categories that bear fruit when the congregation uses those words, stories, and categories to interpret their world."[85]

The Gardener model assumes that the people of the congregation are the primary missionaries to their local context. The goal of a gardening leader, as Daubert describes, is to engage God and Scripture "to discern locally why God has a church and to press toward the people owning their role in God's economy."[86] In order to be missionaries, Daubert adds, three things are necessary. First, "laypeople need to be better equipped theologically for mission." Second, "they need to be given practices and a framework within which to make decisions in a world that may not share their values and priorities." Third, "they need to be able to discern how best to serve as intentional, conscious instruments of God in the various places to which they are sent."[87]

If a new paradigm of leadership is about meaning-making, it is important to address the hermeneutical reality that confronts and challenges Christian communities who seek to interpret scripture and discern the leading of the Spirit. Christian leaders face

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[84] Cormode references an unpublished work of Nancy Ammerman presented to the National Seminar on Religious Leadership, Yale University, January 22, 1999. "In an extremely broad and unprecedented study, she and her team studied congregations in twenty-two communities undergoing significant social change. Some of the congregations adapted to that change, while others never grew beyond it. And a key to their ability to adapt was their experience of conflict. She found that no congregation that adapted did so without conflict and no church without conflict adapted."Ibid., 88.

[85] Ibid., 90.

[86] Daubert, "Vision-Discerning Vs. Vision-Casting: How Shared Vision Can Raise up Communities of Leaders Rather Than Mere Leaders of Communities," 161.

[87] Ibid., 154.

a complex task, comments Craig Van Gelder, because of the "hermeneutic turn" demonstrated by the description of leaders as managers of meaning.[88] Leadership includes a hermeneutical task in which a leader needs to facilitate shared meaning that leads to meaningful action. The hermeneutical turn is a shift from an emphasis on epistemology (how do we know something) to an emphasis on hermeneutics (how do we interpret both how we encounter and what we encounter). Three things will be critical to understanding the complexity of leadership and developing a workable methodology to cultivate a missionary people. First, the church will need to understand what is special about the revelation found in scripture. Second, they will need to understand how God is present in the world as an acting subject. Third, and perhaps most challenging, is that they will also need to understand the hermeneutical character of both these realities.[89] Gerben Heitink chooses a hermeneutical approach for a Christian theory of action that recognizes Scripture and God's presence as critical parts of a church's decision-making life. He draws substantially from Jürgen Habermas' theory of communicative action.

A Spirit-led Theory of Action

Heitink proposes a theory of action that provides a theoretical framework for Spirit-led leadership. He begins by reassessing the contribution of Frederick Schleiermacher—regarded as the father of practical theology. Schleiermacher's book, *On Religion: Speeches to its Cultural Despisers*, was a passionate attempt to give faith a

[88] Craig Van Gelder, "Method in Light of Scripture and in Relation to Hermeneutics," *Journal of Religious Leadership* 3, no. 1-2 (2004): 69.

[89] Ibid.

legitimate place within the modern world.[90] He claimed that Christianity was viable in the modern world because of its fundamental concept of the "feeling of absolute dependence." We misunderstood his concept, Heitink argues, because we have not appreciated how Schleiermacher "linked it, from the very start, in a relational way to transcendent reality."[91] "When faced with the choice between the objectivity of thought and the subjectivity of feeling," Heitink points out, "he opted for a form of intersubjectivity, in which God and human interact."[92] This coincides with the perspective of John Calvin who begins the *Institutes* by saying that the knowledge of God involved knowledge of ourselves.[93] "I intend to go a step further," states Heitink, "and find the point of departure in this anthropological shift. Not God himself, but the human experience of God, the Christian faith, now takes central stage as the object of inquiry."[94] "Practical theology deals with God's activity," he describes, "through the ministry of human beings."[95] This is foundational to asserting that the Spirit's activity can be observed. If the Spirit works through people, studying people can provide data about the Spirit's work.

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[90] Friedrich Schleiermacher, *On Religion: Speeches to Its Cultured Despisers*, trans. John Oman, 1st Westminster/John Knox Press ed. (Louisville, KY: John Knox Press, 1994).

[91] Heitink, *Practical Theology: History, Theory, Action Domains: Manual for Practical Theology*, 24.

[92] Ibid.

[93] John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, trans. Ford Lewis Battles, The Library of Christian Classics, edited by John Thomas McNeill (Philadelphia, PA: Westminster Press, 1960).

[94] Heitink, *Practical Theology: History, Theory, Action Domains: Manual for Practical Theology*, 111.

[95] Ibid., 7.

The parable of the talents in Matthew 25:1-14 is paradigmatic for his theory of action. The parable tells the story of a master who goes on a long journey and entrusts his possessions to his servants who are to be actively using the master's gifts in the world. "They are expected to work with these talents (*charismata*) in God's kingdom and are expected to give an account upon the master's return." In essence, Heitink states, the place of action is "the church as it meets together."[96] The parable underscores that human activity—an activity that includes an intersubjective partnership with God—is the subject of practical theology.

Pneumatology is critical in developing a theological framework for a theory of action. The Spirit guides and equips the church with gifts (charismata) to do work in the world (1 Cor. 12:1-11). Jesus teaches that the "Spirit blows where it wills (John 3:8)," nevertheless, scripture reveals that the ways of the Spirit remain consistent with the mission of the Father and Jesus. The Spirit shapes a theory of action. Heitink warns, "The work of the Spirit cannot be put in a framework or method but it is possible to give room to the kind of communicative action that allows for a listening attitude, in mutual openness and receptivity." We can understand the conditions that allow for this freedom of action "so that what cannot be done will nonetheless happen, when God's Spirit is willing to attach himself to it."[97] "One should emphasize," he claims, "that God prefers to work through people;" therefore, "Humanity is enlisted as *humanity* in God's service."[98] The church is a Spirit-equipped and directed participant in God's mission. God invites the

[96] Ibid., 92.

[97] Ibid., 194.

[98] Ibid., 92.

church into the ongoing restorative work, directed by the Spirit, which will culminate in the return of Jesus Christ.

Communication among those involved in a decision making process—God, church, world—characterizes Heitink's theory of action. He defines his theory of action as "an empirically oriented theological theory of the mediation of the Christian faith in the praxis of modern society."[99] The key word is "mediation." The servants who are tasked with using God's gifts in the world are "mediating" God's activity in the world. Heitink describes "the mediation of the Christian faith" as Praxis One and "modern society" as Praxis Two. The word "in" conjoins the two praxes. Separating Praxis One and Two betrays the church's missional purpose. The two influence each other in favorable and uneasy ways. "For centuries, the praxis of society has been influenced by the Christian tradition," Heitink remarks, and "at the same time the Christian tradition has been subject to the influence of divergent developments within society."[100] Ideally, Praxis One is a transformative agent within Praxis Two. The role of a Christian community, as Heitink sees it, is to mediate the Christian faith in the world. As such, the church is not primarily the focus of practical theology; rather, it has society as the horizon.[101]

A Christian theory of action is necessary in order to understand, evaluate, and be intentional about how Christians can live redemptively in the world. "This mediation takes shape in forms of communicative action, that is, in communication processes that occur within specific structures."[102] Heitink describes what Daubert lists as one of the

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[99] Ibid., 6.

[100] Ibid., 9.

[101] Ibid.

[102] Ibid., 8.

three things the church needs to learn: how to dialogue. It is important to understand how these communicative processes take place so that there can be a "real transmission of the Christian tradition" in our world today. Social theorist Jürgen Habermas' theory of communicative action provides a theoretical framework to understand what happens in communication.[103]

Heitink highlights at least two key contributions from Habermas that shape a Christian theory of action.[104] First, he provides a significant analytical tool to understand developments in society. Second, he provides a constructive understanding of the communicative process. Habermas provides significant analytical and theoretical insights that inform how churches can use deliberative and discerning conversation to decide on mutually agreed upon actions that are aligned with the mission of God in our world.

An Analytic Tool

Erin Brigham in her paper, "Communicative Action as an Approach to Ecumenical Dialogue" applies Habermas' communicative theory in a way that illustrates its useful application to local church situations.[105] The question, "How do societies continue to exist?" is central to Habermas' theory. Habermas calls social systems "lifeworlds" wherein a community is either free or constrained to make decisions. He believed a connection between action and the consequences of an action exists which creates a somewhat stable and functional society. Societies need to be able to link action

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[103] Jürgen Habermas, *The Theory of Communicative Action*, 2 vols., vol. 1 (Boston: Beacon Press, 1984).

[104] Heitink, *Practical Theology: History, Theory, Action Domains: Manual for Practical Theology*, 138.

[105] Erin Michele Brigham, "Communicative Action as an Approach to Ecumenical Dialogue," *Ecumenical Review* 60, no. 3 (2008).

and the consequence of actions in order for some stable society to emerge. That connection, he asserts, is the use of language from which he frames his central concept: communicative action.

Communicative action is a form of human rationality that has become overshadowed by an obsession with a non-participatory form of rationality—instrumental rationality. Every language user employs both dialogue and communicative action. Communicative rationality, Habermas argues, is a natural, human, communicative process that people can use to negotiate their aims and their circumstances which, to humanity's detriment, has been diminished by instrumental rationality. Habermas seeks to resurrect this form of rationality and encourage communicative rationality to liberate societies from powerless lifeworlds where they are disabled or feel disabled to influence their world. Habermas seeks to reconstruct the essential features of communication by clarifying the communication process. Clarifying the communicative process enables people to expose what is going wrong with the communication process. He states:

> I think that the ground rules for public debate are only attempts to give a context-bound and historically specific articulation of an idea that is more widely shared, actually intuitively shared, by everybody who uses a natural language in one way, namely to come to a certain understanding with somebody else about something in the world.[106]

Brigham's application of Habermas' theory to the ecumenical context indicates that a local church, often characterized by diverse perspectives and understandings of what it means to be God's people in the world, can benefit from Habermas' theoretical application. The CMA, as an early movement that allied many different people from a

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[106] Jürgen Habermas, "Concluding Remarks," in *Habermas and the Public Sphere*, ed. C. Calhoun (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1992), 477; as quoted in Gary M. Simpson, *Critical Social Theory: Prophetic Reason, Civil Society, and Christian Imagination*, Guides to Theological Inquiry (MN: Fortress Press, 2002), 88.

variety of theological traditions, demonstrated a process of communicative action as it covenanted to be purposefully evangelistic and spiritually empowered. Through negotiation, they coordinated their actions into what Drath and Palus described as "communities of practice" or "practices of the Christian life" as the authors of *Practicing our Faith* described. The formative years of the CMA demonstrates how members negotiated a renewed understanding of what it meant to be God's people in the world. They did so by thinking through the lenses of a premillennial perspective that inspired a significant and sacrificial commitment to evangelizing the world.[107] In the light of fresh theological developments, this research suggests that further communicative action would be fruitful, desirable, and important if the CMA intends to remain in step with the missional purpose of God.

A.B. Simpson's specific contribution was notable in influencing evangelicalism. Bernie Van de Walle argues that "rather than Warfield and Princetonian orthodoxy," Simpson and the Fourfold Gospel "are the standard of nineteenth-century evangelicalism" and should be regarded as a "pivotal and defining figure of late nineteenth-century evangelicalism and evangelical theology."[108] Simpson's Fourfold Gospel emphasis in his preaching, publications, and conference speaking contributed significantly to Pentecostalism and evangelical theology beyond the formation of the CMA. Simpson's theological reframing of what it meant to be God's people in the world facilitated an expansive missionary movement. The vigour of the CMA's continuing

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[107] Bernie A. Van de Walle, *The Heart of the Gospel: A.B. Simpson, the Fourfold Gospel, and Late Nineteenth-Century Evangelical Theology*, Princeton Theological Monograph Series (Eugene, OR: Pickwick Publications, 2009).

[108] Ibid., 196.

presence in the world, if Habermas' theory is accepted, is less dependent on restoring Simpson's historical emphases but in cultivating a biblical and theological discourse that continues to clarify and motivate meaningful missional action in the world just as it did at the turn of the nineteenth century.

Habermas believes through the negotiation of beliefs, meaning, and values actions are determined with the result that meaningful and purposeful lifeworlds emerge. Habermas' particular concern is that the dominance of instrumental reason dehumanizes and immobilizes existing lifeworlds from establishing meaningful and stable communities. His theory provides an analytical tool to reconsider existing practices and to engage in meaningful discourse that not only rejuvenates a confused and uncertain local mission, but also provides an opportunity to understand how the church today can mediate in *fresh* ways the Christian faith in the world.

Bakers, for example, bake fresh bread every day. The process of measuring ingredients, mixing it up, kneading the dough, letting it rise, baking it brown, and eating it up is a constantly recurring process. Bakers learned, along the way, that it is best to bake daily rather than once a week or once a year. Stale bread is not the bread of choice at family meals. Likewise, the activity of the church requires the kind of dialogue that mixes ingredients (Praxis One and Two) and works the material over so as to make fresh what it means to be God's people in the world is the necessary process of new life.

Instrumental reason, in contrast to communicative reason, flourished since the Enlightenment. As modern society evolved, expanding bureaucratic governance and aggressive capitalist economies differentiated from an integrated lifeworld. Utilizing top-down structures to coordinate society's affairs, the two dominant systems, characterized

primarily by instrumental reason, resulted in decreasing society's capacity to shape their world. Habermas describes this graphically as colonization—a dominant system imposes its actions on another system that has diminishing capacity to resist.[109] The industrial paradigm described by Rost or the take-charge approach in terms of leadership described by Drath and Palus demonstrates the dominant presence of instrumental reason. The emphasis on expert knowledge diminishes the opportunity for people to negotiate strategic action since people passively assume the values and assumptions of the dominant system.

The 1999 movie *Matrix* illustrates, in blockbuster fashion, a world in which sentient machines imprison humanity in a dream-like state in order to farm their bioelectric energy. In an exaggerated sense, it describes how instrumental reason, in contrast to communicative reason, uses mere power to initiate and accomplish their strategic actions. There are only two kinds of consensus according to Habermas: either it is coerced by the self-interests of a system (instrumental reason) or it is mutually agreed upon by the participants experiencing the consequences of the action (communicative reason).

Instrumental rationality can also be understood as previous frameworks that continue to impose previously agreed upon meanings and actions that are now incongruent with present realities. They no longer make sense in a changed context. However, because of historical commitment or a fear of change from an identifying past, an unwillingness to evaluate existing practices in the light of constantly changing culture short changes necessary dialogue and renewed action.

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[109] Van Gelder, "Method in Light of Scripture and in Relation to Hermeneutics," 61.

Voluntary participation and its inherent capacity for communicative reason characterize a robust lifeworld. Participation in the actions shaping the lifeworld is a legitimate right and responsibility that belongs to those who are living. Ideally, communicative action is "the type of interaction in which all participants harmonize their individual plans of action with one another and pursue their…aims without reservation."[110] True participation and collaboration diminishes when reservations are induced by manipulation or by power. Heitink's theory of action seeks to help Christian communities recognize that they are viable, credible, and transformative agents within an overwhelming modern society that has, by its expansive instrumental reason, marginalized the public and prophetic role of the church. Modern society increasingly diminished the church's role so that contemporary, evangelical Christians have acclimated to a theological narrowness that is overly concerned about people's eternal salvation and unconcerned about God's desire to renew all of creation.

Brigham recommends Habermas' theory as a viable way for ecumenical discourse that has struggled to unite different traditions. She notes how the actions of instrumental rationality are primarily responsible in slowing ecumenical progress. An instrumental rationality promotes a pre-established model of what unity looks like which ultimately hinders movement toward unity. Churches do not accept the forms of unity because they have not participated in shaping this unity. The lessons she derives from the analytical tool provide helpful insight for a local church context.

[110] Habermas, *The Theory of Communicative Action*, vol. 1, 294.

A Constructive Dialogue

Habermas describes the communicative act as a participatory and action-oriented process. He is not concerned with ordinary conversations but public deliberation. Habermas uses the speech act theory of John Austin and John Searle to reinforce his point that action is the result of a speech act. Austin and Searle delineate three aspects of a speech act and Habermas builds primarily upon one of the three aspects: illocutionary (doing something by saying something).[111] Habermas is specifically interested in this third aspect because it highlights that action results through what we are saying. The primary goal of communication, argues Habermas, is understanding the mutual agreement between the speaker and the hearer. In a public dialogue, the action aspect is clear in the speech act. The speaker is asserting some meaningful action to the hearer. The unsaid motivations or aim of the speaker (perlocutionary: the secondary aspect), however, can remain unknown and create uncertainty for the hearer. The measure of success in any dialogue ultimately depends on the degree of genuine understanding that exists between the speaker and the hearer, which then results in a mutual agreement about any intended action. No extended dialogue is required unless the hearer says *no* to the speaker's suggested action. A dispute arises when the speaker and hearer disagree about the action. Understanding the dispute and the reason for the hearer's *no* requires testing the validity of a person's argument. A hearer's *no* results when a hearer reacts to one of four claims that are inherent in a speech act.

[111] Speech act theory distinguishes three aspects of communication: locutionary (saying something); perlocutionary (having an effect on the hearer through saying something) perlocutionary (doing something by saying something);ibid., 397.

Habermas explains the four claims. A speaker makes four different claims in order to validate their communication. Hearers either agree or disagree to the validity of those claims. The first claim is to *comprehensibility*. This is the simplest and the most basic claim. The speaker needs to be uttering something understandable—you cannot go much further without it. The second claim is to *truth*. A hearer will not accept a speaker's assertion unless the hearer accepts that the speaker speaks truthfully and accurately about a situation. The third claim is to *truthfulness*. The hearer needs to assess that the speaker is genuine. The hearer can reject the claims of the speaker if the hearer distrusts the speaker—for whatever reason. The fourth claim is to *normative rightness*: What the speaker says needs to fit within the framework of social norms that shape the background to the interpersonal situation. For example, I live in a community where there is a significant Sikh population and their normative understanding of social life has met resistance from the general population—i.e., Canadian-Sikh police officers wearing turbans as official headgear because of religious reasons. Shared actions can require significant dialogue. This fourth validity is key to Habermas' understanding of the generative power of speech. It is also the point of relevance for this research as it coincides with the emphasis on the leader as a manger of meaning and the shaper of Christian practice.

To test the validity of a norm—*normative rightness*, Habermas, particularly in his earlier writing, required an *ideal speech situation.*[112] *Remembering* of the past (*amanuensis*) and an *anticipation* of the future are two key elements that inform normative rightness. The validity of a speaker's argument is evaluated on the speaker's

[112] Brigham, "Communicative Action as an Approach to Ecumenical Dialogue," 299.

congruency with a shared interpretation of the past and shared intentions of the future. Heitink suggests that the two elements parallel the "now" and "not yet" categories of Christian eschatology.[113] Remembering and anticipation provide the "pull (remembering)" and "push (anticipation)" tension to constructing meaningful purpose. We remember in order to be pulled back to a validating interpretation of the world. Catholics, for instance, consider tradition to be an authoritative voice alongside the scriptures. At the same time, we anticipate an ideal future that pulls us forward to new expressions of faith in the existing order of life. The speaker's argument is measured within the context of the pull and push of a validating set of norms and understandings. Ideal speech acts as a regulating principle for the discursive process.[114] A shared interpretation of the world (world view) that asserts an ideal future plays a significant part in validating the claims of the speaker.

This fourth test underscores the relationally generative power of speech. A speaker and hearer are in dialogue to make meaning of their situation. Does the speaker's argument fit within existing social norms? Does it add new insight to existing norms? Does it demand a change to existing norms? The goal is to reach a socially-normative agreement between the speaker and the hearer. The goal is agreement that results in a mutual decision that evidences reciprocal understanding, shared knowledge, mutual trust, and accord with one another.

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[113] Heitink, *Practical Theology: History, Theory, Action Domains: Manual for Practical Theology*, 138.

[114] More recently, comments Erin Brigham, Habermas "offers a more realist rather than an idealist notion of truth, which emphasizes the importance of the observable world as the measure of truth rather than an ideal speech situation." The shift remains closely related as his later emphasis highlights the importance of how one interprets their present situation.

Gary Simpson, in his treatment of Habermas, underscores three key conditions of argumentative procedure that describes an ideal dialogue: the reciprocity condition; the agreement condition; and the fallibilist condition.[115] Each of these provides a framework to evaluate the strength of a dialogue. The *reciprocity condition* underscores Habermas' emphasis that all voices relevant to an argument's outcome should get a hearing as full participants. Each has equal freedom in what is being discussed, especially as it relates to how life is going to be lived. Simpson articulates a golden rule on this premise: Everybody affected by a decision should be involved in the decision. "Those who feel the consequences when a norm is operative ought to be full participants in the decision-making process leading to that norm."[116] "Consequence takers ought to be decision makers," explains Simpson, "just as decision makers ought to be consequence takers."[117]

The second is the *agreement condition*. Those involved in the dialogue need to be truthful about their claims, criticisms, and agreements. The dialogue cannot include any form of coercion or manipulation to compel a hearer's agreement. Only the unforced force of the better argument should determine the agreement or disagreement of the participants. Thus, agreements rely on the force of more or less good reasons.

The third is the *fallibilist condition*. Every decision is provisional. Agreements achieved will call forth future communicative testing. Agreements should remain open to future confirmation and strengthening or to critical correction, modification, and learning, or to overturning, redefining, and new norm formation. Thus, decisions entail fallibility

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[115] Simpson, *Critical Social Theory: Prophetic Reason, Civil Society, and Christian Imagination*.

[116] Gary M. Simpson, "God in Global Civil Society: Vocational Imagination, Spiritual Presence, and Ecclesial Discernment" (St. Paul, MN, 2010), 34.

[117] Ibid.

and, therefore, provisionality. What may have worked in one place or at one time may not necessarily be a faithful action in the present or future. Decision-makers should always anticipate a limitation of understanding and appropriate action because of one's social space and historical time. Others, for instance, not initially part of the discussion may bring new insight or another generation may change it. New information may provide added insight. New interpretations may elicit new actions.

A biblical example is the potentially explosive and divisive church event recorded in Acts 15. Jewish requirements for new gentile believers divided the Christian community. Are the gentiles to follow the legal requirements of the Hebrew law or are they free from the legal requirements as Paul, the new Apostle, argued and practiced? Jesus and the twelve disciples did not provide a clear template or model to address the Gentile requirements. They were all Jewish. Out of the "sharp dispute," a new vision of the Spirit's work in the world emerged (Acts 15:2). The prophetic passage of Joel opened up new biblical imagination. The community of Christian believers, along with the Elders and Apostles, agreed that the Old Testament conditions were not required of gentile Christians. In his many letters, particularly in Galatians, Paul articulated the radical practice of Christian community: "So in Christ Jesus you are all children of God through faith, for all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. There is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free nor is there male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus" (Galatians 3:26-28). Interestingly, the small list of requirements delineated in the apostolic letter to the churches seemed provisional. The specific requirements are never mentioned again in Scripture. However, the force of

Paul's argument is not only sustained, but reinforced in the fourteen letters embraced by the New Testament.

Five 'A' Model

Craig Van Gelder provides a visually helpful framework that draws together the content of this chapter and provides a transition into the next chapter that develops four key biblical and theoretical lenses.[118] He describes community discernment and decision making as an iterative process of *attending, asserting, agreeing, acting* and *assessing*.

Figure 1: Craig Van Gelder's Five 'A' Model

These are commonly referred to as the five `A´s. Although they follow each other in linear fashion, they overlap dynamically in a context that seeks to be biblically and theologically informed but also informed by legitimate theoretical insights (sociology, philosophy, history, economics, etc.). At the heart of the model is action. As Habermas

[118] Van Gelder, *The Ministry of the Missional Church: A Community Led by the Spirit*, 117.

argues, the model is less *prescriptive* and more *descriptive* of how decisions are made. It describes what happens as a community makes decisions. However, the process becomes prescriptive as it helps in isolating gaps or weaknesses that occur in decision-making processes.

The five 'A' model can be illustrated by the unfolding process in Acts 15. The first 'A' is *attending*. A community attends when it seeks to understand the present situation or challenge. In Acts 15, "the apostles and disciples met to consider this question" (Acts 15:6). A*sserting* occurs when various stakeholders offer opinions about their observations and experiences. We see this in verse seven, when Peter, after much discussion by those gathered, stood up to speak. Both Paul and James follow this up in verses twelve and thirteen. All three are contributing significant opinions. Paul, specifically, adds some sociological reflection after he and Barnabas, in their journey to Jerusalem, witnessed what the Spirit was doing among gentile believers. Peter and James draw from prophetic material to interpret what might be happening. *Agreeing* is the point at which there is consensus about the best arguments presented. Verse twenty-two records how the apostles and elders eventually, along with the *whole* church, reach a decision. From this decision, the community acts by sending men out with a letter to all the churches in verse thirty, which explains that the Christian gentiles are not required to follow the legal requirements of the Old Testament law as previously understood. Finally, *assessing* is the reflective process that occurs as decisions are experienced. We see this with Paul, who, in Galatians 2:14, challenges Peter's inconsistent practice among the Jews and Gentiles and reasserts the principle agreed upon in Acts 15.[119]

[119] Ibid., 117-19.

Acts 15 illustrates a five ‘A’ meaning-making process, which resulted in strategic actions that were biblically and theologically informed but also grounded in a competent and critical understanding of a social reality and situation. The model reflects Heitink’s definition of practical theology—an empirically oriented theological theory of the mediation of the Christian faith (Praxis One) in the praxis of modern society (Praxis Two). As a community makes sense of its life and purpose within the existing and inescapable reality of the world, such a model provides a spiritually communicative process to make meaning and shape action.

Gary Simpson, who promotes the model, underscores the prophetic implications of this model for the church. If the church is called to be witnesses to the world, it requires the church to engage the world in dialogue. Recognizing that it is part of the world and not separate from the world, it can speak to how life can be lived in the world. We are witnesses to the world. We are companions to other people in the world. They make meaning (Praxis Two). We make meaning (Praxis One). In the competing arguments about how to understand the world and live in the world, the church mediates the Christian faith to a world that distressingly tends to dehumanize and diminish life.

Summary

The communicative process does not express the content of the redemptive message. It provides a framework to understand the process of leadership that, as Rasmussen argues, provides the choreography for all the other practices of a Christian community. Communicative action, I argue, can engender greater participation and collaboration in God’s mission. The capacity to communicate competently becomes increasingly necessary in a more networked world. The predictable universe of a

Newtonian world view is being replaced by a more participatory world view of networked relations. Notions of leadership cultivated in a Newtonian imagination need to be displaced by notions of leadership being cultivated by New Science. It challenges leaders to replace dyadic definitions of leadership that consider followers as passive instruments and agents for a more reciprocal and relational understanding of leadership that understands leadership as a mutual relationship between follower and leader. Instead of leaders directing the masses, leaders can better understand their role as being meaning-makers who facilitate action-oriented decision-making within their community. Leaders, as managers of meaning, have a significant homiletical function in helping a congregation understand its identity and purpose in the world.

CHAPTER THREE

BIBLICAL AND THEOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVES IN THE RESEARCH

The five 'A' model developed in chapter two underscores that the process for a local church and its leadership needs to be informed by a biblical theological perspective. In this chapter, I draw from the theological resources of a missional perspective that is reflected in the seminal text, *Missional Church,* published in 1991, and followed up more recently by Craig Van Gelder and Dwight Zscheile's book, *Missional Church in Perspective,* which sought to evaluate and explore the decade of missional conversations after the publication of *Missional Church.*[1] At the heart of the missional perspective is an understanding of a Trinitarian God who is actively on the move in the world with the church. The Eucharist powerfully reinforces the missionary partnership between God and the church. I engage the Eucharist as a primary biblical lens to develop a missional perspective.

Eucharist

CCC purchased a new piece of furniture in 2006. It is a seven-foot harvest table set at the front and center of the sanctuary. The congregation required a table as it began the weekly practice of communion at the culmination of each service. Instead of brass

[1] Van Gelder and Zscheile, *The Missional Church in Perspective: Mapping Trends and Shaping the Conversation*; Guder, *Missional Church: A Vision for the Sending of the Church in North America*.

trays of bread and juice passed along the rows, the congregation approaches the table with hands ready to receive from Christ the food that nourishes them for life and mission.

The Table may be one of the most compelling and most available metaphors in our midst to challenge, shape, and orient CCC into thinking through a new leadership paradigm. Letty Russell, a feminist theologian, states that it is one of the "most important metaphors for church in the Gospels."[2] She points out that Paul Minear developed no less than six "table" images in his masterful book, *Images of the Church New Testament*: loaf, cup, wine, feast, altar, and table. These "various snap shots of the church as a world-wide company sitting at this one table," he says, constitute "this community as a people bound together in his death."[3] With this in mind, Russell argues that, "*the critical principle of feminist theology is a table principle*" (author's emphasis).[4] Jesus' preaching, she points out, constantly focuses on inviting the excluded one to the feast of God (Luke 19:1-10).[5] Prevailing notions of hierarchal leadership continue to exclude people from being active participants in the life of the church. This is inconsistent with the embedded values of Jesus' table hospitality where notions of hierarchy, as far as Russell is concerned, are nonexistent. The table inspires a participatory model of leadership that regards power as "something to be multiplied and shared rather than accumulated at the top."[6] Leaders questioned Jesus' authority and conspired for his destruction because he challenged the

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[2] Letty M. Russell, *Church in the Round: Feminist Interpretation of the Church*, 1st ed. (Louisville, KY: Westminster/J. Knox Press, 1993). 18

[3] Paul Sevier Minear, *Images of the Church in the New Testament*, New Testament Library (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2004).

[4] Russell, *Church in the Round: Feminist Interpretation of the Church*, 25.

[5] Unless otherwise noted all biblical references will be drawn from the NIV 2011.

[6] Russell, *Church in the Round: Feminist Interpretation of the Church*, 57.

disorder of the existing religious and political systems by modeling God's new order of freedom and welcome.[7]

Highlighting the meal's centrality, churches gather at the table because they recognize the table as the place where the world encounters God's fullness. Gordon Smith comments, "The holy meal profiles the relationship of the Christian church to a Triune God and is also a means by which God is experienced as Father, Son, and Spirit."[8] Moreover, it is not only where the congregation encounters God; it is where God nourishes and equips the church to live in the world as active participants the kingdom.

The four gospel accounts agree, particularly in his meals, that Jesus was setting an example for leadership and community. Luke situates the disciples' dispute about who is greatest in the Last Supper narrative and establishes a clear connection between what Christ does and how the body of Christ operates (Luke 22: 24-30). Matthew and Mark record the dispute but locate the event prior to the Last Supper (Matthew 20:25-28; Mark 10:42-45). John does not mention the dispute but attaches the identical lesson of service to the foot-washing event (John13: 37, 38). The gospel writers did not miss the critical connection. The one who serves at the table, rather than the one who is served at the table, exemplifies Jesus' way of leadership. The table provides a foundational paradigm for the shape of a community and directly informs the way of leadership and community in a church.

Michael Welker comments that ecumenical discourse in the last decades indicates that the Eucharist is an impressive mirror that "allows for nuanced appreciation of the

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[7] Ibid., 58.

[8] Smith, *A Holy Meal: The Lord's Supper in the Life of the Church*, 9.

working of the Holy Spirit," let alone the Trinity.[9] A great example is the Faith and Order Paper, *Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry (BEM)* published in 1982.[10] The ecumenical paper provided a very constructive means to engage not only the missional conversation, but, also, to rethink models of church leadership and community in relation to the sacraments—specifically, the Eucharist. Transitioning from the topics of baptism and Eucharist in order to shift toward ministry, *BEM* asks, "How, according to the will of God and under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, is the life of the Church to be understood and ordered, so that the Gospel may be spread and the community built up in love?"[11] *BEM*'s response to the question assumes no gap between what a church theologizes and how it operationalizes that theology in terms of its leadership structures. The table demonstrates God's way of love that reflects mutuality, partnership, collaboration, and shared active participation. Despite differences in tradition, culture, geography, theology, and practice, churches agreed that a "strong emphasis should be placed on the active participation of all members in the life and decision-making of the community."[12] Many ecclesial traditions affirm lay involvement; however, the table goes beyond affirming the importance of lay people to fundamentally addressing how the leadership of the church must include the broad participation of lay people.

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[9] Michael Welker, "Holy Spirit and Holy Communion," *Word & World* 23, no. 2 (2003): 157.

[10] Van Gelder and Zscheile comment that the authors did not interact sufficiently with this publication. It provided a meaningful opportunity to engage the missional conversation and little work has been done subsequently.World Council of Churches Faith and Order Committee, "Baptism, Eucharist, and Ministry," 61; Van Gelder and Zscheile, *The Missional Church in Perspective: Mapping Trends and Shaping the Conversation*.

[11] World Council of Churches Faith and Order Committee, "Baptism, Eucharist, and Ministry," M, 6.

[12] Ibid., M, 27.

Michael Welker, in his book *What Happens in Holy Communion*, in dialogue with the ecumenical dialogue, draws out implications for leadership and community.[13] He describes how leadership roles within the community can contradict the intentions of the Lord's Supper. "The community of the Supper is not separated into those who give and those who receive."[14] The table does not reinforce notions of top-down structures and specialized roles. "The enactment of hierarchical relations in the community is out of place in the celebration of the Supper," states Welker. The pastoral office is wrongly conceived as being a representative of God or Christ, he argues, rather, the "active ministerial office acts in a representative way for the entire community."[15]

BEM agrees. "The ordained ministry has no existence apart from the community" and, as representatives of the community, "are bound to the faithful in *interdependence* and *reciprocity*" (emphasis added).[16] The table reinforces the radical impulse consistent with early democracy evident in the New Testament church. It certainly stands in contrast, in my opinion, to the industrial leadership paradigm that has influenced the shape of existing polities of a wide variety of religious traditions.

The Last Supper event gives us an indication of the table's implication about leadership. The disciples were fighting about who was most important. Jesus responded by teaching:

> The Kings of the Gentiles lord it over them; and those who exercise authority over them call themselves Benefactors. But you are not to be like that. Instead, the

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[13] Michael Welker, *What Happens in Holy Communion?* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2000).

[14] Ibid., 144.

[15] Ibid.

[16] World Council of Churches Faith and Order Committee, "Baptism, Eucharist, and Ministry," M, 16.

> greatest among you should be like the youngest, and the one who rules like the one who serves (*diakoneo*) . . . I am among you as one who serves (*diakoneo*) . . . I confer on you a kingdom just as my Father conferred one on me so that you may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom. (Luke 22:25-29)

David Fitch highlights that, as Jesus does, the gospel writers avoid the word leadership and do not use it to describe Jesus.[17] When they do use the term "leader," it usually referred to the religious and political leaders who resisted Jesus. The term, *diakonia* (servant, service), is used more often in the New Testament than any other term to designate a leader. In deliberate fashion, it seems, the authors chose not to use the Septuagint's (LXX) lexicon of authoritative titles.[18] Paul prefers descriptors like brothers, co-laborers, and co-workers to describe his relationship to his colleagues (1 Cor. 3:9; Phi. 2:25; 4:3; 1 Thess. 3:2; Philem. 24). The use of the term *diakonai* contrasts "violently" with the current secular notions of office prevalent in the culture.[19] "Hans Küng," he comments, "outlines how the New Testament writers saw that any words that suggest a relationship of rulers and the ruled were unusable in the new community context."[20] "Though we may disagree how to implement Jesus' commands regarding authority and leadership within the Church," Fitch comments, "we can surely conclude that Jesus instructs the church to resist modeling its own leadership in any way on secular notions of leadership that exist outside the church."[21]

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[17] The only two substantial uses of the term leader (*hegeomai*) are found in Hebrews 13:17, 24.

[18] Robert Banks and Bernice Ledbetter, *Reviewing Leadership: A Christian Evaluation of Current Approaches* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2004), 38.

[19]David E. Fitch, *The Great Giveaway: Reclaiming the Mission of the Church from Big Business, Parachurch Organizations, Psychotherapy, Consumer Capitalism, and Other Modern Maladies* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2005), 80.

[20] Ibid.

[21] Ibid., 81.

I have four reasons for grounding a biblical and theological understanding of the Leadership on the Eucharistic table. First, the table is a demonstration of God's Trinitarian nature and perichoretic character. Each person of the Trinity is a participant at the table and invites humanity to the table to be co-participants since each person of the Trinity participates in the redemption of the world. Second, the table witnesses to the new creation expressed in the biblical language as the Kingdom of God. Part of the renewing of creation includes the transformation of existing structures of human authority. The kingdom of God is God's mission and directly shapes the purpose and focus of Christian leadership. Third, the table underscores the particular work of the Spirit who shapes a new community. Spirit-led leadership must shape the practice and contours of Christian leadership. Fourth, the table reveals the character of Christian leadership—cruciform stewardship. Jesus Christ demonstrated the way of leadership that exposes our human inclinations for amassing power and influence and replaces it with life giving service.

Trinitarian Missiology

Gary Simpson, in his article, "No Trinity, No Mission," argues that the loss of the church's mission relates to the loss of Trinitarian theology. Directly related to the church's apostolic demise, asserts Simpson, is an "inadequate view of God" that can be attributed to the last two hundred years of Christian theology that has abandoned Trinitarian thinking as irrelevant.[22] Simpson quotes Kant, who claimed that the "doctrine of the Trinity, taken literally, has *no practical relevance at all."* He also notes Frederick Schleiermacher, who stated "the doctrine of the Trinity is superfluous." The result has

[22] Gary M. Simpson, "No Trinity, No Mission:The Apostolic Difference of Revisioning the Trinity," *Word & World* 15, no. 3 (1998): 264.

been a substantial degradation of the church's mission as it either practiced a moral monotheism inspired by Kant "that has been little more than culturally conditioned western moral imperialism" or, alternatively, the experiential monotheism inspired by Schleiermacher that oriented Christians toward a preoccupied and individualistic piety seeking a "sense and taste for the infinite."[23] Karl Barth, among Protestants, and Karl Rahner, among Catholics, sought to recover the doctrine of the Trinity.

Simpson's comments reflect the Willingen Missionary Council Meeting of 1952 that helped to resuscitate a renewed Trinitarian emphasis to reframe the relationship between God, church, and world. Described as a Copernican revolution, missiology shifted from a Christological foundation to a Trinitarian foundation. The Christological foundation emphasized the obligation of churches to participate in fulfilling the great commission. By contrast, the Trinitarian foundation emphasized an understanding that God is involved in mission with the world.[24] This revolutionary shift dismantled a prevailing colonial missionary paradigm that presumed that the mission of God is primarily focused on foreign mission fields and that establishment western churches should support such work by sending workers and resources.

Although the Copernican shift was transformative, the accomplishment was limited. In their essay, *Toward a Missional Theology of Participation*, Jannie Swart, Scott Hagley, John Ogren, and Mark Love, fellow students and congregational leaders from different confessional traditions, argue that Willingen did not "sufficiently clarify the

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[23] Ibid., 267.

[24] Craig Van Gelder, "How Missiology Can Help Inform the Conversation About the Missional Church in Context," in *The Missional Church in Context: Helping Congregations Develop Contextual Ministry*, ed. Craig Van Gelder, Missional Church Series (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2007), 20.

relationships between God, world, and church."[25] They conceived the Trinity exclusively in terms of relations of origin, and thus lacked both the "capacity to deliver a more dynamic, participatory God-world-church relationship and the imaginative capacity to fund mission in a post-colonial world."[26] The Willingen Trinitarian framework suggested a straight-line logic of either God-church-world or God-world-church. Both are inadequate, since the unidirectional framework eclipses God's participatory nature. The task of a missional church includes the capacity to discern the church's participation with both God and the world. "Mission in relation to a single, acting subject requires only a flattened discernment too easily co-opted by the instrumental logic of strategic action," they argue.[27] In contrast, a theology of participation opens a church to seeing how God participates with the church and with the world. Like Simpson, they argue that, without incorporating an eastern logic, "moral and experiential monotheisms are the logical outcome of the very western pattern of the doctrine of God with which they commenced."[28] They propose a theology of participation grounded in a social Trinitarian understanding, rather than an understanding of God as a single acting subject.[29]

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[25] Johannes Gerhardus Jacobus Swart et al., "Toward a Missional Theology of Participation: Ecumenical Reflections on Contributions to Trinity, Mission, and Church," *Missiology* 37, no. 1 (2009): 76.

[26] Ibid., 77.

[27] Ibid.

[28] Simpson, "No Trinity, No Mission:The Apostolic Difference of Revisioning the Trinity," 270.

[29] Swart et al., "Toward a Missional Theology of Participation: Ecumenical Reflections on Contributions to Trinity, Mission, and Church," 77.

Jürgen Moltmann supplies the thrust of their argument. The starting point for the western logic is metaphysics, not the biblical salvation story.[30] More consistent with the biblical salvation story is the eastern tradition's description of the Trinity as a *perichoretic* community. The Cappadocian Fathers, Gregory of Nanzianzus, and John of Damascus developed the term. John of Damascus used it as a key word to develop his Christology and the doctrine of Trinity. The Council of Florence (1438-45) formulated the concept in an ecumenical statement: "Because of this unity (perichoresis) the Father is totally in the Son and totally in the Spirit. The Son is totally in the Father and totally in the Spirit. The Holy Spirit is totally in the Father, totally in the Son. No one precedes the other in eternity, or exceeds the other in magnitude or power."[31]

Moltmann contrasts the western notion of Trinity as a closed Trinity with an open Trinity of the eastern tradition. In terms of community, the eastern logic suggests a participatory openness. "By witnessing to the gospel," asserts Moltmann, "all members of the church, each in his or her own way, exercise the *magisterial office*. As a result, the presence of the Trinitarian community "overcomes the perversions and privileges through which the various differences among human beings have turned into inequality and oppression."[32]

Moltmann describes western Trinitarian thinking as working from the "assumption that the unity of the triune God precedes the threeness of the persons of God and not formed through them. The starting point is general metaphysics, not the special

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[30] Jürgen Moltmann, "Perichoresis: An Old Magic Word for a New Trinitarian Theology," in *Trinity, Community, and Power*, ed. M. D. Meeks (Nashville, TN: Kingswood Books, 2000), 116.

[31] Ibid.

[32] Ibid., 123.

biblical salvation history."[33] The eastern tradition, as Dwight Zscheile points out, focused more on how the three persons of God related, while the western tradition focused more on the single divine essence.[34] The individualizing trajectory of the western tradition eventually eclipsed the relational community of the Trinity and fostered leadership structures that are solitary, autocratic, aloof, and isolated.[35] Recovering a Trinitarian formulation that fosters mutuality and collaboration has implications for understanding a Christian leadership paradigm. It seems that the way one conceives the Trinity is replicated in the way one conceives of leadership and authority.

Miroslav Volf is one of many theologians making connections between the participatory nature of the Trinity and the participatory nature of the church's community structure. He claims that the "essential sociality of salvation implies the essential institutionality of the church."[36] "The question is not whether the church is an institution," but rather, "*what kind* of institution it is (emphasis in original)."[37] Institutionality is the inescapable reality of any social unit that seeks to define itself in relation to other groups. For Volf, the nature of the church is understood in reference to the Trinity as the community that "reflects in broken fashion the eschatological

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[33] Ibid., 116.

[34] Dwight J. Zscheile, "The Trinity, Leadership, and Power," *Journal of Religious Leadership*, no. 2 (2007): 45.

[35] Elizabeth A. Johnson, *She Who Is: The Mystery of God in Feminist Theological Discourse*, 10th anniversary ed. (New York: Crossroad, 2002), 208. as quoted in Zscheile, "The Trinity, Leadership, and Power," 47.

[36] Miroslav Volf, *After Our Likeness: The Church as the Image of the Trinity*, Sacra Doctrina (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1998), 235.

[37] Ibid.

communion of the entire people of God with the triune God in God's new creation."[38] At its core, the church possesses an "essentially social dimension" because its ground and goal corresponds to the persons of the Trinity—thus the title of his book based upon Genesis 1:28, *After Our Likeness: the Church as the Image of the Trinity*.[39] "The future of the church in God's new creation," he writes, "is the mutual personal indwelling of the triune God and of his glorified people." By its participation in the triune God, the church takes part in the history "extending from Christ, indeed, from the Old Testament saints, to the eschatological new creation."[40] The church's participation in the communion of the trinity is not only a future hope "but also a present experience," he asserts. The church represents God's redeeming intention to restore humanity into that pre-broken (Genesis 1:27) status of relationship described eschatologically in Revelation. Only when one understands the correspondence between the Trinity and the church can one consider the church's structures and ministry.[41]

"The question concerning the Triune God's relationship to the world is constitutive for any understanding of a congregation's life in mission," assert Zwart, Hagley, Ogren, and Brown.[42] Every day, churches make decisions about how they interact with the world. Those decisions shape their understanding of God. "The practical life of a congregation bears and reveals beliefs about God's identity and missional

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[38] Ibid.

[39] Ibid.

[40] Ibid., 129.

[41] Ibid., 222.

[42] Swart et al., "Toward a Missional Theology of Participation: Ecumenical Reflections on Contributions to Trinity, Mission, and Church," 77.

concern in and for the world."[43] They emphasize that the biblical narrative is the primary source material to understand the nature of God. They point to both Jürgen Moltmann and Wolfhart Pannenberg, who "demonstrate that the biblical narrative reveals genuine reciprocity and that *communion* can be constitutive for the divine life."[44] Moltmann and Pannenberg are not the only voices that use the concept of participation to describe the Trinity. Other voices across the confessional spectrum include John Zizioulas, Catherine LaCugna, Miroslav Volf, and Robert Jenson, who, although expressing a variety of hermeneutical frameworks, conclude nevertheless, as Swart et al., "share a vision of God's life that consists of reciprocal relations."[45]

Zscheile, prior to considering the implications of the eastern emphasis, notes the limits of the analogy between the Trinity and human community. First, the church needs to recognize that we live after the fall and before the final restoration. The church is a pilgrim on the way. Second, the nature of power and our existing state of sinfulness corrupts our use and understanding of power. Attempts at shaping a perfect human community can become coercive and distorted. Third, merely modeling a community on our best understanding of the trinity will not be sufficient or doable. "Rather," Zscheile commends, "we must look to the Triune God's own active leading in our midst through the Holy Spirit to remake our community in its [God's] own image."[46]

A Trinitarian and perichoretic perspective provides a renewed understanding of leadership. Zscheile suggests at least five implications. First, the perspective underscores

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[43] Ibid., 75.

[44] Ibid., 80.

[45] Ibid., 81.

[46] Zscheile, "The Trinity, Leadership, and Power," 52.

a *diversity-in-unity* in which there is a *reconciled diversity* in contrast to an undifferentiated uniformity or a disordered diversity. Second, it promotes a *cruciform* model of leadership in which there is a mutual self-emptying modeled on Christ's rejection of status, power, and prestige. Third, the mutuality of the Trinity points toward a *collaborative*, shared team-based approach. Fourth, in terms of visioning and sensemaking, the perspective encourages a collaborative discernment process. Finally, it reimages leaders as *icons* who "point beyond themselves in their life, words, and deeds to the Trinitarian life they share."[47]

Jim Horsthuis asserts that a perichoretic theology of leadership "resists some of the assumptions of contemporary management theory," which assumes that human beings can control the world and colonize the future effectively as long as they have the right techniques.[48] Primarily, it relieves the human emphasis in management theory. The role of Christian leadership is to "participate with God in Christ's leading of the church by the Spirit."[49] A participative understanding of leadership will seek to establish a "mutuality-in-leading exhibited through a vibrant, relational trust" which is grounded in the Trinitarian reality of mutual service. No other authority for Christian leadership exists other than the "movement of grace" that characterizes the work of the Trinity. Christian leadership should not treat people as a means to an honorable end; rather, it pursues the deepening of relationships as integral to all leadership pursuits. "In this way," argues Horsthuis, "power will not be used to control but to encourage, guide, and excite."[50]

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[47] Ibid.

[48] Horsthuis, "Participants with God: A Perichoretic Theology of Leadership," 95.

[49] Ibid.

[50] Ibid., 96.

Christian leadership is not merely satisfied to engender intimacy with God but in cultivating a community that participates in God's work—the Kingdom of God.

Kingdom of God

The modern notion of mission was developed by two key theological themes that emerged in recent decades—the Kingdom of God and the *missio Dei.* The two are tightly interrelated, as each contributes substantially in shifting the church's imagination from a *church-centric* understanding of mission to a *theo-centric* understanding of mission that includes all of creation within God's salvation plan.

David Bosch, in *Transforming Mission*, describes *missio Dei* and the kingdom of God as a *political* presence in a distorted and inhumane world. "In its mission," writes Bosch, "the church witnesses to the fullness of the promise of God's reign and participates in the ongoing struggle between that reign and the powers of darkness and evil."[51] The mission of God is to restore all of creation and the biblical concept giving expression to the work of God is the kingdom of God.

A dramatic shift occurred in recent decades as missiologists challenged the notion that mission was simply a function of the church and asserted that mission is at the very nature of the church's identity. This was linked to Barth's Trinitarian framework in which the sending of the Son by the Father, and the sending of the Spirit by the Father and Son now included the sending of the church into the world. The view considers mission," explains Van Gelder, "to be inherent within the very nature of the church."[52]

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[51] Bosch, *Transforming Mission: Paradigm Shifts in Theology of Mission*, 391.

[52] Craig Van Gelder, *The Essence of the Church: A Community Created by the Spirit* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2000), 30.

Although the shift was dramatic, it was not automatic. Two views of the church's role in the *missio Dei* developed as a basic issue was left unresolved at the 1952 Conference (Willingen). What was the exact role of the church in relation to the *missio Dei*? Is the church the primary means for God to redeem the world, or is the church a supportive bystander to God's activity in the world? The World Council of Churches, during the 1960s, followed the latter view, which resulted in displacing the church as an active participant in the mission of God. The direction left evangelicals uncomfortable and the uneasiness engendered new associations that ultimately led to the formation of Lausanne Committee on World Evangelization.

J.C. Hoekendijk, a Dutch missiologist, represented the former stream by rooting God's salvation in the biblical concept of *shalom*—meaning peace, completeness, and welfare. "God intends the redemption of the whole creation," asserts Hoekendijk. *Shalom*, "in all its comprehensive richness should be our leitmotif in Christian work."[53] The concept of salvation was being expanded from the narrow and classical confines of individualistic salvation by the more comprehensive and creational concept of shalom. Bosch concurs: "Christians pray that the reign of God should come and God's will be done *on earth* as it is in heaven (Mt 6:10); it follows from this that the *earth* is the locus of the Christian's calling and sanctification" (emphasis in orginal).[54] Despite the importance of the classical interpretation of salvation, argues Bosch, its problem is twofold. It is dangerously narrow, as it comprises only an escape from the wrath of God and the redemption of the individual soul, and, second, it makes the absolute distinction

[53] Johannes Christiaan Hoekendijk, *The Church inside Out*, Adventures in Faith (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1966), 19-20.

[54] Bosch, *Transforming Mission: Paradigm Shifts in Theology of Mission*, 397.

between creation and new creation. Nevertheless, both Van Gelder and Bosch point out that Hoekendijk's emphasis led to a secularized version of the *missio Dei* that tended to reduce the role of the church to simply pointing out what God was doing in the world.

Despite the loss of the evangelical voice, the relationship of the church to God's mission continued to develop. Lesslie Newbigin and David Bosch were key voices in constructing a renewed understanding of the church's mission. Both drew substantially from Barth's Trinitarian framework. "It is not the church that has a mission of salvation to fulfill in the world," writes Bosch, "it is the mission of the Son and the Spirit through the Father that includes the church."[55] The author of mission is God. "We should not subordinate mission to the church nor the church to mission; both should, rather, be taken up into the *missio Dei*, which now became the overarching concept. The *missio Dei* institutes the *missiones ecclesiae*."[56] "This is the deepest source of mission. It is impossible to penetrate deeper still; there is mission because God loves people."[57]

"The gospel of the *basileia*," states Bosch, "underlines the inherent universal and missionary character of the kingdom ministry of Jesus."[58] He highlights two dimensions of God's reign. First, God's reign has both present and future dimensions. "The kingdom of God is in your midst," Jesus announces (Luke 17:21) and, as such, claims Bosch, "the future has invaded the present."[59] Second, the reign of God has a political dimension. The

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[55] Jürgen Moltmann, *The Church in the Power of the Spirit: A Contribution of Messianic Ecclesiology* (London: SCM Press, 1977), 64.

[56] Bosch, *Transforming Mission: Paradigm Shifts in Theology of Mission*, 370.

[57] Ibid., 392.

[58] Ibid., 71.

[59] Ibid., 32.

reign of God launches an "all out attack" on evil in all its devices and expressions. "The church enters the public stage with a truly stupendous claim: that Jesus is the embodiment and expression of God's presence among people, and that this is only the beginning, that there is more to come."[60] Although Jesus' political activities do not correspond to a contemporary understanding of political involvement, nevertheless, Jesus' ministry expresses "a profound discontent with the way things are, a fervent desire to see them changed."[61] "The force field of God's sovereign will" overthrows the corrupted and disordered world that evil has seeded and cultivated.[62]

Van Gelder and Zscheile, by referencing Jürgen Moltmann, highlight a number of implications that result from understanding how the Kingdom of God, creation, and the work of the Spirit coincide. Spirit-led leadership needs to embrace the extent of the Spirit's work to counter an instrumental view of mission and church that is preoccupied with "strategies and methods for making converts, growing congregations or delivering religious good, services or aids."[63] First, the world is a field of God's ongoing activity and presence through the Spirit. The work of the Spirit extends beyond the specific work of the church to include all of creation and all of humanity created in the image of God. God created each image bearer to be a co-partner. A Spirit-led community will recognize and be attentive to the Spirit's activity inside and outside the church.

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[60] Ibid., 34.

[61] Ibid.

[62] Ibid.

[63] Van Gelder and Zscheile, *The Missional Church in Perspective: Mapping Trends and Shaping the Conversation*, 113.

Second, "creativity is connected deeply to God." The Spirit who hovered over creation is "the life force eminent in all the living."[64] The Spirit is not only experienced "as a person," claims Moltmann, "and not merely as a force, but also as a *space*—as the space of freedom in which the living being can unfold."[65] Living in God's Spirit, includes not merely a divine connection but a freedom to live and to be creative. David's word in Psalm thirty-one, "You . . . have set my feet in a spacious place," remarks Moltmann, suggests the creative possibilities that are the result of being in the Spirit.

Third, humans correspond to the Triune God through their relationality to one another. The Spirit does not merely bring about fellowship with God but creates "a network of social relationships in which life comes into being, blossoms, and becomes fruitful."[66] "The creation of community," argues Moltmann "is evidently the goal of God's life-giving Spirit in the world of nature and human beings."[67]

Finally, "salvation is *in, of,* and *for* the world, not *out* of the world," Van Gelder and Zscheile conclude. The Spirit is not at work to draw us out of the existing creation but to transform creation. An eschatological purpose drives the Spirit's work. The Spirit is making all things new—heaven and earth. At the heart of a missional perspective is the church that needs to be in "a reciprocal engagement with the world, while retaining a

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[64] Jürgen Moltmann, *The Spirit of Life: A Universal Affirmation*, 1st Fortress Press ed. (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1992), 42.

[65] Ibid., 42-43.

[66] Ibid., 218-19.

[67] Ibid.

posture of critical discernment."[68] Inherently, the church must see itself as fellow companions with the world.

Spirit-Led Community

LeRon Shults highlights that we are in the midst of an academic revival in pneumatology—the study of the Spirit.[69] He notes three significant shifts that are shaping contemporary discussions in pneumatology—ones that inform a missiological ecclesiology. First, it resists the dualism of matter and spirit. In the early modern period, "it was difficult for theologians to make sense of the relation of the divine Spirit to the material world without inappropriately setting them side by side (as in deism) or conflating them into one substance (as in pantheism)."[70] The general result, as he points out, is the temptation to ignore or denigrate earthly physicality and to focus on the intellectual dimensions of human life or the being of God (i.e., Being so heavenly minded that you are of no earthly good.). This relates directly to how the church conceives the relationship of God, world, and church. The Spirit participates redemptively in all of creation and not just a part (i.e., personal salvation).

Second, modern pneumatology tends "toward more relational concepts of human personhood."[71] The implications of New Science reorient views of personhood. Instead of seeing it as a single autonomous entity, persons are seen as "mediated by relations to

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[68] Van Gelder and Zscheile, *The Missional Church in Perspective: Mapping Trends and Shaping the Conversation*, 113.

[69] F. LeRon Shults, "Spirit and Spirituality: Philosophical Trends in Late Modern Pneumatology," *Pneuma* 30, no. 2 (2008): 271.

[70] Ibid., 273.

[71] Ibid., 277.

others within systems of relations."[72] "The conceptual shift," Shults points out, has ramifications for pneumatology because it opens up "possibilities for retrieving and refiguring traditional language of the three 'persons' of the trinity."[73] This specifically relates to our growing appreciation and awareness of the perichoretic life of the Trinity that encourages a collaborative and participatory community.

Third, the "shifts in late modern philosophy and science have led to more dynamic, non-linear, and holistic concepts of force and movement."[74] The modern image of God as a watchmaker represented a deterministic God who sets the world on a pre-arranged and ordered existence of cause and effect. This is being replaced by a more dynamic understanding of the interrelationships of God, church, and world. The Spirit is now being conceived, not just as the pre-arranged *will* of God that "forces creatures along a predetermined time-line," but as a creative and intimate force that is *making all things new* by calling the world and the church to share in the eternal Trinitarian life.[75]

The three shifts, contends Shults, invite a continuing conversation about how to engage in more relational, holistic, and embodied practices as a church. The result, in terms of understanding the work and role of the Spirit, is that we can "explore and explicate anew…the dynamic relation between the eschatological presence of the Creator

[72]Ibid.

[73] Ibid.

[74] Ibid., 280.

[75] Ibid., 283.

Spirit and the coming-to-be creation."[76] In contrast to a deterministic world view, God's Spirit, highlights Shults, "is an invitation to great levels of life and happiness."[77]

When we recognize that the Spirit is a primary acting subject in the redemptive mission, argues Van Gelder, then we "think about both the church and the world."[78] The focus shifts from a *church-centric* perspective to a *Theo-centric* perspective. "When one starts by focusing on the purpose of the church, the church tends to become the primary location of God, which makes the church itself responsible to carry out activities in the world on behalf of God."[79] Leadership in a church requires a focus on "discerning and responding to the leading of the Spirit—being a Spirit-led, missional church."[80] The challenge for a Spirit-led church is to develop a growing capacity among its community to discern the Spirit's leading in its particular context. Further, he argues that in order to understand the ministry of the church one has to understand the ministry of the Spirit.[81] Van Gelder draws from the Michael Welker's insights on the Spirit.

Welker is particularly helpful in his book, *God the Spirit*.[82] His work provides us with a detailed account of how the Spirit *is* active in the world by how the Spirit *has been* active in the world. Such an effort has been rare among theological and biblical scholars as "more attention is usually given to understanding the ministry of Jesus in relation to

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[76] Ibid., 284.

[77] Ibid., 282.

[78] Van Gelder, *The Ministry of the Missional Church: A Community Led by the Spirit*, 18.

[79] Ibid., 19.

[80] Ibid.

[81] Ibid., 24.

[82] Welker, *God the Spirit*.

the church than to understanding the ministry of the Spirit within and through the church."[83] The two emphases are critical. A high Christology without a comparable pneumatology would be as problematic as a high pneumatology without a Christology.

The renewed imagination will require significant work. Van Gelder and Zscheile comment that the western church has acclimated to the practices of a secularized society that displaced God's personal presence from ordinary life. The result is that churches conceive mission "as a predictable, manageable, executable human effort…devoid of imagination for the Triune God's disruptive, graceful, provocative power and agency."[84] Van Gelder and Zscheile recommend a "forward-oriented vision" that emphasizes the present activity of the Spirit who not only was present at creation bringing order out of chaos but also continues in the ongoing work of creation, including participation in the full scope of redemption. Focusing on Christ, the tendency of the church has been to imitate what Christ did in the past—a "backward-oriented vision."[85] In order to understand the work of the Spirit, it is important to keep in mind the sweep of the four-part biblical story: creation, fall, redemption (re-creation), and consummation—when God creates a new heaven and a new earth.

Michael Welker, in his book *God the Spirit,* unpacks the Spirit's work through the biblical narrative.[86] In creation, we see the Holy Spirit participating in the creation of the cosmos that gives humanity its "breath of life." In the fall, as creation groans and

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[83] Van Gelder, *The Ministry of the Missional Church: A Community Led by the Spirit*, 24.

[84] Van Gelder and Zscheile, *The Missional Church in Perspective: Mapping Trends and Shaping the Conversation*, 119.

[85] Ibid., 118.

[86] Welker, *God the Spirit*.

humanity becomes a vulnerable, imprisoned creature in a world of envy, murder, distrust, oppression, and perversion, the Spirit is involved in the recreating of a new world through the Hebrew people. We see the Spirit empowering God's people throughout the Old Testament. The Spirit endows people with gifts and abilities. The Spirit uses leaders to restore a community in the midst of oppression or disruption. The Spirit exposes evil spirits and confronts the forces of evil. The Spirit uses the faith community to express mercy and extend justice to the oppressed and to open up full access to the knowledge of God to everyone. The Spirit reveals the promised Messiah and the hope of the eschatological future.

In the New Testament, we see the Spirit involved in the new Israel, the new man—Jesus Christ. We see the Spirit involved in the birth of Jesus, involved in his life and ministry, and when Jesus makes his preparation to leave the disciples, he promises the Spirit to the church. This present period between Christ's Ascension and Pentecost to the final consummation of the heaven and the earth is the era of the Spirit-led church. It is a missionary church. If the Spirit leads the church, it must participate in the mission of God to the world. There are five dimensions of the Spirit's ministry:

1. The Spirit creates a new type of reconciled community through accomplishing redemption and gives this community a new identity as the church of Jesus Christ.
2. The Spirit gives and empowers leadership to guide these communities.
3. The Spirit leads these communities into sanctified living consistent with their new nature in Christ.
4. The Spirit leads these communities into active ministry.
5. The Spirit leads these communities into the world to unmask principalities and powers through a ministry of suffering service.[87]

[87] Van Gelder, *The Ministry of the Missional Church: A Community Led by the Spirit*, 41-45.

"In no instance is the descent of the Spirit a merely private affair," claims Welker. Moreover, "in no instance does the descent of the Spirit cause only a private change in the person affected. If God's Spirit is at work, a public or even several publics are involved, either immediately or mediately."[88]

Welker demystifies the theology of the Spirit in such a way that a missional leader can begin to comprehend the consistent character and work of the Spirit and begin to recognize the Spirit's orientation in a community. This perhaps is the striking contribution of Welker. His *realistic theology* appreciates the physicality of the Spirit's work in contrast to an overemphasis on the supernatural and mysterious work of the Spirit most often proof-texted by Jesus' teaching, "You hear its sound, but you cannot tell where it comes from or where it is going. So it is with everyone born of the Spirit" (John 3:8). Welker's theological and biblical effort reveals how the Spirit of God is a tangible power and presence experienced in the restoration of "a community in the midst of distress and disintegration, reactivating solidarity, loyalty, and the capacity for action in this community."[89]

The Spirit is the *leading character* in the great drama of the redemptive history. As such, the Spirit remains the *leading character* in the church today. The church, directed by the Spirit, has a missional task to prevail against the power of evil that isolates, fragments, and causes disintegration. The Spirit empowers a community to flourish.

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[88] Welker, *God the Spirit*, 75.

[89] Ibid., 274.

The implications for missional leadership are immediately apparent, as it provides a new way to view the challenge and mission of a local church in its existing context. First, the Spirit's role in the redemptive story inspires a deeper gratitude and dependence on the work of the Spirit. Second, it alerts a missional leader to what God has done and is doing. Third, the presence of the Spirit provides direction in what Alan Roxburgh described as the in-between-time where the "culture that shaped our imaginations, actions, and expectations" is passing away and "we feel ourselves in a new place where it is difficult to draw those new maps."[90] For such a time of transition, Welker reminds us that the Spirit "preserves the community and makes it one in the midst of its being torn apart and laden with conflict." Moreover, the "Spirit takes those persons who are ordained to lead the people and brings them into a remarkable, indeed dismaying condition hovering between power and powerlessness." If Welker's insights are accepted, we begin to interpret transitions, conflict, and change as divinely inspired opportunities to discern the direction of the Spirit. "Precisely in this way they end up in an openness to God's creative power and effectiveness—an openness that can also be recognized by other people."[91]

Cruciform Stewardship

What is leadership in a Christian community? Thus far, four biblical and theological lenses have been described that, when combined, shape the contours of a collaborative church community and its participatory model of leadership.

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[90] Roxburgh, *Missional Map-Making: Skills for Leading in Times of Transition*, 23.

[91] Welker, *God the Spirit*. 99

1. The Eucharist is the paradigmatic life-giving model that establishes the life and leadership of a Christian community.

2. A Christian community is participatory because the Trinity relates in perichoretic fashion.

3. A Christian community's mission is to participate in the overarching mission of God to redeem all of creation by dwelling relationally and contextually in its local time, place, and culture.

4. The Spirit, evidenced throughout the biblical narrative as a restorative and community-shaping agent, is recognized as the creator of the church and who continues to lead the church in its mission to be an agent of transformation in the world.

I suggest that cruciform stewardship, drawing on all four of these four biblical perspectives, describes the soul and purpose of Christian leadership. The cruciform character of leadership is cultivated as the community gathers around the table because at the table God's cruciform character is at work forming a new humanity in God's image. It is cruciform because it patterns itself on the life-giving model Jesus demonstrated. It is about stewardship because the disciples are called to be a community representing and stewarding a new and radical vision for life that is cruciform in character.

Thomas Frank develops the concept of stewardship. To limit the language of leadership, he uses the term *administration* as a synonym of leadership, and links it to the biblical idea of stewardship.[92] The suggestion is bold as leadership theorists have commonly differentiated leadership and management (administration) as two separate and distinct functions and roles: "Managers do things right and leaders do what is right." Yet, suggests Frank, "The churches' understandings and practices of administration have

[92] Frank, "The Discourse of Leadership and the Practice of Administration," 24.

much to contribute to the larger discussions of leadership continuing in all organizations today."[93]

Built into the word, *administration* is the word *ministerium*, the Latin translation of the word, *diakonia,* meaning service. The prefix *ad* implies the sense of *to* or *forward.* "In the most general sense," Frank suggests, the term means "a service toward fulfilling the organizations' purposes."[94] Specifically, he defines administration "as the practice of bringing to focus the intentions of the people of God for ministry and building up the community of faith in its witness and service to the world."[95] As a practice, it belongs among the *constitutive* practices like liturgy, hospitality, formation, and care. For instance, each church or denomination has ways of doing ministry, such as governance, nominations, finances, etc., that are peculiar to the church's theological and denominational heritage and polity. Failure to adopt these practices would raise questions about the church's legitimacy in the tradition. However, more universally, Frank argues, a Christian community "expresses through its administrative practice an image of who it trusts God to be and what it believes God's intentions to be for the world."[96] He is, therefore, able to argue that administrative practice is not simply the function of a singularly gifted person, but it is primarily an "expression of the whole community." Certainly, and most often, the administrative role is expressed in the ordained offices but as a practice, "it belongs to the whole people of God."[97]

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[93] Ibid.

[94] Ibid., 24.

[95] Ibid.

[96] Ibid., 25.

[97] Ibid.

As a practice, the community therefore engages in the ongoing process of forming (*ecclesia semper formanda*) and reforming (*ecclesia semper reformanda*). On the one hand, administration depends on, and draws from, the heritage of practice found in its tradition, but, on the other hand, it wrestles with the particular challenge of adapting to the specific realities of its situation and challenges. The deliberative process corresponds directly with Heitink's theory of action of mediating God's activity (Praxis One) in the world (Praxis Two).[98] Shaping leadership practices is a critical piece in establishing a missional community. The church, if it is intentionally pressing into God's agenda, is constantly experiencing change as it seeks to faithfully practice God's way in the world. The church's capacity to engage this dynamic reality of change is dependent on a church's willingness to be led by the Spirit.

"The church's central logic for constructing the practice of administration is embedded in the biblical language of stewardship (*oikonomia*)."[99] Quite simply, it means the management of one's household. "Stewardship embraces the economy of the whole household," defines Frank, "to the end that its resources are used fully and justly and that its purposes flourish."[100] Biblical images help to conceptualize stewardship. The Apostle Paul uses the image of the *builder:*

> For we are co-workers in God's service; you are God's field, God's building. By the grace God has given me, I laid a foundation as a wise builder, and someone else is building on it. But each one should build with care (1 Cor. 3:9-10).

He also uses the image of a garden:

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[98] Heitink, *Practical Theology: History, Theory, Action Domains: Manual for Practical Theology*, 6.

[99] Frank, "The Discourse of Leadership and the Practice of Administration," 26.

[100] Ibid.

> I planted the seed, Apollos watered it, but God has been making it grow. So neither the one who plants nor the one who waters is anything, but only God, who makes things grow. The one who plants and the one who waters have one purpose, and they will each be rewarded according to their own labor. For we are co-workers in God's service; you are God's field, God's building (I Cor. 3:6-9).

The image of a garden is evocative and it clearly raises a question: who or what causes things to grow? Leaders can sow and leaders can water, but the power to make things grow lies with God. Frank suggests that a leader/administrator's role is similar to a farmer who cultivates. A Christian leader cultivates a context where community members thrive, learn, adapt, and become a transforming presence in their context. Frank builds upon Larry Rasmussen's emphasis on leadership as a practice and suggests the image of *choreographer*, which, argues Frank, extends the understanding of what it means to cultivate a community.[101] Administration, in Rasmussen's words, "is the practice that provides the choreography for all the other practices of a community or society." [102]

This point creates tension between what we commonly understand as leadership and what stewardship suggests about leadership. Whereas common leadership paradigms emphasize decisive top down leadership, "ecclesial images of administration," Frank explains, "are about creating a space in which fruitfulness can flourish through cultivation of the community's resources and removal of obstacles to the community's thriving."[103]

Scott Cormode, in his article, "Multi-layered Leadership," builds upon the gardening metaphor to describe a less used leadership model—the *gardener* as meaning-

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[101] Rasmussen, "Shaping Communities."

[102] Bass, *Practicing Our Faith: A Way of Life for a Searching People*, 120-1.

[103] Frank, "The Discourse of Leadership and the Practice of Administration," 27.

maker.[104] He contrasts this model with two others: the *builder* as decision-maker and the *shepherd* as people-empowerer. Cormode suggests that excellent leaders will adapt each of the models in a multilayered way, as each has their particular strengths at the right times. He suggests, nevertheless, that the gardener model is the one that is most suitable to organizational realities where goals are a challenge to define because of a church's complex constituencies (stakeholders) and where there is significant change. The Meaning-Making Gardener Model provides a model of leadership that inspires collective action by not lording it over others or dissipating initiative among others. Gardeners, he explains, take a different view of organizations. Builders see organizations as structures. Shepherds see organizations as communities. Gardeners see organizations as cultures.

The contrast to the gardener, for Frank, is the entrepreneur who lives with the premise that the church is primarily a human enterprise or an invention in terms of what the *industrial paradigm* described in chapter two. "Churches are constituted by a logic of gift," argues Frank. The Spirit created the church. It is a gift. "Everything they do is a grateful response in stewardship of that gift."[105] Discernment of the Spirit's direction is a response to God's gift. It is a gift and blessing for the sake of the world. The gift requires responsible attentiveness, and, as a result, inspires innovative action. "The effective management and expression of the wealth and diversity of gifts that churches enjoy calls for enormous energy and focus."[106] Thus, the practice of administration requires the

[104] Cormode, "Multi-Layered Leadership: The Christian Leader as Builder, Shepherd and Gardener."

[105] Frank, "The Discourse of Leadership and the Practice of Administration," 27.

[106] Ibid., 28.

active participation of congregational members to steward their personal and community resources.

Like Cormode, who understands the leader as a meaning maker, Frank defines administration as "the art of discerning and naming the images that guide an organization, that both express its internal solidarity and its sense of purpose in the world external to it."[107] The administrative role is to address the capacities of the church to engage the mission of God. It is, as Peter Senge describes, a learning organization. The leaders of a learning organization are the primary mentors and teachers who can help guide the church's learning, growing, and adapting in order to be a transforming presence.

Rasmussen notes that the early Christian community reflects a number of qualities described by Drath and Palus. The experience of the early church, as the body of Christ, reflects a radical democratization of power. The early church, based upon the model of leadership Jesus exemplified, embodied an "alternative way of ordering life together."[108] Following Jesus is decidedly egalitarian. Jesus refused the name King. "His position is more like that of a prophet—without favorites, without secure establishment, without honor or privilege, and without followers who possess any of these," Rasmussen writes. [109] This democratization of power, however, was in tension with the existing versions of governance within the wider society that challenged the early church to accept and adapt it. The early church demonstrated ambivalence.

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[107] Ibid.

[108] Rasmussen, "Shaping Communities," 127.

[109] Ibid., 125-6.

Hierarchal forms of leadership triumphed by the fourth century. "Stability won out over change, hierarchy prevailed over egalitarianism, male-held office triumphed over gender equality, power was more centralized than dispersed, and social, political, and economic privilege lodged with the few rather than the many."[110] Nonetheless, Rasmussen asserts, the "radical impulses" of the body of Christ never lost their hold. This is evidenced in a variety of religious orders through the Middle Ages, and is encapsulated in Martin Luther's emphasis on the priesthood of all believers. This New Testament principle repeated itself in a host of other renewal initiatives among Catholics, Orthodox, and Protestant Christians today. The "radical impulse" rests in qualities that are in tension with leadership models that concentrate power along clear lines of authority and structure indicative of the industrial paradigm of leadership. Rasmussen identifies specific qualities of this radical impulse:[111]

1. a sense of divine power as the power for peoplehood;
2. a basic equality that dignifies the varied gifts of varied members;
3. forms of address that tend more toward "brother" and "sister" than titles;
4. a sharing of resources with a view to need;
5. an effort to cross social boundaries for a more inclusive community;
6. an uneasy relation to every dominant order, every "Caesar";
7. an empowerment of all members, either as laity or within a new religious order; and
8. a conviction that somehow all this is good news and a vanguard example for the wider world.

[110] Ibid., 127.

[111] Ibid., 128.

Our present historical situation resembles the situation of the early church. New ways of leadership and community emerged out of a stable and dominant order. Christians "adapted governance practices and traditions they knew, but they also initiated new ones when, in their judgment, these kept faith with the way of Christ and made for the upbuilding of community in the Spirit."[112] In much the same way, Christians need to learn from the early church, not in order to copy them, but, like them, to test the spirits of their age and cultivate a leadership paradigm that remains true to the participatory and collaborative impulses apparent in the life and ministry of Jesus.

The model Jesus demonstrates is neither an autocratic nor a purely democratic one. Gordon Smith, in his book, *The Voice of Jesus: Discernment, Prayer and the Witness of the Spirit*, comments that the church does not need to choose between a democratic model and a hierarchical model. He agrees with Inagrace Dietterich that Christian communities are neither "autocratic (the rule of one) nor democratic (the rule of the people) but pneumocratic (the rule of the Holy Spirit)."[113] Spirit-led leadership is a third way. However, it is not an easy way. Communal discernment is not about seeking unanimity or simply finding consensus. As Parker Palmer states directly, Christian leaders are not looking for agreement; we are looking for a good decision![114] A good decision requires a discernment process that does not "negate the responsibility of leaders to lead," Smith writes, "but it insists that leadership find its place *within* the process, as

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[112] Ibid., 129.

[113] Inagrace Dietterich, "Missional Community: Cultivating Communities of the Holy Spirit," in *Missional Church: A Vision for the Sending of the Church in North America*, ed. Darrell L. Guder (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998), 173-4.

[114]Parker Palmer, *To Know as We Are Known: A Spirituality of Education* (San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1983), 95-6.as quoted in Smith, *The Voice of Jesus: Discernment, Prayer, and the Witness of the Spirit*, 229.

part of a group coming to a common decision."[115] Christian leadership is authentic only if the leader listens "to the community and to the voice of the Spirit *through* the community."[116] This process needs to be clear, accessible, and reasonable. A genuine discernment process will be able to explain why God is leading in a particular way. Heeded cautiously are "Holy Hunches" or "Midnight visions." Intuition is a vital part. At the end of the day, describes Smith, we should be able to say, "We have a deep and abiding sense that this is what we are supposed to do."[117] "Real leadership occurs within the process of communal discernment and welcomes a process of shared leadership that affirms both formal roles and the multiple ways in which the group has been gifted and thus enabled to think well and discern well."[118]

Summary

Five biblical and theological themes provide a substantial foundation to re-conceive Christian leadership. The table of the Lord's Supper questioned the leadership practices of the early disciples and should continue to do so today. Developments in Trinitarian studies highlight a more dynamic and interdependent understanding of relationships. The Kingdom of God compels the church to see itself in a reciprocal relationship with the world and with God. The cosmic scope of God's redemptive plans must inform the church's identity. The church is a companion with the groaning world that is being renewed by the mutual work of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

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[115] Smith, *The Voice of Jesus: Discernment, Prayer, and the Witness of the Spirit*, 232.

[116] Ibid.

[117] Ibid.

[118] Ibid., 235.

Specifically, to understand the church's role in the world the church has to understand the ministry of the Spirit. The church is a Spirit-led church. As the church embraces its pneumtalogical identity, its life will be characterized by cruciform stewardship—a way of life modeled by Christ who lived his Spirit-filled life for the sake of the world.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This research thesis is participating and contributing to the ongoing conversation of God's direction for the future at CCC. I was privileged, in my year of research, to travel with CCC on its unfolding journey. One major intervention and several minor interventions, in the course of my ministry at CCC, produced the findings of this research. As a *permanent insider*, my pastoral role included facilitating a mission and vision process (major intervention), along with ministry oversight, finances, facility, human resources, and leadership facilitation (minor interventions), and leadership responsibilities. My job became the context and content of the research. This chapter describes the research methodology adopted, provides a biblical and theological rationale for using the methodology, details the major and minor interventions accomplished, explains how the research instruments were used to collect data, how those data were developed and analyzed, and, finally, addresses the ethical concerns that arise as an enmeshed researcher. Primarily, this chapter outlines how the research is *operationalized*—a term used by Van Gelder to describe how the research was conducted.[1] As such, it would be possible for someone not only to understand how the research was done but also to replicate it accordingly.

[1] Professor Craig Van Gelder on February 2, 2012 quoted the term in a class lecture, in CL7542.

Participatory Action Research

Kurt Lewin, the grandfather of Participatory Action Research (PAR), argues, "the best way to understand something is to try to change it."[2] Lewin recognizes that humans naturally engage in learning. A discernible pattern of action and reflection shapes the way people *plan, act, reflect,* and then *plan* again. PAR is pragmatically focused on this common human process and seeks to cultivate collaborative contexts where agreed-upon actions can contribute to making improvements within a shared context. The methodology is intriguingly congruent with a church community's desire to discern the Spirit's leading.

Among the sweep of social science research methodologies, PAR is a more recent methodology and contrasts itself with the more positivistic methodologies that presume the researcher to be a detached and objective observer. PAR stresses that the researcher is a co-participant and co-generator of knowledge among the stakeholders engaged in an action research that seeks change. The methodology re-conceives the researcher's role and function. Davydd Greenwood and Morten Levin argue that, "action research rejects the superiority of professional researcher knowledge over the practical knowledge of local stakeholders."[3] The "purpose of academic research and discourse is not just to describe, understand, and explain the world," but engaged with local participants, "also to change it."[4]

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[2] As quoted by Greenwood and Levin. Greenwood and Levin, *Introduction to Action Research: Social Research for Social Change*, 18.

[3] Ibid., 53.

[4] Coghlan and Brannick, *Doing Action Research in Your Own Organization*, 6.

John Creswell and Vicki Plano Clark, in *Designing and Conducting Mixed Methods Research*, describe PAR as a "Transformative Design."[5] This design assumes an advocacy and participatory world view that embraces research characterized by political action, empowerment, collaboration, and change-oriented goals.[6] In contrast to other mixed approaches where the goal is to corroborate findings, explain results, or explore findings, a transformative design seeks to challenge and reorient existing practices. This method, like other mixed-method approaches, benefits from the blending of different research methods, both quantitative and qualitative, which serve, in different ways, to enrich and validate research findings.

A mixed-method model adds strength to the research in five ways. First, a mixed approach offsets the weaknesses of both quantitative and qualitative methods. Second, it provides more data than either of the methods alone. Third, it answers questions that neither method can do alone. Fourth, it encourages the use of multiple world views or perspectives to address an issue. Fifth, it is practical. "It is natural," according to Creswell and Plano Clark, "for individuals to employ mixed methods research as a preferred mode for understanding the world."[7] People use both words and numbers when solving problems. Deductive and inductive reasoning are combined. The use of a mixed-method design in a collaborative environment is very valuable, as it engages multiple perspectives to engender action toward a greater good.

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[5] Creswell and Plano Clark, *Designing and Conducting Mixed Methods Research*, 96.

[6] Ibid., 97.

[7] Ibid., 13.

Furthermore, PAR provides a practical process, which, apart from the research goals intended, cultivates communal competence so it can engage in further transformative opportunities beyond the research. "While conventional social research is oriented around professional enlightenment," Greenwood and Levin argue, "PAR is oriented to achieving particular social goals, not just to the generation of knowledge to satisfy curiosity or to meet some particular professional academic need."[8] David Coghlan and Teresa Brannick concur, adding that PAR seeks to "forge a more direct link between intellectual knowledge/theory and action so that each inquiry contributes directly to the flourishing of human persons and their communities."[9] "The key idea," Coghlan and Brannick state, "is that action research uses a scientific approach to study the resolution of important social or organizational issues together with those who experience these issues directly."[10] The implementation of a well-developed PAR process can cultivate new practices that engender greater collaboration and participation in the life of a congregation.

Kathryn Herr and Gary Anderson emphasize that PAR is an "inquiry that is done *by* or *with* insiders to an organization or community, but never *to* or *on* them" (emphasis in original).[11] It is a collaborative, deliberate, and systematic reflective process that is oriented towards actions that the community or organization has agreed upon. The methodology seeks to combine both action and research. "Unlike traditional social science research that frowns on intervening in any way in the research setting, action

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[8] Greenwood and Levin, *Introduction to Action Research: Social Research for Social Change*, 97.

[9] Coghlan and Brannick, *Doing Action Research in Your Own Organization*, 44.

[10] Ibid., 37.

[11] Herr and Anderson, *The Action Research Dissertation: A Guide for Students and Faculty*, 3.

research demands some form of intervention."[12] PAR provides not only an opportunity for the researcher to learn and contribute, but for the community to learn together as it works through a process of planning, acting, observing, and reflecting.[13]

Coghlan and Brannick express this collaboration as the incorporation of three voices and audiences: first, second, and third persons.[14] Traditional research is usually done in the third person where research is done *on* third persons, *for* third persons, and does not include first and second voices. PAR seeks to include authentic third-person research by including first- and second-person voices. First-person research is a focus on the researcher's own life and values. Second-person research is a focus on collaborating with others to engage in the research process. P. Reason and M. Marshall highlight the importance of the three voices:

> All good research is for *me*, for *us*, and for *them*: it speaks to three audiences…. It is for *them* to the extent that it produces some kind of generalizable ideas and outcomes….It is for *us* to the extent that it responds to concerns for our praxis, is relevant and timely…for those who are struggling with problems in the field of action. It is for me to the extent that the process and outcomes respond directly to the individual researcher's being-in-the-world (emphasis in the original).[15]

Deeply embedded in PAR is the value that "local participants play a key role in acquiring new knowledge, negotiating its meaning and testing its validity in action."[16]

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[12] Ibid., 71.

[13] S. Kemmis, ed. *The Action Research Reader* (Victoria, Australia: Deakin University Press, 1982). As quoted by Herr and Anderson, *The Action Research Dissertation: A Guide for Students and Faculty*, 5.

[14] Coghlan and Brannick, *Doing Action Research in Your Own Organization*, 5.

[15] P. Reason and J. Marshall, "Research as Personal Process," in *Appreciating Adult Learning*, ed. D. Boud and V. Griffen (London: Kogan Page, 1987), 112-3.

[16] Greenwood and Levin, *Introduction to Action Research: Social Research for Social Change*, 53.

PAR is based upon the collaboration between the researcher and members of an organization or community. The purpose is to address a recognized problem and generate new knowledge that can lead to renewed action in the light of the new learnings. PAR intends to be both practical and theoretical. "The key idea," argue Coghlan and Brannick, "is that action research uses a scientific approach to study the resolution of important social or organizational issues together with those who experience these issues directly."[17] It seeks to serve the community as it addresses a concern in that community. It seeks to contribute to the growing knowledge base of social science, and, in the case of this study—congregational studies.

PAR is a model of research that fits well with a church community seeking to discover and discern the Spirit's leading. PAR is less concerned about methods and procedures than it is about implementing a model that is value-based and has a rationalized ideology—in other words, a model that can be shaped by a biblical and theological perspective. The design is primarily focused on harnessing methods that "are best suited for advancing the transformative goals of the study."[18] The skills associated with facilitating a transformative design are suited to a congregational pastor who seeks to engender a congregational environment that collaboratively seeks to transform practices that do not fully align with God's mission or God's ways. Moreover, it is a methodology that goes beyond the particular curiosities of the researcher and engages a congregation's desire to be faithful to God's mission.

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[17] Coghlan and Brannick, *Doing Action Research in Your Own Organization*, 37.

[18] Creswell and Plano Clark, *Designing and Conducting Mixed Methods Research*, 97.

The methodology, embedded in a biblical and theological framework, can also advance the development of participatory skills by equipping a church community to more wisely discern what God seeks. Specifically, a community can begin to understand that pastors and other designated leaders are not experts to be consulted, but people who are called to facilitate genuine processes of discernment and action within the community. The design helps a church reorient itself into a transformative community led by the Spirit, instead of being a static environment where spiritual information is downloaded from top to bottom and decision-making is confined among professional experts or representational leaders.

A Biblical and Theological Framework

"Every context," asserts Van Gelder "is a location where God seeks to be at work redemptively."[19] A Spirit-created community is a context, if not a primary context, where theological engagement is most vital. Studying a congregation is not simply an exploration of a human social organization, but a reflective inquiry of the Spirit who is at work forming and reforming a community. Seminary training has cultivated a leadership environment where theological discourse does not deal with local contexts with sufficient seriousness. The result has been congregations and congregational leaders unable to interpret their particular social contexts, biblically and theologically. The default mechanism is an over-confidence on direct theological application (theory to practice), or the adoption of a program application from another context. Practical theology and PAR combine to reorient leaders to develop skills that help congregations understand themselves, their context, and God's direction.

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[19] Van Gelder, *The Ministry of the Missional Church: A Community Led by the Spirit*, 57.

Cormode argues that, "every circumstance has theological meaning," and that "part of the pastoral role is to make that meaning clear."[20] He affirms, by implication, that the local congregation is a context in which to explore the working of God's Spirit in the community. In concert with Cormode, Van Gelder suggests two dimensions that can "inform and guide the process of discernment and decision making."[21] First, the church is the creation of the Holy Spirit and is thus, present in the congregation. Second, the Spirit cultivates a relational context in which the community discerns and processes decisions together. These two dimensions, aided by the tools of social science research and an open, fair, engaging, and deliberative discourse, can contribute to a constructive and redemptive means for making decisions. Within such a deliberative and collaborative environment, the role and responsibility of a pastor can be described as a *manager of meaning*.

Developing communal competence to process decisions about direction and activity then becomes a primary function of pastoral leadership. Participating in action research cycles and developing skills—such as interviewing, surveying, facilitating group discussions, interpreting, and analyzing such data in a biblical and theological perspective—can help the church address who they are and what they are doing. Pastoral leadership, as described by Cormode, should "provide a theological framework for faithful action."[22] Through such leadership, a pastor helps a community identify its own particular reality, interpret its situation with biblical and theological meaning, and

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[20] Scott Cormode, *Making Spiritual Sense: Christian Leaders as Spiritual Interpreters* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2006), 11.

[21] Craig Van Gelder, "The Hermeneutics of Leading in Mission," *Journal of Religious Leadership* 3, no. 1-2 (2004): 155.

[22] Cormode, *Making Spiritual Sense: Christian Leaders as Spiritual Interpreters*, 66.

prayerfully discern what God is up to and how to respond to it. Although social science may aid in the accumulation of valuable quantitative and qualitative data, the analysis and interpretation must be done through the lens of a biblical and theological world view. Cormode argues that the legitimacy of a church's interpretation is based upon acceptable biblical and theological grounding. "Meaning-making leaders give people the vocabulary and theological categories to imagine a different way to interpret the world and to construct a new course of action that flows from the interpretation."[23] Van Gelder agrees. "Congregations need to systematically study their contexts to evaluate trends that are taking place. But more importantly, they need to look at their contexts through theological lenses to discern the work of God that is taking place." He asserts, "every congregation needs to learn how to 'confess the faith' within its present context."[24]

This constructive approach to making decisions in the life of the church is based upon a core conviction about the nature and mission of the triune God. God, who created the world, is the God who seeks to redeem the world. God's love and faithfulness for the world resulted in sending Jesus to redeem and restore creation. Jesus, in word and ultimate deed, demonstrated the power of God at work in the world. The pouring out of the Spirit who gathered and formed the church at Pentecost is directing the church toward the day in which all things are made new.

A belief in God's redemptive activity in the world assumes a participatory dynamic between human agency and God's agency. Whereas many PAR practitioners do not make the same assumption due to a secular perspective, a Christian perspective

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[23] Ibid.

[24] Van Gelder, *The Ministry of the Missional Church: A Community Led by the Spirit*, 66.

recognizes God is, and should be, part of an intentional change process. The value of PAR and a mixed-method approach is that they provide valuable tools and capacities to explore a very complex human and divine reality. The church is a mixture of human and divine. As such, the mix of discordant personalities, cultures, history, perspectives, and the fallenness of our human state adds a complexity and difficulty to the process of discernment and decision-making. Competent use of social science tools, along with effective models of discourse highlighted in chapter two, can equip a mixed body of believers to navigate appropriately through changing seasons of conflicts, interruptions, disruptions, and surprises that befall any organization.[25] In a Spirit-led congregation, a biblically and theologically informed research methodology, namely PAR, assists in cultivating a deliberative community that seeks to discern and implement God's direction.

A congregation is not simply the exploration of a human social organization, but an investigation of the Spirit who is at work forming and reforming a community. A local congregation is a vital—if not preferred—context for theological reflection and development. A biblically and theologically informed PAR approach encourages church leaders to become better equipped in the study of congregations. As a result, they can cultivate engaging theological and biblical conversations that can bear wonderful fruit, not only in the life and activity of the church, but also for the greater church as it seeks to become relevant in a world of secular practice.

[25] Ibid., 59.

Research Interventions

The strength of a mixed-method approach is that it can adapt to the issues and opportunities that arise during the process of the research. Herr and Anderson comment that with PAR, "You are designing the plane as you are flying it."[26] The research path is not easily predictable. "Action research is a messy somewhat unpredictable process, and a key part of the inquiry is a recording of decisions made in the face of this messiness."[27] As such, the methodology provides an open context that does not easily bound the surprising work of the Spirit as the Spirit leads and directs through a variety of people, circumstances, and directions. A research process that is scripted too tightly risks missing the Spirit all together (John 3:8). A research process that provides a flexible and adaptable context, open to unpredictable events and circumstances, allows the researcher to be guided by the unfolding realities of a community's efforts to participate in the work of the Spirit.

The PAR model seeks to bring about change through agreed-upon interventions. The interventions are the means for change but also the means to elicit thoughtful reflection and learning. The research conducted at CCC incorporates a number of PAR interventions—one major intervention and a variety of minor interventions. In their book, *Holy Conversations,* Gilbert Rendle and Alice Mann provide a helpful framework to describe the interventions.[28]

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[26] Herr and Anderson, *The Action Research Dissertation: A Guide for Students and Faculty*.

[27] Ibid., 78.

[28] Gilbert R. Rendle and Alice Mann, *Holy Conversations: Strategic Planning as a Spiritual Practice for Congregations* (Bethesda, MD: Alban Institute, 2003).

Rendle and Mann describe planning as "spiritual discernment." It is a holy conversation that is "about a people's understanding of their identity as a faith community, their sense of purpose, and their relationship with God."[29] "When planning is understood as discernment," they comment, "it becomes a means to a much longer and more faithful process of questioning, in which leaders and members are continuously engaged in conversation with one another and with God."[30]

They describe three forms of planning that are useful in describing the focus of the research interventions.[31] Starting from the largest, the first type is *frame bending planning*, a twelve- to eighteen-month process, in which a community recognizes that it is not being faithful and seeks a significant new way of thinking to dislodge old paradigms. It is a revolutionary attempt to replace old ways with new ways.

A second type is *developmental planning*, which is a planning process of three to six months that basically asks, "What's next?" and "What do we do now?" The goal is to determine the next steps and to build upon what is presently being done. The third type is *problem planning*, which is a short-term process designed to fix things with a goal to return things to the way they were before the problem. These last two planning processes are described as *gap planning*, which follow a series of five steps:

- Here's where we are now.
- Here's where we want or feel called to be in the future.
- Here's a description of the gap between where we are and where we want to be.

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[29] Ibid., xiv.

[30] Ibid., 23.

[31] Ibid., 209.

- Here's what we have to learn or do in order to get there.
- Here are our options for making the changes to get there.[32]

The specific PAR research interventions pursued in this research are characterized by the latter two gap planning types: problem and developmental planning. My role as an Executive Pastor and position in the life of the church provided a variety of opportunities to engender more collaborative and participatory practices in the life of the church. Beyond the everyday challenges and responsibilities, CCC began a developmental planning process to articulate its mission and vision. The *frame-bending planning* is beyond the scope and capacity of this research time line. Nevertheless, the interventions undertaken can be seen as part of an overarching frame-bending process with the developmental and problem planning types being seen as strategic opportunities to advance more collaborative and participatory practices. Instead of seeing, for instance, problem-solving as fixing things as they once were, problem solving was seen as opportunities to advance collaborative and participatory practices in the life of the church.

Coghlan and Brannick use the image of a clock to describe how multiple and concurrent cycles of action research (minor and major) can happen simultaneously to engender transformative change.[33] The hour hand, which takes twelve hours to make its course, represents frame-bending planning. The minute hand, which takes sixty minutes to make its course, describes developmental planning which are stages or phases in the larger ongoing project. The second hand, which completes its course in sixty seconds,

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[32] Ibid., 89.

[33] Coghlan and Brannick, *Doing Action Research in Your Own Organization*, 11.

represents problem planning. All these hands move concurrently and contribute dynamically to the ongoing, forward process. Extending their illustration, theologically and biblically, the local time of a church's context fits into the greater movement of the *missio Dei*. Although it is the minute and second hands that provide the majority of the research content, these are set in the greater movements of the church's ongoing frame-bending planning which, in turn, is set in the greater eschatological movement of God's mission.

Minor Interventions

The first minor intervention was a women's ministry, *Mentoring of Mothers*, which experienced a critical leadership crisis in August, 2011, that threatened the possibility of it restarting in September. The ministry is a significant one, with weekly attendance averaging more than 40 women, and from the many members who responded strongly to the program's potential demise. Two primary leaders resigned in the midst of transitioning to the start of the new ministry year. Several other team members stepped down for a variety of reasons. The result was that the eight-member team was reduced to two previous members and two others who were freshly recruited by the resigning leaders. I entered the *mess* by informing the group about the resignations and calling a summer meeting to consider the future of the ministry. An approach was taken to provide a more collaborative leadership structure that contrasted with the previous leadership structure. This was a politically-charged situation, as the two previous leaders were highly regarded and recognized leaders whose style of leadership was less collaborative

and more top-down.[34] They brought leadership to the team in a season where the ministry was confused about its identity between being an *outreach focused* and being a *Christ-centered* ministry seeking to build up the women of the church. With their departure, a new team emerged with a new leadership approach since the previous model could not be replicated. The ministry's transition from a top-down leadership model to a more collaborative model is part of the Action Research.

The Community Kitchen project was another minor intervention, although one with significant implications. On May, 2011, the RCMP District Commander, and Chairperson of the Business Improvement Association, requested CCC's participation in starting a Community Kitchen that could address the needs of the homeless in the community. In January, 2011, an existing homeless food program was dismantled due to commercial development and the removal of an existing downtown location. CCC responded positively to the request and initiated a food program, in collaboration with two other local churches, to provide weekly meals. However, CCC's present facility is inadequate, as the government food agency cannot, in the long term, approve CCC's make-shift kitchen for food preparation. Working with Cloverdale's Homeless Committee as the primary agent, CCC sought a grant from the *City Homelessness and Housing Fund* to develop its kitchen. CCC was successful in attaining an initial $2000 grant. A more extended application resulted in a grant of $25,000 with additional funds generated by the BIA, Business Chamber, Rotary Club, and Lions Club. This was an exciting project that provides significant opportunity for CCC to enmesh itself with

[34] One leader was the wife of the Senior Pastor and the primary leader was a long-time and personal friend of the Senior Pastor's wife who began attending CCC when the Senior Pastor began his ministry at CCC.

community stakeholders in a collaborative effort to address homeless issues. The intervention provides a valuable engagement in Global Civil Society.

Major Intervention

In January, 2012, CCC launched a mission and vision process in order to clarify the church's mission and align its ministries. CCC has been engaged in an ongoing conversation that, in 2009, produced a set of seven distinctives that served to shape the ongoing life of the church. The collaborative process was outlined and described in an unpublished paper.[35] In the spring of 2011, the Board assessed a need to cultivate two of those seven distinctives in the life of the church: the *missional* and the *charismatic*. In January, 2012, the Board and Staff initiated the first steps of a vision and mission process that furthered the Board's assessment in 2011. In terms of framing, the content and direction of the year's preaching schedule included an early focus on the Mission of God with the key biblical and theological resource being Michael Goheen's, *Light to the Nations.*[36] Goheen understands the overarching story of God's mission as a series of significant phases: creation, fall, redemption, and final consummation. The goal of the sermon series was to help the congregation understand the biblical story and to understand its place in that story. The sermon series then moved into the Gospel of John, with a particular focus on the ministry of Jesus and the work of the Holy Spirit. The year of preaching was framed as a piece of the developmental planning process to engage the

[35] Unpublished paper by Jim Heuving.

[36] Michael W. Goheen, *A Light to the Nations: The Missional Church and the Biblical Story* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2011).

church in a collaborative conversation about CCC's corporate mission and people's particular calling within that mission.

In February, 2012, the Senior Pastor and I proposed a congregational discernment process to the Board with a goal to clarify and articulate CCC's mission and vision by September 2012. The plan adopted Rendle's and Mann's perspective that planning is a discernment practice, as well as their template of a planning process.

Two key pieces of the planning process included effective feedback between the Board and the congregation and the development of a biblical and theological imagination through Bible study and discernment processes. These are the primary elements of the planning process and were woven into the unfolding stages of the project. The first stage of the process included training and equipping the congregation for this larger discernment process. The second stage included selecting a six-person, board-approved team who took primary ownership in directing the development of this process. The team included the Senior Pastor, two Board members, two congregational members, and me. The third stage included collecting and coordinating previous data and resources that can contribute to making a clear assessment of the church's activity. During this data gathering stage, where external and internal audits were done, the goal was to identify the specific learnings that clarify God's mission, the church's identity, and the church's missional role in the neighbourhood. The next stage included a proposed mission statement and a proposed vision statement refined though a congregational process. On the basis of an accepted mission and vision statement, objectives, goals, and recommendations were made. The team provided a completed proposal for the Board to review, approve, and refer to those who will implement—the staff.

The most important goal of the planning process was to articulate action plans that derived from the development of the mission and vision statements. The goal was not simply to craft finely-articulated mission and vision statements. Nevertheless, both of these statements were instrumental in helping shape actions to be implemented. The mission statement was important because it was a heavily coded, concise, memorable, and axiomatic statement that articulates, as clearly as possible, the mission of the church.[37] It is a statement of identity and purpose. It expressed what CCC believes in unity with other congregations and what CCC uniquely believes because of who they are, when and where they live. A mission statement defines a ministry in terms of biblical understanding (what they believe), geographical scope (where they minister), the people CCC have been called to serve (target audience), and what gifts they bring to their unique ministry.

A vision statement is a word picture of what CCC would look like if CCC were, in fact, able to fulfill its mission statement. It identifies what would be different if CCC were faithful. It includes hints of the criteria by which CCC will measure its ministry through describing what will be different about CCC in three to five years. Vision statements are descriptive, and therefore, usually not as brief and concise as mission statements. They draw a picture of a future that is sufficiently rich in detail to offer some direction and guidance for the trip.[38]

Articulating the mission and vision of the church served to establish objectives, goals, and recommendations. This is accomplished by doing a gap analysis as outlined

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[37] Rendle and Mann, *Holy Conversations: Strategic Planning as a Spiritual Practice for Congregations*, 84.

[38] Ibid.

above in gap planning. Simply, it is to understand where CCC is, discern where the Spirit wants CCC to go, and establish strategic goals to move CCC from where it is to where it needs to go. The objectives, goals, and recommendations lay out the path that the church believes will take it from where they are to where they believe God is leading them.

The number of interventions was substantial. Combining the findings with a goal to exploring the transformative impact of discerning the Spirit's direction, and activating the community to courageously move toward an unrealized but imagined future, provided the primary source of data that is presented in chapter five and reflected upon in chapter six. The research results were strengthened when the variety of these interventions and research instruments are triangulated to form a more holistic understanding of what is happening at CCC.[39]

Research Design and Instruments

Quantitative research began with a baseline quantitative survey administered during a one-month period from December 1, 2011, to January 1, 2012. Problem planning interventions preceded and followed this initial survey. The developmental planning intervention began January, 2012. Recordings of key meetings, along with qualitative interviews (see appendix B) with teams experiencing interventions, were conducted. Interviews were conducted at points when problem planning had concluded or when specific actions were taken at the conclusion of the Mission and Vision project. An endline survey, identical to the baseline survey, was administered November, 2012. The identical questions provided two points in time to quantitatively measure any change. A

[39] T. D. Jick, "Mixing Qualitative and Quantitative Methods: Triangulation in Action," *Administrative Science Quarterly* 24(1979).

number of questions were added to the endline survey to provide some self-reflective feedback. Although the time frame was short, the combination of problem planning interventions and the developmental planning intervention provided an indication of how the changes were being experienced.

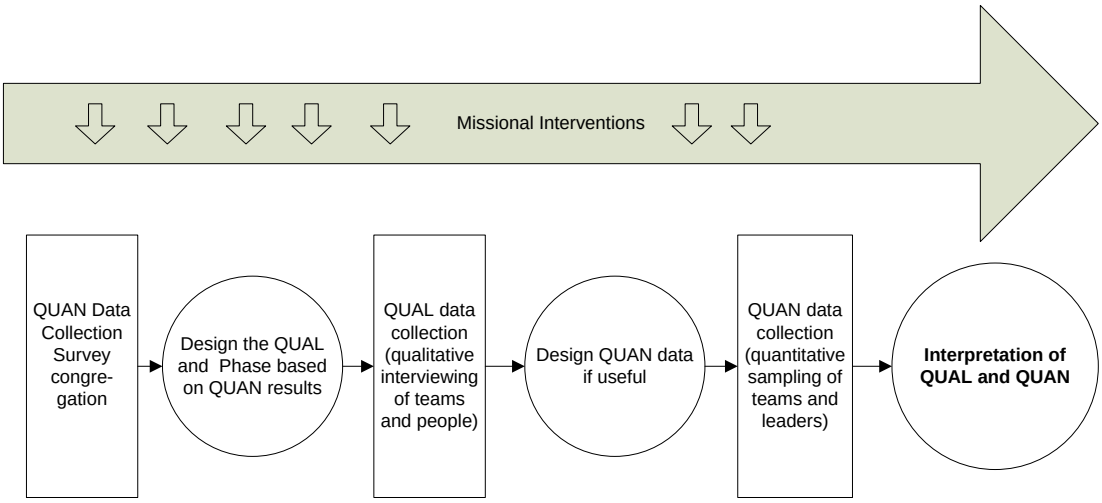

Figure 2. Research Design

Quantitative Instruments

The research combined both quantitative and qualitative research. The quantitative surveys provided a broad sampling of congregational responses for the research, whereas the qualitative interviews provide opportunity to drill deeper into the research. Identical baseline and endline surveys were administered which provided point-in-time measurements that could be compared with each other. The survey questions were primarily built upon Likert scales that sought people's degree of agreement or disagreement to a statement or question. Each answer was numerically valued and responses to questions were calculated into a mean figure representing the accumulated response. The mean figures between the baseline and endline could then be compared using independent t-testing, a statistical method of inferential analysis.

Inferential analysis seeks to make valid statements about any changes that may have occurred in the congregation. An independent t-test produces a *p-value* which is only significant if it is equal to or below .05. The .05 threshold is important because it states that any measurement of .05 can happen by chance five times out of one hundred. Therefore, any *p-value* below .05 indicates that there is a high probability that changes are statistically relevant. Any number above .05 suggests a greater likelihood that the results are due to chance. The significance of this t-test procedure is further explained in chapter five.

Qualitative Instruments

Qualitative research provided an opportunity to explore questions and data more deeply. Printed materials, written and transcribed sermons, transcribed meetings, key communications (emails, minutes, transcribed announcements, etc.) and most importantly, transcribed interviews, conducted throughout the length of the study, became sources of significant data. The combined material added a significant source of depth to the research. In particular, the group interviews provided focused opportunities to reflect upon the interventions and provided the core content of the qualitative research. The interviews followed an informed protocol of developed questions that focused the direction of the interview (see appendix B). Although the interview questions were adapted to each setting and conformed to the dynamics of each group, the protocol remained essentially intact.

A web-based research program, “Dedoose,” provided extensive tools to code, thematize, sort the major themes into generalizable statements, and aided the analysis of

the transcribed interviews and other relevant materials.[40] This tool provided a greater capacity to include more relevant materials for the research. Moreover, *Dedoose* included features that could organize and compare a variety of qualitative data in quantifiable ways, if required.

Dedoose does not replace but simplifies the process of coding since the material can be uploaded, stored, and arranged effectively and securely. With the help of the program, the material was analyzed line-by-line. The coding process included summarizing the contents of each line with a key word suggested by the material—what is called *In Vivo* coding. I used the language of the participants to generate concepts and themes that are dominant in the materials. As the coding progressed, I moved to a stage of *focused coding* with an interest in identifying dominant themes in the materials. This led to *axial coding* in which core concepts emerged. Once the axial coding developed, I moved to a stage of *theoretical coding* where I compared, contrasted, and examined the different themes with a goal to elicit a theoretical construct.[41]

Through the layered process of coding I developed a process of memo writing which became an accumulated resource of reflections where themes were explored, considered, and connected to other materials. The memos became the garden out of which the reflections found in chapter six emerged.

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[40] Eli Lieber and Thomas S. Weisner, "Dedoose," SocioCultural Research Consultants, https://www.dedoose.com/AboutUs/ (accessed February 20, 2012).

[41] Kathy Charmaz, *Constructing Grounded Theory: A Practical Guide through Qualitative Analysis* (Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE, 2006), 63-66.

Participants Involved in the Study

The congregation and the leaders of CCC were involved in the research. Problem planning interventions engaged a variety of leaders and members. The broader, more engaged developmental planning intervention included the congregation at large and a designated team overseeing the planning process.

The congregation was invited to participate in the initial December, 2011 quantitative survey which resulted in 86 completed surveys and in the final November, 2012 endline survey which resulted in 81 completed surveys. Qualitative interviews were done with teams who participated in the minor and major interventions.

The Researcher's Role

The PAR project is unique because I am the primary researcher and a permanent insider, what Coghlan and Brannick call the *complete member*.[42] A complete member is someone who intends to do research in the organization and maintain one's employment role during the research and after the research is complete. Doing research in one's own organization has advantages and disadvantages. The advantage is that the internal position provides direct access to both formal (statements, policies, etc.) and informal information (culture, practice, jargon). The potential disadvantages include my pre-understanding, the dual role of being a pastor and a researcher, and the political realities involved in a change process.

My pre-understanding is based upon my knowledge, insights, and experience prior to engaging in the research. Formally, I am aware of the statements, policies, and structures of the church. Informally, I am familiar with the cultures, norms, traditions,

[42] Coghlan and Brannick, *Doing Action Research in Your Own Organization*, 101.

politics, personalities, and practices of the church. I needed to pay attention to how I lived and functioned within the organizational culture, and how I needed to remain openly reflective to disconfirming evidence that challenged my held opinions and theories. Moreover, I needed to cultivate a collegial process of inquiry among the co-participants in such a way that we worked together at the interventions. Collaborative inquiry with co-workers, where inquiry has not shaped existing relationships, needed to be done effectively as the interventions engendered new ways of relating with each other. My own thinking and the relational dynamics that shaped the context of the research needed to be addressed.[43] To ensure clarity, I adopted two activities. First, I maintained a journal that provided a personal reflective process; second, I utilized the mission and vision team as a validation team.

The second challenge was role duality. As both pastor and researcher, the confusion of roles was very real. The advantage of the dual roles is the two-way exchange between theory and practice. The dual role creates a bridge where there is a great exchange between the academy (theory, literature) and congregational practice. The exchange benefited the church and me. However, there was a degree of experimentation that created confusion among participants who felt, at times, more like experimental subjects than collaborators. This dual role also created confusion for me. While, at times, there was total engagement in the interventions, there was, at times, a level of detachment that led me to feel like an outsider. Distinguishing the two roles, and deliberately and publicly putting on different hats, became a useful means to go about the research task. Generally, role duality issues were reduced at CCC because there was strong

[43] Ibid., 117.

congregational support for my research. Moreover, the obvious interactive exchange between what was being learned and how it was implemented in the church resulted in tangible benefits for both of us.

The third challenge was managing organizational politics. The transformative design intends organizational change. Change is politically charged, since members of the organization respond to the change—or lack of change—experienced. Coghlan and Brannick highlight two key political activities, *performing* and *backstaging. Performing* is the more public role of being active in the change process. *Backstaging* involves maintaining necessary support and infrastructure for the change process. "Because you are an insider," Coghlan and Brannick argue, "you have a pre-understanding of the organization's power structures and politics, and are able to work in ways that are in keeping with the political conditions without compromising the project or your own career."[44] As an Executive Pastor, these two activities were important to ensure a level of shared ownership at the congregational and leadership levels. Overstepping perceived lines of authority and responsibility needed to be sensitively considered and recognized. The description and image of the leader as a facilitator and cultivator, as developed by Cormode and Frank, worked well in this context, as it reduced the political resistance and encouraged shared action.

The researcher, as the Executive Pastor in the church, has considerable resources and political and relational influence in the church. As an insider who is involved in multi-leadership levels in the church, these concerns had to be clearly addressed and managed appropriately throughout the course of the research. All the data from the

[44] Ibid., 128.ll

quantitative and qualitative instruments were accessible only to me. All data collected or managed through online applications like *Surveygizmo* and *Dedoose* were kept secured until the completion of the research. All data will be destroyed within a year of the research completion date. Chapter five explores the events, the results, and the findings of the research.

CHAPTER FIVE

RESEARCH RESULTS

Introduction

Key quantitative and qualitative results are the content of this chapter. The two methods, combined, provide a means to triangulate and measure the degree of change that occurred as a result of the missional interventions that sought to engender greater collaboration and participation. The virtually identical baseline (December 2011) and endline (November 2012) surveys provide point-in-time measurements to observe whether leaders and congregation members were impacted by the intended changes. The qualitative data, which analyzed over sixty items, including transcribed interviews, papers, reports, minutes, and a personal journal, explores the effects of the missional interventions at CCC. Figure three provides a visual overview of the interventions. Appendix F provides a chronological list of interventions, actions, and events that occurred throughout the process. This chapter highlights the most significant change indicated by the quantitative results and reinforces them with the qualitative results.

The diagram details the flow of interventions. The first intervention was the thirteen-week mission sermon series preached by the Senior Pastor drawing from Michael Goheen's *Light to the Nations* and Christopher Wright's *The Mission of God's*

People.[1] The second intervention was the introduction of a mission and vision process based upon Gilbert Rendle and Alice Mann's book, *Holy Conversations: Strategic Planning as Spiritual Practice for Congregations.* It framed a conversational planning approach to include multiple stakeholders—board, staff, ministry leaders, congregational members.[2] The third intervention was the formation of a six-member Mission and Vision Team (MVT), which facilitated the conversational discernment process. Fourth, was the design and development of three congregational forums that provided feedback to the MVT as it scribed and finalized agreed-upon mission and vision statements.

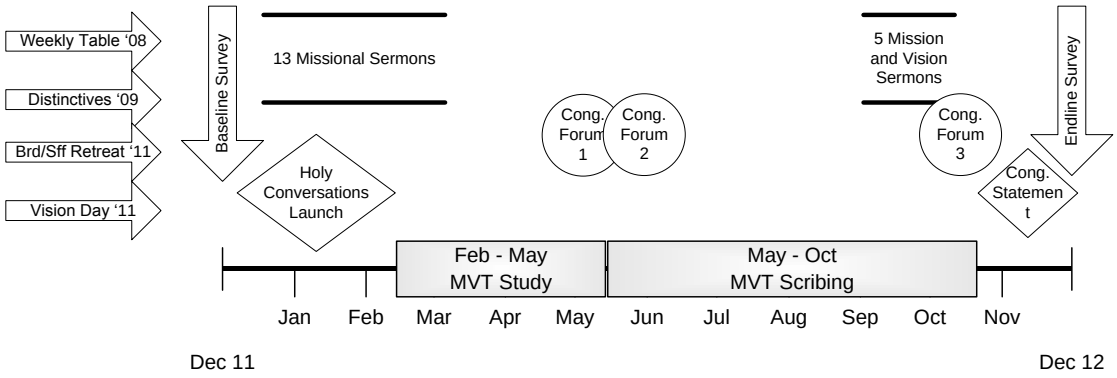

Figure 3. Missional Interventions

Fifth, are the five mission and vision sermons that coincided with the final forum to discuss the statement scribed by the MVT and taught by the Senior Pastor. The process ended when the congregation was presented a completed statement at the Annual General

[1] Goheen, *A Light to the Nations: The Missional Church and the Biblical Story*; Christopher J. H. Wright, *The Mission of God's People: A Biblical Theology of the Church's Mission* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2010).

[2] Rendle and Mann, *Holy Conversations: Strategic Planning as a Spiritual Practice for Congregations*.

Meeting on November 18, 2011. The endline survey was administered a day after this point. Eighty-one completed surveys were received by November 27, 2012

This chapter describes, first, how the research unfolded—From a Blank Wall to Community Kitchen. Second, it presents key quantitative and qualitative findings with an emphasis on measurable results that reveal the degree of change experienced. The complete set of responses to the survey questions are listed in appendix A. The survey questions were organized around four specific areas—team health, collaboration, decision-making, and Spirit-led leadership. Both decision-making and Spirit-led leadership provided significant results, whereas team health and collaboration, although valuable, did not provide results that directly informed the research question. This was expected—somewhat. I developed the survey tool knowing that the interventions I planned for were not solidly determined and were entirely dependent on the direction of the church and its leadership. I, therefore, crafted four sets of questions, two focused on internal team dynamics and two focused on broader congregational dynamics. This chapter addresses decision-making and Spirit-led leadership, since a comprehensive, congregational process became the major intervention at CCC.

Finally, this chapter concludes with a summary of key results that most directly relate to the research question: *To what extent will a series of missional interventions help CCC adapt to being more collaborative and participative as a Spirit-led missionary people?* Chapter six engages these data more thoroughly by examining them in the light of theoretical and biblical lenses developed in chapters two and three.

From a Blank Wall to a Community Kitchen

CCC's days of *Great Sadness* prompted a longing to reshape its leadership practices and the purposes that guided the church.[3] It desired to reshape its dependence (or idolatry) on heroic leadership models, and to practice a renewed leadership model that would provide a greater context of collaboration and safety. These two themes resulted in a focus on the charismatic and missional Distinctives that gave expression to two desires: (1) a desire to affirm and activate the gifts and calling of all God's people; and (2) a desire to participate in what God was doing in the world (see appendix G).

In 2008, painters erased the original mission statement that was boldly printed on the sanctuary wall: Passionately Pursuing Friendships that Count: with God, with Each Other, and the People of the World. The blank wall symbolized a new season in which the congregation would have to discern a renewed mission and vision. It aroused an intensifying discomfort and an increasing anxiety as time passed. In concert with this discomfort, a new way of leadership was developing which increasingly invited others into leadership decisions about significant matters, such as the mission and the vision of the church. The two results of the *Great Sadness*, a need for mission and vision clarity and an emerging leadership shift, converged in the mission and vision process.

CCC's Mission and Vision process became the primary missional intervention of this research. Some of the intended minor interventions unfolded within the larger actions and are included within the results to reinforce the findings of the primary research interventions. Events and actions prior to the Mission and Vision intervention provide a narrative backdrop.

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[3] The term, *Great Sadness,* was coined by one of the Elders. The term stuck. Chapter two describes those days. See page ten and following.

The research question relates to both the need for mission clarity and the emerging leadership shift. First, it seeks to understand how leadership practice was demonstrated throughout the leadership developments, and, second, it explores what missional shifts occurred through the process. This research assumes that the way a church makes decisions reflects the model of leadership it practices. My growing assumption is that missional development is inhibited when a church's practice of leadership remains anchored within a pre-missional paradigm. Embracing a model of Spirit-led leadership, I argue, increases greater collaboration in decision-making and greater participation in the mission of God.

The Mission and Vision process was a decision-making journey by the whole of the church involving staff, board, leaders, and congregational members. It was framed as a *holy conversation* that would involve God, us, and others. Conversation was conceived as the transformative process that would help the church discern God's direction and envision specific actions in keeping with God's purposes. The baseline survey was administered before a clear mission and vision process became the major intervention of this research. The process was formalized in January, 2012, among the senior staff, presented to the Board in February, and launched congregationally in March.

Results of the baseline survey suggest that the mission and vision process was launched within a healthy and positive climate. There was a sense that the church was beginning to understand its purpose and had an unfolding sense of mission. This is notable, since there were significant shifts in the life of the church as a result of the mission and vision interventions despite a positive sense of mission. Observing shifts out

of a positive context to a more positive context underscores the significance of the interventions.

The baseline survey, however, reflected a concern—more on the part of the board and senior staff rather than the congregation—about the church's unclear purpose. The Senior Pastor expressed an acute sense of the church's anxiousness while in the midst of the missional interventions. He wrote in his June 2012 Board report, "If there is one word that characterizes CCC at this moment, it is "malaise—a vague or unfocused feeling of lethargy." He attributed it to three factors, one of which was vision. He states, "We are still waiting and working towards finding a mission large enough to galvanize us as a missional movement. It's painfully obvious to me that we are not there yet. Without this clarity in focus, our malaise will deepen and spiritual boredom will continue."

The time to discern a new mission and vision was ripe and coincided in timely fashion with the research. The leadership was anxious to discern specific, Spirit-led actions consistent with God's mission in the world. The established practice around the weekly communion table, the articulation of the seven Distinctives, the identification of both the missional and charismatic Distinctives as immediate concerns, and the senior pastoral team's desire to press forward, cultivated an openness to create an intentional, congregational process to articulate a mission and vision statement that would direct the actions and practices of the church's future.

Referencing an organizational life-cycle chart, the Board and Staff agreed that we were on the early backside of stability that suggested CCC risked growing instability and decline if it did not address mission and vision.[4] The board embraced the plan and in

[4] Rendle and Mann, *Holy Conversations: Strategic Planning as a Spiritual Practice for Congregations*, 225.

February 2012, "set in motion the formation of a Mission and Vision team (MVT) to facilitate a four-month process to discern, articulate, and clarify CCC's mission and vision." The Senior Pastor invited me to lead the team and facilitate the process.

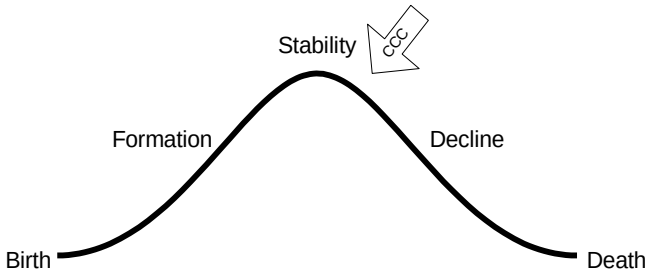

Figure 4. Life Cycle Stages

The Board's mandate from February 2012 required that something be ready for September 2012—within seven months. Two months of summer absences, and a goal to involve the congregation in May, left the team with three months to pull together something substantial and hopeful to discuss. The task was intimidating. Within a couple of weeks, a six-person team formed with two pastors, two board members, and two congregational members. The team began its work in March 2012, with an official congregational launch of the *Mission and Vision Process: A Holy Conversation.* It presented a three-stage process: Study, Scribe, and Strategic Action (see figure five).

The MVT met five times before facilitating the first Congregational Forum. MVT meetings, most often around a meal, were no shorter than two hours, with most extending beyond three hours. The team's goal, established from the outset of the process, was modest. At the first meeting, the team decided it would be successful if it could articulate a mission statement at 100 per cent, a vision statement at 60 per cent, and strategic objectives at 30 per cent completion.

The three congregational forums occurred after Sunday Services, included lunch, and provided childcare to encourage broad participation. Thirty-five people attended the first forum. Though the team was not yet ready to present a draft statement, it did provide a worksheet listing sixteen bible passages, asking two questions for round table discussion: *What is God's mission? What is the church's mission?* Participants separated into smaller groups, discussed the first question, and then reported to the big group. The same process was followed for the second question. The conversation generated enthusiastic discussion and key themes emerged that influenced the scripting of future statements.

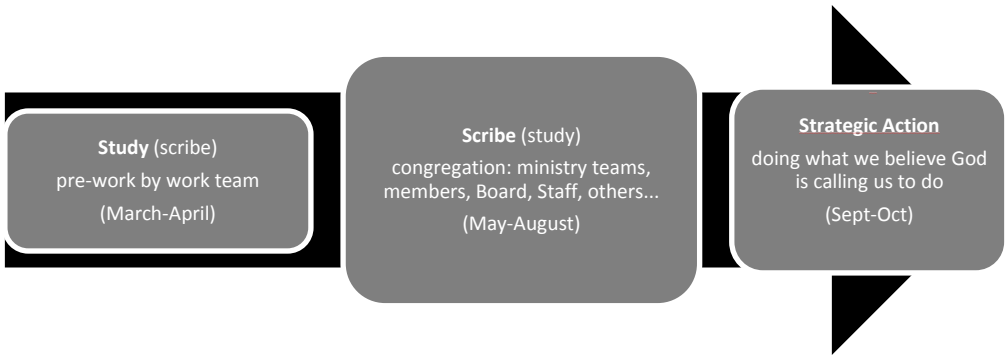

Figure 5. The Mission and Vision Process

At the second congregational forum, May 27, thirty-five attended and the team presented a tentative mission statement with this confession: "We are not as far as we wanted. We do not feel ready to script something yet." People divided into table groups and discussed the tentative statements presented. Comments and dialogue, once again, were robust, invigorating, and encouraging. The positive and challenging feedback to the tentative statement inspired intense efforts by two or three team members to scribe a coherent statement through the summer months.

June was a pivotal month. The Senior Pastor's report expressed concern about the church's malaise and lethargy. It inspired an urgent and diligent focus on scripting a

statement. September was coming. Something had to be ready, because a sermon series on mission and vision was planned to launch the new ministry year—another missional intervention. My influence on the summer scribing was minimal. I was absent for five of nine weeks in July and August, although I entered the scripting stage at key points along the way. At one point, I challenged the format of one of the early drafts and reasserted an adapted Rendle and Mann recommendation to first craft a mission statement, second, a vision statement, and, finally, strategic objectives. The framework stuck. Eventually, the MVT met once again, after not meeting for twelve weeks. On the Saturday before the September 9 Board meeting, we finalized a statement that we felt ready for congregational presentation as a provisional statement (see appendix H.).

The mission and vision statement explicated the slogan, "Embraced by Christ; Embracing His World," along with three key visionary statements—the core focus of action and new practice. The vision sentences addressed three areas: *personal transformation; neighborhood transformation; and, global transformation.* Each vision statement recommended specific strategic objectives that the church would need to consider and review at the third forum on October 21. A five-part sermon series that began in September introduced the congregation to the provisional statements and invited the congregation to the final forum where the statements would be discussed further. Responses to the messages included spontaneous applause, excited conversations, and a palpable increase of enthusiasm and energy to move forward.

The enthusiasm was best expressed in the number of attendees at the third and final forum: sixty-one adults, not including the thirty children and eight volunteers who provided child care, squeezed into the room to eat and talk. After two hours of engaged

conversation, they unanimously endorsed the mission statement, and the three vision statements. The MVT had one final meeting to finalize the statements and presented a final report to the Board of Elders with a completed statement. The Elders received the finished work of the team and, at the church's Annual General Meeting November 18, presented the statement to the congregation for final approval. It was unanimously approved.

When asked at the last MVT meeting, "Have you ever been through an experience like this before?" the Senior Pastor replied, "I have never been through anything like this before. This was my first experience in doing a mission and vision process that involved staff, elders, and lay people." The process was unique to all of us. The MVT were co-researchers, so to speak, who participated freely in shaping the unfolding process. I struggled at times to facilitate a process that would conform to the research proposal and yet allow the process to unfold without pressure. The experience was as, Herr and Anderson described it, "…designing the plane as you are flying it."[5]

Never before, the team commented, did we operate with our hands so open in dialogue. The five sermons presented an unfinished set of statements under formation and invited people into a conversation that would shape the life of the church for the days to come. These were not corporate top-down statements, but shared community commitments. The Senior Pastor stated passionately, as he evaluated the process: the holy conversation allowed "the Holy Spirit to work through the proclamation of the word. Right? Then the discussion of it afterwards. That is a great model. Preach. Discuss around tables... [the process] creates a dynamism."

[5] Herr and Anderson, *The Action Research Dissertation: A Guide for Students and Faculty*, 69.

The dynamism was expressed by the forty adults who joined intentional discipleship groups, the fifteen people who volunteered to be hosts or to provide their homes to begin missional communities in their neighbourhoods (Emmaus groups), and the unanimous support of a $400,000 Community Kitchen project.

Two parts of the mission and vision statement resonated with and informed the largest of the three: The Community Kitchen project: "We seek to participate in God's mission by leaving our provincial comforts...so that we and those we seek to reach may be transformed by the love of God." "We need the poor more than the poor needs us," someone argued. The orientation of the new actions suggested a substantial missional shift was happening at CCC. "Embraced by Christ," which the mission statement celebrated, was driving CCC to "embrace his world" through partnerships and embracing forgotten and marginalized strangers.

The early identity of CCC was based on an *attractional* model that celebrated CCC as the *cool place* to go because of the rocking worship, the edgy preaching, and the impressive Christmas productions. This was being replaced by new efforts focused on a more transformative way of life that included intentional spiritual practices, a desire to be *prophetically present* in one's neighborhood, and partnering in mutually transformative relationships. An obvious correlation between the practice of weekly communion and the development of the Community Kitchen, which expresses an extension of table hospitality, is a profound example of the changing focus at CCC.

The discomfort and uncertainty of a blank wall was being replaced by an emerging engagement with others that demanded a more intentional focus on personal, neighbourhood, and global transformation. The endline survey included thirteen self-

reflective questions that asked each respondent how much change they experienced in the past year. To each of the questions they could respond with "negative change, no change, low change, positive change, or great change in the past year."[6] The following bar graph (figure 6) and table of results (table 2) indicate the impact of the Mission and Vision process.

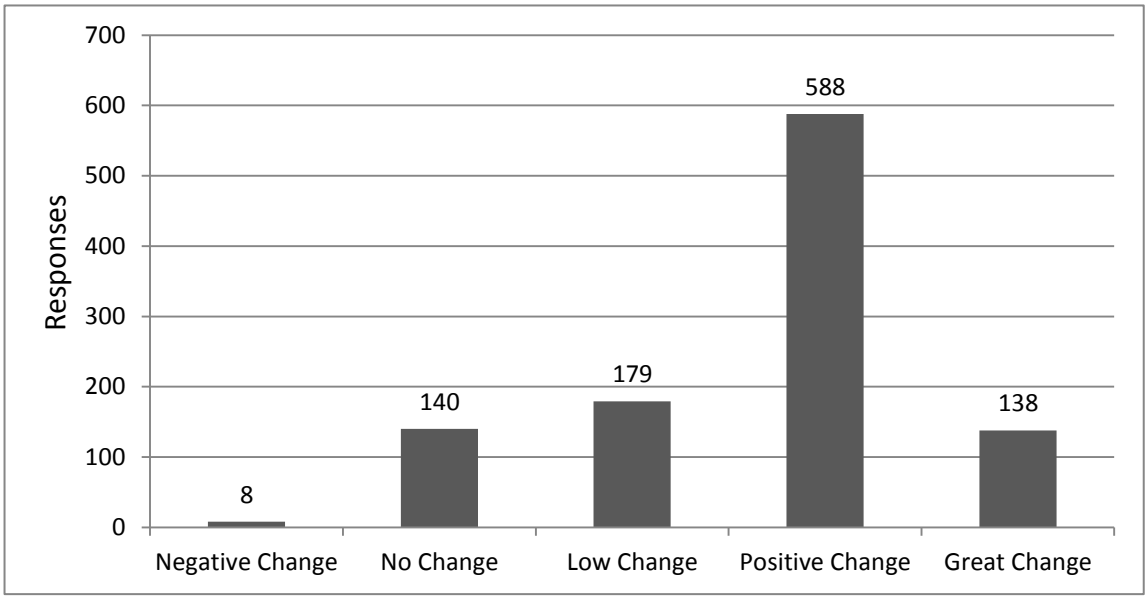

Figure 6. Accumulated Responses of self-reflection questions

[6] These questions were added quickly to the endline survey and, although they indicate positive change, the scale of choices may have been strengthened by being more distinct from one another. As it stands, it may be difficult to know the difference between low change and negative change. Nevertheless, the survey fulfilled the intention of soliciting how survey respondents experienced the past year of developments.

Table 2. Summary of Self-Reflection Questions

		Neg.	No	Low	Pos.	Great	Total
I am more intentional about being a disciple of Jesus Christ	n	0	9	13	53	6	81
	%	0	11	16	65	7	
I am more intentional about being part of a mission community (Emmaus Groups)	n	0	16	11	45	9	81
	%	0	20	14	56	11	
I am more convinced that the Spirit of God is calling me to participate in God's mission in the world	n	1	15	11	47	7	81
	%	1	19	14	58	9	
I am more intentional about participating in local missions (Christmas Hamper, Defend Dignity, Community Kitchen or other social justice issues)	n	0	8	14	53	6	81
	%	0	10	17	65	7	
I understand better what it means to be missional	n	1	9	16	48	7	81
	%	1	11	20	59	9	
I understand better what God's purpose is in the world	n	0	19	19	41	2	81
	%	0	23	23	51	2	
I understand better how we are able to discern the Spirit's leading for the church	n	2	14	16	38	11	81
	%	2	17	20	47	14	
I have a better understanding of the Bible's overarching message because of the Mission series (Jan-Jun) and the Mission and Vision sermons (Sept-Oct)	n	1	7	14	51	8	81
	%	1	9	17	63	10	
I am more hopeful about the future of Pacific Community Church	n	0	6	11	44	20	81
	%	0	7	14	54	25	
The mission and vision process, specifically the congregational forums, provided me an increased way to participate in shaping Pacific's future	n	1	14	16	40	10	81
	%	1	17	20	49	12	
I have a clearer understanding of Pacific's mission and vision	n	0	4	8	46	23	81
	%	0	5	10	57	28	
Pacific's style of leadership is more participatory and collaborative	n	2	11	17	40	11	81
	%	2	14	21	49	14	
I am more convinced that the Spirit of God calls me to participate in God's mission in the world	n	0	8	13	42	18	81
	%	0	10	16	52	22	
Total	n	8	140	179	588	138	1053
	%	1	13	17	56	13	

The results of the self-reflective questions provide a single point-in-time indication of what people experienced and what actions they were more intentional about as a result of the interventions. The combined results from the baseline and endline surveys provide a more measurable perspective through the application of independent t-test.

T-tests are an inferential statistical formula, comparing two means, and is based on hypothesis testing to determine if a null hypothesis is rejected. If the p-value is greater than .05, we fail to reject the null hypothesis and conclude that *there is no significant difference between the means of the variables*. If the p-value is equal to or less than .05, the null hypothesis is rejected and the alternative hypothesis is accepted, leading to the conclusion that *there is a significant difference between the means of the variables*.

The summary of key results focuses primarily on the p-values that measured the levels of significance between the baseline and endline among the groupings. The congregation was asked identical questions in both surveys, which reinforces significant shifts that, I suggest hypothetically, are the result of the missional interventions. Moreover, findings from the qualitative portion of the research add depth, colour, and testimony to the hypothesized trends. The rest of the chapter explores the shifts quantitatively and qualitatively.

Summary of Key Results

A broad range of congregational members—board, staff, leaders, and laypeople—participated in the survey. Eighty-five people completed the survey in December 2011, and eighty-one completed the November 2012 survey. Ninety-two per cent of the baseline respondents and ninety-five per cent of the endline respondents attended CCC

several times a month. Nearly seventy per cent of both the baseline and endline respondents attended CCC for four years or more. Fifty-nine per cent of the baseline respondents and forty-two per cent of the endline respondents served on leadership teams or were team leaders. They included staff, board, and a variety of ministry teams (youth, children, worship, hospitality, etc.). Two groups are highlighted in these key results: the congregational group (all respondents) and the leaders of teams, as they provide the most substantial and relevant data. Seventeen team leaders from the baseline and sixteen team leaders from the endline participated. This reflects substantial participation from the leadership core of the church. Moreover, ninety-five per cent indicated that they participated in the Mission and Vision process. Eighty-two per cent listened to the missional sermon series (January to May) and eighty-seven per cent listened to the mission and vision series (September to October.). Thirty per cent attended the first forum, twenty-five per cent the second, and forty per cent the third. Table three provides a summarized overview of relevant demographics.

Independent t-tests were conducted among a variety of groupings—gender, age, attendance—that revealed consistent returns and offered no differences relevant to the research question. The comparison of the congregational group with the leadership group provided the easiest way to examine the intended change that occurred at CCC. T-tests were also conducted with the congregational group minus the leaders, but the results are not listed since they corresponded closely with the larger congregational group. There were no significant differences identified in questions eight to twenty-nine (Team Health and Collaboration). Questions thirty to forty-seven (Decision-Making and Spirit-Led) evidenced the differences that were most notable. The seventeen questions averaged a

1.04 shift from the baseline average of 3.21 (ok) to an endline average of 4.29 (high). The responses that indicated significance are discussed in more detail below. Table 3 describes the demographics of those who participated in the baseline and endline surveys.

Table 3. Relevant Demographics (BL - baseline; EL - endline)

		BL		EL	
		N	%	N	%
Age					
	1930-1940	18	21	15	18
	1950-1970	54	64	54	67
	1980-Present	13	15	12	15
Length of attendance					
	Three years or less	23	32	25	31
	Four years or more	58	68	56	69
Weekly attendance					
	Several times a month	78	92	77	95
	At least once a month to several times a year	7	8	4	5
Member of a leadership team		46	59	34	42
Lead of leadership team		17	20	16	20
MOMs Leadership Team		6	7	13	16
Total Respondents		85	100	81	100

Team Health and Collaboration Results

Questions eight to twenty-nine, which focused on team health and team collaboration, did not indicate any significant shifts as they focused primarily on inner team dynamics, and, as such, they do not relate directly to the shifts in the congregation at large or in the leadership group. The focus on the major intervention reduced an interest in and focus on any specific team, although what interventions were done provide some quantitative and qualitative feedback.

Decision-Making Results

These are questions addressing decision-making and Spirit-led leadership, and they provided the more significant results (Table 4). Among the decision-making questions, respondents were asked to rate their level of agreement on a five-point scale from low to great for each of the statements. Responses were scored on a five-point Likert scale: very low = 1; low = 2; ok = 3; high = 4; very high = 5. The results of each question indicated a clear direction towards greater agreement from baseline to endline. I refer to each of these positive increases as shifts since they reflect a substantial missional reorientation from a less missional orientation. Out of the eleven questions about decision-making (Table 4), the congregation indicated ten shifts of significance that averaged a move of 1.10 from a baseline average of 3.13 (ok) to and endline average of 4.34 (high). Leaders indicated eight shifts of significance that averaged a move of 1.48 from a baseline average of 3.09 (ok) to an endline average of 4.48 (high). The difference of means is calculated into a negative but represents an increase in agreement from the baseline to the endline.

Table 4. Decision-Making-Comparison of Means (c - congregation; l - leaders)

		BL Mean(N)	EL Mean(N)	diff. of means	df	t-value	p
Q30. Our church values congregational collaboration on significant decisions.	C	3.62 (73)	4.62 (55)	-1.0002	126	-6.629	**.000**
	L	4.00 (17)	4.80 (10)	-.800	25	-3.641	**.001**
Q31.Our church seeks to engage the spiritual gifts of every member.	C	3.07 (72)	4.04 (73)	-.972	143	-5.405	**.000**
	L	3.29 (17)	4.20 (15)	-.906	30	-3.137	**.004**
Q32. Attendees of CCC regularly participate in the decision making of the church.	C	2.79 (66)	3.96 (78)	-1.174	142	-6.036	**.000**
	L	3.06 (17)	3.86 (14)	-.798	29	-1.824	.078

Table 4. (Continued)

Q33. Attendees of CCC are clear about its mission.	C	2.81 (72)	4.24 (72)	-1.431	142	-7.793	**.000**
	L	2.53(16)	4.38 (13)	-1.855	28	-4.250	**.000**
Q34. Attendees of CCC are sacrificially involved in the mission of God.	C	2.94 (66)	3.70 (77)	.762	141	-4.021	**.000**
	L	3.00 (16)	3.53 (15)	-.533	29	-1.517	**.140**
Q35. Decisions tend to be made solely by the pastors and elders of CCC	C	2.63 (72)	2.74 (80)	-.113	150	-.632	.529
	L	2.35 (17)	2.63 (16)	-.272	31	-.779	.445
Q36. Attendees of CCC understand how the church makes decisions	C	2.79 (71)	3.62 (77)	-.835	146	-4.314	**.000**
	L	3.00 (17)	3.73 (15)	-.733	30	-2.058	**.043**
Q37. Attendees of CCC risk trying new things	C	2.78 (69)	3.68 (76)	-.902	143	-4.942	**.000**
	L	2.63 (16)	3.93 (15)	-1.308	29	-.4000	**.000**
Q38. The leaders at CCC equip us, the congregation for ministry	C	3.06 (72)	3.99 (75)	-.931	145	-5.609	**.000**
	L	3.18 (17)	3.94 (16)	-.761	31	-2.243	**.032**
Q39. Our church understands what it means to be missional	C	3.16 (74)	4.18 (71)	-1.021	143	-5.727	**.000**
	L	2.88 (17)	3.92 (13)	-1.041	28	-2.403	**.023**
Q40. Our church is a missional church.	C	3.31 (77)	4.26 (69)	-.949	144	-5.940	**.000**
	L	3.00 (17)	4.14 (14)	-1.143	29	-3.502	**.002**

Spirit-Led Results

Results from the Spirit-led questions also indicated significant shifts (Table 5). Respondents indicated their level of agreement, between two statements, on a seven-point scale from “I strongly agree with statement one” to “I strongly agree with statement two.” Each point of the scale was valued from one to seven, with “I strongly agree with one” valued at one and, “I strongly agree with two,” at seven. Both the congregation and the leadership groups indicated four significant shifts. All but one of the questions in table five increased from the baseline to the endline. Four of the seven questions showed

significance. Among the congregation an average shift of 1.78 occurred from a baseline of 3.38 (agreeing somewhat to statement one) to an endline average of 5.10 (agreeing somewhat to statement two). Leaders, specifically, moved an average of 2.38 from a baseline of 3.13 (agreeing somewhat to statement one) to 5.47 (agreeing somewhat to statement two).

Table 5. Spirit-led Leadership-Comparison of Means

		BL Mean(N)	EL Mean(N)	diff. of means	df	t-value	p
Q41. CCC is a spectator church or CCC is a participatory church.	C	3.97 (78)	4.42 (81)	-.445	157	-1.855	.065
	L	3.65 (17)	4.63 (16)	-.978	31	-1.991	.055
Q42. I sense that decisions at CCC are mostly human-led or I sense that decisions at CCC are mostly Spirit-led.	C	3.27 (78)	5.31 (81)	-2.039	157	-8.832	**.000**
	L	3.18 (17)	5.50 (16)	-2.324	31	-5.335	**.000**
Q43. It is not easy to become a leader at CCC or It is easy to become a leader at CCC.	C	3.72 (78)	4.53 (81)	-.813	157	-3.334	**.001**
	L	3.06 (17)	5.06 (16)	-2.004	31	-4.447	**.000**
Q44. We don't know how to discern the Spirit together to make decisions or We know how to discern the Spirit together to make decisions.	C	3.71 (78)	5.12 (81)	-1.418	157	-6.636	**.000**
	L	3.88 (17)	5.56 (16)	-1.680	31	-4.451	**.000**
Q45. The church can learn a lot from the business world or The church should unlearn what it uses from the business world.	C	4.13 (78)	4.23 (81)	-.106	157	-.484	.629
	L	3.88 (17)	4.69 (16)	-.805	31	-1.600	.121
Q46. Meetings are for leaders to direct members or Meetings are for team members to decide.	C	2.81 (78)	5.44 (81)	-2.637	157	-11.227	**.000**
	L	2.41 (17)	5.75 (16)	-3.338	31	-7.479	**.000**
Q47. Attendees show high ownership of the church or Attendees show low ownership of the church.	C	4.09(78)	3.90 (81)	.189	157	.770	.442
	L	3.76 (17)	4.06 (16)	-.298	31	-.569	.573

Five Key Shifts

Qualitative data corresponded with the quantitative results. The mission and vision process accomplished the task of articulating a mission and vision statement that

clarified CCC's purpose. The result created a growing momentum of energy and excitement as the congregation unified around a shared sense of purpose. Results from question thirty-three (Table 4), "Attendees at CCC are clear about its mission" supports this point. The difference of means ranked first in table four, particularly among the leadership group. The congregation indicated a shift between the baseline and endline of 1.431, moving from a baseline of 2.81 (low) to an endline of 4.24 (high), while leaders had a mean difference of 1.855, moving from a baseline of 2.53 (low) to an endline of 4.38 (high). In contrast to the congregation the leaders moved from beneath the congregational mean to above the congregational mean. The comparative results suggest that leaders expressed greater discomfort about the lack of a clear direction and/or more enthusiastic about a clarified direction. For both the congregation and leaders, the results marked a move from despondency to hopeful activism, which was reflected in the growing attendance at the congregational forums and the unanimous and excited embrace of the Mission and Vision statement.

This research is less interested in the positive outcome of the mission and vision statement, and more interested in how the interventions contributed to the shift from an existing leadership model to that of a Spirit-led model. The results in tables four and five suggest a number of shifts occurred. This chapter highlights five shifts: a leadership shift, a Spirit-led shift, a prophetic shift, a decision-making shift, and a participatory shift.

A Leadership Shift

The greatest shift in table five is the congregation's perception of the role of leaders and the function of a leadership team. The shift in mean in question forty-six, "Meetings are for leaders to direct members," to "Meetings are for team members to

decide" represented a mean shift of 2.637 reinforcing a move to a more collaborative leadership style by congregational members and a 3.338 shift by leaders. The congregational group, alone moved 2.476 from baseline to endline. The shift in means from baseline to endline is significant and substantial. The positive shift affirms the alternative hypothesis that the missional interventions altered people's understanding about how teams make decisions and what team members expect from leaders.

The mission and vision process practiced a different leadership model that provided a *table* where people could gather and discuss the core issues at stake. "None of my previous churches," the Senior Pastor commented, "have done it like this." "There is always an opportunity to … 'come sit at the table with us.'" Moreover, he stated, "There wasn't anybody to lead us through a process." What occurred throughout the process was a team who not only focused on scribing a mission and vision statement but who collectively planned and facilitated the congregational dialogue. In Scott Cormode's terms, the leadership paradigm shifted from a leader as builder to a leader as cultivator.[7] An *aha* moment in the last MVT meeting underscored the surprise of the team itself when one of the key board members commented, "I think it is amazing that you [Senior Pastor] had five messages on this [mission and vision statement] and it hasn't been endorsed by the Board yet."

"That is interesting!" replied the Senior Pastor. "The preaching was part of the forum," I added, beginning to connect some thoughts In my own mind. "Absolutely," emphasized the Board member. "That allows the Holy Spirit to work," stated the Senior Pastor.

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[7] Cormode, "Multi-Layered Leadership: The Christian Leader as Builder, Shepherd and Gardener," 90.

By placing the congregational forums, as we did, with the final one ending at the end of the sermon series, we folded the sermon series event into the broader conversational process. The messages presented a provisional set of statements that remained open for discussion. The conversation shifted to a comparison of the first sermon series of thirteen sermons, with the five sermons on the mission and vision. I repeated what the Senior Pastor remarked about the thirteen-week series some time earlier, "I preached but there was no transformation." I contrasted that comment with what we were saying about this second sermon series. The first was all content, I described, this first sermon series, I remarked, "seems so different than the last sermon series…it provided a potentially more transformative process."

"Absolutely," the Senior Pastor exclaimed, "It shows that the gifts of teaching and preaching must be side by side with gifts of leadership and administration, or there will be frustration." "Or," added the Board member, "there is no transformation …it is all intellectual." "That is right," replied the Senior Pastor, "using the gifts of everybody, yes. What has been the most transformational for me, I think, is being able to lead, teach, and preach in an environment where there are so many people at work together using their gifts to facilitate action and an action plan. In many ways the whole church was invited into that."

"The Spirit is going to speak through all of us," we agreed. This single theological assertion had been reverberating throughout the process. It was recognized that, though the gifts of the Spirit may work in different ways and at different times in people, fundamentally, we believed that this conversational process was to be a shared process because the Spirit of God works through many—not just a few or an anointed one.

Leadership paradigms tend to centralize not only power, but also celebrate a special spiritual *anointing* upon individual leaders. Like Moses, who went up Mount Sinai to receive God's ten big words, so our understandings of leadership tend to celebrate and reinforce the lone leader who needs to climb up a mountain on their own and come down to persuade the masses. In its place, a model of leadership in keeping with Pentecost and Acts 15 was practiced and developed.

The change is reflected in the shift in mean in question forty-three: "It is not easy to become a leader at CCC or it is easy to become a leader at CCC." The congregation shifted .813 from a baseline of 3.72 to an endline result of 4.53. Leaders expressed a substantially greater shift of 2.004 from a baseline of 3.06 to an endline of 5.06. Both means suggest a shift from one way of leadership to a new way of leadership. In a Spirit-led, missionally framed model, it can be argued that the leadership community is more expansive and resists more centralized models of authority. Increasing numbers of leaders who are able to collaborate, discern, and decide about actions consistent with God's purposes expand the power of the community. As people's gifts are engaged in mission and more leaders are equipped effectively for Spirit-led ministry, the capacity and presence of the church increases in its local context. For instance, as more congregational members chose to be Emmaus group leaders in their neighbourhood, or others chose to lead discipling groups, the capacity of the church expanded by extending the reach of the church into the community. Instead of constricting power to a single team or person, a Spirit-led model seeks to release many to become kingdom agents. This translates into people's perceptions about engaging meaningfully and purposefully in the mission of God as suggested by the self-report responses.

A Spirit-Led Shift

The second and third ranking results in table five, question forty-two and forty-four, indicate significant shifts in how people perceived decision-making and being led by the Spirit. Question forty-two had a congregational shift of 2.039 from a baseline mean of 3.27 to an endline mean of 5.31 as people indicated that decisions were less human-led and more Spirit-led. There was a greater leadership shift of 2.324 from a baseline of 3.18 to an endline of 5.50. Question forty-four reflected the congregation's sense of competency in discerning the Spirit. The congregation shifted 1.418 from a baseline 3.71 to an endline of 5.12. Leaders shifted 1.68 from a baseline of 3.88 to an endline of 5.56. The shifts are substantial and indicate that the mission and vision process engaged people in a large congregation process with a purpose to discern the Spirit. This highlights a significant shift by the congregation, which had generally attributed a specific visionary trait to a gifted leader. Now the congregation embraces a more Spirit-led approach where the community can discern the Spirit's direction together.

When I gathered some of my initial statistics, I emailed them to the Senior Pastor and the Board member who were on the MVT. The Board member replied,

> Great to see that you now have statistics to verify what the Spirit has already been showing us! I choose to discard the thought that our human wisdom has produced great results, and instead choose to faithfully state that there has been a movement of the Spirit. He has been going before us—directing the choice and preparation of sermons and the planning and actions we take. He has also given us a new infilling of our people. Let's give Him the praise!

The quantitative results suggest that the year of interventions cultivated a greater awareness that the Spirit was leading the church. The MVT was fashioned with a goal that the team would be "formed not on the principle of equal representation, but rather on

the principle of engaged people who are able to handle varieties of opinions, provide capable biblical and theological insight, and *are dependent on the Spirit's leading*."

The renewed level of competence perhaps came as a result of specific actions articulated in the mission and vision statement and the new opportunities to which the congregation was able to respond (Discipleship groups, Emmaus groups, Community Kitchen). Two sets of results suggest that, as a result of the interventions, congregational members felt more equipped and freer to use their gifts in the ministry of the church. The congregational mean shifted significantly in two relevant statements (Table 4): "The leaders at CCC equip us, the congregation, for ministry," question thirty-eight shifted .931 from a baseline of 3.06 to 3.99; "Our church seeks to engage the spiritual gifts of every member," question thirty-one shifted .972 from 3.07 to 4.04. Moreover, the responses to question thirty-seven "attendees of CCC risk trying new things" suggested a renewed creativity that, perhaps, underscores people's sense of being freshly led by the Spirit into new, uncharted challenges. On the one hand, the congregation .902 from a baseline of 2.78, while on the other hand, the leaders shifted 1.308 from a baseline of 2.63. The three key initiatives of the mission and vision underscore a growing creativity and willingness to participate in the mission of God. The goals not only sought to intentionally disciple members, but to invite members to leave their "provincial comforts and boldly cross into different cultures…so that we, and those we seek to reach, may be transformed by the love of God (see Appendix H)."

Rendle and Mann, whose text, *Holy Conversations,* I used as the source of my teaching, provided a framework for a congregational conversation. They pointed out that

planning is about finding more than agreement.[8] Agreement and consensus among each other is not the goal. Rather, in line with Rendle and Mann, I taught, "Planning helps people to risk making a commitment to a purpose that is sufficiently compelling to bring faithful change." "The vision process," I said at the Board presentation, "if it seeks to discern the Spirit's leading and wrestle with God's Word, should compel us to move beyond our simple comforts to love boldly, courageously, and redemptively for the sake of the world." The process, I asserted at the launch of the congregational process and at each of the forums, "…is a not a democratic consensus but a courageous response to God's direction and mission in the world." The conversation was a dialogue about CCC's identity with a goal to claim its own story within the unfolding biblical story.

The second highest-ranking shift on table four reinforces the effort made by the MVT to engage a congregational conversation. The congregation's baseline and endline responses to "Our church values congregational collaboration on significant decisions," question thirty, revealed a 1.000) shift from a baseline of 3.62. This was greater than the leadership shift of .800 from a baseline of 4.00. This highlights a greater sense on the congregation's part that they felt more involved in the decision-making of the church. Hypothetically, I can assert that the mission and vision intervention corresponded directly with this shift. The leadership group already had a higher mean at the baseline for this question, which suggests that they felt that there was already a high degree of collaboration that only increased as a result of the mission and vision process.

Question forty-five (Table 5), "The church can learn a lot from the business world or the church should unlearn what it uses from the business world," did not show any

[8] Rendle and Mann, *Holy Conversations: Strategic Planning as a Spiritual Practice for Congregations*, xxii.

statistical significance. The mean stayed relatively even between the baseline and endline, 4.17 for both the congregational group and the congregational group without leaders, which is more or less a neutral reading on a scale of one to seven. However, when the three groups are examined closely, the leadership group showed an increasing inclination (.805) to reject what it uses from the business world by twenty-one per cent in contrast to the others who averaged a.033 increase. Although the p-value does not allow us to reject the null hypothesis, it is, nevertheless, intriguing to note, that the leaders were increasingly moving away from endorsing corporate leadership models. Perhaps this is a slight indication of a growing desire to develop a Spirit-led leadership model.

A Prophetic Shift

The Community Kitchen is the most tangible and public expression of the new mission and vision statement. The Mission and Vision process coincided with a growing need to feed and serve the homeless, thus the need for a commercial-grade kitchen. In September 2011, CCC responded to a request by Cloverdale civic leaders to open our church to serve the homeless and marginalized who needed food. CCC's welcome response to that request created new partnerships with two local churches and the City. The city granted $27,000 to help upgrade our inadequate kitchen facilities to a commercial scale kitchen. On November 18, the same date CCC ratified the new mission and vision statements, the congregation affirmed the launch of a $400,000 *Community Kitchen* campaign.

The initiative fit seamlessly with the mission and vision. It was endorsed as an extension of our weekly communion table where all, including those hungry and in need, could gather around tables. More importantly, eating with the needy was more about

creating a genuine Christian community and less about being gracious benefactors to the less fortunate—it was about partnering in a mutually transformative meal. Presently, three different church communities who each oversee a meal option per week are serving seventy meals. It had a troubling start, and the trouble inspired the initiative.

Two weeks into the start of the program a homeless person died. Although he died of heart-related issues, doctors identified that he had salmonella poisoning. This diagnosis required the local health authority to investigate the source of the salmonella. As a result, they knocked on our church door and nearly closed the kitchen initiative. The kitchen neither met food-safe standards, nor could it in its present state. The ongoing capacity of CCC to host the partners and the meals was at stake. The health inspector decided to turn a temporary blind eye, which allowed CCC to discuss the future of the project. The Board decided to advance on a kitchen renovation project, securing support from civic leaders. November 18 launched a campaign that would seek $150,000 of pledged support from CCC and $150,000 of pledged support from the broader community to establish a community kitchen at the church.

Twenty thousand dollars of surplus funds from a previous renovation project, along with the Surrey Homelessness and Housing grant, spearheaded the way. CCC's move into this social justice territory represents a significant shift. Addressing social justice issues, particularly in partnership with secular community social agencies, is an entirely new step in the church and generally uncommon in the denomination. Theological and biblical frameworks, particularly an ecclesiological identity, needed to move to re-imagine the church as a place to network with community agencies and address shared problems with a more synergized effort. Instead of seeing social work as a

means to rescue people's souls (i.e. a means to an end), the social initiative might evidence a genuine extension of the church's role in the community, representing more of an *end* than a *means*.

The kitchen initiative corresponded with another social justice initiative that reinforced the identity shift. CCC hosted a community-wide information night called *Defend Dignity*. It addressed the issue of prostitution, human slavery, and violence against women.

The two initiatives evidence a growing emphasis of the congregation to be engaged in community issues. It derives from a renewed understanding of being a "prophetic presence" in our immediate community. Results from two statements reinforce this new activism (Table 4): "Our church is a missional church (Q40)," and "Our church understands what it means to be missional (Q39)." The congregational mean shifted significantly on both statements. The congregation shifted by thirty .949 from a baseline 3.31 (ok) to an endline of 4.26 (high) for question forty and, in question thirty-nine, there was a1.021 shift from of 3.16 (ok) to 4.18 (high). In comparison to the leader group, the mean also shifted 1.143 from a baseline of 3.00 (ok) to 4.14 (high), and in the question thirty-nine 1.041 from a baseline 2.99 (low) to 4 (high). Of interest is the greater shift by the leaders, although only slightly. Leaders who were more informed about what missional means, perhaps, were less inclined at the baseline to assert that CCC was missional, whereas the endline results suggest a greater confidence by leaders that the church was being more missional.

In one of his missional sermons, the Senior Pastor showed a poignant picture of an African sculpture of the Samaritan woman standing above Jesus. "Jesus is sitting. He

is tired. He is without a bucket. He is thirsty," he said. He highlighted that "Jesus does not come as the imperial power, but as the humble babe in a manger, and here, as the thirsty traveler, asks, 'Woman, would you help me by giving me a drink from your bucket.'" The image graphically demonstrated an emerging new orientation within CCC's conservative and evangelical tradition. It was less about doing service as a means to save somebody, and, instead, it was about becoming a companion with others in the world.

He related companionship to one of the existing church partners who exchange rent payments for the weekly use of our building with work around our facilities and in our ministries. It is a day program for special-need adults who use our sanctuary to rehearse for their semi-annual drama productions. They also need work experience. The exchange works great for them and us. Here is how he explained CCC's relationship with them:

> A group of special needs adults uses our facility to rehearse and perform musicals and plays. We don't charge them. It is our gift to them. But how then would we not be in a position of power over them? How do they maintain human dignity? How are they to look at themselves as more than just the church's charitable cause, our "social justice" project? Sometimes social justice only makes the giver feel good, but dehumanizes the recipient. But in this case, I can tell you these special adults are not our pet project but companions. Have you ever driven by here in the fall when the leaves are being raked into huge piles to be taken away? Guess who's doing it? In fact, our special needs friends are learning real job skills at CCC. They wash our kitchen towels, clean the garbage out the parking lot, and provide a lot of the labour for the Christmas Hamper program.

As the MVT pressed toward finalizing the mission and vision statement, we dialogued a lot about our missional role in the world as it related to social justice issues. While crafting a result clause in the global transformation vision sentence some pressed: "I wonder if we could include the transformation of ourselves?" they asked. "We need the poor. We need the Samaritan in order to experience the transformed life. Right? Part

of the reason why we boldly cross different cultures is so that they can encounter the gospel so that we can encounter Christ in them."

A Decision-Making Shift

A further shift seems to have occurred in the decision-making experience of the church. Three sets of results are suggestive. First, question thirty-five, the lowest ranking in table four, "Decisions tend to be made solely by the pastors and elders," had the lowest baseline and endline means among all the questions. The endline results showed no significant change for the congregation (.113) or the leaders (.272). The results are informative since we see that the implemented mission and vision process did not centralize decision-making onto staff or the board. Generally, the mission and vision is the primary responsibility of the governing board and the senior leaders. A common tendency during any consequential decision-making would be toward centralized leadership practice. That did not happen at CCC. The p-value was above .05 and, thus, we *fail* to reject the null hypothesis and cannot accept an alternate hypothesis. This is encouraging since it provided a reverse verification on the interventions. More spectacular would have been a shift to a lesser mean from the baseline to the endline; that it remained constant reinforces the hypothesis that the interventions had an impact on shifting the congregation and leaders of CCC to a more collaborative environment.

Second, the results for question thirty-six (Table 4), "Attendees of CCC understand how the church makes decisions," had a significant shift. The congregation shifted by .835 from a baseline of 2.79 (low) and the leaders by.733 from a baseline of 3.00). The results reinforced that congregational members and leaders increased their understanding about how decisions are made at CCC.

Third, responses to question thirty-two (Table 4), "Attendees of CCC regularly participate in the decision-making of the church," showed significant change. The congregation, already indicating a high level of participation at the baseline, indicated an increased level of participation of 1.174 from a baseline 2.79 (low) to 3.96 (ok). Leaders increased by .798 from a baseline of 3.06. The congregational mean, without leaders, increased 1.238!

The three sets of responses underscore the significant shift that occurred at CCC in the year that the mission and vision process was implemented. The mission and vision process employed a decision-making plan that provided for extensive participation by a variety of stakeholders. The mission and vision process, at the outset, was characterized by an expected, extroverted communication style using emails, web postings, and Sunday service announcements. Although the MVT would meet on their own to study and scribe, the process it facilitated included significant opportunities for stakeholders to learn through the messages, dialogue through the forums, and participate in crafting the finalized statements. The technique modeled a decision-making process, which equipped the church into a new way of making decisions together. The result, stated in the terms of the posed statement, is that the congregation had a clearer understanding of the decision-making process. Since the most significant decision between the baseline and endline was about mission and vision, I can conclude that the process in developing the mission and vision statements was the leading stimulus.

A Participatory Shift

The self-reflection questions that were added in the endline survey represent increased participation in a number of transformative practices. This is reinforced by the

statement, "Attendees of CCC are sacrificially involved in the mission of God" found in question thirty-four (Table 4). The congregation shifted .762 from a baseline mean of 2.94 (low). Potentially, this shift could be the result of a number of factors. However, the congregation's response to participating in discipleship groups, Emmaus groups, and their support and involvement with the Community Kitchen project, suggested that people have chosen to embrace new transformative practices that require significant sacrificial involvement. The Leadership group's shift of means to the statement (Q37) in Table 4, "Attendees of CCC risk trying new things," increased by1.308 from a baseline of 2.63 (low) to 3.93 (ok) suggesting that CCC was willing to engage in new initiatives that required substantially new commitments to live out the mission of God in their world.

The Emmaus story of Luke 25 emerged as a biblical theme for what CCC was experiencing. It was the third meeting of the MVT. We were struggling to frame CCC's identity by finding a relevant biblical story. We separated into three pairs to explore key biblical themes or passages that might be foundational to helping us to identify ourselves within the biblical story. Those of us who were part of CCC's *Great Sadness* selected stories like David and Bathsheba, Jonah and the whale, Samson, the Prodigal Son, and other biblical narratives that centered around the failure and shame of faithlessness. "We had the cloak of humility," commented one of the team members, "but we were not. We collapsed." Another added, we "talked about Jesus preaching about the clean and the unclean. Clean on the outside but the inside? That described us."

"But we have to look to the future, right?" asked another member. "The problem with these stories," another added, "is that these stories are not life giving." Back and

forth the team wrestled with its past and its future until the Emmaus passage was revisited (Luke 24:13-35):

> I am really partial to Emmaus…I do see a lot of similarities between our present experience and the whole Emmaus experience because I see many of our people going through a world view shift. Cleopas and his wife had a faulty world view. They were confused and downhearted. Jesus changed their world view and said "you have not understood the scripture correctly." The gospel transformed them. Their hearts burned within them. There was an experiential thing that they encountered. Then there is the hospitality at the table. Come to the table. Jesus assumes the host—the role of the host. Breaks bread in a Eucharistic fashion and so their eyes are opened and they see that it is Jesus through the breaking of bread.

"I like that it is relational," a member added, "Jesus comes right into it." Another reflected, "I was seeing if there was another story, like the Ethiopian, but it doesn't have the same presence of Christ at the table as the Emmaus story does." Another emphasized, "It does capture the sacramental element, the Spirit element, the only thing that is a bit of a stretch is that the mission is going to the city. That is…." And before the person could finish the sentence, the Senior Pastor asserted, "They did run! They ran away from their home in order to make sure they got their story corroborated."

The text began to resonate and it eventually developed into the conceptual framework of creating Emmaus groups within our own neighbourhoods—creating communities where we could expect Christ to show up. The story embodied the themes of desolation and consolation that could both frame CCC's past and inspire its future. It also drew a direct line of connection between the weekly practice of communion and a new missional practice of cultivating missional communities in our neighbourhoods. Moreover, the Emmaus story reinforced the emerging leadership model, a model which invited people to the table to discuss and experience the presence of Jesus Christ through the work of the Spirit.

Summary

The result of the qualitative and quantitative research provided significant data as it relates to the research question: *To what extent will a series of missional interventions help CCC adapt to being more collaborative and participative as a Spirit-led missionary people?* The missional interventions sought to cultivate a more collaborative and participative community that faithfully participates in the mission of God. Collaboration and participation are seen to be two key attributes of a Spirit-led community. The shifts experienced at CCC resulted from a change of leadership models that created more opportunity for the congregation to engage in the decision-making of the church. Specifically, that leadership model was framed within a conversational framework that allowed leaders and congregation members to mutually discern the Spirit's leading for CCC.

The findings suggest that five substantial shifts were experienced at CCC. First, a leadership shift engaged the congregation in a process of making-meaning together, resulting in a compelling mission and vision statement that inspired congregation-wide action. Second, a Spirit-led shift embodied by the congregation-wide discernment model. Third, a prophetic shift, which represented a significant theological shift oriented to becoming companions with others in the world. Fourth, a decision-making shift suggested an expansive capacity for laypeople to become activated in mission and become leaders within that mission. Finally, a participatory shift indicated a renewed embrace of God's mission and of the world—locally and globally.

On the basis of these qualitative and quantitative data, it can be reasonably asserted that the missional interventions had a significant impact on equipping the

congregation to be more Spirit-led, to be more collaborative, to be more participative, and to be more engaged in the mission of God. Chapter six develops these themes more directly.

CHAPTER SIX

RESEARCH REFLECTIONS

Introduction

The action research involved CCC in a collaborative discernment process. The research methodology promised to be, not only a means to do research, but a transformative journey to cultivate a Spirit-led learning community. The research and the church's desire coincided so that my research, on the one hand, could recommend missionally-informed interventions, and, on the other hand, participate in a collaborative endeavor to discern the Spirit's leading in this particular congregation. The research was less interested in the positive outcomes of the mission and vision process and more interested in how the interventions contributed to shifting from one leadership model to another. The goal of the research was to observe the Spirit's activity at CCC and, perhaps, suggest valuable insights about how the Spirit moves and shapes a community and its leadership structures.

Seeking to understand the Spirit seems, initially, to be in conflict with what Jesus taught about the Spirit: "The wind blows wherever it pleases. You hear its sound, but you cannot tell where it comes from or where it is going" (John 3:8). We commonly interpret this statement to mean that the Spirit is mysterious and moves in indiscernible ways. Paul's letter to the Galatians exhorted, however, that "since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit" (Galatians 5:25). He implies that the Spirit's ways are discernible. The wind metaphor suggests more of a force and less of a mystery.

This chapter represents the emergence of a new leadership model that resulted from my research with CCC. Changes in the church's life, prior to the research, inspired new practices and new thinking. Primary among the changes was weekly communion—a potent practice within a Christian community. It reshaped the community's sense of identity and purpose and drew the community toward a greater appreciation of the dynamic relationship between the Spirit and leadership.

In a seminar to train Elders at CCC, Bob Rose, a retired District executive, CMA College and Seminary President, and chairperson of CCC's Board, entitled his talk to Elders: *The Lord's Table and the Board Table*. His connection between the two tables was straightforward. The way we live around the Lord's Table shapes the way we live around the board table. CCC's liturgy around the table emphasizes the love of the Father, our dependence on the work of Christ, and the ongoing renewing work of the Spirit in the church and world. The table celebrates the welcome and promise of Jesus instead of being a rite of passage that approves or rewards the faithful.

As lay people offer the bread and wine, leaders, pastors, members, and visitors make their way to the Table to receive the elements that promise life for now and the future. The Table expands our sense of identity by understanding the church's role as being hospitable to the world. *Extending the Table* became a synonym of evangelism (Community Kitchen and Emmaus Groups). The weekly practice around the Table diminished the distinctions that often separate church members into distinguishable groupings: leaders, laypeople, elders, the spiritually mature, and the newcomers. Parading to the Table together puts us all into one reality—a community dependent on the ways and direction of the Spirit.

The new way of leadership Jesus declared and demonstrated at the Table was a difficult lesson for the disciples to embrace (Luke 22: 7-38). Church history and present-day practice indicate the same struggle. After Jesus explained the difference between his way of leadership and the world's way of leadership, the disciples still considered their two swords necessary to address the future (Luke 22:38). "That's enough!" Jesus replied to their willing sacrifice. From that moment, Jesus made his way, in increasingly lonely fashion, to the cross.

Cruciform stewardship was a term used in chapter 4 to describe the character of Christian leadership. It describes the life-giving way of Christ demonstrated at the Table and on the cross. Jesus absorbs the darkness and rejection of the world's way of power and replaces it with the divine way of power. Jesus bestows this new way onto the disciples to steward, cultivate, and practice. He commands them to await the coming of the Spirit—Pentecost. The church is born on that day, a Spirit-created community, a community that remains led by the Spirit.

The combination of the new Table practice and the emphasis on Spirit-led participation contributed to a new leadership practice at CCC. The change was palpable enough that it confounded a children's pastor who recently joined our staff. Like any staff member, she needed to address issues that she encountered in her ministry. She sat me and the Senior Pastor down to discuss one of them. She presented a solution to the problem. She was not sure if she had the ministry team's support, but she had to address the problem quickly, she reasoned. As the leader, she asserted that she would have to make a unilateral decision and show the way for her team. "This is what leaders do," she argued. The Senior Pastor and I nearly responded at the same time. He said, "You should

talk to your leadership team. Ask them what they think. Make the decision together." Then both of us went back and forth suggesting that she replace her approach with a more collaborative approach. I am confident such a conversation would not have happened a year or two before. The tendency would have been to cheer on the leader to lead the charge. Leadership practices shifted at CCC.

Spirit-led Leadership

Six themes emerged from the findings to describe Spirit-led leadership. A leadership example from CCC's past serves well to provide a contrasting backdrop to the shift of leadership experienced during the mission and vision process. This leads to a general description of Spirit-led leadership that sets up a development of six themes that interact with the variety of theoretical and theological/biblical lenses developed in chapters three and four.

A Contrast to a Spirit-led Model

In 1997, CCC was addressing growth issues. Existing worship space was inadequate, or soon would be inadequate, as the average growth rate of the church was between 35-44% a year, and there were minimal facilities that could accommodate. A facilities report was developed for the advisory committee—the closest thing to a board in those days—with a purpose to recommend ways to address space issues. Recommendations for the size of the building required speculation about future growth rates. The committee suggested a doubling of the City's expected growth rate listed in the city's *Official Community Plan*—17.8% in 1997 and 9.8% in 2000. "After much discussion and prayer," the minutes recorded that the Senior Pastor "urged the Committee

to use a growth rate of 44%" instead. Future projections should be based on the actual growth rate, argued the Senior Pastor. At the Senior Pastor's urging, the committee

Table 6. Attendance Figures 1991-1996

Year	Attend Avg.	% change
1991	93	
1992	85	-9
1993	99	17
1994	166	68
1995	330	99
1996	342	4
Average		36

amended all their projection figures to reflect new growth projections. The team then projected that the church would grow from 342 in 1996 to 6522 by 2003. They recommended a potential $4.6 million purchase of a 30,000 square foot facility with a minimum worship space for 1000 people. By 2002, however, CCC was meeting in a half-completed building, attendance averaged below 700, and the *Great Sadness* was about to begin with the consecutive moral failures of two Senior Pastors. Leadership systems collapsed, ownership dwindled, and CCC experienced a leadership crisis, which inspired new openness for a different leadership model.

This example illustrates the model of leadership embedded in CCC's culture that corresponded to the prevailing leadership culture operative in the Christian and Missionary Alliance. The Senior Pastor was the primary authoritative leader. Congregational members deferred to the spiritual authority of the primary leader.[1] In

[1] In contrast to standard C&MA polity CCC did not establish an authorized Board of Elders co-responsible for decision-making. The lack of an authoritative Board heightened the centralization of power upon one person. CCC would be considered an eccentric case (a deviation of the normal pattern) within the C&MA. Nevertheless, the structure of leadership was endorsed as it was not challenged; moreover, the

terms of the 44% growth projections, the advisory team and the congregation deferred to the leader's discernment. The projections assumed a huge load of responsibility and expectation. There was the burden of costs for those who attended and the burden of performance for those leading the church. One person out of the twenty-one who attended a forum indicated that they were "not too enthusiastic about buying or building based on projections." Ninety-five per cent of the attendees favored moving forward with a search for a suitable building. They also indicated a strong preference for leasing instead of purchasing. Fifty percent of the respondents expressed cautious reserve about incurring debt. CCC leadership, however, moved in a different direction, and in the words of one forum attendee, they were "hoping for a miracle." Although key leaders researched and provided a recommendation for future space issues and a forum of community members provided feedback to the recommendation, the decision made did not reflect the concerns raised or the alternatives considered. It betrayed a constricted understanding of the Spirit's ways and a limited collaborative capacity to arrive at a shared and agreed-upon decision.

A Definition of Spirit-Led Leadership

This leadership example is a contrast to the Spirit-led leadership intentionally cultivated during the mission and vision process. It describes a *leader-centric model* in contrast to a *Spirit-centric model*. Fundamental to a Spirit-led model is the recognition that the Spirit leads through the observations, voices, perspectives, and wisdom of many who intentionally engage in a conversation to discern the leading of the Spirit. This value

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Senior Pastor was celebrated in the C&MA as one who was showing a new way of leadership and CCC's ministry growth was validating it.

is based upon the outpouring of the Spirit at Pentecost and the discernment process demonstrated in Acts 15.

CCC indicated a desire for a new way of leadership because of the *Great Sadness*. Leaders confessed in a public statement that they needed to pursue God's best ways for leadership and develop a healthier and more biblical community of accountable, servant-leadership. We idolized the leader, the church confessed. But what is that new way of leadership? Alternatives to the existing culture of leadership tend to be remixes of traditional themes that reinforce leader-centric approaches to decision-making. Without an alternative model, solutions to the problematic leadership culture revert to more traditional and popular notions. The straightforward solution to the church's problems would be to find a stronger and more spiritual leader who can grow the church and keep their personal life intact and congruent with their public life. Two perspectives competed. On the one hand, some highlighted a problematic leadership culture that needed to address congregational practices of leadership. On the other hand, problematic leaders were highlighted who needed to address issues of character and practice. The two perspectives overlapped. A leader influences a culture. A culture shapes a person. Rarely, however, do we have the opportunity to focus on a culture. Two reasons short-change our willingness to address leadership culture: (1) the urgency to call the next leader, and (2) the difficulty and complexity for a community to work through such a cultural dynamic. The thesis reflects a sustained effort to explore and think through leadership for the sake of the church.

Scott Cormode's biblical description of three leadership models, builder, gardener and shepherd, provides a way to frame what I describe as a Spirit-led model of

leadership. The leader as builder model represents the leader-centric model. The leader as shepherd represents the "We need a healthier and more biblical community" side. I will call it a people-centric model of leadership. The two sides characterize two primary models of leadership operative in people's imagination. The builder model represents a more autocratic style of leadership, and the shepherd model represents a more democratic style. Weaving the two together is problematic. The servant-leader model is one well-known approach that reframes the character of leadership so that the relationship of the leader and people is healthier. However, essentially, the servant leadership model remains a leader-centric model.

The research explored a third way of leadership—Spirit-led leadership—which is broadly represented by Cormode's description of the leader as gardener. This alternative model of leadership, on the one hand, makes room for skilled and expert leaders, but, on the other hand, makes room for meaningful and significant collaboration in making-decisions. Both of these sides are woven together in the singular pursuit to discern the Spirit's direction collaboratively and to commit together in actions consistent with the direction of the Spirit that result in increased levels of participation and involvement with God's mission.

Six reflections about Spirit-led leadership emerge out of the research. First, Spirit-led leadership is a participatory form of leadership rooted in the mutuality of the Trinity. Second, Spirit-led leadership recognizes the transforming energy of dismay that can serve to open a community to new life-giving ways of life. Third, Spirit-led leadership seeks to cultivate a biblical and theological world of meaning in order to interpret the times and decide on Spirit-led actions. Fourth, models of leadership can either restrict or release the

work of the Spirit. Fifth, action-oriented conversation is the communicative medium of Spirit-led leadership. Finally, Spirit-led leadership cultivates a learning community that is continually open to the renewing work and leading of the Spirit.

Trinity and Participatory Leadership

The early church created alternative ways of leadership and community in contrast to the stable and dominant Roman world. Christians "adapted governance practices and traditions they knew," argued Rasmussen, "but they also initiated new ones when, in their judgment, these kept faith with the way of Christ and made for the upbuilding of community in the Spirit."[2] The challenge to adapt leadership practices and traditions remain the same for the church today. Ongoing developments in Trinitarian theology provide creative incentive to examine existing ways in light of the Trinity. Christians can learn from the early church, not in order to copy them, but, to test the spirits of their age and cultivate a leadership paradigm that remains true to the participatory and collaborative impulses apparent in the Spirit-led life and ministry of Jesus.

Leadership challenges opened up new leadership perspectives for CCC. The Trinity inspired a new imagination as reflected in one of the seven Distinctives crafted prior to the mission and vision process (see appendix G):

> We are a people who desire our relationships to reflect the community of our three-in-one God. By looking at Jesus, we will clearly see him in relationship with the Father and the Holy Spirit. As we are drawn into the fellowship of the Trinity, our earthly relationships with one another will begin to reflect our understanding of the Trinitarian nature of God, not our own relational needs and desires. We long to reflect the relationship within the Trinity, where each member is co-equal

[2] Rasmussen, "Shaping Communities," 113.

> with one another, lives with and for the other, serving, cherishing, and honouring the other.

The relationality of the Trinity presented a relational model of leadership. The mission and vision created an opportunity to position leaders within a conversational process that engaged the members of the church. The process provided a variety of venues for many voices to contribute to the development of the statements and the agreed upon actions. People's responses to the forums included their sense that the Spirit was directing us. People expressed contrarian opinions. Solutions arose from voices other than primary leaders. Members highlighted areas of needs or gaps in ministry. People agreed about the next steps. Lay leaders expressed values and passions. Pastoral leaders, in the midst of the conversations, provided and offered theological and biblical perspectives. Words, meanings, passages, and practices from a varied set of voices contributed to the formation of the statements and the actions embodied in the statements. The process led me to conclude that Spirit-led leadership thrives in a participatory environment in contrast to a hierarchical environment. The mutuality of the Trinity provides a model of relational life, which is reflected in the way the Spirit works and moves in the human community.

The conversations were transformational. People's thinking changed as they engaged the process. The push of the past and the pull of the future created a degree of tension and uncertainty that allowed new and old insights to mix and combine into new ways of thinking and new ways of life. New meaning developed as conversations worked through competing ideas, contrasting observations, and assorted theological perspectives. This new meaning is the fruit of a community's vital theological discourse that seeks to understand God's way in a particular location. A diversity of voices had to work through

a time of confusion toward a shared understanding about where the Spirit was leading the church. Conversations progressed from meeting to meeting with themes and ideas being recycled and reflected on in new ways. The conversations were church wide. Conversations at the mission and vision team level were replicated throughout the community in forums and unplanned, spontaneous conversations. It resulted in a faithful and courageous response to God's mission.

Two things contributed to the energetic involvement and creativity. First, there was the pressure of time constraints. It forced a degree of anxious attention as due dates emerged. Second, there was time to go back and forth. Due dates drew the team forward and compelled it toward a courageous push in development. Each forum demanded the next step that would take us further on the journey. The degree of *we-need-to-get-something-done* set within *let-us-listen* feedback loops allowed for encouragement, new insight, and creative pushes forward. It also allowed the team to measure levels of agreement as indicators of whether they were going in the right direction. The conversation could not be controlled or managed. Agendas for meetings and forums were loosely constructed, allowing potential directions to emerge.

As leaders, we were surprised at the last forum. We expected one or two of the vision statement action items to be the primary content of the meeting. But we left the agenda open by asking each participant to indicate with three stickers the primary items we should discuss. Four items were selected that shaped the conversation and focus of decision-making.

It cultivated a fruitful and creative context as order emerged out of the mix of contributions. Such an environment is in contrast to the idea of a leader seeking an

independent, contemplative space to discern God's will and then deliver it to the masses. Certainly there were moments of independent insight in CCC's own process, but these insights were fed back into the process to be tested and considered. Some stuck. Others did not. The process highlights how collaborative conversations with a goal toward decision-making are perhaps too quickly disregarded because leaders fear conflict, disagreement, and the uncontrollable inefficiencies of unpredictable conversation. The process encouraged the expression of diversity with a confident hope that a Spirit-led conversation could lead to a shared outcome that was faithful to participating in God's mission. Forums and team meetings included a prayerful awareness that we were engaging a spiritual process—a holy conversation that included the participation of the Trinity.

The role of Christian leadership is to "participate with God in Christ's leading of the church by the Spirit," argues Jim Horsthuis.[3] Participatory leadership that allows a diversity of voices requires a context of trust. The church needs to trust the Spirit and the Spirit working through each other. The Trinitarian reality of mutual service grounds a community's capacity to trust each other. The "movement of grace" that characterizes the Trinity, described by Horsthuis, engendered CCC's conversational environment and is the means by which churches can engage diversity. "In this way," argues Horsthuis, "power will not be used to control but to encourage, guide, and excite."[4]

Zscheile indicated five implications that would result from a Trinitarian emphasis: reconciled diversity, a cruciform model of leadership, a shared team-based approach,

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[3] Horsthuis, "Participants with God: A Perichoretic Theology of Leadership," 95.

[4] Ibid., 96.

collaborative decision-making, and leaders who function as icons pointing beyond themselves to the Trinitarian life they share with others.[5] These implications were evident in the mission and vision process.

Joseph Rost's emphasis on the participatory nature of leadership, Jürgen Habermas' emphasis on communicative action, and Gerben Heitink's emphasis on humanity as the means through which the mission of God works underscores the dynamic reality of a Spirit-led participatory congregation. The way a community structures leadership and community strongly determines how it seeks God's will—makes decisions. The mission and vision process assumed that the church can discern the Spirit's leading. We pursued God's will with little idealism that we would achieve an exact answer. Nevertheless, there was an acute sense that combining text, context, tradition, prayer, and action-oriented conversation we could provisionally discern the Spirit's leading and establish strategic goals that would result in a "it seems good to us and the Spirit" level of agreement.

Spirit-led Leadership and Dismay

Michael Welker suggests an alternative interpretation narrative that is adopted as a primary lens to understand CCC's story. He describes the work of the Holy Spirit "as a power that restores a community in the midst of distress, disintegration, reactivating solidarity, loyalty, and the capacity for action in this community."[6] The Spirit does this, Welker claims, by bringing those who are ordained to lead "into a remarkable, indeed,

[5] Zscheile, "The Trinity, Leadership, and Power."

[6] Welker, *God the Spirit*, 274.

dismaying condition hovering between power and powerlessness."[7] Specifically, through such Spirit-led direction, in which a church is in the "midst of being torn apart and laden with conflict," they become open to "God's creative power and effectiveness—an openness that can also be recognized by other people."[8] Primarily, we see the ways of the Spirit demonstrated in the person of Jesus Christ and in the formation of a new community—the Church. The Bible reveals the ways of the Spirit that the church, and specifically its leaders, need to recognize and embrace if it seeks to be God's missionary people in the world.

This researcher chooses to see CCC's dismay as something the Spirit fashioned in order to bring it to a place between "power and powerlessness" with the purpose of opening up the community to new ways of leadership and community action. This research is not concerned, primarily, to address conflict in churches, or how leaders can lead in crisis, or how to heal church hurts. Rather, the research desired to understand the ways of the Spirit as the Spirit renews solidarity and capacity for participation in God's mission. The missional interventions sought to embrace biblical and theological perspectives that seemed aligned to the ways of the Spirit as revealed in the Bible. Chapters three and four asserted a Spirit-led framework of leadership set contrasted to prevailing patterns of leadership which, I argue, served to undermine a church's capacity to effectively discern the Spirit's leading and, ultimately, to participate in God's mission to the world. The threat of remaining within prevailing models of leadership is a

[7] Ibid., 99.

[8] Ibid.

diminishing capacity to disciple and equip Christian communities to be prophetic kingdom agents who embody Christ's presence in the world.

W. Rodman MacIlvaine III argues in his article, "How Churches Become Missional," that missional change is more often "quirky, nonlinear, and generally precipitated by a crisis."[9] This contrasts to a conventional change process where senior leaders set down a plan, recruit leaders, and cast a vision. "When crisis is responded to in a spirit of humility and discovery, it creates an environment in which missional culture can take place."[10] This is true for CCC. The mission and vision process was less about strategizing, recruiting, and casting a vision and more about establishing a missional culture that was open to the ways of the Spirit.

Missional change, suggests MacIlvaine, is expressed in two ways: an external change and an internal change. Externally, mission is expressed in service to the community and, internally, it is expressed in a different way of worshipping as a community. Interestingly, before CCC embarked on its mission and vision process or articulated a missional ecclesiology, it embraced the practice of weekly communion. We did not do it because it was missional. It took a well-established CMA pastor who was anxious for liturgical change to make it part of CCC's life. The Eucharist provided a rich theological resource to re-imagine the shape and purpose of CCC. It provided theological resources for CCC to develop missionally. Increasingly, I tapped into that resource to begin re-imagining CCC's leadership and the purpose of our Christian community. The internal expression was not worship, as suggested by MacIlvaine, but a reorientation of

[9] W. Rodman MacIlvaine, III, "How Churches Become Missional," *Bibliotheca Sacra* 167, no. 666 (2010): 216.

[10] Ibid.

leadership that resulted in a number of leadership shifts. New thinking led to new practice—Eucharist. New practice led to new thinking—Leadership. The external expression of service to the community is expressed in at least two ways: the launch of Emmaus communities and the renovation for a Community Kitchen. The community kitchen, particularly, has been recognized as immediately arising from the communion table. We use the language of extending the table to describe the extension of the kitchen, and, in a like manner, the extension of our homes to our neighbourhoods.

The *Great Sadness* cultivated openness for a renewed leadership model that allowed for greater missional change. The practice of weekly communion provided a lens within that midst to reframe a new understanding of leadership. It is intriguing how the two became connected. The table was introduced to CCC by a pastor who did not travel through the *Great Sadness*. Yet the table became a key resource in reshaping CCC's community life. It was quirky and non-linear.

Interestingly, both the practice of the table and the practice of new leadership practices resulted out of periods of *dismay* as both the Senior Pastor and I separately and independently journeyed through personal leadership crises where we questioned existing theology and ecclesiological structures. The pattern of dismay and openness was similar. The same pattern was experienced corporately at CCC. The church was open to new ways of thinking and living because it had become dissatisfied with old ways of thinking and living. Dismay created openness for change.

The quirky and non-linear variety of resources that contributed to the shifts experienced at CCC underscores one of the insights Welker has about the Spirit. "In no instance," he writes, "does the descent of the Spirit cause only a private change in the

person affected. If God's Spirit is at work, a public or even several publics are involved, either immediately or mediately."[11] His point is that, if the Spirit is moving in one part of the local community, we should expect that the Spirit is also moving simultaneously in another part of the local community. Therefore, it is very possible that two people who are not relationally connected in the community may be discerning identical notions that are prompted by the Holy Spirit. Another example of the Spirit's promptings may be the two realities of CCC's leadership dissatisfaction and CCC's weekly Eucharist. Is it possible that the Spirit intentionally created an environment so that CCC might move toward new ways of thinking and practice? The question for leaders is whether they are open to discerning these moves as Spirit-led moves.

To be led by the Spirit requires that people, specifically leaders, be open and observant as to what the Spirit might be doing in others or in other places within their community—or even outside their community. Asking, "What is the Spirit doing?" is perhaps the most critical question for a Spirit-led leader. In terms of CCC, it might mean, "What is the Spirit telling us about the role and practice of weekly communion?" "What did the Spirit want us to understand about our *Great Sadness*?" "Why did the Spirit put two very different pastors together on one team?" A number of simultaneous things were stirring that do not necessarily seem to have connections, yet, if we agree that the Spirit is the *leading character* in the great drama of redemptive history, we too need to affirm that the Spirit remains the *leading character* in the church today. Making meaning that is consistent with the leading of the Holy Spirit is the challenge for leaders. "Where is God's Spirit taking us?"

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[11] Welker, *God the Spirit*, 274.

The women's ministry leadership crisis provided a micro-level example of the leadership shift. For valid reasons, the two primary leaders resigned suddenly, prior to the start of the new ministry year. Team members were distraught by the late resignations so close to the start of the new ministry year. Significant anxiety peaked as they were confounded about replacing two capable leaders and coalescing a fragmented remnant of team members, many newly recruited. I gathered the remaining leaders and those concerned about the future of the ministry into an emergency-planning meeting. I applied the five 'A's and facilitated an intense conversation. The team attended to the emotive reality, asserted a mix of opinions, and agreed about what needed to happen and what actions could be taken. One of them described the situation:

> Emotion! Nobody knew what was going on. There was anger. There was frustration. There was confusion. There was, 'What are we going to do?' That was the first half an hour [of the meeting]."We just laid it on the table," after you [Jim] asked, "How are you feeling?" "We needed to get that out of our system to move on," another added.

After that first half hour, I led the team in a discussion about the purpose of the ministry. They identified four specific statements to describe the purpose of the group. One of the leaders commented about that moment when the purpose statement clarified.

> I remember even looking at the board and being completely overwhelmed by the circle illustrations and things (values) on the side. Suddenly things made sense! There was a clicking and a moment . . . we moved out of chaos into clarity and order. That was an exciting meeting for me. I loved it! We came [into that meeting] in desolation and there was a distinct turning point to feelings of consolation.

Out of that meeting, a new and tentative team was formed as each of the participants took temporary ownership and shared responsibility for the ministry activities ahead. One of the new team members commented about the team's development as they entered the ministry year:

> It was just collaborative ideas [kind of] coming together. Let us see what we can make together—very organic. I felt freedom in that. It really depended on what all of us had to contribute.

This experience mirrored, in a small way, what was experienced in the congregation at large. There was an identifiable point of desolation that ended in consolation through a process of deliberative dialogue framed around the five 'A' model. The meeting engendered collaboration and participation as team members contributed freely and boldly toward discerning and deciding on future actions. Instead of avoiding conflict and disagreement, the trauma became the context and ingredients to discern and envision creative and hopeful actions. The creation account of the Spirit hovering over the unformed chaos, an illustration I used, provided hopeful incentive that despair is not the destination for those who are Spirit-led. It was a hint of what Michael Welker asserts. The Spirit cultivates dismay and despair in order to open us up to God's creativity. Instead of seeing crisis as trouble, a Spirit-led perspective could view the challenging situation as a creative opportunity to grow in new ways, beyond the old ways.

"When you sit down with a group of women who didn't even intend to be sitting down on the table together," described one of the team members, "and you have a task to do that is really important to God as well as ourselves, he does pull it together in a way that we are willing even though we didn't want to be on the team . . . That seems Spirit-led to me." "It is not the typical idea of what you want for charismatic Spirit-led things," another commented:

> It has been small. It has been quiet, prayer-filled. It involves well-run meetings. It involves a little bit of work done on the outside. You come in and it is prepared. So it is not necessarily spontaneous and energetic. It has been careful and full of process and full of conversation.

"I would just shut up," said the designated primary leader, "and let the Spirit lead the team. It was amazing." The leader-centric model of leadership was replaced by a collaborative and participatory model of leadership that illustrates a Spirit-led model. The MOMs process suggests a pattern that seems to be a consistent pattern of the Holy Spirit: (1) a structure or system collapses; (2) dismay about the situation occurs; (3) openness to the leading of the Spirit becomes possible; (4) making decisions and committing to actions that move beyond the system that collapsed. On a macro-level, this occurred for CCC and opened them to new ways of leadership. On a micro-level, it happened in the women's ministry. In the development of the mission and vision statement, a similar level of dismay preceded an energetic push to craft a statement. In each situation, we see a similar pattern. Ronald Heifetz asserts that one of the capacities of leaders is their ability to know when to turn up the temperature and when to turn down the temperature. Change does not happen without a degree of crisis.[12] Spirit-led leadership requires not only an ability to change the temperature, but also the ability to interpret temperature changes. Creativity and crisis seem intimately related.

The particular challenge for leaders and the Christian community is the choice to revert to old patterns or to courageously embrace new Spirit-led directions prompted by the crisis that they are in. This can happen in big settings like the *Great Sadness* or in small settings like the MOM's summer panic. If the Holy Spirit created the church, certainly it requires leaders to cultivate an environment that employs a leadership model that is dynamically consistent with the ways of the Spirit.

[12] Heifetz and Laurie, "The Work of Leadership".

LeRon Shults noted that the revival in pneumatology has provided us with more dynamic, non-linear, and holistic concepts of force and movement.[13] Instead of conceiving God as a watchmaker with all the wheels and springs arranged in a predetermined mechanical order, we can conceive of a world of interrelated forces. For instance, CCC partnered with a church in greater city's downtown called Mosaic—a church community shaped to include the homeless and marginalized with other classes of society. As the Community Kitchen emerged, we connected simultaneously with Mosaic with the hope that the partnership would help us to develop thoughtfully in our own midst. They were prophetic. The development and influence of both the partnership and the community kitchen influenced the orientation of the mission and vision statement.

Spirit-led leadership evidences a cycle of dismay and openness. The Spirit seeks to renew a broken world. Dismantling structures and systems that are inconsistent to the life-giving force of the Spirit is what the Spirit does. In terms of the mission of God, the Spirit is making all things new. The movement from dismay to openness seems to be expressed by Paul in Romans: "The Spirit helps us in our weakness," Paul writes, "We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us through wordless groans" (Romans 8: 26). Paul, earlier, describes creation that is subjected to frustration in the hope that it "will be liberated from its bondage to decay and brought into the freedom and glory of the children of God" (Romans 8:21). We groan inwardly, claims Paul, "as in the pains of childbirth right up to the present time." These verses underscore a fascinating dynamic that occurs within the confluence of creation's frustrations, our groaning, and the Spirit's interpretive intercessions to the Father. "He

[13] Shults, "Spirit and Spirituality: Philosophical Trends in Late Modern Pneumatology."

who searches our hearts knows the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for God's people in accordance with the will of God" (Romans 8:27). Christian leaders need to be able to facilitate holy Spirit-led conversations in order to discern God's will in the present context with the firm conviction that "God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose" (Romans 8:27).

Meaning-Making Leadership

There was a shift from expecting leaders to make decisions to leaders who make meaning. Members of the church became more aware about their role in the decision-making process. Leaders became more aware of their facilitating role. The combination engendered new expectations about how leadership and congregation could function together which was, on the one hand, exciting, but, on the other hand, challenging. Our new children's ministry pastor provides another good illustration about how difficult it can be to negotiate in this leadership context.

I explained to her the concept that leaders facilitate agreed-upon actions. The new pastor responded by expressing her frustration that her opinions seemed to be reduced to being one and equal to the others on the team. What is the role of the leader? She was thinking that leaders simply need to seek the most democratic, peaceable, and acceptable decision possible amongst the variety of diverse opinions expressed. She imagined her role to be that of a decision-broker. This was particularly the case on one team that was writing a Christmas script for a children's Christmas production. Eventually, she and a discouraged team member asked to meet with me. The script was not ready after three weeks of writing. They could not come to a finalized agreement. The big rehearsal was a day away. It was a small, but tangible crisis.

I read the script and quickly rejected a song on theological grounds, made adjustments to other places of the script, and declared, "I'd go with this." The children's pastor stepped back into my office, after the meeting, and remarked, "That was autocratic of you. I thought I couldn't do that." A discussion ensued. In fact, it became a watershed conversation that inspired a conceptual framework on my part, which I develop below. The same struggle was apparent in her other team settings where decisions were weightier, but this example became very illustrative for our discussion.

She understood an *either/or* option in leadership possibilities. The Spirit-led alternative, I explained, is a *both/and* option. Leaders are expected to participate in meetings by providing theological and spiritual perspectives and facilitating action-oriented conversations. Both require a growing level of expertise. The Spirit-led leader functions predominantly in that in-between world.

Two models of leadership are predominate in people's imaginations: the leader as builder (autocratic/leader-centered) or the leader as shepherd (democratic/people-centered). The command and control style of the leader as builder model seems to thrive in a conservative evangelical culture, while the empowering model tends to not flourish as well. Finding a third way between the two is not well-scripted. Drath and Palus suggested an in-between paradigm that requires five key shifts. These shifts are suggestive about a Spirit-led model that is Spirit-centric. First, a shift towards greater ownership is needed. Second, a shift toward people participating in a shared process is needed. Third, a shift toward shared meaning that motivates great action is needed. Fourth, a shift by leaders toward understanding that they are part of and not the exclusive

part of the leadership process is needed. Fifth, a shift by leaders toward "how do we together make things happen" instead of "how do I make things happen" is needed.[14]

The shift from expecting the leader to decide on mission and vision to involving the whole congregational in the decision-making is a notable shift at CCC. No one would deny that the Spirit can move in the two primary models of leadership. Rost's definition of leadership is helpful in framing a two-sided understanding of leadership and postulating that a more credible third way of leadership is to recognize that leadership happens only when followers and leaders are in a mutual relationship. This mutual understanding of leadership is how I would frame a Spirit-led leadership model.

Figure 7. Spirit-Led Leadership Dashboard

A Spirit-led model is different than a leader-centric model that tends to enforce uniformity or a people-centric model that tends to find no agreement because of diversity. Scott Cormode argues that leaders need to be skilled in each of the three models of leaders he describes—builder, gardener, and shepherd—since all three are appropriate to specific situations and, at times, even within the same situation.[15] My research and experience led me to see the three models on a continuum (see figure seven). Instead of

[14] Drath and Palus, "Making Common Sense: Leadership as Meaning-Making in a Community of Practice."

[15] Cormode, "Multi-Layered Leadership: The Christian Leader as Builder, Shepherd and Gardener."

seeing three different models to be used independently, one can envision Spirit-led leadership as primarily that of a gardener that leans to either leader as builder, or to leader as shepherd, depending on circumstances and the nature of the decisions. I would suggest that the leader as gardener is most aligned with a Spirit-led model and that the Builder and Shepherd models offer exceptional and temporary models of leadership. Spirit-led leadership is a third way that places leaders, followers, and the Trinity within a shared context to make decisions. I think it is possible to distinguish the three models in this way (see table seven):

Table 7. Description of Three Leadership Models

Leader as Builder	Leader as Gardener	Leader as Shepherd
Leader-Centric	Spirit-Centric	People-Centric
Leader and God	God, Leaders, and People	People and God
Undifferentiated uniformity	Reconciled diversity	Disordered diversity
Expert-led decisions	Spirit-led decisions	People-led decisions
Autocratic	Pneumocratic	Democratic
Hierarchical	Networked	Flat
Leader tells	Leader cultivates meaning	Leader encourages

The mutuality of leaders and followers in making shared decisions was most evident in the preaching of a provisional and tentative mission and vision statement that encouraged conversation and pushback. It evidenced less of a need for leaders to be the

experts and more of a desire to invite the congregation in a transformative conversation where greater participation in the mission of God would result.

The Spirit-led model does not lessen the importance of the ordained leaders. Leadership skill may, in fact, be more critical as leaders need both to be able to cultivate a compelling biblical and theological world view and a capacity to engender collaboration and participation in God's mission. Pastoral leaders remains significant in the life of the congregation as they apply their expertise to discipling followers to make good decisions in the light of a biblical world view. They paint the biblical world view that shapes the way people discern and make meaning of their situations and consider future actions. They facilitate conversations, ensuring that all are engaged in a purposeful and action-oriented dialogue. The two sermon series immersed people in new theological and biblical perspectives. Within that context, congregational members could engage in a new dialogue and begin to view the church and their role in new ways.

Members of my staff team nicknamed me the *midwife.* It illustrates this key shift. They gifted me with a t-shirt with the title nicely printed on the front of it. The title derived in a meeting with the women's leadership team when I described my role as being their midwife. Speaking to a group of mothers, the analogy seemed to fit. "I am one," I remarked, "who steps into uncomfortable and difficult places to help bring life—to help you give birth to renewed Spirit-led actions." All the team members chuckled, but the title stuck because it concretely described my role as a facilitator and their responsibility to do the hard work of discerning and deciding God's direction together. As the mid-wife, I engendered a conversational process framed around the five 'A's to help teams attend to their situation, assert what seems to be happening, agree about what

seems best, decide upon actions to be taken, and follow up, in like manner, as the actions are implemented. My role is not to decide for their sake but to help them to make decisions in the light of God's mission and to show them how they can do this together. This happened profoundly in the MOMs ministry and it also happened within the mission and vision process.

Drath and Palus defined meaning-making as a "social meaning-making process that occurs in groups of people who are engaged in some activity together."[16] Primarily, what happened through the mission and vision process was a meaning-making process. Arriving at a mission and vision statement required considerable conversation as the community came to terms with its past and its future. In terms of the leadership model embraced in the mission and vision process, it brought to light a new orientation in how CCC understands its relationship to God, each other, and the world.

Larry Rasmussen argues that leadership "provides the choreography for all the other practices of a community or society."[17] As such, the way leadership chooses to function reverberates throughout the community and shapes the church's practice in all its other areas. The capacity of church leaders to make sense collaboratively and to mutually engage in shared decision-making processes is critical to the health and sustainability of a community's witness in the world.

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[16] Drath and Palus, "Making Common Sense: Leadership as Meaning-Making in a Community of Practice," 1.

[17] Rasmussen, "Shaping Communities," 120.

Restricting or Releasing the Spirit

Leadership models are not neutral. Some models of leadership either diminish or increase the capacity of the Spirit to lead the community. The shifts from baseline to endline suggest that a collaborative environment resulted in new prophetic expressions of ministry for CCC.

Two important shifts occurred simultaneously: (1) CCC indicated a greater capacity to discern the Spirit together and, (2) they indicated a shift in leadership expectations. The leadership shift was substantial in the space of a year. Instead of expecting leaders to direct team members at the baseline, congregational members expected leaders to facilitate good decision-making. By seeking the Spirit together, greater mutuality developed. Leaders were less burdened with expectations of expertise and followers were elevated as significant and meaningful contributors to decision-making. The process encouraged congregational discernment, dialogue, and decision-making, which engendered greater ownership and participation in the mission of God.

Vision and Mission projects tend to be directed by the primary and most senior leader. This is often regarded as one of their primary responsibilities and is consistent with traditional top-down approaches. Churches often look for a senior leader with a vision so that they might adopt a vision. Rarely do churches seek a person who can help a congregation discern and discover their vision. This thesis argues for an alternative approach that would seek less capacity to deliver a vision and more capacity to cultivate an environment where many relevant stakeholders can collaborate and participate in discerning the Spirit's direction and making decisions in step with that spiritual discernment. In contrast to the loneliness and independence of the leader, a Spirit-led

model inspires a leadership model of mutuality and collaboration that is well aligned with more relational and participatory frameworks of Trinitarian thinking.

Leadership models seem to be strongly linked to how one conceives the place of authority in Trinitarian relationships. The western logic—about Trinitarian relationships—reinforces an authoritative top-down approach to leadership relationships, while the eastern Trinitarian logic reinforces perichoretic or interdependent leadership relationships. A discussion about Trinitarian perspectives and leadership models emerged in a staff discipleship group when we talked about the Trinity. I contrasted the western logic and the eastern logic and suggested that leadership models need to embrace more interdependent relationships and revert from top-down metaphors of God the Father sending the Son and the Son sending the Spirit. My assertion raised concerns about the location of authority. "Didn't Jesus submit to the will of the Father?" Spirit-led leadership, I suggested, is less about following the person in charge who has the *authority* and more about alignment to the missional *purpose* of the Trinity. Decision-making in the church is less about following the opinions of the most authoritative one but about aligning the community with the missional purposes of God.

In another conversation with a District Office leader, I described some of my developing leadership perspectives. He pointed to the twelve tribal leaders who failed to trust God's invitation to enter the Promised Land. Those ten votes in a collaborative context of decision-making, he implied, resulted in forty deathly years in the wilderness. "But this is what young people want," commented the District Leader, "they want to be part of the decision-making." He demonstrated the push and pull of two orientations. His perspective on leadership was shaped within the duality of leadership as builder (leader-

centric) and shepherd (people-centric). His suggestion is that we need more leaders like Joshua and Caleb who know what is right, lead their people rightly, and do not get bogged down in the time-wasting wilderness.

His thoughts inspired me to reconsider the Kadesh story (Numbers 14). Is it not about a community discerning God's direction and agreeing upon a shared-action? Each of the twelve spies were selected for the exploratory task because they were identifiable leaders who probably had capacities to discern for the rest of the people. The model expressed a collaborative orientation toward decision-making. Ultimately, in this case, it led to failure. The ten leaders led Israel into the forty years of wandering. Even those who did not accept the majority opinion had to endure the consequences of the majority opinion. The crux of the story is the community's faithless discernment of God's missional purpose.

I assumed early in my research that the New Testament modeled a radically new leadership style that needed to be contrasted with leadership models found in the Old Testament. I am, now, less inclined about the contrast. Instead of embracing power and leadership in God's way, Israel continually reverted to distorted ways and practices of power. The book of Judges describes Israel's failure to live in a collaborative way to discern God's direction. God eventually accommodated to their desire to have a king, like the other nations. Finally, Isaiah the prophet helps Israel imagine a new form of leadership. The most poignant of these descriptions is expressed in the Suffering Servant passages. This is extended into the New Testament when Jesus demonstrates a new way of leadership that he calls the church to practice in the world. The most profound demonstration occurs at the last supper when Jesus presents himself as the servant to the

disciples by washing their feet and inviting them into a new way of life—not leading in the same way as the world, but leading as the rejected one who gives life to others. The demonstration of that new way of leadership is lived out in iconic fashion as the early community addresses the crisis of Jewish and Gentile believers in Acts 15.

A missional church needs to address the ways of leadership and the ways of power employed in a Christian community if it seeks to participate fully in God's mission. The missional interventions, at CCC, sought to engender a new model of leadership by cultivating greater collaboration in discerning the Spirit's direction. Instead of leaders delivering a statement for the congregation to adopt, the leaders provided a process of discovery which required leaders and congregational members to participate in a conversation that, first, sought to understand God's mission and the world, second, to discern God's purpose for the church specifically, and, finally, to decide the actions to which the community would be faithfully committed.

Congregational members responded to the process as something new and refreshing. The MVT focused more on what the Spirit was saying then on crafting a saleable statement. The role of leadership shifted from providing traditional visionary roles to inviting the community into a meaning-making process. The role of leadership was about creating a theologically rich environment for congregational members to deliberate what the Spirit was saying. The process dramatically shifted the congregation's understanding of what happens on leadership teams. Leaders are not those who direct team members. Leadership teams are about discerning together.

The shift towards leaders as meaning-making facilitators is reflected in question thirty-two: "Attendees of CCC regularly participate in the decision-making of the

church." Responses indicated a changing environment that is more conducive to discerning the Spirit and to committing to faithful actions. The congregational group indicated a significant shift when leader responses were not included in the calculation. Their mean shifted by forty-six per cent in contrast to the leadership group that increased by twenty-six per cent. The mission and vision process continued an emerging orientation that preceded the missional interventions but helped it advance further. CCC may not be an exemplar of a mature and discerning congregation but, for the time being, it moved the church further down this path.

Action-Oriented Conversation and Spirit-led Leadership

Van Gelder's five 'A' framework describes a conversational process of communicative action that helps a community to *attend, assert, agree, act,* and *assess* within a biblical and theological world view. The biblical and theological perspective, in this research, is aligned to a variety of authors such as Lesslie Newbigin, David Bosch, Michael Goheen, and Craig Van Gelder. The missional interventions sought to practice a new leadership framework that is described as Spirit-led leadership that emphasized congregational collaboration and shared decision-making. The result is a Christian community that is open to the leading of the Spirit that will prophetically and practically assail strongholds of darkness in its local and global context.

The mission and vision process provided open space for leaders and congregational members to engage in fruitful conversations. The church is a necessary environment, as Herbert Heitink asserts, where people can participate in meaningful dialogue that addresses both Christian practice (Praxis One) and worldly practice (Praxis

Two).[18] The action-oriented dialogue was a way of wrestling with God's way of life and our way of life in the world. It compelled people to see their present reality in the context of God's missional purpose. It placed them into the push-and-pull of the now and not-yet of God's kingdom.

Deciding on Spirit-led actions required conversations that explored the church's identity within God's mission. An inherent question in the pursuit of the mission and vision is "How should we live in the world as God's missionary people?" The mission and vision process would identify new practices that would require new commitments. The conversation was about shared actions and shared commitments. This corresponds to Drath and Palus's description of a community that is shaped by agreed-upon commitments. "Communities of practice embed people in commitments," they assert. "In a community of practice, people are united by more than membership in a group or category; they are involved with one another in action."[19] Their definition highlights a significant characteristic of a Spirit-led community; it is a community that is primarily united in actions consistent with the missional activity of God. It is a community that mutually discerns, mutually commits, and mutually acts together. Mutuality is built on a community's capacity to engage in deliberative, action-oriented conversations.

Jürgen Habermas' theory of communicative action provided a valuable framework to understand action-oriented conversation. Gary Simpson summarized one of Habermas' tests for good communication in this expression: "Those who feel the

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[18] Heitink, *Practical Theology: History, Theory, Action Domains: Manual for Practical Theology*, 6.

[19] Drath and Palus, "Making Common Sense: Leadership as Meaning-Making in a Community of Practice," 11.

consequences when a norm is operative ought to be full participants in the decision-making process leading to that norm."[20] This principle became a prevailing golden rule in CCC's mission and vision process and in many other decision-making situations. The mission and vision process invited all to participate because they would experience the consequence of the decisions. As such, they needed to participate in the decision-making because it would involve actions that would shape the community's commitments. The process included three specific opportunities for people to enter into direct conversations. The forums were held on Sunday, after the service. Childcare and food were provided, which allowed for a healthy cross-section of *consequence-takers* to join the conversation. Although the whole church did not participate in the forums, there was a tangible sense among the eighty-one endline respondents that the mission and vision expressed the work of the congregation.

Heitink argues that God chooses to work through humanity. "Practical theology deals with God's activity," he says, "through the ministry of human beings."[21] CCC's mission and vision was more than a statement-crafting experience. It was a church doing theology together—practical theology. Allowing opportunity for unpredictable conversation within a biblical and theological world view is key to cultivating a missional community as it allows openness to a variety of perspectives and the need to evaluate proposed new meanings in the light of the gospel. Moreover, the conversation could be called discipleship. Drawing the congregation into deliberate, action-oriented discussions

[20] Simpson, "God in Global Civil Society: Vocational Imagination, Spiritual Presence, and Ecclesial Discernment," 34.

[21] Heitink, *Practical Theology: History, Theory, Action Domains: Manual for Practical Theology*, 7.

moved people positively toward new missional practices. Intentional discipling groups were launched in order to equip the congregational members who might reproduce similar groups to create an expanding ministry to help others to grow in Christ: fourteen people identified themselves willing to begin missional groups in their communities.

The mission and vision process was not a democratic process where each person had an equal voice and an equal vote. The focus was primarily on discerning God's leading and our courageous and sacrificial embrace of God's purpose. Voices that were weighted most heavily were those that made biblical and theological sense. The Emmaus Story, for instance, provided an interpretive text that brought new meaning to understand the centrality of Christ, the table, hospitality, and the church's mission. It was expressed in two new practices, hospitality through the renovation of a commercial kitchen and hospitality to our neighborhoods with the start of the Emmaus groups.

The decisions reflected in the mission and vision statement suggest an emerging missiological ecclesiology for CCC. Concern for people's personal salvation was couched within a broader understanding of God's desire to redeem all of creation. In contrast to an attractional style of evangelism, the statement underlined a new sense of being *prophetically present*, visibly and verbally, in their neighbourhoods. The goal did not include the standard evangelical focus of transforming others, but the mutual transformation that would result by encountering others in our neighbourhoods and in our ministries. It represented a growing awareness that the Spirit is at work beyond us in others. The Spirit of God was inviting CCC to embrace God's mission to the world.

At the sixth MVT meeting, we studied Lukan passages when Jesus sent out the twelve and the seventy-two. We were struck by the instruction to embrace the hospitable

home. “It suggests,” someone commented, “that God’s Spirit was already at work.” Spirit-led leadership requires that leaders become comfortable and expectant within the context of diversity and competing opinions. The development of the mission and vision statement evidenced significant shift in the language used to describe ministry to others. Leaders were less focused on discerning what the Spirit was trying to say to them personally and more focused on discerning what the Spirit was saying and doing among others. The process recognized that we should not limit the Spirit’s voice to the experts, but we should be attentive to the voices that are in our midst and on the margins. This recognition was expressed in two ways. First, the forums provided a way to hear from others within the congregation. Second, CCC partnered with other communities who represented different opinions about being God’s people in the world.

One of those partnerships was with Mosaic, the church in Vancouver who is cultivating an intentional Christian community among both marginalized and mainstream people. The partnership was less about financial support and more about the possibility of mutual transformation. There was a growing realization that CCC could discover the Spirit’s leading by having *transforming* conservations with others. Mosaic’s lead pastor speaks at our services twice a year and, each time, brings three or four friends to share their stories. Their presence is transformative. The statement of “the church needing the poor” indicates their influence—we borrowed the language from them.

A Spirit-led Community Is a Learning Community

Participatory Action Research (PAR) was adopted as a research methodology in order to cultivate a potentially transformative model that invited CCC into becoming a more discerning community competent to *plan, act, observe,* and *reflect* with the

direction and participation of the Holy Spirit.[22] Fundamentally, I assert a Spirit-created community, intentionally seeking the leading of the Spirit, is a learning community that continually engages in a process of reflective action. The missional interventions included theoretical perspectives that seemed aligned and consistent to the ways of the Spirit. Herbert Heitink, Craig Van Gelder, and Gary Simpson provided a biblical and theological foundation to incorporate Jürgen Habermas' communicative action theory, which is valuable to understanding how communities make decisions about shared actions.

A Spirit-led community is a learning community. The Spirit is at work renewing the world. God works through humanity in this renewal. The discerning church continues to learn as the Spirit leads the church into new territories—to confront the powers and principalities that shape the church and the world. The Action Research model provided a learning process that embraces the ongoing work of the Spirit as a learning process. The learning process, in theological terminology, became a sanctifying process. The model of research provided the Mission and Vision Team with a sense of experimentation—a *let's try that* openness. The model provided a way of ongoing research, study, and development that can lead to new actions. The learning not only opened new ways of doing things but new ways of thinking about things.

The learning community is an interpretive community. Often churches are too preoccupied with being truthful that they do not recognize that their discernment and decision-making is an interpretative process. On several occasions, some members of the MVT asserted that we should simply select a Bible verse as our mission statement. "After

[22] Coghlan and Brannick, *Doing Action Research in Your Own Organization*, 9.

all, the Bible is true," a team member confessed. The comment generated a conversation about the hermeneutic character of what we were doing. The MVT began to recognize that the process was an interpretive meaning-making process. Embracing the interpretive character of our discernment created tensions in a culture that has oversimplified the application of truth to today's world. As Van Gelder underscored, the interpretive character of our lives makes the process of leadership complex. The church, including leaders and members, needs to understand what is special about God's revelation, how God is present in the world as an acting subject, and the hermeneutical reality of both.[23] The hermeneutical shift changes where one grounds the authority of truth. Traditionally, authority was based upon the clear reading of scripture. Authority within an interpretive Christian community does not abandon scripture, but recognizes that it resides in a Spirit-led discernment and decision-making process. The hermeneutical turn is a shift from an emphasis on epistemology (how do we know something) to an emphasis on hermeneutics (how do we interpret both *how* and *what* we encounter).

Recognizing the hermeneutical reality of the church's life places the church in a new learning environment. In the past, learning was more about getting the facts straight and applying them systematically to one's life and world. Now, learning opens us to review not only the facts of scripture but also the world view that shapes the way we read the Bible and understand how God works in our world. This research, which explored the way the church thinks about leadership, is an example of a community willing to examine its prevailing assumptions and practices.

[23] Van Gelder, "Method in Light of Scripture and in Relation to Hermeneutics," 69.

What Is Important about these Findings

The research sought to explore and observe how a community might engender greater collaboration and participation through missional interventions informed by a Spirit-led leadership model. Five things make this study valuable. First, this study demonstrates that a leadership shift can occur by a constructing decision-making process influenced by a Spirit-led model. The interventions functioned like a foreign virus that was adapted by a living and breathing organism. Instead of confronting existing leadership models, the mission and vision process practiced an alternative way of leadership that began to transform the congregation's understanding of leadership. It moved from a leader-centric model to a Spirit-centric model.

Second, this study suggests key characteristics of a Spirit-led model. This research explored an alternative Spirit-led leadership that offered a third way between leader-centric and people-centric models of leadership. It includes a way to recognize the contribution of both leaders and followers. Key to the leadership alternative is an understanding of a community's conversational process to make decisions within a shared understanding of God's missional purpose in the world.

Third, this study utilized a model of Participatory Action Research that increases the community's capacity to be a learning community. It shifts an epistemologically-oriented community to becoming a hermeneutically-oriented community. The former tends toward an unquestioned assumption about the nature of truth—i.e., the Bible is simply true. The latter recognizes that truth is not always straightforward because our understanding of what is true is influenced by the culture we live in. Decision-making needs to assume a provisional character. We can expect to keep on learning and

developing as we intentionally attend, assert, agree, act, and assess (the five ‘A’s). It is an action and reflection process that engages a community in an active learning process—a process that the church can biblically and theologically assert is a Spirit-led process.

Fourth, the study is also valuable because it demonstrates a way to have a church-wide conversation that includes leaders and members. The process followed a template from an earlier process when the church articulated the Seven Distinctives. The mission and vision process built upon that process. The facilitating team focused on coordination and development. They were the workhorses who provided statements to consider, collecting feedback, and resubmitting renewed statements. The extroverted character and back-and-forth movement of the MVT not only allowed congregational opportunity to be involved but it provided significant motivation and resource for the MVT to function. Encouragement, challenge, and feedback added quality, depth, and strength to what was crafted. Fundamentally, when the mission and vision was ultimately introduced, it already had the ownership of the whole community, who not only endorsed the mission and vision, but who were participating in it. Moreover, the final sermon series provided a further opportunity to dialogue and discern as it was connected to the final forum. In our context, this was a departure from the general rule that preaching should be delivered with a leader-centric, “Thus saith the Lord” emphasis.

Finally, the study suggests some key characteristics of a missional community. It is characterized as a learning community that continually discerns new transformative practices that renew existing practices. The story of CCC illustrates a church that seeks to renew its leadership practice. A missional church recognizes that it is a community constantly involved in a transforming process led by the Spirit. It is a community

characterized by transformative conversations that welcome a variety of stakeholders who reside at the center of the church and the margins of the church. It recognizes that conversation is the medium through which a community discerns the leading of the Spirit. It is a community characterized by a collaborative leadership model that sets leaders and members within a constructive and action-oriented leadership relationship. It is a community characterized by a commitment to follow the lead of the Spirit as the leading character in the local church. It is a community characterized by a biblical and theological world view that provides an interpretive lens to understand God's actions in the past, the present, and the future. The missional church finds its identity and its purpose in its local context, within that world view.

Limits for Generalizing These Findings

CCC is a community with a unique character and history. The findings of the quantitative research may indicate the impact of the missional interventions alone or may also represent an ongoing change process that peaked during the mission and vision effort. Key parts of the research depended on the gifting, capacity, and leadership of a number of people. This process is not a technique that can be simply applied to any situation.

This process was carried out in a healthy and hopeful environment. It is not known how such a process will work in a context where there is great polarity or low levels of trust. This process, though it included a growing discomfort about the blank wall, was motivated by hope in contrast to pain. Forums did not have to address concerns about healing or reconciliation. Instead, people were expectant and longing for a mission and vision that would shape CCC's future.

A church's size may also limit its capacity to experience similar shifts. CCC is a moderately sized church—like eighty per cent of most churches in North America who are the same size or smaller. I suspect that a similar model could be possible in a larger church context. I sense that the model practiced at CCC can be adapted to a variety of environments, but it will require a leadership capacity to facilitate open conversations and to hold their own opinions in an open hand.

The conversational process is dependent on a leader's capacity and comfort in facilitating broad conversation among different stakeholders. Facilitating group conversation is a skill that I enjoy and have fun doing. I think it is a vital skill in order to develop healthy and fruitful discussion that leads to action. I find it simple but, perhaps, my personality makes it so.

This research embraces Jürgen Habermas' communicative theory. Understanding the nature of public discourse and being able to facilitate it ensures that all those who will experience the consequence of the decisions have reasonable opportunities to contribute to the dialogue and decision-making. I suggest that Acts 15 is a primary example of such a dialogue that involves Scripture, Spirit, and the emerging Christian community. We simply need to learn how to dialogue together—God, us, and others—the problem is usually the "us" part.

The baseline and endline surveys could have been more strongly structured to reinforce the findings. Dependent t-tests would have provided data between identical people in the baseline and endline surveys. For various reasons, the surveys were done anonymously, and I did not, at the time, comprehend how to structure the surveys to make it possible to do dependent t-tests. If so, those who completed the first survey

would have been directly invited to complete the endline survey. I recommend that in replicating this process that surveys not be anonymous. Nevertheless, my assessment and examination of the surveys revealed a consistency around a number of factors: age, involvement, length of attendance, and average attendance per month. There is a very strong correspondence between those who did the baseline and endline. CCC has 250 adult attendees and the completed baseline and endline surveys each represent one third of the congregation. The people leading groups did not change substantially. The independent t-tests provide a substantial indication of what dependent t-tests would have provided and, perhaps, provided a better sense of the shifts in the congregation, as a whole, since the eighty respondents were a healthy cross-section of the church at two different points-in-time. Certainly, the eighty completions at the baseline and endline was a strong sampling of the congregation.

Questions for Future Research

This research prompts questions for future research. It would be good to take a closer look at some facilitating techniques and how they provide for effective action-oriented dialogue. An exploratory study of a number skilled facilitators and consultants would be a fascinating study in order to isolate specific capacities and methods to encourage congregational decision-making.

It would be good to isolate specific congregations who have a developed practice of congregational discourse and explore how they came to such a process and how they sustain the conversational process. Moreover, it would be fascinating to explore these questions in different ecclesiologies. Many leaders are continuing to be trained as the experts who provide directive leadership. Often, when I talk to accomplished pastors

about my thesis, they comment that "this is what the young people really want." What is too quickly overlooked is that the younger generation, who demand new levels of involvement, are saying such things because they are cognizant that the old ways of directive, top-down leadership, though appropriate at times, is, nevertheless, an inadequate model for congregational leadership today.

It would be fascinating to do comparative research among a number of seminaries or Bible colleges to explore what leadership models are shaping students before they enter pastoral training and the leadership models they develop while in their training. The leadership models that have predominated in the life of the church require rethinking. Rasmussen highlights the radical nature of Jesus' leadership that resists the notions of power and prestige operative in the world. Perhaps the fundamental flaw of leadership training in seminaries is that individuals are trained outside the context of congregational life. Individuals are pulled out of the congregational mix, equipped to be experts, and integrated back in to be the leadership experts.

Summary

The discernment journey was both thrilling and anxious. It was thrilling because it concluded in a surge of momentum as the community asserted and agreed together about specific new actions. The five substantial shifts discussed in chapter five—the leadership shift, the Spirit-led shift, the prophetic shift, the decision-making shift, and the participatory shift—combine to suggest that CCC learned new ways of being a community together that resulted in creative synergy and excited anticipation about the future. Leadership embraced new practices. The congregation collaborated on key decisions. The church committed to new actions.

It was anxious because many stakeholders participated in the process, making the outcomes unpredictable. Control was not in the hands of leaders. Instead, they focused on cultivating purposeful discussions rather than promoting what they thought best. We had never done this before as leaders and as a church. Although motivated by hopefulness, all of us were aware that the discernment process was not like a mathematical equation with a calculated and predetermined outcome. It would be a dynamic and unpredictable conversation involving many people. It was a new way of doing leadership that depended on trusting that the Spirit leads through a mixture of voices focused on discerning the Spirit's direction. CCC's openness, renewed solidarity, and committed actions are indicative of a community embracing leadership structures allowing the Spirit more freedom to lead the church.

EPILOGUE

I attended a leaders' training that addressed the leader's soul. The seminar speaker, a successful senior pastor, now oversees a retreat center focusing on restoring soul-depleted leaders. The seminar was instructive and valuable. It certainly resonated with most of the CMA pastors and church leaders who attended. Leadership is demanding and difficult. He chronicled a number of stunning statistics of pastoral burnout and depression. He shared his own personal journey about how the pastoral demands drained him physically, mentally, and spiritually. When he asked pastors to share their feeling about difficult ministry experiences people had no problem filling a whiteboard of distressing and painful emotions.

The seminar evoked a mixture of feelings in me. On the one hand, I recognize that leaders need to tend to their souls, but, on the other hand, I think leaders need to recognize that the primary cause afflicting their soul may be the model of leadership shaping their organizational experience. The reports of burnout, depression, and early resignations, I suggest, are more related to an inadequate leadership model than personal or spiritual capacities. I sense these issues are indicative of a church that is overwhelmed by a system of leadership that is generally incongruent with the ways of the Spirit. Certainly leaders need to attend to their personal soul but the church corporately, it seems to me, needs to tend to its *corporate* soul. It is experiencing levels of dismay that, if we are willing, can open us to new ways of leadership that is Spirit-led, more involved in God's mission, and more prophetic in the world.

I would not have said these things five years ago—at least not as confidently. My Doctor of Ministry studies at Luther and my thesis writing has increased my understanding of God's ministry and God's ways of leadership. Ecclesiology was the primary focus—a missiological ecclesiology. My full-time pastoral position provided me with a rich context to apply lessons and strategies in my leadership. Luther Seminary provided a space to step back, observe, evaluate, and reorient. The interaction of school and ministry was stimulating. Nearly every major project through the course of my studies involved CCC. There has been a fruitful give-and-take between the church and my studies. CCC was very much a partner in my learning, as were the professors and the students in my cohort. In many ways, CCC and I learned new ways of leadership together.

The studies engendered a renewed understanding of leadership. One of CCC's retired Elders, for example, approached me because he wanted to pick my mind on the relationship between community and evangelism. He is also a retired CMA missionary who served in the Congo for over thirty years and was very involved in establishing the Christian French radio network throughout Africa. His style of leadership embodied the traits of heroic leadership. Both of us served on the team responsible to scribe the seven Distinctives, a significant precursor to the mission and vision process. He referred to one of the seven Distinctives in our conversation: "*A Trinitarian Community—We are a people who desire our relationships to reflect the community of our three-in-one God.* "Jim," he asked:

> I'm preaching at a church soon about being missional…You were the one who stated that God lived in community. That stuck with me. If I get this right, a missional community is a community that does evangelism together. Evangelism is not something just one person does.

This was revelatory for him. He was aware that the African perspective is different than the European and North American perspective. Africans understand and experience community differently than we do. While we were conceiving the Trinitarian distinctive in our scribing group, we naturally discussed the eastern and western notions of Trinitarian thought. These theological notions sowed seeds that began to transform his own understanding of leadership and community.

The story illustrates how I have been able to lead with missional influence as an associate level pastor. I was able to plant or affirm new theological and biblical ideas into the mix of ongoing deliberations. I have been able to design and facilitate significant decision-making processes. Increasingly, I see my primary role as a change agent who leads people out of leader-centric models into more Spirit-centric models of leadership. I often quote Gary Simpson, "Consequence-takers ought to be decision-makers," in different settings. Simpson's *Golden Rule* is like a sharp axe against traditional leadership models. It cuts through the grain of existing leadership models. We continue to live in a leadership culture overburdened by the demands of organizational performance and spiritual expectations that are inconsistent with a community created and lead by the Spirit.

The studies granted me resources to lead through times of change and renewal. I sense that CCC's experience mirrors the macro shifts occurring in the broader culture. Just as the substantial changes at CCC requires new leadership capacities that are not standard lessons or practices in traditional churches or seminaries, so the church today requires leaders to think and live in new ways. As the implications of the changes reverberate through CCC, old practices will seek to either coexist, or moderate the new

practices. The Doctor of Ministry studies have not only made me alert to some of the change dynamics, but enabled me to embrace them. Instead of seeing problems, disappointments, and dismay as results of poor human planning and practice, I see them now as Spirit-led opportunities for renewal and transformation.

CCC underwent and continues to undergo significant change. Churches live in demanding times that requires a new imagination that is able to address the tired but resistant models of leadership. CCC will need to be alert to the dynamics of change because so much change has taken place. It is vulnerable in some regard. The pace of change in the last number of years is probably not sustainable and leaders, therefore, need to be alert to levels of fatigue and resistance that may suddenly present themselves.

In open systems theory a principle called *homeostasis* describes an organization's character to maintain equilibrium. The principle describes how an organization automatically seeks to balance or counteract change. But it also underscores the fuel that energizes a community's conversation and innovation. Harnessing that energy appropriately and wisely will determine whether the changes at CCC in the past year sink deep or blow away in the wind. Recognizing conflict and change as positive energizing forces in a community has been liberating for me as a leader. Instead of avoiding conflict and change, I have learned to dwell in them to cultivate environments of diversity, creativity, and innovation. CCC's leadership will need to be cognizant that the changes occurring at CCC creates levels of instability as new practices disrupt old ways of thinking and practice. Instability might present itself as a wave of enthusiasm that may surprisingly react with a hidden undertow.

The studies blessed me with a new imagination for leadership—an imagination refreshed by Trinitarian theology and pneumatology. It shifted me from a standard Christological orientation to a pneumatological orientation. Many Christian leaders, even some corporate leaders, turn to Jesus as an exemplar for their leadership. Jesus invites it when he demonstrates to his disciples a new way of leadership. "I am," says Jesus, "the way, the life, and the truth." I found myself, however, particularly through the course of my studies, identifying with the person and work of the Spirit to re-imagine the way I think about leadership. It is not so much a departure from the person of Jesus, but a recognition that the Spirit was mightily at work in the person of Jesus. Jesus and the Spirit functioned in concert with each other. Viewing leadership through the lens of the Spirit, instead of the lens of Christ, provided me with a new way of considering leadership.

The theological developments in pneumatology invite us to rethink and reconceive the structure and form of Christian community and leadership. Less should we ask, "What would Jesus do?", and instead ask, "What would the Spirit do?" It might draw churches into being more contextually reflective. I have tried to imagine my leadership role more like the role of the Spirit—creating contexts of openness. Instead of being deliberately directive, I have tried to engender a more collaborative environment where many participate together.

The shift towards collaboration and participation is attractive and contagious. I worked with a young youth pastor for three years while I studied at Luther. He eventually moved into a senior leader position in another church. We regularly connect and talk about leadership. Certainly he learned many things at CCC, but the most noteworthy he

stated, was my ways of leadership. This was surprising, since he and I identified with very different theological tribes. Nevertheless, it was the leadership perspective that I was growing in and modeling that had the greatest impact on his leadership style. He has since taken some of the lessons into his new ministry setting and has helped a community navigate together through challenging times.

The studies helped me to tackle the leadership conversation. The confusing array of leadership books and material leaves pastoral leaders grabbing and taking practices without due attention to what one is really doing. Attempting in this thesis to tackle leadership theory was daunting and discouraging. The topic is broad and deep. Chapter two, the theoretical chapter on leadership theory, resulted after at least two abandoned attempts. My drive and curiosity derived from a failed leadership system at CCC and a growing sense that traditional forms of leadership were problematic. I was seeking a way forward, a new way of understanding leadership. This short thesis, from a pastor in the trenches, represents my best efforts so far. I like the trajectory, but I am not sure where it will end.

The talk about leadership has become one of the biggest trends in business and organizational literature in the last fifty years. It indicates a desperate and longing search. I believe the church has something significant, redemptive, and prophetic to contribute to this discussion. It is the Trinity, after all, that created humanity. Theologically, it is logical that the community of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit offers us the greatest hope of structuring and ordering human society. The Holy Spirit, who is renewing creation and humanity, is also at work renewing our ways of leadership and community.

Gerben Heitink provided a theological framework that renewed my orientation to understanding the dynamic between a Christian way of life and the world's way of life. He describes them as Praxis One (Christian) and Praxis Two (world).[1] Instead of differentiating two isolated and unrelated sets of practices, Heitink describes the Christian life as the mediation of God's ways in the midst of the world's ways. In line with the mission of God, Christian practices should embed themselves within the world's practices as a prophetic and transformative presence. The Christian community, true to its incarnational identity, demonstrates and declares an alternative way of life anchored in the Spirit-filled life of Jesus Christ. God plants a community in the midst of the disoriented world to assert and practice a prophetic way of life that should intentionally participate in the Spirit's renewing of God's creation. Moreover, Heitink, along with Gary Simpson, expanded my understanding and imagination about the church's prophetic presence in the world. They did so by introducing me to Jürgen Habermas and his cultural analysis. This is perhaps the greater theological and sociological shift that I experienced. Until this shift, I had a very difficult time translating the reality of the Kingdom of God in tangible ways.

The Doctor of Ministry studies provided me a way to learn that kept me in the trenches and transformed me for the trenches. The course of studies provided a reflective environment to get off the dance floor and to sit on the balcony, to use Heifetz's apt metaphor, to see and think about what God was up to in my life, ministry, and local community. It set me within a great cohort of a wide variety of denominational traditions (Anglican, Evangelical Lutheran, Covenant, Presbyterian, Methodist, Missouri Synod

[1] Heitink, *Practical Theology: History, Theory, Action Domains: Manual for Practical Theology*.

Lutheran) that gave me a look into new territory and to what God was doing elsewhere. We travelled together for five years. There was something very transformative about being part of the group. I know well that I entered the group a confused and jaded evangelical. The five years of study and the five years with the cohort provided a restorative and safe womb to be born again. The classroom, the professors, Stub Hall, the library, the meals, the laughs, the time together, the new friends, have all contributed to a learning process that pushed me forward. Today, I think I am a wiser and more equipped leader then when I first started. I think I am still an evangelical.

The thesis is like a baby that took a lot of pushing to get out. Hopefully, the baby will cry and show signs of early life. Perhaps the baby will walk and talk. Perhaps it will continue to grow and mature. The shelves of Luther will now include one more study by a Doctor of Ministry student. This thesis also represents something that I think was born in me. I entered the Doctor of Ministry program as a troubled and discouraged pastor. I leave the program with a hopeful yet challenging road ahead. By faithful service in the trenches, I shall continue to model a new way of leadership that sows seeds of hopeful transformation for the church's future.

A new partnership at CCC offers a provoking illustration of how the Spirit invites the community forward. CCC co-partnered in a reciprocal arrangement with a member of the congregation, more recently, who works with Canada's First Nation community. We help him financially and he helps us open our eyes to the realities of the First Nations. During a Sunday service he addressed the national *Idle No More* movement where first nation communities are pressing First Nation associations and the Federal government to address the lack of movement on First Nation issues. Road blockades, rail stoppages,

hunger strikes, and prayer circles popped up across the country.[2] "Why is it," asked the church member, "that there are Christians like us who look skeptically on the movement and there are First Nation Christians who look skeptically at us for not participating? Is it not possible for us to see the Spirit working on both sides?" The challenge reverberated as a prophetic challenge among our mostly Caucasian, Christian community. How do we, as a Christian community, engage the movement and, more broadly, the challenges of dismissing traditional stereotypes and discerning the Spirit's voice among those who are different?

This is the challenge of missional community. Engaging the world with an ear to the leading of the Spirit transforms us and them. Engaging each other with an ear to the Spirit transforms us. Engaging God with an ear to God's voice transforms us. We need to allow our comfortable practices and preconceived assumptions to be challenged by a convicting Spirit who seeks to dismantle our valued structures and systems that may stand in the way of God's mission to renew the world.

[2] MacIlvaine, "How Churches Become Missional."

APPENDIX A

QUANTITATIVE SURVEY INSTRUMENT AND RESULTS

Team Health--Comparison of Means

	BL N	EL N	Diff. of means	df	t-value	Sig.
Q8. Working on a ministry team to solve problems frustrates me.	1.50 72	1.45 71	.049	141	.531	.596
Q9. Leaders know how to run action-oriented meetings at PCC.	2.42 62	2.62 69	-.204	129	-1.762	.081
Q10. I think there is too much talk and too little action at meetings.	1.76 62	1.60 70	.158	130	1.311	.192
Q11. Teams work through issues thoughtfully	2.53 60	2.66 68	-.128	126	-1.032	.304
Q12. I am energized by working with others	2.25 77	2.35 80	-.103	155	-.780	.436
Q13. I enjoy addressing ministry challenges with others.	2.18 76	2.02 80	.159	154	1.276	.204
Q14. I get upset when people don't do what they say they will do.	2.14 78	2.01 81	.129	156	1.125	.262
Q15. I find it easy to speak my mind at meetings.	2.24 76	2.00 81	.237	155	1.907	.058
Q16. I try to help discussion to result in a specific action as follow up.	2.29 76	2.20 75	.088	146	.691	.491
Q17. I seek to discern what the Spirit is saying in meetings.	2.33 76	2.46 79	-.127	153	-1.088	.278
Q18. My spiritual gifts and talents are used in and through meetings.	2.04 73	2.07 72	-.028	143	-.229	.819
Q19. People are honest about what they really feel at meetings.	2.31 78	2.35 71	-.052	139	-.522	.603
Q20. I think healthy conflict/disagreement makes a team creative.	2.31 78	2.28 81	.024	157	.187	.852

Collaboration--Comparison of Means

	BL Mean N	EL Mean N	Diff of means	df	t-value	Sig.
Q21. Our team has a clearly defined goal or purpose that justifies the team's existence.	3.40 53	3.61 49	-.216	100	1.524	.131
Q.22. Team members possess the essential skills and abilities to accomplish the team's objectives.	3.40 53	3.51 49	-.114	100	-.858	.393
Q23. Achieving our team goal is a higher priority than any individual objective.	3.21 53	3.42 49	-.209	99	-1.475	.144
Q24. We trust each other sufficiently to openly share information, perceptions, and feedback.	3.19 52	3.48 49	-.287	98	-1.862	.066
Q25. Our team is provided with the resources it needs to get the job done.	3.17 52	3.42 48	-.244	98	-1.978	.051
Q26. Our team leader(s) create(s) a safe climate for team members to openly and supportively discuss any issue related to the team's success.	3.48 52	3.58 48	-.103	98	-.816	.417
Q27. Our team leader looks for and acknowledges contributions by team members.	3.52 52	3.63 48	-.106	98	-.805	.423
Q28. Our team leader understands the organizational issues we must face in achieving our goals.	3.36 (50)	3.45 47	-.087	95	-.620	.537
Q29. Our team is willing to confront and resolve issues associated with inadequate performance by team members	2.88 (51)	3.10 48	-.022	97	-1.540	.127

Decision Making--Comparison of Means

	BL Mean N	EL Mean N	Diff. of means	df	t-value	Sig.
Q30. Our church values congregational collaboration on significant decisions.	3.62 73	4.62 55	1.000 2	126	-6.629	**.000**
Q31. Our church seeks to engage the spiritual gifts of every member	3.07 72	4.04 73	-.972	143	-5.405	**.000**
Q32. Attendees of CCC regularly participate in the decision making of the church.	2.79 66	3.96 78	1.174	142	-6.036	**.000**
Q33. Attendees of CCC are clear about its mission	2.81 72	4.24 72	-1.431	142	-7.793	**.000**
Q34. Attendees of CCC are sacrificially involved in the mission of God.	2.94 66	3.70 77	.762	141	-4.021	**.000**
Q35. Decisions tend to be made solely by the pastors and elders of CCC.	2.63 72	2.74 80	-.113	150	-.632	.529
Q36. Attendees of CCC understand how the church makes decisions	2.79 71	3.62 77	-.835	146	-4.314	**.000**
Q37. Attendees of CCC risk trying new things.	2.78 69	3.68 76	-.902	143	-4.942	**.000**
Q38. The leaders at CCC equip us, the congregation for ministry.	3.06 72	3.99 75	-.931	145	-5.609	**.000**
Q39. Our church understands what it means to be missional.	3.16 74	4.18 71	-1.021	143	-5.727	**.000**
Q40. Our church is a missional church.	3.31 77	4.26 69	.949	144	-5.940	**.000**

Spirit-led Leadership--Comparison of Means

	BL Mean (N)	EL Mean (N)	diff. of means	df	t-value	Sig.
Q41. CCC is a spectator church or CCC is a participatory church	3.97 78	4.42 81	-.445	157	-1.855	.065
Q42. I sense that decisions at CCC are mostly human or I sense that decisions at CCC are mostly Spirit-led.	3.27 78	5.31 81	-2.039	**157**	-8.832	**.000**
Q43. It is not easy to become a leader at CCC or It is easy to become a leader at CCC.	3.72 78	4.53 81	-.813	**157**	-3.334	**.001**
Q44. We don't know how to discern the Spirit together to make decisions or We know how to discern the Spirit together to make decisions.	3.71 78	5.12 81	-1.418	**157**	-6.636	**.000**
Q45.The church can learn a lot from the business world or The church should unlearn what it uses from the business world.	4.13 78	4.23 81	-.106	157	-.484	.629
Q46. Meetings are for leaders to direct members or Meetings are for team members to decide.	2.81 78	5.44 81	-2.637	**157**	-11.227	**.000**
Q47. Attendees show high ownership of the church or Attendees show low ownership of the church	4.09 78	3.90 81	.189	157	.770	.442

Summary of Self-Reflection Questions

		Neg.	No	Low	Pos.	Great	Total
I am more intentional about being a disciple of Jesus Christ	n	0	9	13	53	6	81
	%	0	11	16	65	7	
I am more intentional about being part of a mission community (Emmaus Groups)	n	0	16	11	45	9	81
	%	0	20	14	56	11	
I am more convinced that the Spirit of God is calling me to participate in God's mission in the world	n	1	15	11	47	7	81
	%	1	19	14	58	9	
I am more intentional about participating in local missions (Cloverdale Christmas Hamper, Defend Dignity, Community Kitchen or other social justice issues)	n	0	8	14	53	6	81
	%	0	10	17	65	7	
I understand better what it means to be missional	n	1	9	16	48	7	81
	%	1	11	20	59	9	
I understand better what God's purpose is in the world	n	0	19	19	41	2	81
	%	0	23	23	51	2	
I understand better how we are able to discern the Spirit's leading for the church	n	2	14	16	38	11	81
	%	2	17	20	47	14	
I have a better understanding of the Bible's overarching message because of the Mission series (Jan-Jun) and the Mission and Vision sermons (Sept-Oct)	n	1	7	14	51	8	81
	%	1	9	17	63	10	
I am more hopeful about the future of Pacific Community Church	n	0	6	11	44	20	81
	%	0	7	14	54	25	
The mission and vision process, specifically the congregational forums, provided me an increased way to participate in shaping Pacific's future	n	1	14	16	40	10	81
	%	1	17	20	49	12	
I have a clearer understanding of Pacific's mission and vision	n	0	4	8	46	23	81
	%	0	5	10	57	28	
Pacific's style of leadership is more participatory and collaborative	n	2	11	17	40	11	81
	%	2	14	21	49	14	
I am more convinced that the Spirit of God calls me to participate in God's mission in the world	n	0	8	13	42	18	81
	%	0	10	16	52	22	
Total	n	8	140	179	588	138	1053
	%	1	13	17	56	13	

APPENDIX B

QUALITATIVE INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

In this qualitative interview I want to explore how a leader or team members grew in their capacity as Spirit-led collaborators and participants in God's mission

1. To what extent do you enjoy working with others in ministry? Why or why not?
2. What are the two things you most enjoyed about leading a team or participating in a team at CCC in the past year?
3. How does your team make decisions?
    a. What was the most important decision you made as a team?
    b. How was the decision made?
    c. What was your role in that decision?
    d. Do you feel that everybody contributed freely to what was decided by the team? How did that go?
    e. How do you know it was a good decision?
    f. Do you think that decision making process is a good one? What worked well about this process?
    g. What would you change?
4. How would you describe the way your team works together?
    a. How might you describe a Spirit-led team?
        i. Can you describe a time or give an example when a decision was Spirit-led?
        ii. What evidences of the Spirit gives you a sense that it was Spirit-led?
        iii. Does your leadership or team exhibit those qualities regularly?
            1. If so, explain.
            2. If not, what would your team need to do to become more Spirit-led?
    b. Someone described three types of groups: the leader led group; the member led group; the shared leadership group. If you were to pick one group that evidenced more of a Spirit-led group which one would it be? Why?
5. Describe the biggest challenge/conflict in your group in the past year and how your team resolved it.
6. What is one thing your team spiritually discerned together that challenged you and the team to do something new?
7. To what extent do you feel that your ministry or your team is in sync with God's mission in the world?
8. Do you have any thing you would like to add? What haven't I asked that I should ask?

APPENDIX C

LETTER OF INVITATION AND EXPLANATION

Leadership in Spirit-Created Community:
An Action Research Project to Engender Further Collaboration
and Participation in God's Mission.

I want to invite you to participate in a congregation wide survey. But first let me explain.

Since 2009 I have been studying in the Doctor of Ministry (D.Min) program at Luther Seminary. I fully intend to graduate in May of 2013, God willing. The studies have been intensive and thrilling. I'm deeply thankful that CCC has given me room and space to do this learning and to integrate it fully into my role as Executive pastor. It is because of this blessing that I am committed to producing as good a work from my studies as is possible without ignoring my job, my relationships and my family. The focus of my studies has been on congregational leadership and mission. Professor Craig Van Gelder, who initiated and oversees both the Luther Seminary D.Min and the Ph.D program areas, was a professor of mine when I studied at Calvin Seminary. During that time and since, he has become a leading voice and contributor, through his many books and articles, in the area of congregational research and the broader missional conversation. The studies have provided me a rich and challenging opportunity to reflect on my own leadership, the history and ministry of CCC, and the shared leadership understandings we accept more broadly in the church.

The research is not simply for my own personal benefit, despite the fact that I am benefiting greatly from this season of study and research. More importantly it is about doing research with others for the sake of God's mission in the world. This study intersects directly with the greater and more important responsibilities of the Board and the responsibilities I assume in my calling as a Pastor at CCC.

The purpose of this study is to see if the way we are equipping leaders and teams at CCC is helping us to become more missional and charismatic. In 2011, the Board and Staff of CCC agreed that of the seven distinctives crafted by the congregation in 2009 two distinctives stood out requiring intentional and dedicated effort. First of all, PCC states that as a missional community we want to be a "people in mission seeking to effectively testify to the Good News in our neighborhoods and the nations of the world." Second, PCC states that "we are a people who desire the fullness of the Holy Spirit to empower us for Christ's mission to the world." The combination of these two distinctives and PCC's desire to focus on them has inspired the specific focus of my research. The assumption of my research is that as we are more Spirit-led we will become more collaborative and more participatory and less dependent on directive leaders who control the direction of the church. The result, in my opinion, will be a more equipped, more capable and expansive community of people engaging in the mission of God.

Although the academic study is being conducted by me, it involves many "students" at CCC. We are all learning what it means to be Spirit-led and missional. At least one survey will involve as many attendees to CCC as possible. More specifically, I will be working with others in specific ministry efforts in what I am calling missional interventions. The interventions are actions that intend to shape us into being a more collaborative and participatory community. Truly, I have been working at this for years even before I began this course of studies, but with the added structure of school and a focused research project, I am taking the effort to a new level.

I hope you will participate in this research. Primarily, in and through the ongoing dynamic reality of ministry, we will launch a variety of missional interventions like small group studies, a sermon series, new

partnerships and other things that we believe might help us to being more Spirit-led. Before Christmas 2011 we will administer a general survey to get a point-in-time sense of where we are at presently. Beginning in 2012, I will interview a number of leaders and ministry teams, hopefully, so that we can reflect more fully on what we are learning and experiencing through some of the missional interventions. If possible we will do a smaller and more limited survey by which we can assess any measurable difference from the various missional interventions that we will engage.

I invite you to travel with me in this research. I will maintain a blog on the church website where you can read the research proposal and keep abreast with the ongoing research development. Ultimately a book length research thesis will be produced. It will be the story of CCC. Perhaps the effort will not only strengthen our capacity as a Spirit-led community but also be informative to other churches pursuing the same goals. The research portion is designed to be completed by December 31, 2012. Final submission of the thesis will be completed by March 15 with a defense planned for April 2013. If all goes well, Monica and I will travel to Minneapolis for a graduation ceremony.

It is an adventure in many ways. This is not a study where we are trying to make something happen. It is a study where we together can explore how the Spirit of God can help us to become more collaborative and participatory as God's people in mission with God in the world.

Now back to the initial question: Would you be willing to participate in the initial congregational survey? If yes, please respond by saying yes and I will send you a survey.

If you have any questions, comments or ways in which you would like to participate further please contact me.

In the pursuit of God's mission,

Jim Heuving

Contact:

Researcher: Pastor Jim Heuving
Email: jim.heuving@CCCcommunity.ca
Cell: 604-308-6191
Home Address: 18457-65 Avenue, Surrey BC V3S 8T1 (778-330-2147)
Work Address: 7437-180th Street, Surrey BC V3S 4K5 (604-574-4001-102)

Advisor: Professor of Congregational Mission Craig Van Gelder, Ph. D
Email: cvangeld@luthersem.edu
Phone: 651.641.3218
Work Address: Luther Seminary, 2481 Como Ave., Saint Paul, MN 55108

APPENDIX D

LETTER OF CONSENT

Leadership in Spirit-Created Community:
An Action Research Project to Engender Further Collaboration
and Participation in God's Mission.

You are invited to be involved in a research project that seeks to engender greater participation and collaboration in the mission of God at CCC Community Church. You were selected as a possible participant because you are an attendee of CCC Community Church. We ask that you read this form and ask any questions you may have before agreeing to be in the study.

This study is being conducted by me as part of my Doctor of Ministry thesis in Congregational Mission and Leadership at Luther Seminary. I began doctoral studies in 2009 and this thesis project is the final and culminating effort. The research portion is designed to be completed by December 31, 2012. Final submission of the thesis will be completed by March 15 with a defense planned for April 2013. Overseeing the academic rigor of this project is my advisor Professor of Congregational Mission at Luther Seminary, Craig Van Gelder. CCC Community Church has provided a significant opportunity to grow and learn as a Christian leader and this project seeks not only to benefit me personally but to aid CCC in becoming a more collaborative, participatory and Spirit-led community.

Background Information:
The purpose of this study is to see if the way we are equipping leaders and teams at CCC is helping us to become more missional and charismatic. In 2011, the Board and Staff of CCC agreed that of the seven distinctives crafted by the congregation in 2009 two distinctives stood out requiring intentional and dedicated effort. First of all, PCC states that as a missional community we want to be a "people in mission seeking to effectively testify to the Good News in our neighborhoods and the nations of the world." Second, PCC states that "we are a people who desire the fullness of the Holy Spirit to empower us for Christ's mission to the world." The combination of these two distinctives and PCC's desire to focus on them has inspired the specific focus of my research but also shapes my role as an Executive Pastor at PCC. The assumption of my research is that as we are more Spirit-led we will become more collaborative and more participatory and less dependent on directive leaders who control the direction of the church. The result, in my opinion, will be a more equipped, more capable and expansive community of people engaging in the mission of God.

Procedures:
If you agree to be in this study, I would ask you to participate specifically in the first item and potentially the following 2-4 opportunities that follow in the course of the research.

1. Primarily I would like to invite you to participate in a church wide survey that will serve to explore how we as a church are presently experiencing collaboration and participation as a Spirit-led community. The survey will serve as a baseline to perhaps indicate if some of the existing actions being taken during the time of research suggest degrees of change in our collaboration and participation.
2. Secondly, I might potentially invite you or your ministry team/small group to participate in some missional interventions that might engender change toward greater collaboration and participation.

An invitation, like this letter, will be sent to you prior to commencing a specific a particular intervention. What is an intervention? Good question. An intervention can be any specific, intentional effort to aid a person or group to advance in their capacity to discern the Spirit and to take actions consistent to the work of the Spirit.

3. Thirdly, I might potentially invite you and your ministry team/small group to participate in an interview to more deeply explore and discuss how you have personally experienced changes in collaborating and participating with others in the mission of God. The goal, as with the more general surveys, is to learn what we can about what it means to be a Spirit-led community so that we can reinvest that learning to advance us further into becoming God's people in mission.
4. Finally, I might potentially invite you and your ministry team/small group to participate in another general survey, much like the initial survey, that will function as an end-line comparative to measure if there is any discernable change in our capacity to be more collaborative and participatory as God's Spirit-led people

Risks and Benefits of Being in the Study:
The research will not pose nor does it foresee any physical or psychological risks. However, given the changing nature of the research methodology adopted for this research, unforeseen risks might be encountered. If there are significant physical or psychological risks to participation, you will be fully informed as to the risks before consenting to further research.

In the event that this research activity results in an injury, treatment will be available, including first aid, emergency treatment, counseling, and follow-up care as needed. Payment for any such treatment will be provided by the insurance provided by CCC Community Church. If there are psychological risks, we will provide contacts to credentialed counselors at Peace Portal Counseling Services.

There will be no direct benefits (money, jobs, or coffees) from participating in this research to coerce or tempt you to participate in the study.

Indirect benefits to you will include the possibility of CCC growing in its understanding and capacity to become more engaged in the mission of God by becoming more collaborative and participatory because of being more dependent on discerning the direction of the Spirit and acting on the direction of the Spirit.

Confidentiality:
The records of this study will be kept confidential. If I publish any type of report, I will not include any information that will make it possible to identify you. All raw data will be kept in a specially locked file at home (18457-65 Avenue, Surrey BC Canada); only my advisor, Craig Van Gelder, and I will have access to the data and, if applicable, any tape or video recording. If the research is terminated for any reason, all data and recordings will be destroyed. After the completion of the thesis, the raw data will be retained but all identifying information removed by May 30, 2013.

Voluntary Nature of the Study:
Your decision whether or not to participate will not affect your current or future relations with CCC Community Church. If you decide to participate, you are free to withdraw at any time without affecting those relationships.

Contacts and Questions:
The researcher conducting this study is Jim Heuving. You may ask any questions you have. You can contact either the researcher or the advisor. Contact information is included:

Researcher: Pastor Jim Heuving
Email: jim.heuving@CCCcommunity.ca
Cell: 604-308-6191
Home Address: 18457-65 Avenue, Surrey BC V3S 8T1 (778-330-2147)
Work Address: 7437-180th Street, Surrey BC V3S 4K5 (604-574-4001-102)

Advisor: Professor of Congregational Mission Craig Van Gelder, Ph. D

Email: cvangeld@luthersem.edu
Phone: 651.641.3218
Work Address: Luther Seminary, 2481 Como Ave., Saint Paul, MN 55108

You will be given a copy of this form to keep for your records.

Statement of Consent:

[The following includes what would be adapted for a variety of research contexts.]

I have read the above information or have had it read to me. I have received answers to questions asked. I consent to participate in the study.

I consent to be audio taped.

I consent to allow use of my direct quotations in the published thesis document.

Signature of participant_____ **Date**_____

Signature of researcher _____ **Date**_____

APPENDIX E

IMPLIED LETTER OF CONSENT FOR SURVEYS

Date

Dear,

You are invited to participate in this survey. The survey is part of an extensive research project being done by Pastor Jim and endorsed by CCC Community Church. The research is focused on understanding how collaborative and participatory CCC is as a Spirit-led community. We hope to learn what it might mean to be more Spirit-led and how that connects to being involved in the mission of God to the world. What we learn will be invested back into the ministry of CCC so that we might grow as a spiritual community committed to each other and the work of God . You were selected as a possible participant in this study because you are an attendee of CCC Community Church.

If you decide to participate, please complete the enclosed survey. Your return of this survey will imply that you are consenting freely to participate. The survey is designed to our present experience in terms of our collaboration and participation together in the mission of God. It will take about fifteen minutes. No benefits accrue to you for answering the survey, but your responses will be used to have an point in time sense of where we are at and provide insight about areas in our ministry where we might learn further. The only discomfort or inconvenience to you should derive only from the amount of time taken to complete the survey.

Any information that is obtained in connection with this study and that can be identified with you will remain confidential and will not be disclosed.

Your decision whether or not to participate will not prejudice your future relationships with CCC Community Church. If you decide to participate, you are free to discontinue participation at any time without prejudice.

If you have any questions, please ask. If you have additional questions later, contact Jim Heuving (7437-180th Street, Surrey BC V3S 4K5, 604-574-4001)

Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

Jim Heuving
Executive Pastor, PCC

APPENDIX F

LIST OF NOTABLE EVENTS AND ACTIONS

Date	Interventions and Notable Events
4-Apr-07	Report: Sounding Survey Summary
7-Mar-09	Distinctives Forum 1
28-Mar-09	Distinctives Forum 2
4-Jun-09	Seven Distinctives
10-Sep-09	Paper: Being Reshaped Around a Table
31-Mar-10	Paper: Cultivating a Missional Community
6-Oct-10	Paper: Grounded Theory Research on Pacific's Relationship with CSOs
19-Feb-11	Report: Board and Staff Retreat
31-Mar-11	Paper: Quantitative Research Project--Next Chapter
9-Aug-11	Mom's Leadership Meeting Crisis
6-Sep-11	Report: Outcomes of Vision Day
30-Dec-11	Congregational Survey about Spirit-led Leadership
1-Jan-12	Brian's Discipleship Meeting 1
8-Jan-12	Missional Sermon 1: Living our Lives within God's Grand Story
12-Jan-12	Scribing: Thoughts about the Mission and Vision Process
15-Jan-12	Missional Sermon 2: Saved! For what?
22-Jan-12	Missional Sermon 3: The Mission of God's People Amdist the Nations
5-Feb-12	Missional Sermon 4: Jesus and the Mission of God
12-Feb-12	Missional Sermon 5: The Mission of God and the NT Story
14-Feb-12	Board Presentation: Mission and Vision Process
19-Feb-12	Missional Sermon 6: Mission Through Weakness
21-Feb-12	MVT 1
26-Feb-12	Missional Sermon 7: The Indispensable Center of Christian Mission
11-Mar-12	Missional Sermon 8: Incarnation and God's Mission (Jim)
15-Mar-12	MVT 2

18-Mar-12	Missional Sermon 9: The Holy Spirit in Mission
25-Mar-12	Congregational Announcement
25-Mar-12	Missional Sermon 10: Jesus' Banquet and the Changing Guest List
1-Apr-12	Missional Sermon 11: The Marks of a Missional Church
1-Apr-12	Interview of Tangible Kingdom Primer Studying Group
12-Apr-12	MVT 3
21-Apr-12	Children's Ministry Team Intervention: Decision Making
25-Apr-12	MVT 4
27-Apr-12	Forum One Planning Meeting: Brian and Jim
6-May-12	Forum 1
9-May-12	MVT 5
18-May-12	Scribing: Brian Draft
23-May-12	Scribing: Jim Pushback
23-May-12	Scribing: Team
24-May-12	Scribing: Forum 2
27-May-12	Forum 2
27-May-12	MVT 6
20-Jun-12	Scribing: Glen and Brian Draft
21-Jun-12	Board: Senior Pastor Ministry Status Report
11-Jul-12	Scribing: Glen and Brian Draft 1
25-Jul-12	Scribing: Jim's comments on Draft 2
27-Jul-12	Scribing: Glen and Brian's Draft 2 (3)
30-Aug-12	Scribing: Draft 4b
8-Sep-12	MVT 7
16-Sep-12	MV Sermon 1: Embraced by Christ; Embracing the World (Ephesian 1)
18-Sep-12	Staff: Presentation of Draft Mission and Vision Statement
22-Sep-12	Marcus Disciple Group Start
23-Sep-12	MV Sermon 2: Personal Transformation
28-Sep-12	Staff: Discussion of MV
30-Sep-12	MV Sermon 3: Neighborhood Transformation
9-Oct-12	Staff Discipleship Meeting 1
11-Oct-12	Surrey Homelessness and Housing Society Grant Presentation
14-Oct-12	MV Sermon 4: Global Transformation
21-Oct-12	Forum 3

APPENDIX G

SEVEN DISTINCTIVES

A Gospel Community
We are a people committed to participating in the good news of God redeeming all creation through Jesus Christ.

The gospel is everything God has done, is doing, and will do to redeem all creation for his glory. We are both recipients and participants in this unfolding drama of redemption. Our worship services and ministries are shaped by re-enacting this "good news" story and celebrating its centerpiece, Jesus Christ. Being Christ-centered implies that we embrace the cross of Christ as God's means of redeeming us from sin's penalty and sin's hold through the power of the Holy Spirit. Through the consistent exposition and application of the Scriptures, we are progressively transformed into a people who follow Jesus, seek his kingdom, and reflect his glory to the nations.

A Missional Community
We are a people in mission seeking to effectively testify to the Good News in our neighbourhoods and the nations of the world.

God is on a mission--as the Father sent his Son, so Jesus is now sending us, empowering us by his indwelling Holy Spirit. As "sent ones" we are to be the embodiment of the Living Word in human culture and social settings so as to display his divine nature and transforming power. We seek to engage the culture both locally and abroad declaring and demonstrating the gospel within the specific context of time, place, language, and culture. We seek to radically identify with the world while maintaining a radical distinction from it.

A Trinitarian Community
We are a people who desire our relationships to reflect the community of our three-in-one God.

By looking at Jesus, we will clearly see him in relationship with the Father and the Holy Spirit. As we are drawn into the fellowship of the Trinity, our earthly relationships with one another will begin to reflect our understanding of the Trinitarian nature of God, not our own relational needs and desires. We long to reflect the relationship within the Trinity, where each member is co-equal with one another, lives with and for the other, serving, cherishing and honouring the other.

A Sacramental Community

We are a people who highly value the stewardship of all God's creation and the celebration of the sacraments of Baptism and the Lord's Supper.

We see all of God's creation as holy, reflecting his glory, and therefore "good". We see no distinction between what is sacred and secular, spiritual and physical. The incarnation of Jesus of Nazareth supports that what we see, taste, smell, and touch is indeed good. Being a sacramental community implies the generous stewardship of all of God's gifts (environment, money, family, business, facility, etc.) to the best of our ability and for the glory of God. We are also sacramental in that we value the celebration of baptism and communion as not mere symbols of deeper spiritual realities, but as God's means of grace to his gathered church. We believe that baptism and The Lord's Supper are frequent practices of the worshipping church, where heaven is particularly close to earth. We enjoy a weekly celebration of the Lord's Supper.

A Catholic Community
We are a people who highly value our relationship with Christ's whole Church, past, present, and future.

We desire "catholicity" by embracing the work of God's Spirit throughout church history. We see ourselves as a dependent branch of the universal Church which humbly gathers nourishment from the entire tree in all its historical, theological, and cultural diversity. We choose to learn from those who hold differing views than ours in the non-essentials, yet we contend for those bedrock beliefs that the whole church for all time and in every place has considered orthodox. Our ultimate allegiance is to the King and his kingdom. Yet, we believe there is synergy by working in submission and alignment to our own denomination, the Christian and Missionary Alliance. This enables us to be served and coached by others who share our values. These find their greatest expression in discipleship, church planting and global missions. In addition, we seek and welcome opportunities for cross-denominational fellowship and endeavours.

A Charismatic Community
We are a people who desire the fullness of the Holy Spirit to empower us for Christ's mission in the world.

We are a charismatic community in that we acknowledge the Holy Spirit is present and active in the church today, sovereignly dispensing all his gifts for the building up of the church and the renewing of his world. We value the ministry that God has given each and every member of the body of Christ. We love and serve with eager anticipation of what the Holy Spirit can and will miraculously do as Jesus' kingdom breaks into our midst.

A Hopeful Community
We seek to be a people who live with an expectant eye on Christ's second coming.

We are encouraged in this present life to persevere with the blessed hope that "when he comes, we shall be like him." Just as "all creation groans eagerly awaiting her redemption", we too acknowledge our weakness and imperfection "until He comes."

With Christ we share with those who suffer, and rejoice in the hope and victory of his return when all suffering ends. Living with one eye on his return will keep us from the two extremes of discouragement and arrogance. This hope compels us to be watchful, prayerful, patient and prepared.

APPENDIX H

MISSION AND VISION STATEMENT (SEPTEMBER 2012)

Mission Statement

Embraced by Christ; Embracing His World

By the Holy Spirit, we seek to be a worshipping and discipling community that embodies the vocal and visible presence of Jesus in our neighbourhoods and nations of the world through transforming relationships of love with God and one another.

Vision Statement

Personal Transformation
We seek to be a community that cultivates a contagious culture of personal ownership for spiritual growth and discipleship that results in ongoing life transformation and intentional missional living.

Goals and Objectives:

- Operation Timothy – We will start 10 new year-long discipleship groups within the next two years with the goal of equipping an expanding network of disciple makers who practice spiritual disciplines and personal accountability.
- The Potter's Wheel – We will develop an Alpha-like program for launch in September 2013 and a series of other recurring and key formative opportunities (e.g., Newcomers Class, Gift Discovery, Missional life) within the next two years to guide new people into the life of God's mission.
- Re-Centering Youth & Children's Program – Beginning September 2013, we will revise and re-shape our existing Children's Ministry program and Youth Ministries to be centered on disciple transformation.

Neighbourhood Transformation
We seek to be a prophetic and life-giving presence of Christ**,** serving our neighborhoods and local community so that our neighbours and friends will experience God's transforming love in Jesus.

Goals and Objectives:

- Emmaus Groups – We will explore various models and options for missional parishes that combine pastoral care, discipleship and missional outreach to their surrounding neighbourhoods. We will work toward establishing 4 such Emmaus Groups by September 2013 and another 4 Groups in September 2014.

- Community Kitchen – We will seek to renovate our current kitchen, starting with the launch of a fundraising campaign this fall toward the construction in Summer 2013 of a fully-equipped kitchen facility. This will allow us to double our Community Kitchen initiatives by fall 2013, providing meals for the poor and homeless twice a week, and to enable the exploration of partnering opportunities including the possibility of a catering initiative using the disabled.
- Mid-Week & Summer Programs – We will develop community outreach initiatives for youth and children potentially for summer 2013, but certainly for fall 2013 (e.g., DVBS, Soccer Camp, Awana, etc.) under the leadership of our Children and Student Ministries Pastors.

Global Transformation

We seek to participate in God's mission by leaving our provincial comforts and boldly crossing into different cultures and other nations so that we and those we seek to reach may be transformed by the love of God.

Goals and Objectives:

- International Missions - We will develop a close working relationship with at least one foreign mission field by September 2013 that provides opportunity for congregational members to participate in global mission efforts or other people groups.
- Local Missional Partners – We will establish and/or clarify our missional partnerships with four external groups over the next three years (e.g., Mosiac Church – Don Cowie, Young Life – Brendan Weidner, YFC – David Morgan) and also develop and support participation by congregational members in specific social justice and human dignity initiatives (e.g., Defend Dignity, Night Shift, Servants Anonymous Society, etc.).
- Operation Jacob's Well – We will research ways and opportunities for reaching out with the Gospel to different ethnic groups within our community and initiate at least one such initiative within the next two years.

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