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Simmonds, Sharon Jean. "Designing, Facilitating, and Evaluating an Approach for Leaders to Experience God's Shepherding and to Develop Together as Shepherds of the Church." D. Min., Tyndale University College & Seminary, 2015.

Tyndale University College and Seminary

Designing, Facilitating, and Evaluating an Approach for Leaders to Experience  
God's Shepherding and to Develop Together as Shepherds of the Church

A Thesis  
submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements  
for the degree of  
Doctor of Ministry  
Tyndale Seminary

by

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September 2015

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## **ABSTRACT**

Research by the Barna group indicates that the health of Christian leaders affects the health of the church and that nothing is more important for the future of the Christian church than leadership (Barna 1997, 20, 29). A Canadian Evangelical Churches study identifies a connection between pastoral well-being and congregational well-being (Reimer 2010, 12). And a report on the Well-being of Clergy in Ontario recognizes the need for leaders to experience wholeness with integrity through an emphasis on community and the Christian call to reconciliation in relationship with God, self, and others (Irvine 2006, 22). A leadership development focus will address the need for Christian leaders to develop in health within the context of community.

This research project involved the design, facilitation, and evaluation of a leadership development approach with colleagues of St. Paul's Leaskdale. Objectives were to increase connection and care between leaders, acquire new knowledge together, and develop in shared purpose as shepherds of the church. Four leadership development models contributed to the design of this approach: shepherding as a biblical model, Arrow Leadership, The Social Change Model of Leadership Development (Komives, Wagner and Associates 2009), and Integrated Leadership (Pietersen 2010).

This action research project involved qualitative inquiry, including action learning and appreciative inquiry. Qualitative data was collected through personal interviews, documents, participant participation, and researcher observations. Data was analyzed through reflective evaluation and content analysis. An evaluation of a shepherding approach indicates that leaders benefit when they covenant together in a supportive environment to promote integrated leadership development.

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

I am grateful to God for the opportunity to learn and develop through this DMin experience. The journey has deepened my trust with the Lord as my Shepherd, experiencing his faithful presence, provision, protection, and guidance.

I express deep gratitude to my husband Gord and our children Matt and Kathleen, Krista, Scott, and Jason. You have patiently and enthusiastically provided support throughout this process. Thanks for cheering me on and caring well for me. I am blessed with a wonderful family.

Numerous people have strengthened this work. Thanks to St. Paul's Leaskdale, Pickering Presbytery, participants of this research, Tyndale DMin program personnel, my cohort and workgroup, extended family and friends, and many others who provided timely encouragement and counsel. I have experienced amazing expressions of companionship and have understood the wisdom of Proverbs 20:18, "Form your purpose by asking for counsel, then carry it out using all the help you can get" (MSG). Thank you to all for your generous interest, insight, and inspiration for me to complete this work.

## CONTENTS

LIST OF FIGURES .....	xii
LIST OF TABLES .....	xiii
LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS.....	xiv
CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION.....	1
Personal Leadership Development Journey.....	3
Ministry Context .....	4
Ministry Opportunity .....	8
Response .....	8
Chapter Summaries .....	14
CHAPTER TWO: THEOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK.....	16
God’s Design for Covenant Community .....	16
The Trinity .....	17
Covenantal God .....	20
Identity and Purpose as the People of God .....	23
A True Shepherd.....	25
Shepherding as a Biblical Model of Leadership Development .....	27
The Shepherd Metaphor.....	28
Shepherds in God’s Community.....	37
Leading Together as Shepherds.....	40
Developing Leaders as Shepherds of the Church .....	42
Life Together in Jesus.....	43
Arrow Leadership: Investing in Christian Leaders.....	47
Conclusion of Theological Framework.....	50
CHAPTER THREE: PRECEDENT LITERATURE.....	51
Defining Leadership Development .....	51
Developing a Shepherding Approach .....	54
Four Models of Leadership Development .....	55
Shepherding as a Biblical Model .....	56
Arrow Leadership .....	56
The Social Change Model of Leadership Development.....	56
Integrated Leadership.....	60
Comparison of Four Leadership Development Models.....	65
Components for Leaders to Develop Together .....	67
Relationship .....	68
Care .....	70

Ability .....	73
Design and Facilitation of a Shepherding Approach .....	79
Shepherding Approach Design .....	80
Meeting Design .....	81
Facilitator Role.....	84
Participant Role.....	86
Conclusion of a Shepherding Approach Design .....	86
Evaluation of a Shepherding Approach .....	86
Conclusion of Literature Review .....	87
<b>CHAPTER FOUR: RESEARCH METHODS .....</b>	<b>88</b>
Research Methodology .....	89
Qualitative Inquiry .....	89
Action Research and Learning.....	90
Appreciative Inquiry .....	94
A Shepherding Approach of Leadership Development .....	94
Contextual Knowledge.....	95
Researcher Assumptions.....	95
Project Design.....	96
Project Timeline.....	101
Ethical Review .....	102
Data Collection .....	104
Interviews.....	105
Church Documents and Records.....	106
Participant Participation.....	107
Research Documents.....	107
Researcher Observations.....	107
Data Analysis .....	108
Reflection and Evaluation.....	108
Content Analysis.....	109
Research Methods Conclusion.....	112
<b>CHAPTER FIVE: RESEARCH FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS .....</b>	<b>113</b>
Interviews.....	114
Church Documents.....	114
Participant Reflection and Content Analysis .....	116
Increased Connection and Care Between Leaders.....	116
Acquiring New Knowledge and Learning Together.....	121
Clarity about Shared Purpose as Church Leaders.....	125
Researcher Analysis.....	129
Identified Themes from the Research .....	133
Leaders are Whole People with Real Needs .....	133
Developing Together is a Missing Piece .....	134
Learning and Practice in Community .....	135
Life-giving Meetings .....	136
Insights to Improve a Shepherding Approach.....	137
Resources .....	138
Expectations.....	138

Group ownership.....	139
Meeting venue and time.....	139
Research Analysis Conclusion.....	140
CHAPTER SIX: CONCLUSION.....	142
Outcomes .....	142
Research Conclusions .....	145
Future Research .....	145
Potential Application .....	147
Personal Reflections.....	148
Conclusion .....	148
APPENDICES .....	150
Appendix 1: Participant Information and Consent .....	151
Appendix 2: Shepherding Approach Design .....	153
Appendix 3: St. Paul’s Leaskdale Discipleship Strategy.....	156
Appendix 4: Arrow Leadership Character/Competency Model .....	158
Appendix 5: Shepherding Interviews.....	161
Appendix 6: Research Project Resource List.....	164
Appendix 7: Research Project Activities and Timeline .....	165
Appendix 8: Relationship Data Statements .....	168
Appendix 9: Communication Samples .....	172
Appendix 10: Spiritual Practices.....	175
Appendix 11: Evaluation of Shepherding Meetings.....	177
REFERENCE LIST .....	187

## LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1. Connection of St. Paul's Leaskdale leaders .....	8
Figure 2. A shepherding approach designed for this research project.....	10
Figure 3. Activities of a shepherding approach .....	12
Figure 4. The Trinity, God in three Persons, in covenant community.....	18
Figure 5. Arrow Leadership's three areas of leadership development .....	48
Figure 6. A shepherding approach for leadership development .....	55
Figure 7. The Social Change Model of Leadership Development.....	58
Figure 8. Three domains of Integrated Leadership.....	61
Figure 9. Strategic learning cycle .....	63
Figure 10. World Cafe design.....	83
Figure 11. Creating space for a shepherding approach with leaders .....	98
Figure 12. A shepherding approach designed for this research project.....	99
Figure 13. Frequency of meetings for church leaders.....	116
Figure 14. Relationship data statements .....	117

## LIST OF TABLES

Table 1. Shepherding Principles and Description.....	10
Table 2. Shepherding Principles and Integrated Leadership .....	11
Table 3. Cultivating Christian Community.....	19
Table 4. Shepherding Principles and Description.....	27
Table 5. Shepherding Roles and Responsibilities.....	28
Table 6. Similarities Between Arrow Leadership and Integrated Leadership .....	66
Table 7. Research Project: Action Research Cycles.....	92
Table 8. Influences of a Shepherding Approach Design .....	97
Table 9. Template of a Shepherding Meeting.....	99
Table 10. Research Project Timeline .....	102
Table 11. Data Collection Overview .....	104
Table 12. Interviews with St. Paul’s Leaskdale Leaders .....	106
Table 13. Content Analysis Application with this Research Project .....	110
Table 14. Magnitude Coding to Analyze Data .....	111
Table 15. Data Analysis at Measuring Points.....	111
Table 16. Appreciative Inquiry Process to Develop with Shared Purpose .....	126
Table 17. Shared Purpose and Priorities for St. Paul’s Leaskdale Leaders .....	129

## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AI	Appreciative Inquiry
ESV	ESV Study Bible. (Crossway Bibles 2008)
NIV	The New International Version Bible. Unless otherwise indicated all Bible quotations in this paper are from NIV. (Zondervan 2005)
MSG	The Message: The Bible in Contemporary Language. (Peterson 2002)
PCC	The Presbyterian Church in Canada
SPL	St. Paul's Leaskdale

## **CHAPTER ONE:**

### **INTRODUCTION**

The church is designed for Christian community and companionship in ministry, yet many leaders operate in isolation and without adequate support. The focus of this thesis is the design, facilitation, and evaluation of a one-year leadership development approach with Christian leaders who work together. The project positioned nine leaders of St. Paul's Leaskdale (SPL) to experience God's shepherding and to develop collectively as shepherds of the church.

Research by the Barna group indicates that the health of Christian leaders affects the health of the church and that nothing is more important for the future of the Christian church than leadership (Barna 1997, 20, 29). A Canadian Evangelical Churches study identifies a connection between pastoral well-being and congregational well-being (Reimer 2010, 12). And a report on the Well-being of Clergy in Ontario recognizes the need for leaders to experience wholeness with integrity through an emphasis on community and the Christian call to reconciliation in relationship with God, self, and others (Irvine 2006, 22). A leadership development focus will address the need for Christian leaders to develop in health within the context of community.

Healthy leaders and churches are affected by the realities of Christian leadership. The above-mentioned Evangelical Churches study indicates that

pastors often experience threatening actualities of time demands, criticism and conflict, loneliness, idealism, stress, and burnout (Reimer 2010, 1-2). Reimer identifies the need to strengthen churches by developing healthy Christian lay leaders who will work collaboratively with pastors in a supportive environment (Reimer 2010, 12).

The study on the Well-being of Clergy in Ontario revealed that 55% of participants identified that they sometimes feel very lonely (Irvine 2006, 9). Close friendships and relational support between persons in ministry were not evident in the study findings (Irvine 2006, 9). Reasons cited for these statistics include professional ethics that teach ministers to avoid developing relationships of depth or intimacy in their leadership setting, busyness, wanting to avoid favouritism, the need for confidentiality, the transient nature of ministry, and levels of distrust and jealousy between ministers and colleagues in ministry (Irvine 2006, 8-9). Irvine's conclusion identifies the need for an approach of support and care that addresses a leader's identity as a person in relationship to God (2006, 27). Irvine suggests that a healthy, forming identity develops emotional strength that enables a leader to seek supportive relationships, nurture the Call to ministry, and promote a true sense of community (2006, 27).

A leader's time and energy can be consumed with tasks, often at the expense of relationships and self-care. The design of the church is intended to function in community and we need one another for the body of Christ to function properly (Barna 1997, 28). A shepherding approach used with this research project created

a supportive environment for SPL elders, pastors, and ministry directors to develop together in relationship, care, and ability as leaders of the church.

### **Personal Leadership Development Journey**

My personal leadership development journey began in my family of origin. I am the oldest of five children and we were naturally integrated into life on a dairy farm and our father's auction business. I was entrusted with responsibility and care of people and tasks at a young age. As I grew older, my leadership development expanded through involvements with church, school, and community. I provided leadership with children and youth ministries, led a church choir, served on various leadership committees, facilitated Bible study groups, and founded and chaired the board of a charitable organization. Much of my leadership development occurred informally as I read books, observed other leaders, attended seminars, and practiced leadership in real-life scenarios.

Over the past fifteen years my leadership journey has evolved through a combination of practice and formal development. I have developed practice in leading a charitable organization and serving on a church staff. My formal development in educational settings includes a bachelor of arts in social development, the Arrow Leadership program, masters-level education in evangelism and leadership at Wheaton College, and the doctor of ministry program in leadership at Tyndale Seminary. Leading discipleship initiatives in a local church has positioned me to think strategically about how to position people to develop in the Christian faith. Three emphases of the SPL discipleship strategy are for believers to be growing in relationship with Jesus, growing in relationship

with others in Christian community, and growing in active expression and engagement as the people of God. The SPL discipleship strategy is included in appendix 3.

My personal leadership development journey has influenced my growing conviction that the condition of Christian leaders and how we work together matters a lot for our personal well-being and the churches or organizations we serve. I have a heightened awareness that the shepherd metaphor has something to say about God's intention and design for the development of Christian leaders. These leadership development experiences and convictions have impacted what I have brought as the researcher to this research process and project.

### **Ministry Context**

I have been a leader with St. Paul's Leaskdale (SPL) serving in various staff roles since the year 2000. My involvement with the church during this research project was in leadership roles as an elder and the discipleship ministry director. The history of the church introduces the ministry context for this research project.

SPL is a thriving Presbyterian church in an unlikely rural setting, eighty-six kilometers northeast of Toronto in the village of Leaskdale. Established in 1862, church records indicate seasons of growth and decline with this ministry. Times were especially desperate in 1994. With no minister and dwindling numbers, a small group of leaders worked through a vision process to determine whether it was feasible for the ministry of SPL to continue, or whether it was time to close the doors to the church. A 1994 SPL church document outlines a self-analysis and summary of that process (St. Paul's Leaskdale Session Notes, 1994). SPL leaders

identified that if everything remained the same, the church would expire within ten years. The leadership group at that time determined that they were willing to make necessary adjustments for the ministry to continue. They selected a minister they believed could lead them forward. He became the SPL minister of Word and Sacrament in 1995 and continues to lead the church as lead pastor at the time of this research project (St. Paul's Leaskdale 2012).

Since that turning point in the history of SPL, gradual changes were made and the congregation steadily developed from a family-sized community church led by a minister and elders into a large regional church led by a pastoral team, elders, staff ministry directors, and support staff. In 2009, SPL church leaders worked through a visioning process to determine that SPL exists for people of all ages to be “together fully alive in Jesus.” This statement guides ministry conversations, decisions, and evaluation about how God is at work to bring people alive in relationship with him (Ministry Beyond 2009, St. Paul's Leaskdale, 2009).

SPL is affiliated with the Presbyterian Church in Canada (PCC). Governance of a PCC church includes an ordained PCC minister who is the teaching elder, and congregational members who are ordained ruling elders. This leadership group, known as the session, brings supervision and oversight to the church (The Presbyterian Church in Canada 2008, Section 105). The minister and elders are equal partners in the ministry, accountable to the Presbytery (an area of local Presbyterian Churches) and the Presbyterian Church in Canada (Henderson, McLean and Muir 2010, 30).

Ruling elders are ordained for life and traditionally serve on the session until they resign, are no longer able to actively serve, or are removed for disciplinary purposes. The PCC has more recently implemented an option for congregations to govern with elders who serve in six-year terms (The Presbyterian Church in Canada 2008, Section 132). The SPL session has chosen to operate with elders who actively serve for a period of six-years and then rotate off the session for a break. Elders can be elected to serve subsequent or future six-year terms.

Teaching and ruling elders work collaboratively and collegially to provide oversight as spiritual leaders, and to design and deliver the ministry and mission of the church (Elders' Institute 2005, 1). The Presbyterian Church identifies that many elders feel “ill-equipped and inadequate to lead” (Clare 2014) and that training and development is required for elders to understand their responsibility to enable positive process and how to work together with others for a collective leadership approach (Elders' Institute 2009). The development of elders is the responsibility of each local church body, with resources and support available from the PCC.

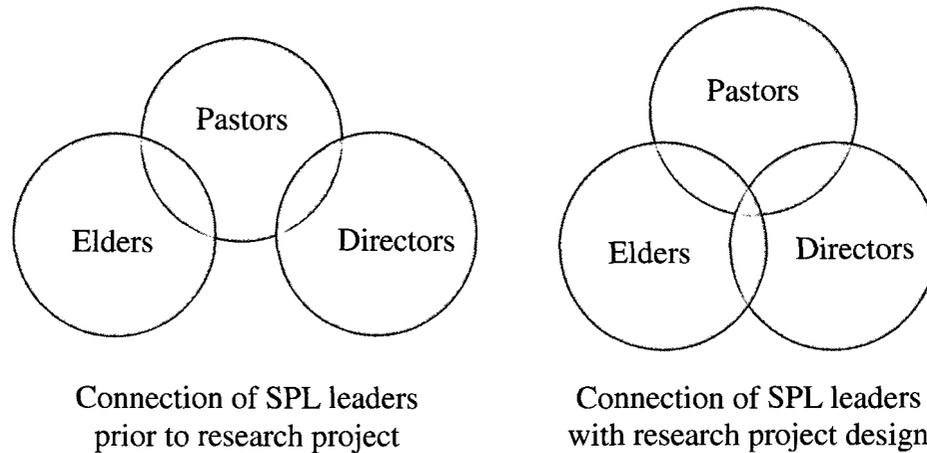
At the time of this research project, the SPL session included the lead pastor (male teaching elder) and four ruling elders (two female and two male). Two associate pastors (one female and one male) attended session meetings to contribute with spiritual oversight and leadership for the church, although they were not ordained as elders of the church and did not have voting privileges with the session.

The practice of the SPL session was to meet together twice monthly during the ministry year, September through June, with one meeting for business, and the other for study. During times of study, the SPL session focused on reading and discussing resources, prayer, and working through topics that required additional conversation and discernment. The SPL session normally organized one annual overnight retreat together. These established practices with the SPL session influenced the design and facilitation of this research project.

SPL leadership has evolved over the past twenty years with growth and development of the church. Additional pastors and staff directors have brought strength to the church through a complement of personalities and giftedness. In addition to the session, SPL developed another leadership group known as the ministry council to involve pastors (the lead pastor and two associates) and staff ministry directors. Ministry directors provide leadership with the church in four main areas of SPL ministry including worship, community, discipleship, and mission. The lead pastor assumed responsibilities as the director of worship. Pastors and directors interacted frequently as they worked together in day-to-day ministry, and the ministry council met formally once a month for extended time to pray, update, plan, and assess ministry.

At the time of the research project the three SPL pastors attended both session and ministry council meetings, and provided a connection between elders and staff ministry directors. Elders and ministry directors rarely interfaced. The focus of this research project was to design and facilitate an approach for the three groups of leaders (elders, pastors, and directors) to connect and develop together

as leaders of the church. Figure 1 compares the connection of SPL leaders prior to this research project and the connection of SPL leaders with this research project's design.



**Figure 1. Connection of St. Paul's Leaskdale leaders**

The intersecting space in the right diagram of figure 1 illustrates the connection of elders, pastors, and directors through the design of this action research project.

### **Ministry Opportunity**

SPL exists for people to be together fully alive in Jesus (the church's vision statement). Leading the way with vision requires SPL elders, pastors, and ministry directors to be together fully alive in Jesus. This research project provided the opportunity for SPL leaders to commit to a leadership development journey for this purpose. An intentional approach positioned these ministry colleagues to experience God's shepherding and to develop together as shepherds of the church.

### **Response**

In this research project I provide evidence for, and assess how, a shepherding approach connected and developed SPL leaders as shepherds of the church. The

design, facilitation, and evaluation of a shepherding approach was developed from the concept that God's shepherding involves his covenant of presence and intimate connection with his people (see chap. 2). This relationship includes his consistent care and ability to provide, protect, and guide those who respond to his presence and love (see chap. 2). God places people in positions of leadership to join with him to shepherd his people. Still, leaders are human beings first, in continuous need of God's shepherding in covenant community (see chap. 2). Receptive leaders will be committed to experience the Lord's shepherding and to develop together as shepherds who can guide others to experience the same (see chap. 2).

The purpose of a shepherding approach was to create space for SPL elders, pastors, and ministry directors to experience God's shepherding and develop together as shepherds of the church. Figure 2 illustrates a shepherding approach used with this research project. Appendix 2 provides the strategy and design of a shepherding approach.



**Figure 2. A shepherding approach designed for this research project**

This shepherding approach is based on foundational shepherding principles of relationship, care, and ability (see chap. 2). Table 1 provides a description of these shepherding principles.

**Table 1. Shepherding Principles and Description**

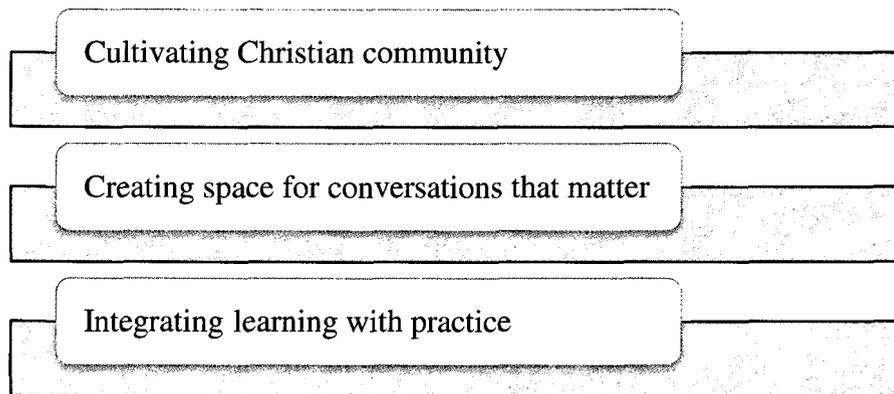
<b>Shepherding Principles</b>	<b>Description</b>
Relationship	Togetherness, oneness, trust, unity, love, collaboration
Care	Promotes and brings good, supportive presence, compassion, provision, protection
Ability	Skills, knowledge, experience, commitment, guidance, competence to faithfully fulfill responsibilities

To design a shepherding approach I incorporated shepherding principles with three aspects of integrated leadership: intrapersonal (to lead self), interpersonal (to lead with others), and strategic (to lead the church) (see chap. 3). Table 2 illustrates this connection.

**Table 2. Shepherding Principles and Integrated Leadership**

		<b>INTEGRATED LEADERSHIP</b>		
		<b>Intrapersonal Leadership</b>	<b>Interpersonal Leadership</b>	<b>Strategic Leadership</b>
<b>SHEPHERDING PRINCIPLES</b>	<b>Relationship</b>	<p>Responding to God's presence and love</p> <p>Growing in an intimate relationship of oneness with Jesus</p>	<p>Committed to developing together with colleagues and peers</p> <p>Cultivating Christian community</p>	<p>Leading collaboratively and consistently for people to enter into relationship with God and others as the body of Christ</p>
	<b>Care</b>	<p>Receiving God's care</p> <p>Seeking and trusting his provision, protection and guidance</p> <p>Developing healthy rhythms of activity and rest</p>	<p>Attentive to God's presence together, receiving his care</p> <p>Listening to God and one another</p> <p>Providing and experiencing care and support between colleagues and peers</p>	<p>Promoting and bringing good</p> <p>Leading with care in process and practice</p> <p>Positioning people to experience the Lord's shepherding</p>
	<b>Ability</b>	<p>Attentive and responsive to the Spirit of God</p> <p>Self-awareness and integrity as a person and leader</p> <p>Stewarding time, energy and gifts for God's purposes and his glory</p>	<p>Gaining new knowledge together</p> <p>Gaining clarity about shared purpose</p> <p>Discovering what it means to be together fully alive in Jesus</p>	<p>Commitment and competence to join with God in his mission and for his glory</p> <p>Stewarding people, time, energy, resources and gifts for the church to be engaged in God's purposes</p>

A shepherding approach created a supportive environment for a SPL leadership group to focus on developing as integrated leaders with particular attention to interpersonal leadership. This was accomplished through ten shepherding meetings over one year. Each shepherding meeting was designed to cultivate Christian community (see chap. 2), create space for conversations that matter (see chap. 3), and integrate learning with practice (see chap. 3). Figure 3 illustrates the activities that were incorporated into this research project's design.



**Figure 3. Activities of a shepherding approach**

Intended ministry outcomes of this research project were to increase connection and care between SPL elders, pastors, and ministry directors, to acquire new knowledge together, and to clarify shared purpose as leaders of the church. Research questions with this project included, what are the components to design a shepherding leadership development approach? How do we facilitate a shepherding approach? How do we evaluate a shepherding approach? How did this shepherding approach benefit SPL leaders? And what approach with leadership development is most beneficial for colleagues who work together in Christian ministry?

Research took place primarily at the SPL church facility located in Leaskdale, Ontario, and three secondary locations. The group met seven times at the church, once in a home setting, and at two different locations for an overnight retreat. Nine SPL leaders participated in this research including three elders, three pastors, and three ministry directors. I was involved as a participant with the group in a three-way role as researcher, facilitator, and SPL leader. The participant group included five women and four men ranging in age between late-thirties and early-sixties. Ethical considerations and participant consent are included in appendix 1.

Four leadership development models contributed to the design of a shepherding approach: shepherding as a biblical model (see chap. 2), Arrow Leadership (see chap. 2, appendix 4), The Social Change Model of Leadership Development (Komives, Wagner and Associates 2009) (see chap. 3), and Integrated Leadership (Pietersen 2010) (see chap. 3). The World Café design (see chap. 3), reflective evaluation (see chap. 4), appreciative inquiry (see chap. 4), and content analysis (see chap. 4) were used as qualitative assessment tools.

The shepherding approach with SPL leaders took place from May 2013 to May 2014 with ten two-hour meetings approximately once monthly. Participants were expected to read resources for group discussion and write reflections in a journal for personal use. The research project was one large cycle of action research with several smaller cycles taking place throughout the project (see chap. 4).

This shepherding approach of leadership development could be transferred into a similar context with leaders who work together in a church ministry setting, with Christian colleagues in other settings such as denominations or departments, and with Christian peers of equal role or status.

### **Chapter Summaries**

This chapter explained the researcher's personal development journey, the SPL ministry context, the opportunity for leaders of a church to develop together as shepherds, a shepherding leadership development approach, and the intended outcomes, key research questions, and description of this research project.

Chapter two examines three theological themes: God's design for covenant relationship in community, shepherding as a model of biblical leadership development, and developing leaders together as shepherds of the church. Arrow Leadership as a leadership development model is introduced in this chapter.

Chapter three explores precedent literature related to leadership development and this term is defined. Four models of leadership development are explained and compared to understand components of a shepherding approach for leaders to develop together. Concepts of cultivating community, developing care through conversations that matter, and integrating learning with practice are explored in this chapter to assist with the design, facilitation, and evaluation of a shepherding approach.

Chapter four describes the research methodology of this action research project and explains the project design, project timeline, ethical review,

facilitation and delivery of a shepherding approach, data collection, and data analysis.

Chapter five examines the findings of qualitative research data. Findings indicate that a shepherding approach increased connection and care with nine SPL colleagues, positioned this group to acquire new knowledge together, and assisted the group to clarify their shared purpose as leaders of the church.

Chapter six concludes this thesis outlining lessons learned, how this project's findings could be applied to a shepherding approach of leadership development with other Christian leadership groups, and the researcher's personal learning and development gained through the experience of this project.

## **CHAPTER TWO: THEOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK**

This chapter provides a biblical and theological rationale for leaders of the church to develop together as shepherds. Three theological themes are explored: God's design for covenant community, shepherding as model of biblical leadership development, and developing leaders as shepherds of the church. The following section addresses the first theme of covenant community.

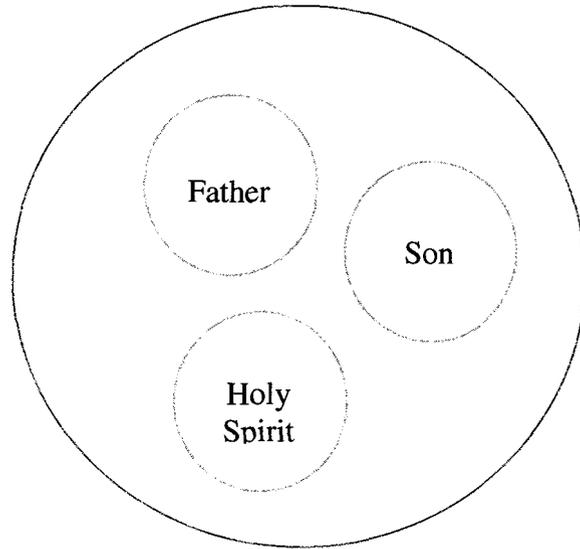
### **God's Design for Covenant Community**

God models covenant community as one God in three Persons (Cladis 1999, 10). This model of community is extended into God's creation of human beings who are created in his image (Wright 2004, 214-215). Particularly, God's plan for the people of Israel as a community in covenant relationship, with him and each other, provides the theological foundation for the church as the people of God, and the function of those appointed to lead within this covenant relationship. God's design for relationship highlights the need for leaders of the church to develop together in Christian community. Four topics develop this theme of covenant community: the Trinity, covenantal God, identity and purpose as the people of God, and a true shepherd.

## The Trinity

The Trinity is the concept of one God in an expression of three unique persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit (T. Keller 2012, 33). This research does not focus on the history and development of the doctrine of the Trinity. Rather, the Trinity is emphasized to identify the mysterious social expression of God in community (Wright 2004, 214). Scripture indicates that God, the Creator (Gen. 1:1) is joined by the Spirit (Gen. 1:2), and the Word who was with God in the beginning (the Son), in whom all things were made (John 1:1-3). The use of the plural in Genesis 1:27, “Let us make man in our image, in our likeness,” suggests a form of covenant community between these three unique persons characterized by equality, identity, unity, function, and authority (Wright 2004, 215). Jesus describes this as presence and glory together before the world began (John 17:5).

The Trinity can be described by the Greek term *perichoresis* and portrays relationship of God’s three distinct persons in the image of a circle dance (Cladis 1999, 4). *Perichoresis* involves continuous movement between the three with expressions of intimacy, equality, unity, and love (1999, 4). *Perichoresis* is a design where the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit move with dynamic and creative energy, working together to create, transform, and restore creation (Tam 2015, chap. 1, par. 3). Figure 4 is my interpretation of the Trinity in covenant community. The circle represents space where Father, Son, and Holy Spirit interact, commune, and move rhythmically together as three distinct Persons in relationship.



**Figure 4. The Trinity, God in three Persons, in covenant community**

Cladis describes the *perichoretic* Trinity as a biblical and theological model for leadership in the church, and applicable for ministry leadership teams in the twenty-first century (Cladis 1999, 6, 10). Tam concurs that the perichoretic Trinity is foundational to Christian leadership (Tam 2015, chap. 1, par. 2), and a relevant model for transformational leadership development (Tam 2015, chap. 4, par. 1). Tam describes the inner and outer life of the Trinity to include essential aspects of God’s character and economic aspects of God at work (Tam 2015, chap. 4, sec. 2, par. 3). Applying concepts of the Trinity to leadership development will require a focus on the inner and outer work of a leader, emphasizing character, credibility, and collaboration according to a leader’s gifts and abilities (Tam 2015, chap. 4, sec. 2, par. 3). Tam emphasizes that such a focus on leadership development is an invitation for leaders to enter into a relationship with Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, “in the dance of love together with the triune God of grace” (Tam 2015, chap. 4, sec. 3, par. 7). This dance, she suggests,

involves rhythms that “captivate, motivate, and transform” (Tam 2015, chap. 4, sec. 3, par. 8).

The concept of the *perichoretic* Trinity in covenant community is the foundational principle for creating a space for SPL leaders to covenant together with God and each other in a shepherding approach. I did not use the term *perichoretic* Trinity with this project’s shepherding approach. Instead, I assigned the phrase “cultivating Christian community.” By this, I mean that Christian leaders will work together to develop attributes of Christian community that are aligned with God’s design of covenant community. Attributes and definitions of Christian community are illustrated in table 3. These attributes assisted the design of a shepherding approach with this research project.

**Table 3. Cultivating Christian Community**  
Adapted from (Cladis 1999)

<b>Attribute</b>	<b>Description</b>
Covenanting	Committed to relationships
Visionary	Clear about God’s mission together
Culture-creating	Expressions of love, unity, and redemptive community
Collaborative	Recognizing and releasing spiritual gifts for ministry
Trusting	Relying and cooperating with the Spirit of God to build and protect relationships
Empowering	Shared leadership by distributing power and removing hierarchical barriers
Learning	Attentive to God’s transformative activity and committed to growing together

The Trinity, God in three persons, is the relational model of Christian community. It is exemplified by communal expressions of being together in love, adoration, service, and enjoyment (T. Keller 2012, 33). It is this image that establishes God’s design for Christian leaders to cultivate Christian community as

they relate, develop, and serve together. The following topic of a covenantal God explores this theme of Christian community from a biblical and historical perspective.

### Covenantal God

God's design for relationship with, and between, human beings is expressed through covenants. The biblical Hebrew term for covenant, *tyrb*, can be defined as "a chosen relationship of mutual obligation that is guaranteed by oath sanctions" (Foster 2006). God's covenants are messianic as they point toward and find their fulfillment in Christ (Richardson 2007). His covenants are missional with the ultimate goal for all nations to gather in relationship and worship God together (Richardson 2007). Additionally, the covenants are cumulative, integrating with God's mission for all people to be initiated into the Kingdom of God, incorporated into Christ and his community (Richardson 2007). Psalm 111:9 states that God provided redemption for his people and ordained his covenant forever.

God's first covenant to create human beings in his image incorporated three emphases. First, that human beings would develop diversity by being fruitful, multiplying, and filling the earth (Richardson 2007). Second, that we would care for creation by ruling, stewarding, and cultivating the earth as God's image to the world (Richardson 2007). And third, that human beings would live in right relationship with God, with one another, and the world by creating cultures and societies (Richardson 2007). God's covenant with Noah (Gen. 9:7, 11) reestablished his design for human beings to be fruitful and increase in number,

and emphasized God's concern for humanity to join with him in his purpose to care for his creation (Richardson 2007).

God's covenant with Abraham (Gen. 12-22) was specific as his purpose for the whole earth became focused on one man (Richardson 2007). This covenant was also universal as God expressed his purpose for all nations to be blessed through this one man (Richardson 2007). The idea of blessing, "I will make you a great nation and I will bless you...and all peoples on earth will be blessed through you" (Gen. 12:2) involves elements of well-being (Richardson 2007). God's intention, through the Abrahamic covenant and Abraham's obedience, was to bring blessing to all nations of the earth (Richardson 2007).

God's covenant with Moses (Exodus 6, 19) was to rescue and redeem the Israelites from slavery, and to establish them as a holy nation (Richardson 2007). God's good news for Israel involved economic, political, social, and spiritual deliverance and liberation (Richardson 2007). His purpose, to bless the nations through Israel, remained unchanged, and this missional dimension of Israel's faith was to be expressed through their worship of God and their witness as a community that modeled redemption and blessing to the rest of humanity (Wright 2004, 35, 49). Through Moses and the mosaic covenant, God gave the law, the land, and the temple for Israel to be a light to the nations (Richardson 2007). The Old Testament law involved both vertical and horizontal aspects that were necessary for the fulfillment of the covenant: to reflect God's redemptive initiative and Israel's responsive obedience in a love relationship with God and one another (Wright 2004, 317). Israel, as the people of God, was called into a

covenant commitment to be a community that reflected God's character, values, priorities, and goals (2004, 228).

God reestablished his covenant with his people through David, who he called and positioned to be a witness, a leader, and a commander (Is. 55:3-5) (Richardson 2007). The Davidic covenant signified God's choice for David to represent God to Israel, and for Israel to represent God to the nations (Richardson 2007). God's covenant with David emphasized that he would make David's name great, that he would provide a place for his people Israel, and that David's house and kingdom would endure forever (2 Sam. 7:8-10, 16) (Richardson 2007).

The cumulative covenants of the Old Testament lead to Jesus and the new covenant: "We look at this Son and see the God who cannot be seen. We look at this Son and see God's original purpose in everything created" (Col. 1:15-16, MSG). Jesus came to earth to proclaim and demonstrate the inauguration of the Kingdom and the liberating rule of God through word, deed, and sign (Richardson 2007). His life, death, and resurrection provided the continuity of covenant relationship between God and his people for eternity (Richardson 2007).

Cumulatively, God's old and new covenants involved his redemptive grace and the call for people in all nations to respond to this covenantal God in love and ethical obedience (Wright 2004, 317). The new covenant continued God's design for human beings to live in community with identity and purpose as the people of God, "to make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I [Jesus] have commanded you" (Matt. 28:19-20). With this covenant, Jesus

promised to be with his people always, “to the very end of the age” (Matt. 28:20). Through covenant, Jesus continued the work for people to be in right relationship with God, growing in right relationships with each other, and being involved with him to reconcile all people and all things to himself. It is this concept of a covenantal God that establishes the church in identity and purpose as the people of God.

### Identity and Purpose as the People of God

God’s design for covenant community involves him in relationship, dwelling and walking among his people, “I will make my dwelling among you, and my soul shall not abhor you. And I will walk among you and will be your God, and you shall be my people” (Lev. 26:11-12, ESV). God’s covenant invites human beings to acknowledge and worship him as God, and to respond in surrendered obedience with him as Lord of their lives. For example, Deuteronomy 12:28 says, “Be careful to obey all these regulations I am giving you, so that it may always go well with you and your children after you, because you will be doing what is good and right in the eyes of the Lord your God.” Jeremiah 7:23 reiterates, “Obey me, and I will be your God and you will be my people. Walk in all the ways I command you, that it may go well with you.” Jesus expressed that those who love him will obey his teaching: “My Father will love [you], and we will come to [you] and make our home with [you]” (John 14:23).

Throughout history, the people of God were not consistent to live in their identity and purpose as the people of God. In Old Testament times, God used prophets to call people back into right relationship with him. Most often the

message included two charges. That the people had turned to idols and that they had stopped inquiring and listening to God, living according to their own thoughts and plans. Judges 17:6 and 21:25 identify a time in Israel when people did whatever they felt like doing. Jeremiah 7:24-26 indicates that instead of obeying God and walking in his ways, the people did not listen or pay attention. They followed their own stubborn inclinations, went backward and not forward, and they did what was evil in God's eyes. God expressed: "My people have committed two sins: They have forsaken me, the spring of living water, and have dug their own cisterns, broken cisterns that cannot hold water" (Jer. 2:13).

Often, those positioned to provide leadership with God's people were negligent to assist them to live in their identity and purpose as the people of God. Consistently, God attached the condition of his people to the condition of the leaders. There are multiple passages of scripture that address this. For example, Isaiah refers to blind watchmen, without knowledge, shepherds without understanding, turning to their own way, and each to his own gain (Isa. 56:10-11). Jeremiah describes the shepherds as senseless, not inquiring of the LORD, "so they do not prosper and all their flock is scattered" (Jer. 10:21). Ezekiel addressed shepherds who were feeding themselves, "The weak you have not strengthened, the sick you have not healed, the injured you have not bound up, the strayed you have not brought back, the lost you have not sought, and with force and harshness you have ruled them. So they were scattered, because there was no shepherd" (Ezek. 34:2, 4-5, ESV). Nahum criticized the shepherd-leaders who were in

charge of caring for the people, but busy doing everything else, there was no one looking after them, and the people were scattered and lost (Nah. 3:18, MSG).

In each of these contexts, God is speaking through his prophets to the leaders of the nation of Israel, a people meant to be set apart from other nations, recognized for their worship and witness as the people of God (Wright 2004, 62). The leaders were not taking responsibility to lead in ways that promoted God's covenant community. They were selfishly complacent, irresponsible and negligent (Isaiah 56:10-11, Ezekiel 34:2-5). Although these prophets' references are at different times in history, the common element is God's displeasure with the leaders of his people. With a lack of godly shepherds, the people of God suffered, and the worship and witness of God's glory faded. Good shepherding is required for human beings to experience identity and purpose as the people of God.

### A True Shepherd

Within covenant, God promised that he would give his people shepherds after his own heart who would feed them with knowledge and understanding (Jer. 3:15) and set shepherds over them who would care for them (Jer. 23:4). The prophecy was fulfilled through Jesus. When Jesus saw the crowds he had compassion on the people, recognizing them as harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd (Matt. 9:36). Jesus revealed himself as the good shepherd, the one who knows and cares for the sheep, the one who gathers all people into the Kingdom of God, and the one who offers abundant life (John 10).

Jesus used the metaphor of the shepherd and his flock to portray the role of a true shepherd (John 10). There is evidence of relationship. He calls his sheep by

name and the sheep know his voice (John 10:3-4). The shepherd provides safe passage and Jesus is the door that people can enter, be saved, and go in and out and find pasture (John 10:7, 9). Jesus as the good shepherd brings abundant life (John 10:10). This connects with the Old Testament covenantal concept of God's presence and blessing to include richness, fullness, meaning, identity, and purpose in relationship with God and others.

Jesus highlighted his intimate relationship with the Father (John 10:14) and his ultimate expression as true shepherd to lay down his life for the sake of the sheep (John 10:14-15). His death on a cross personifies the continuing covenant between the Father, the Son as the true shepherd, and the people as the sheep (Bailey 2014, chap. 8, fig. 8.13). This generous act of love and sacrifice means that those who believe in Jesus are "drawn into the heart of the good shepherd who himself dwells within the very heart of God" (Bailey 2014, chap. 8, fig. 8.13, par. 2). This is the new covenant and this is the gospel: "News about what has been done by Jesus Christ to put right our relationship with God" (T. Keller 2012, 30). Leaders of God's people begin from this foundational position of responding to the good news of the gospel, entering into a personal, intimate relationship with Jesus the good shepherd, and leading like shepherds for others to experience the same.

God's design for covenant community involves his ongoing commitment to shepherd his people into right relationship with him, with one another, and as a worshiping and witnessing community for others to experience the same. This research project provided the opportunity for SPL leaders to experience a

deepened level of God’s shepherding for leaders to be together fully alive in Jesus. I will now explore the topic of shepherding as a biblical model of leadership development.

**Shepherding as a Biblical Model of Leadership Development**

Shepherding is a comprehensive metaphor that is biblically and theologically appropriate for spiritual leaders (Laniak 2013). The metaphor reveals insight about God’s relationship with his people, the Israelites, and how shepherding principles for God’s people are connected between the Old and New Testaments (Gan 2007, 99). The shepherd metaphor provides a lens to view leadership in relation to Jesus the good shepherd and provides principles of biblical leadership for leaders of the church. Shepherding principles were connected to the context of this research project with SPL leaders who lead a church affiliated with The Presbyterian Church in Canada (PCC).

This section will examine shepherding as a biblical model of leadership development. God’s shepherding integrates principles of relationship, care, and ability and is characterized by his presence, provision, protection, and guidance. Table 4 describes these shepherding principles.

**Table 4. Shepherding Principles and Description**

<b>Shepherding Principles</b>	<b>Description</b>
Relationship	Togetherness, oneness, trust, unity, love, collaboration
Care	Promotes and brings good, supportive presence, compassion, provision, protection
Ability	Skills, knowledge, experience, commitment, guidance, competence to faithfully fulfill responsibilities

Shepherding principles as a biblical model of leadership development will be examined by looking at the shepherd metaphor, exploring the concept of shepherds in God’s community, and discovering what it means to lead together as shepherds.

### The Shepherd Metaphor

The shepherd metaphor provides a lens to view shepherding and discover principles of biblical leadership (Laniak 2006, 40). The metaphor highlights similarities between shepherds and human leaders where both groups experience complex tasks that require attention, skill, and effective response in every situation (Laniak 2006, 41). The shepherd metaphor outlines ways that God shepherded his people and recognizes that he established leaders to join with him in the role of shepherding. Table 5 illustrates a description of shepherding roles and responsibilities, and will be explained following.

**Table 5. Shepherding Roles and Responsibilities**

<b>Shepherding roles</b>	<b>Shepherding responsibilities</b>
God as the Great Shepherd	Relationship with those being led
A human shepherd	Feeding, tending, leading, oversight
King	Presence, provision, protection, guidance
Head of a culture	Mediates
Mediator	Promotes unity
Promoter of unity	Promotes and brings good
Dispenser of justice	Bestows blessings
Protector	Dispenses justice
Leader	Relationship with the people
Pastor	To nourish, to enliven
	Tender care
	Faithfulness
	Deliverance, restoration
	Provides and promotes hope
	Leads with wisdom

The shepherd metaphor is consistently highlighted throughout Scripture. In the Old Testament, shepherd, used as a noun (Heb. *rō-ēh*), occurs sixty-two times (Vine, Unger and White 1984, 228). The use of shepherd in this context references God as the great shepherd and the one who pastures and feeds his sheep (Vine, Unger and White 1984, 228). Historically, the shepherd term is used to reference non-Israelite human kings recognizing that person as the head of the culture, the mediators between the gods and man, the center of national unity, the supreme protector and leader of the nation, the bestower of every earthly blessing, and the dispenser of justice (Vine, Unger and White 1984, 228). Isaiah and Ezekiel use the term shepherd to identify leaders other than kings (Vine, Unger and White 1984, 228). In the New Testament, shepherd (Gk *poimēn*) is used to describe Christ, and those who are recognized as pastors of churches (Vine, Unger and White 1984, 569).

The meaning of “to shepherd” as a verb (Heb. *rā`-āh*; Gk *poimainō*) can include feeding, leading to pasture, and tending or oversight (Laniak 2006, 53). Metaphorically, it represents a leader’s or a ruler’s relationship to the people (Vine, Unger and White 1984, 227) and figuratively it means to provide with nourishment or to enliven (Vine, Unger and White 1984, 228).

Characteristics of the shepherd-king in the Bible and Near Eastern literature include leading, feeding, and protecting (Gan 2007, 27). These activities are dependent on two foundations: tender care and faithfulness to responsibilities (Gan 2007, 29). The role of shepherd-king represents deliverance and restoration

indicating that when the shepherd role is evident, characteristics of deliverance and hope are displayed (Gan 2007, 29, 32, 26).

The metaphor parallels what we understand about a shepherd who looks after sheep with God as shepherd of his people, and Christ as the good shepherd (Gan 2007, 39). It provides a metaphorical image of a flock, the people of God, and highlights how people without a leader were compared to a flock without a shepherd (Vine, Unger and White 1984, 84). God's people are often connected with the shepherd metaphor (Keach 1972, 152).

Shepherding imagery is apparent throughout Scripture. In the Pentateuch God leads his people with protection, provision, and love (Gan 2007, 47). The wisdom literature refers to the responsibility of shepherds to provide and protect for the well-being of the flock, and wisdom for those who lead (Gan 2007, 95). The theme of redemption highlights God's leadership and guidance for his people to move out of the bondage of Egypt like sheep through the desert (Witmer 2010, 12). Ultimately, the shepherding imagery of protection and care is fulfilled in the climactic redemptive deliverance through Jesus (Witmer 2010, 12).

Leaders in scripture testify to the Lord's good shepherding. Jacob, in his final blessing to his family, acknowledged God's faithfulness as "the God who has been my shepherd all my life to this day" (Gen. 48:15). Moses, when uncertain about God's call to shepherd the Israelites, receives God's assurance, "I will be with you" (Ex. 3:12). David, appointed by God to shepherd his people Israel and to become their ruler (2 Sam. 5:2) proclaims, "God, my shepherd! I don't need a

thing...Your beauty and love chase after me every day of my life” (Ps. 23:1,6, MSG).

Christian leaders will benefit from understanding God’s shepherding heart and recognize that he appoints human leaders to experience his shepherding, and to join with him to provide the same. This work of shepherding involves the ability to shepherd well. The following sections provide examples of good and bad shepherding.

#### Examples of Good Shepherding

Psalms 23, 72, and 78 are examples where the shepherd motif is expressed in practical terms to know the qualities of good shepherding. In Psalm 23, the shepherd cares for the sheep through provision, guidance, and protection (ESV Study Bible 2008, 966). The shepherd leads with personal attention to each of the covenant lambs, providing peaceful places to rest and feed: to be restored, refreshed, and revived (ESV Study Bible 2008, 966). In times of darkness and trouble, the shepherd is present and attentive, and fear diminishes (ESV Study Bible 2008, 966).

Psalm 72 emphasizes the shepherding work of ruling people to promote and bring good. The king, as shepherd, rules the people with justice and righteousness: to defend the cause of the poor, to give deliverance to the needy, and to crush the oppressor (ESV Study Bible 2008, 1026). The chapter emphasizes the good that comes when a shepherd leads well: for the king himself, for the people, and for the blessing and praise of God. Good shepherding results

in deliverance, redemption, abundance, flourishing, and glory to God (ESV Study Bible 2008, 1026).

Psalm 78 outlines the story of the Israelites, reminding present and future generations about what God has done to guide, protect, and provide for his people. The chapter ends with reference to God's choice of David to shepherd his people, "With upright heart he shepherded them and guided them with his skillful hand" (Psalm 78: 70-72). David was not perfect. He is recognized, however, as a man after God's own heart who led according to God's will (Acts 13:22). He was anointed and filled with the Spirit of the Lord to shepherd God's people well (1 Sam. 16:13).

Examples of good shepherding reveal principles of relationship, care, and ability. Leaders committed to good shepherding will lead with a focus on who God is and what he has done. Leaders will be attentive to people's cares, concerns, and needs, working to promote and bring good. Righteousness and justice will be pursued and celebrated. Leading with integrity, consistency, and skill, through the anointing and power of God's Spirit, will enable leaders to shepherd well.

#### Example of Bad Shepherding

An extreme or distorted understanding of shepherding can lead to unhealthy leadership. For example, care can develop into enabling, authority can move towards power, and guidance can slip into false teaching (Laniak 2013). It is possible that leaders, even with good intentions, can become distorted in their

thinking. With no accountability, leaders can move into a dangerous focus of self-interest, self-serving, and misguided teaching (Laniak 2013).

Jesus addressed distorted understanding of shepherding when he confronted the Pharisees (Matt. 23). He identified the Jewish leaders as being faithful to the tradition of their religion, but void of life. Jesus condemned their hypocrisy, religious show, and self-exaltation (Matt. 23:3-7). Jesus accused them of placing heavy burdens on people without lifting a finger to help (Matt. 23:4) and shutting the kingdom of heaven in people's faces, "for you neither enter yourselves nor allow those who would enter to go in" (Matt. 23:13).

Jesus referred to the Pharisees as blind guides and indicated that even though they had been diligent to follow the rules, they had neglected the most important things: justice, mercy and faithfulness (Matt. 23:16, 23-24). He addressed the condition of the spiritual leaders by calling them hypocrites. The religious leaders spent all their time working to appear righteous to others through outward appearance, but on the inside were full of greed and self-indulgence (Matt. 23:25). They were dead and full of hypocrisy and lawlessness (Matt. 23:27-28). The condition of the leaders did not represent the shepherd's heart.

Jesus called out leaders who were not shepherding well. Leaders who are committed to good shepherding will be self-aware and attentive to address unhealthy leadership patterns and practices.

#### Limits of the Metaphor

Metaphors have limits. A metaphor may fail if assumptions of the speaker are not known to the listener, or if the two things compared are considered to be

exactly alike in all ways (Caird 1997, 145). As discussed in the previous section, a metaphor may also fail when there is an extreme or distorted understanding of a metaphor. The following examples address limits of the shepherd metaphor that could affect the interpretation and application of shepherding as a biblical model of leadership.

One example that highlights abuse of the shepherd metaphor is the 1970's shepherding renewal movement. There are both strengths and limits of this movement (Moore 2004). This research will not examine the movement in depth. However, I want to acknowledge its existence and provide a brief overview to understand how the concept of shepherding carries historic relevance that could taint the use of the shepherd metaphor as a valid option for church leadership.

Moore explains that the founders of the shepherding renewal movement had an ideal vision for churches to be expressions of redeemed community (Moore 2004, 186). These churches were to be characterized by disciplined disciples who lived together in covenant community, and exhibited qualities of the Kingdom of God (Moore 2004, 186). Moore identifies factors that contributed to the shepherding movement's inability to achieve this. Primarily, he recognizes that the movement became inflexible and, perhaps, legalistic as pastoral relationships integrated principles of hierarchy, authority, and submission (Moore 2004, 185). As a result, large numbers of people were hurt and disillusioned, and many became vocal in their criticisms of the movement (Moore 2004, 186). This led to a mostly negative perception of the shepherding movement even though it included many positive results for other people who were involved (Moore 2004,

186). Witmer describes the shepherding movement as having a misunderstanding about the biblical view of authority, and one that progressed as an example of leaders who domineered over others (Witmer 2010, 76, 93).

Another example of limits with the shepherd metaphor comes from work by theologian Seward Hiltner (1909-1984). Hiltner's theology and teaching emphasized a perspective on pastoral relationships based on the shepherd image (Hiltner 1959). Theologian Charles Scalise assesses Hiltner's desire to reorganize the Protestant approach to pastoral ministry through the shepherding perspective (Jacobsen 2009, 30). One limit Scalise associates with Hiltner's approach is its focus on being male-centered and individualistic (Jacobsen 2009, 31). Cooper-White agrees with this limit, identifying Hiltner's approach as an individualistic and heroic model of leadership (Cooper-White 2004, 123).

A second limit with Hiltner's pastoral shepherding model is the potential for a leader to claim to be all-knowing, suggesting a comprehension about what is best for those being led (Jacobsen 2009, 29). The danger with this, according to Scalise, is that a leader may be authoritarian and condescending, developing a distorted perspective of individual and corporate sinfulness (Jacobsen 2009, 30). Cooper-White identifies an additional concern that a leader who is responsible to be all things to all people can wrongly assume self-sacrifice as a defining image of ministry (Cooper-White 2004, 123). A leader who feels this level of responsibility is likely to make oneself available at all times and is likely to neglect the priority of self-care and personal relationships (Cooper-White 2004, 123).

A third limit is a concern expressed by Scalise that the shepherd metaphor associates people with the image of naïve sheep (Jacobsen 2009, 29). Human beings, made in God's image, deserve the highest respect as those who are redeemed by Christ and part of the universal priesthood of all believers (Jacobsen 2009, 29). Caution is required when speaking about shepherds and sheep to ensure that leaders are not condescending or pejorative in their approach with human beings.

There is a tension with shepherding to lead people with both compassion and authority, to recognize that authority without compassion leads to harsh authoritarianism, and that compassion without authority leads to social chaos (Laniak 2006, 247). Limits of the metaphor reveal that shepherding is not harsh, demanding, domineering, or demeaning. Instead, shepherding is attentive to appropriate authority, accountability, and humility within the context of healthy Christian community.

### Relevance of the Metaphor

The discipline of looking through the lens of the shepherd metaphor requires insight and discernment to recognize its limits in any specific context of leadership. To understand more about the vocation of shepherding within my context, I visited and interviewed two sheep farmers in our area. The interaction with these shepherds provided insight about shepherding and leadership (appendix 5).

One local shepherd, Keith, showed me how he tracks information and puts systems in place to increase the well-being of the sheep. This involves a method

of protection to keep dangerous animals away, and systems to analyze feed and track the health of the flock. Keith's tracking systems assisted his ability to assess the health and well-being of his flock. His attention to detail for the safety and provision of his flock highlighted, for me, the need to establish boundaries of safety as we lead the people in our care. My visit with Keith emphasized a good practice for leaders to develop systems of monitoring and evaluating our work and the people we serve. This insight was applicable to my shepherding approach with this research project.

Another local shepherd, Becca, made observations about the relationship between the shepherd and the sheep. She identified that stress of the shepherd impacts the sheep. Becca explained that a calm leader creates calm whereas a rushed or abrupt leader creates unsettledness and jittery responses in the sheep. This insight caused me to reflect on Jesus, the good shepherd. He was always calm in his leadership, never frantic, busy, or hurried. People were drawn to Jesus. Like a shepherd with sheep, and like Jesus with the crowds, good shepherding will involve creating a sense of presence, security, safety, and well-being for the people in our care. These reminders influenced my attention and work in a shepherding approach with SPL leaders.

### Shepherds in God's Community

Shepherding as a biblical model of leadership is applicable for church leaders. The apostle Paul provided a connection between the community of Israel and the New Testament church when he quoted Leviticus 26:11-12 in his letter to the Corinthians, "I will make my dwelling among them and walk among them, and I

will be their God, and they shall be my people (2 Cor. 6:16). God differentiated his people through covenant, for Israel through the Abrahamic covenant, and for the church through Christ and the new covenant (Erickson 1998, 1046). Two Greek words in the New Testament writings affirm God's continued covenant with his people. *Kuriakos* means belonging to the Lord (Erickson 1998, 1041) and *ekklesia* identifies the church as the called out ones (Grenz 2000, 464).

The New Testament church emphasized the people of God collectively and acknowledged a foundational role for church leaders (Grenz 2000, 470). The apostle Paul taught, "Keep watch over yourselves and all the flock over which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers. Be shepherds of the church of God" (Acts 20:28). God as the shepherd of his covenant community appoints leaders to join with him to shepherd his people and holds these leaders accountable for the well-being of his flock (Gan 2007, 45). Effective shepherding leadership "is vital for the health and welfare of the church of Jesus Christ" (Crossley 2008, 11).

The most common term used in the New Testament for the work of church leadership was pastor or shepherd (Beeley 2012, 6). Shepherding was the primary emphasis for leaders of the church to lead in a way that promoted the well-being of the people and paid attention to the spiritual condition of the whole flock (Beeley 2012, 12, 14). Shepherding is not a one-person task (Van Yperen 2003, 16). More accurately, shepherding is a family occupation with a team of people who work together according to their complementary gifts (Van Yperen 2003, 17). Leaders of the church assist the people of God to understand their identity

and purpose as the people of God, and to live authentically in relation to that identity and purpose (Cannell 2013).

Leaders are sheep first with Jesus as the Chief Shepherd (1 Pet. 5:4) and, secondly, appointed by Jesus as under shepherds: “A good shepherd is one who sees what the Owner sees and does what the Owner does. He is a follower before he is a leader. He is a leader because he is a follower” (Laniak 2006, 22).

Contrary to negative connotations about authority and submission, the shepherd model highlights the need for spiritual leadership (Van Yperen 2003, 31).

Spiritual authority comes from God and involves the empowering of the Holy Spirit through God’s gift of grace (Van Yperen 2003, 17). Spiritual authority is initiated by God and entrusted to men and women who respond with obedience, humility, and responsibility to the presence and work of the Holy Spirit in their lives (Van Yperen 2003, 33). Spiritual authority involves call, gifts, appointment, and character with “God as the object and subject of the authority” (Van Yperen 2003, 33).

Shepherds in God’s community, the church, are assigned the responsibility to be intimately connected with Jesus, relating and working together in responsive obedience to the Holy Spirit. This requires an intentional approach for leaders of the church to develop in integrated leadership practices, including an emphasis on learning how to lead together as shepherds of God’s people. A shepherding approach identified men and women in positions of leadership and authority at SPL, and brought them together to develop as shepherds of the church.

## Leading Together as Shepherds

Christian leaders are appointed by God to lead together with others in ways that reflect his shepherding. The way leaders function and lead together will vary depending on the context. However, the emphasis of this thesis and research project is to explore the possibility for leaders of a church, regardless of title and role, to develop together in their mutual call and responsibility to lead the church. Within any denomination and governance structure, leaders can commit to developing and leading together well.

We can understand more about leading together as shepherds through the example of Jesus with his twelve disciples. His leadership was centered on shepherding principles of relationship, care, and ability. He modeled surrender and obedience in his relationship with his Father and he taught the disciples to love the Lord their God with all their heart, soul, mind, and strength (Matt. 22:38). Jesus modeled leading together with others in communal rhythms of prayer, eating, times of learning and rest, compassionate leadership, ministry with people, and debriefing after leadership responsibilities. People demands did not overwhelm Jesus, for he did nothing by himself, but only what he saw the Father doing (John 5:19-20).

Jesus invited the disciples to learn how to live lightly and freely by watching how he did things, by remaining in relationship with him, and by embracing the unforced rhythms of grace (Matt. 11:28-30, MSG). He taught them truth about the Kingdom of God and how to lead for the multiplication of mature Spirit-filled leaders who would continue to shepherd the church wisely and well.

In his interaction with Peter, three times Jesus asks Peter if he loves him. When Peter answered affirmatively each time, Jesus responded with a directive to feed his lambs, to tend his sheep, to feed his sheep (John 21:15-17). This exchange implies that love for Jesus will cultivate church environments where people experience nourishment, care, and guidance. Peter must have remembered his exchange with Jesus to help him stay intimately connected in relationship with the shepherd as he tended to the demands and needs of people. His words to a group of Christian leaders in the early church carry authority and credibility for leaders of any generation to embrace:

As a fellow elder and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, as well as a partaker in the glory that is going to be revealed: shepherd the flock of God that is among you, exercising oversight, not under compulsion, but willingly, as God would have you; not for shameful gain, but eagerly; not domineering over those in your charge, but being examples to the flock. And when the chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the unfading crown of glory. (1 Peter 5:1-4, ESV)

The message of Peter's words highlight the shepherding role as pastoral, involving care, concern, and attention to the welfare of God's people who are entrusted to their care (Crossley 2008, 12). As a leader and shepherd of the church, Peter kept his eyes on the bigger story of God's design for people to be in his covenant community, and he taught, trained, and urged other leaders to faithfully develop and lead together as shepherds of the church.

#### The Presbyterian Church in Canada

Leading together as shepherds aligns with the collective role for leaders of the Presbyterian Church in Canada (PCC), the tradition and context of this research project. Presbyterians believe that Jesus Christ is the only king and head of the

church (Henderson, McLean and Muir 2010, 21), and that it is necessary for Christian communities to organize themselves so they can provide pastoral care, teaching and service, decently and in order, as expressed by the apostle Paul in 1 Cor. 14:40 (Henderson, McLean and Muir 2010, 21).

‘Presbyterian’ originates from the Greek word *presbuteros* meaning elder and the PCC church is organized around the concept of being ruled by elders (Henderson, McLean and Muir 2010, 20). Elders include teaching elders (ordained ministers), and ruling elders (ordained lay leaders). Teaching and ruling elders work together to provide care and oversight for all levels of church ministry (Henderson, McLean and Muir 2010, 20). Ministers and elders are shepherds who serve Christ together as they lead his church, and the collective role of elders is greater than the sum of any one elder’s work within the ministry (Henderson, McLean and Muir 2010, 20).

The PCC governance structure is well-suited for an intentional approach of leadership development with pastors and lay-leaders. SPL, the Presbyterian church connected with this research project, already had a practice with elders and pastors meeting together for a monthly study. What this research project provided was the opportunity to expand leadership development at SPL by joining elders, pastors, and staff ministry directors together in a one-year shepherding approach.

### **Developing Leaders as Shepherds of the Church**

An emphasis on developing leaders as shepherds of the church arises from the belief that the role and responsibility of leaders is to become a model of community and ministry for the whole church (Olsen 1995, 9). This requires an

intentional process for Christian leaders to be formed as the people of God, and an intentional practice for leaders to gather together in a supportive environment that cultivates Christian community, creates space for conversations that matter, and integrates learning with action. Developing leaders together as shepherds of the church was the focus of this research project. This section will outline a shepherding approach for leaders to develop together, including an explanation about life together in Jesus and Arrow Leadership's focus on developing leaders.

### Life Together in Jesus

When I use the name Jesus I am referring to the man, the Son of God, who lived on earth during a certain period of history. I am also referring to Jesus, the name above all names (Phil. 2:9-10), the Messiah, Saviour, Christ, ever-reigning Lord and King. Life together in Jesus represents the ministry experience of Jesus with twelve disciples, and life together in Jesus is the reality for every person who confesses Jesus as Lord and believes that God raised him from the dead (John 3:16-17; Rom. 10:9-13). In Jesus, all the fullness of God is revealed, all things are held together by him, he is the head of the body, the church, and he is reconciling all things to himself (Col. 1:15-22).

Jesus modeled covenant community with an intimate group of twelve (Morris and Olsen 1997, 96). John 14-16 provides an overview of the meaning and expression of life together with Jesus, and Jesus used the teaching in these chapters to train the disciples to relate and lead well, and to keep them from falling away (John 16:1). Jesus established that he is the Way, the Truth, and the Life (John 14:6), and he emphasized that his followers could live in an intimate

relationship with the Father by staying connected with him. He introduced the work of the Holy Spirit, the Helper and the Spirit of truth who would be with them forever (John 14:16; 15:26; 16:7-15). He emphasized loving him and each other, and keeping his commandments (John 14:15; 15:4, 9-10, 17). Jesus taught that by abiding in him they would bear much fruit, and that apart from him they could do nothing (John 15:5). He called them friends (John 15:15), forewarned them that they would have trouble in this world (John 16:33), and assured them of his continued presence and peace, even when he was not visible (John 14:18, 19; 15:33). Jesus wanted the disciples to understand God's concept of relationship with him as father to his children, and shepherd to his sheep. This basis of relationship was first imagined in the mind of God the Father, made possible and practical through Jesus Christ, and is confirmed through the activity of the Holy Spirit (W. P. Keller 2007, 17).

Evidence of the Trinitarian God and invitation for the disciples to join in this mysterious covenant relationship is expressed as Jesus prays to his Father in John 17. Jesus identified that he was sent by God with authority to give eternal life, to make God known, and to complete the work he was given to do (John 17:3-5). The prayer initiates the disciples into a new expression of community in covenant relationship with God and each other (Chennattu 2006, 132). The new covenant, possible through Christ, continues the relationship between God and his people (C. J. Wright 2004, 317). This covenant is not only extended to the disciples. Jesus expands the covenant to include all who will believe (John 17:20). He prays

that the believers will be one, in complete unity, so that Jesus Christ and the love of the Father would be expressed to the whole world (John 17:22-23).

The unity theme in John 17 is an expression of oneness that involves the mutual indwelling of the Holy Spirit in each believer, and the expression of people living together in covenant relationship with God (Carson 1980, 197-198). Life together in Jesus involves dependency on him, reliance and obedience to him, commitment to embrace and share the gift of the gospel, and living together in grace (Carson 1980, 198). Oneness is already achieved through Jesus Christ, and it is something that requires continued attention and perfecting for continued life and unity together with Christ (Carson 1980, 199). Growing in unity will require practice, “at the level of attitude, at the level of love, at the level of a growing grasp of true doctrine – at all these levels the Christian church needs to be perfected in unity” (Carson 1980, 199).

The apostle Paul reiterates the theme of oneness in Ephesians 4:4-6: one body, one Spirit, one hope, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all. Life together in Jesus, according to Paul, involves a combination of gifts and abilities to promote and guard the theme of oneness and unity. Ephesians 4:11 outlines leadership roles for healthy growth, development, and well-being in the community (Slater 2012, 212). Apostles, prophets, evangelists, shepherds, and teachers are given by Jesus through the Spirit to equip the saints for the work of ministry and for building up the body of Christ (Eph. 4:11). Life together in Jesus requires Christian leaders who shepherd wisely, lead and teach faithfully,

incarnate biblical and theological principles, and speak prophetically when necessary (Cannell 2008, 16, 18).

The church has an important responsibility to rediscover its identity as the people of God in community (Bilezikian 1997, 11). God's covenant has always focused on the salvation of human beings with the purpose of bringing people together in redemptive communities where they are integrated with others, growing and serving together (Bilezikian 1997, 163). Spiritual leaders of the church experience life together in Jesus by being the people of God in community. This involves being a group within the body of believers with various gifts and functions, a group formed by "scripture, prayer, silent waiting, witnessing, and serving," a group on a journey together (Olsen 1995, 10).

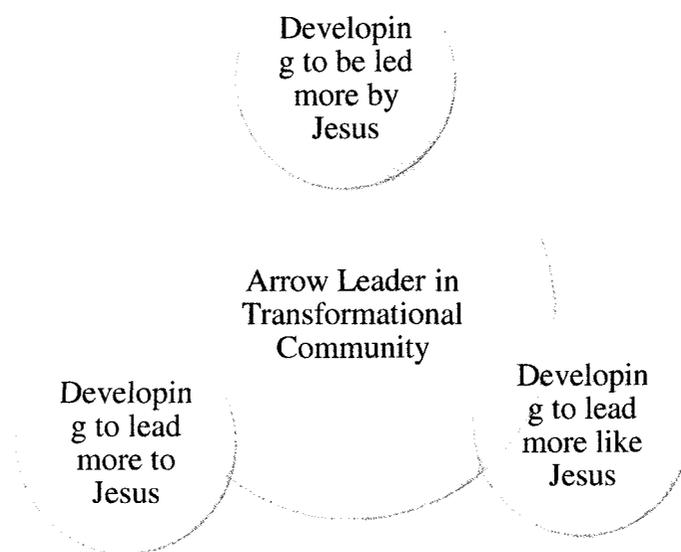
Life together in Jesus positions people for transformation in community involving a process where Christ is formed in us, for the glory of God, for abundant life, and for the benefit of others (Haley Barton 2014, 11-12). Developing leaders as shepherds of the church will focus on attitudes, practices, and behaviours that promote Christian community and provide opportunity for leaders to be open to Christ's transforming presence (Haley Barton 2014, 14). Contrary to the typical emphasis on making community about us, Christian community begins with Jesus and emphasizes his invitation for us to experience life together with him (Haley Barton 2014, 21, 27).

In the midst of demands and responsibilities, it is not easy for leaders of the church to practice life together in Jesus. Some might argue this proposition of colleagues developing together as impractical, idealistic, or unappealing.

Research in this thesis, however, identifies that the real work of leaders is to experience life together in Jesus, modeling healthy Christian community, developing in shared leadership to lead wisely and well. This will require an intentional approach for leaders of the church to prioritize this focus. Arrow Leadership is one example of an intentional development program that provided insight into the design and facilitation of a shepherding approach with SPL leaders.

#### Arrow Leadership: Investing in Christian Leaders

Arrow Leadership is a premier transformational learning environment for the development of Christian leaders ([www.arrowleadership.org](http://www.arrowleadership.org)). Founded in 1991 by Leighton Ford, Arrow Leadership's confession is that God calls kingdom leaders to be led more by Jesus, to lead more like Jesus, and to lead more to Jesus (Barna 1997, 126-127). This will involve development for a leader to know Jesus and understand his will, to learn how to be a reconciling community, and to serve God's redemptive purposes in our generation (Barna 1997, 126-127). Figure 5 illustrates Arrow Leadership's three areas of focus to develop Christian leaders.



**Figure 5. Arrow Leadership’s three areas of leadership development**

To develop leaders who are led more by, lead more like, and lead more to Jesus, Arrow Leadership’s development approach forms a group of twenty-four men and women who journey together over two years in a supportive community. This leadership development model reflects the shepherding approach that Jesus took with his disciples. Leighton Ford explains, “Jesus’ leadership development of his under-shepherds was not so much a course or a curriculum as it was a shared life...shared vision and goals, shared partnership and time, shared learning and risks, a shared future, and shared power” (Ford 1991, 200-201).

The Arrow program focuses on developing both character and competency for transformation in a leader’s spiritual character, leadership, and commitment to evangelism. Steve Brown, current president of Arrow Leadership in North America, identifies that “personal leadership is our first leadership responsibility”

(Brown 2015, 17). The Arrow Leadership program partners with God to guide men and women on a personal leadership development journey with the desired results of healthy, transformed leaders, who lead others well and, ultimately, bring glory to God (Brown 2015, 17-19).

I am an alumnus of the Arrow Leadership program and I currently serve as a leadership partner to coach and mentor leaders in the Arrow program. Arrow Leadership's development program involves a comprehensive assessment process to assist the leader with self-awareness and support in his or her personal development journey. Leaders in a class are assigned to leadership clusters to journey with others in community, and each leader is connected with a leadership partner and mentor/coach to provide one-to-one support for the leader to develop a leadership plan with specific objectives and action points. An Arrow class meets together three times for a program residential week. These cohort weeks include worship, teaching, meals, mentoring, cluster work, and social times. Leaders work on readings and assignments between residential weeks.

The Arrow Leadership model of leadership development aligns with shepherding principles of relationship, care, and ability (see table 4) and integrated leadership responsibilities to lead self, to lead others, and to lead the organization (see table 2). The Arrow Leadership design strengthened this project's focus and provided clarity about a shepherding leadership development approach for leader's to be led more by, lead more like, and to lead more to Jesus. This model is explained further and compared with other leadership development models in chapter 3.

## **Conclusion of Theological Framework**

God's shepherding heart, as expressed throughout Scripture and the history of the church, has not changed. The book of Revelation conveys God's consistent desire that human beings will experience shepherding principles of relationship, care, and ability in covenant relationship with him and each other: "Behold the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them as their God" (Rev. 21:3). The church, as an expression of this covenant community of oneness and togetherness, will involve leaders who are committed to connect in a loving relationship with God and each other, constantly adapting, adjusting, and aligning to develop as shepherds who lead together for God's glory.

This chapter explained a biblical and theological rationale for leaders of the church to develop together as shepherds. My project addressed this need and provided the opportunity for elders, pastors, and staff ministry directors of a Presbyterian congregation to journey together in a one-year development focus. A shepherding approach positioned SPL leaders to increase connection and care between leaders, acquire new knowledge together, and clarify their shared purpose as shepherds of the church.

## **CHAPTER THREE: PRECEDENT LITERATURE**

This chapter explains an approach for colleagues to develop together in relationship, care, and ability within the context of community. It will focus on the following: defining leadership development, explaining and comparing four models of leadership development, exploring components for leaders to develop together, and identifying principles for the design, facilitation, and evaluation of a shepherding leadership development approach.

### **Defining Leadership Development**

Leadership development is identified as a relevant topic in education, business, organization, science, and practically every expression of social involvement. The literature provides varied nuances in leadership development. Some approaches focus on the development of individual leaders (Malphurs and Mancini 2004; Ford 1991; Pietersen 2010), other approaches view leadership development in the context of a group or team (Komives, Wagner and Associates 2009; Fall and Wejnert 2005; Forrester and Drexler 2015; Barna 2001), additional approaches focus on leadership development from an organizational perspective (Day 2000; Lencioni 2012; Wheatley 2006; Carter, Ulrich and Goldsmith 2005), and some researchers focus on global leadership development (Mendenhall,

Osland, et al. 2013). This research project focused on a leadership development approach in the context of a group.

The literature delineates a distinction between training and development. Myatt explains that training focuses on skills, assumptions, and standardization for people to conform to a certain norm or status quo (Myatt 2012). Development, in contrast, involves mentoring, coaching, and discipling people to differentiate, and to develop according to their uniqueness (Myatt 2012). Leadership development is meant to be contextual, collaborative, fluid, and actionable (Myatt 2012).

Contemporary leadership theories are multiple and, yet, three emerging themes can provide insight for a leadership development approach: 1) the importance of self-awareness, 2) ethics, moral leadership, and social responsibility, and 3) redistribution of power and shared leadership (Komives and Dugan 2011, 118). These themes suggest that leadership development will include relational reciprocal processes, collaboration, authenticity in relationships, deep personal awareness, and direction to enhance the common good (Komives and Dugan 2011, 119).

Leadership development in the twenty-first century involves attention to both human and social capital (Day 2000). Consistently, the literature explains leadership development as a process. However, there is divergence on what the leadership development process entails and the desired results of such a process. The following five definitions provide contemporary perspectives about leadership development:

Leadership development means intentionally partnering with God and others to become the whole person he created and desires us to be...to nurture a dynamic and intimate relationship with God...cultivating godly character that leads to long-term holiness and health...developing deep, vibrant relationships and fostering the heart, calling, and skills for effective impact through service. (Brown 2015, 17)

Leadership development is a purposeful, collaborative, values-based process that results in positive social change. (Komives, Wagner and Associates 2009, 50)

The development of ourselves as integrated leaders requires a process of lifelong learning and growth...Leadership development involves inside-out learning, starting with an understanding of self. (Pietersen 2010, 206)

Leadership development [is] the intentional process of helping established and emerging leaders at every level of ministry to assess and develop their Christian character and to acquire, reinforce, and refine their ministry knowledge and skills. (Malphurs and Mancini 2004, 23)

Each organization is unique in its methods of change and development. Each organization has different methods, motives, and objectives that are relevant only to the unique landscape of each of its individual dynamics and designs. Leadership development and organization change, therefore, are mere categories or a common lexicon for describing the way in which “real work” is done within our best organizations. Leadership development and organization change is the real work of the organization. (Carter, Ulrich and Goldsmith 2005, Introduction)

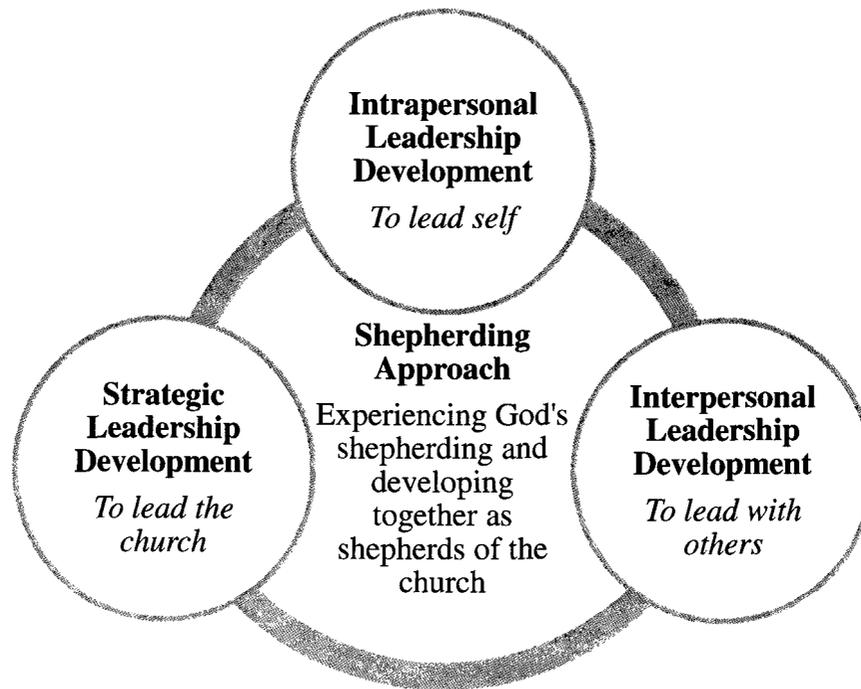
Each of these five definitions identify that leadership development is a process or journey that requires ongoing attention and engagement. Development is advocated as the real work of the organization (Carter, Ulrich and Goldsmith 2005, Introduction) and something that requires a continuous approach to assist established and emerging leaders at every level of the organization (Malphurs and Mancini 2004, 23). Leadership development involves lifelong learning and growth (Pietersen 2010, 206) and will result in positive social change (Komives, Wagner and Associates 2009, 50). With the exception of Pietersen’s definition, the other descriptions are explicit about a collective and collaborative focus with

leadership development. Brown's definition identifies the goal of wholeness and describes the development process as something that nurtures, cultivates, and fosters relationships, character, skills, and service (Brown 2015, 17).

These leadership development definitions assisted me to identify values for a shepherding approach with this research project. These values were established to facilitate leadership development that was focused on process, integrated learning, collaborative relationships, and a supportive environment (see appendix 2).

### **Developing a Shepherding Approach**

Four models of leadership development influenced the design of a shepherding approach used with this research project including shepherding, Arrow Leadership, The Social Change Model of Leadership Development (Komives, Wagner and Associates 2009), and Integrated Leadership (Pietersen 2010). The purpose of a shepherding approach was to create space for a group of Christian leaders to experience God's shepherding and develop together as shepherds of the church. This approach acknowledged shepherding principles with integrated leadership responsibilities to lead self, lead with others, and lead the church (see table 2). Figure 6 illustrates a shepherding approach of leadership development used with this research project.



**Figure 6. A shepherding approach for leadership development**

The four models of leadership development will now be explained, compared, and applied to the shepherding approach used with my project.

### **Four Models of Leadership Development**

Four models of leadership development provide relevant application for this research project. Chapter two introduced and explained shepherding as a biblical model of leadership development and Arrow Leadership’s model to develop transformational leaders. In this section I will introduce two additional models, The Social Change Model of Leadership Development (Komives, Wagner and Associates 2009) and Integrated Leadership (Pietersen 2010). This section will provide an overview, analysis, and interpretation of these models.

## Shepherding as a Biblical Model

Chapter two identified shepherding as a biblical leadership approach that focuses on developing relationship, care, and ability within the context of Christian community. Leaders who prioritize leadership development will submit to God's shepherding and commit to developing together as shepherds of the church. This model provided the context for a leadership development approach with SPL elders, pastors, and staff ministry directors.

## Arrow Leadership

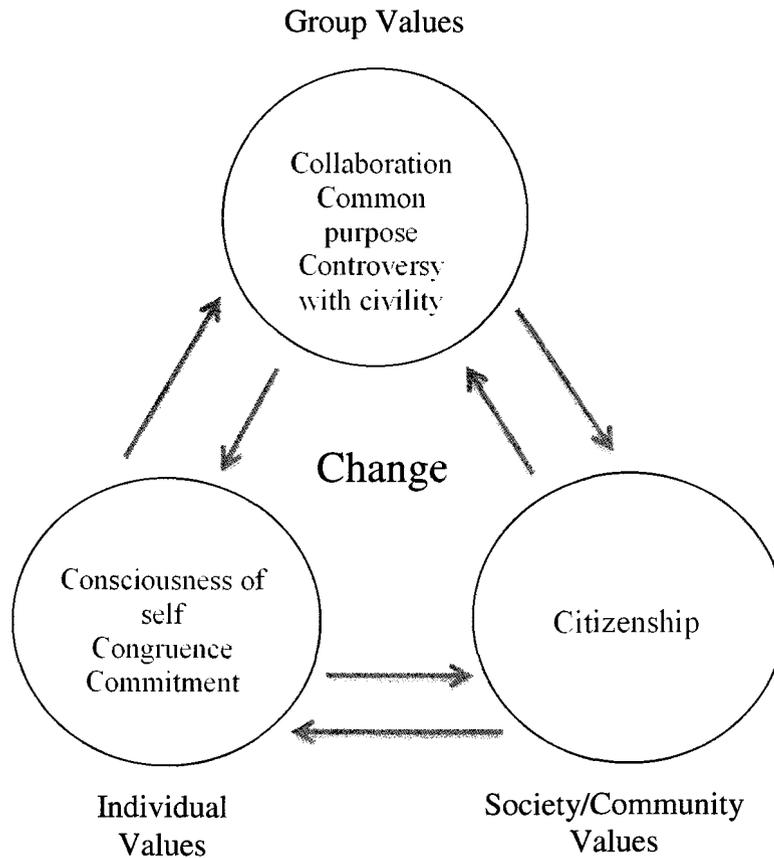
As introduced in chapter two, Arrow Leadership's aim is to develop Christian leaders to be led more by, to lead more like, and to lead more to Jesus (appendix 4). The Arrow Leadership program is an example of an intentional leadership development journey that focuses on awareness, learning, and transformation in community. This model influenced an intentional leadership development focus with SPL leaders in a supportive, learning environment.

## The Social Change Model of Leadership Development

The Social Change Model of Leadership Development is built on the theory that leadership is a process of collaborative relationships (Komives, Wagner and Associates 2009, 50). In these relationships, people establish shared values and work together with collective action to effect positive change (Komives, Wagner and Associates 2009, 45). This model defines a leader as "one who is able to effect positive change for the betterment of others, the community, and society" (Komives, Wagner and Associates 2009, 45). The model was developed in an

educational setting for college students who were interested to learn how to work effectively with others for positive social change (Komives, Wagner and Associates 2009, 43). The Social Change Model focuses on a purposeful, collaborative, values-based process, including the interplay between individual values, group values, and community values (Komives, Wagner and Associates 2009, 50, 52).

The emphasis on values is the primary focus of The Social Change Model of Leadership Development, including values of the leaders and values of the proposed social change (Komives, Wagner and Associates 2009, 45). Individual, group, and community values interact together for social change in this development model, as illustrated in figure 7.



**Figure 7. The Social Change Model of Leadership Development**  
 Adapted from (Komives, Wagner and Associates 2009)

The three components of the social change model include: society/community values (citizenship), group values (collaboration, common purpose, and controversy with civility), and individual values (consciousness of self, congruence, and commitment). Leaders develop when they pay attention to the interaction of these values, learning to work together effectively for social change (Komives, Wagner and Associates 2009, 45).

Social change, in relation to this leadership development model, occurs in the middle of the group's work, in the interaction of the values, and as the group learns to work together to create the desired social change. The authors of the

model explain that social change involves knowing (knowledge and acquisition of knowledge), being (attitudes and knowledge integration), and doing (skills and knowledge application) (Komives, Wagner and Associates 2009, 70). Explained further, knowing involves knowing yourself, how change occurs, and how and why others may view things differently than you do (Komives, Lucas and McMahan 2013, 6). Being means living ethically, principled, caring, and inclusive (Komives, Lucas and McMahan 2013, 6). And doing includes acting in socially responsible ways, consistently and congruently as a participant in a community, and in commitments with passion (Komives, Lucas and McMahan 2013, 6).

The Social Change Model involves six assumptions: leadership is socially responsible and it impacts change on behalf of others, leadership is collaborative, leadership is a process and not a position, leadership is inclusive and accessible to all people, leadership is values-based, and community involvement in service is a powerful vehicle for leadership (Komives, Wagner and Associates 2009, 50).

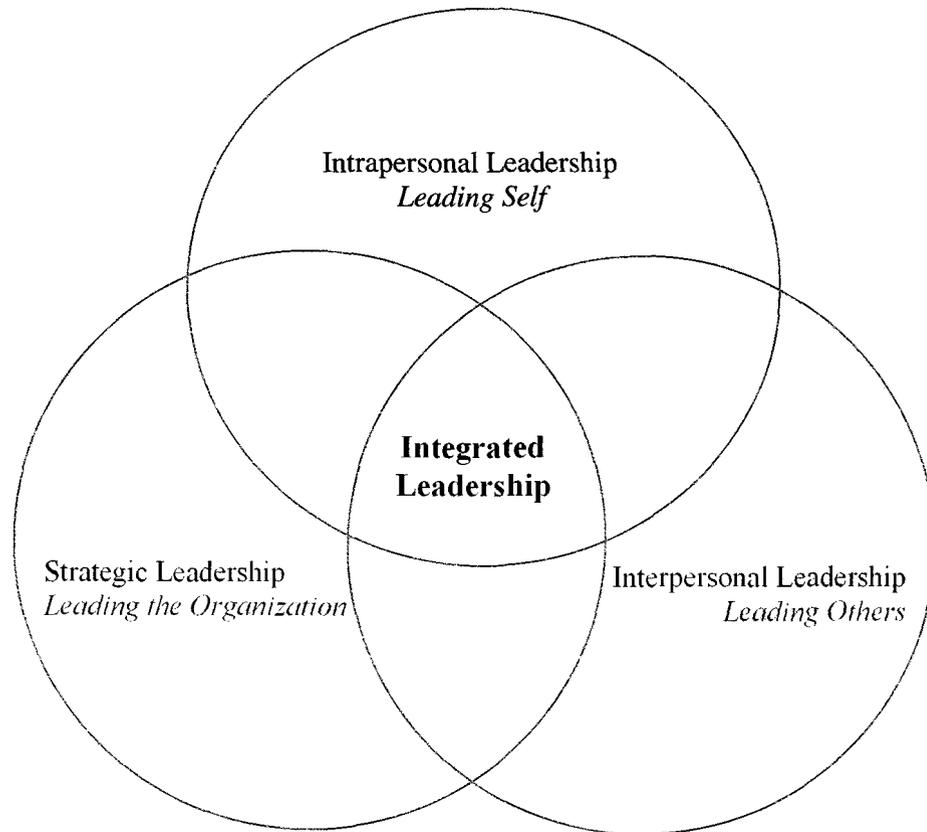
The Social Change Model is holistic in the sense that it focuses on the individual, the group, and the community. It emphasizes good citizenship and shared human values of self-knowledge, service, and collaboration (Komives, Wagner and Associates 2009, 45). This leadership development model shifts the end result of leadership development to be less about creating excellent individual leaders, and more about developing together as citizens, and creating effective impact for the good of others. The model does promote health and growth in individuals. However, the emphasis moves away from the individualistic mindset

to concentrate on collective and collaborative development and influence. This emphasis was influential in the design of a shepherding approach for SPL leaders to develop together.

### Integrated Leadership

The model of Integrated Leadership was developed by Pietersen as a practical leadership method to create and implement strategic learning and a process of change (Pietersen 2010, xvii). The model is developed from Pietersen's experience as a business leader, professor of business management, and advisor to global companies and organizations.

Integrated Leadership works on the assumption that both strategy and leadership are required to generate commitment and creativity with people in an organization (Pietersen 2010, 196). Pietersen identifies three key domains of leadership that must work together synergistically for integrated leadership to occur: intrapersonal leadership (leading self), interpersonal leadership (leading others), and strategic leadership (leading the organization) (Pietersen 2010, 196-198). Figure 8 illustrates Pietersen's three domains of integrated leadership.



**Figure 8. Three domains of Integrated Leadership**  
Adapted from (Pietersen 2010)

An effective leader will integrate and develop these three domains, recognizing that each one enhances the others, and that not one of them will succeed if there is an absence of support from the other two (Pietersen 2010, 199). A description of each leadership domain follows.

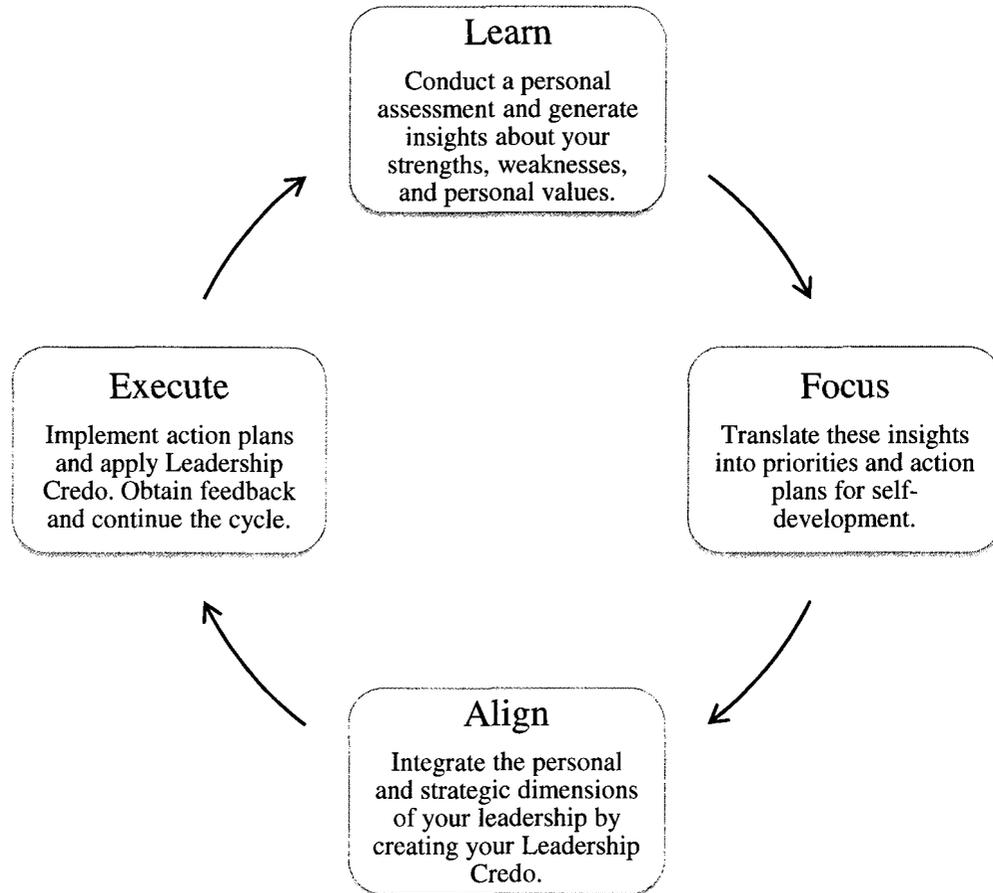
Intrapersonal leadership, leading self, requires a firm sense of identity (who I am), moral values (what I stand for), and purpose (what I believe). Intrapersonal leadership is self-aware, focused on acquiring self-knowledge, and exhibits self-control. Personal values guide the intrapersonal leader with decisions and actions in a manner that is consistent and sincere. Effective intrapersonal leaders exhibit

optimism and commitment to something that is larger than self (Pietersen 2010, 197).

Interpersonal leadership, leading others, focuses on “the ability to win the hearts and minds of others” (Pietersen 2010, 198). Interpersonal leadership builds teams, rallies people together, and leads with collective effort for the good of the organization (Pietersen 2010, 198). The interpersonal leader provides compelling communication and messaging, fosters collaboration, pays attention to people’s perspectives, feelings and concerns, invites participation and shows appreciation for all, and creates a high-performance culture established on shared values and common purpose (Pietersen 2010, 198-199).

Strategic leadership, leading the organization, focuses on the need to provide clear direction so that people and the organization can prosper (Pietersen 2010, 198). Strategic leaders pay attention to reality, recognize the changing environment, establish priorities, apply effective disciplines to implement strategy, and tend to the stewardship of resources and people (Pietersen 2010, 198). Strategic leadership energizes people and builds capacity in the organization to effectively address reality with strategies of change and renewal (Pietersen 2010, 198).

Pietersen identifies leadership development as a lifelong process and implements a strategic learning cycle to develop integrated leaders (Pietersen 2010, 206). The cycle includes four basic steps for leaders to continuously learn, focus, align, and execute (Pietersen 2010, 206). Figure 9 illustrates Pietersen’s strategic learning cycle.



**Figure 9. Strategic learning cycle**  
Adapted from (Pietersen 2010)

The strategic learning cycle provides a way for leaders to develop self-awareness and self-knowledge, and for this awareness to activate positive personal development (Pietersen 2010, 207). An overview of the four basic steps follows.

Leaders develop by learning. The first step in Pietersen’s cycle for integrated leaders to develop includes the need for a leader to grow in self-awareness and self-knowledge by engaging in appraisals, honest feedback, and coaching (Pietersen 2010, 207). Insights about personal strengths and weaknesses assist the leader to develop clarity about values, reality of the environment and the leader’s

role, and specific leadership challenges that the leader is facing (Pietersen 2010, 207-208).

The second step in the model is for the leader to focus. This involves translating insights from learning into priorities and action steps for improvement. Pietersen encourages leaders to focus on competencies that are most likely to contribute to effectiveness, and suggests that a maximum of five personal development priorities be established, along with action steps and a method to evaluate progress (Pietersen 2010, 208).

Step three in the cycle is for the leader to align. This stage focuses on integrating the three domains of leadership, and developing a leadership credo (Pietersen 2010, 208). The leadership credo is “a succinct statement of a leader’s personal beliefs and leadership principles, the vision and strategy of the organization, and the shared values of the enterprise that will drive success” (Pietersen 2010, 199). Pietersen suggests that each credo is unique, with a common element of answering three basic questions: what do I stand for as a leader? What is our organization’s vision and how will we win? And what do we stand for as an organization? (Pietersen 2010, 208).

The fourth step in Pietersen’s leadership development cycle is to execute. He describes this as the “learn-by-doing” step (Pietersen 2010, 208). This involves the leader articulating the personal leadership credo, continuously evaluating personal performance, seeking feedback, and using those insights for further learning and development (Pietersen 2010, 208). At this point, the cycle of strategic learning begins again, in a continuous loop of leadership development.

The Integrated Leadership model provides a holistic perspective of the tasks of leadership to lead self, to lead others, and to lead the organization. This concept influenced the design of a shepherding leadership development approach for leaders to develop in these three domains, and Pietersen's strategic learning cycle parallels closely with the concept of action learning, a method of qualitative research used with this research project (see chap. 4).

### Comparison of Four Leadership Development Models

There are similarities and differences between the four models of leadership development explored in this research. The four models agree that leadership development is a process or a journey. All models prioritize learning for leaders to develop in ways that promote and bring good to the people and organization (or community) they serve. Each of the models have different expressions, yet, all are similar in the emphasis to focus on developing relationships, exhibiting care and support with people and tasks, and growing in ability and competency as leaders.

Shepherding and Arrow Leadership are similar with an emphasis for leaders to develop within a supportive environment of Christian community. In these two models there is a focus on partnering together with God and others in relationship, and to experience the Lord's shepherding (being led by Jesus). Character and competency develop from the foundational position that leaders are called and appointed by God to be Kingdom leaders, on mission with him to lead more like Jesus, and to lead more to Jesus.

Arrow Leadership and Integrated Leadership are similar in the expression of integrated leadership responsibilities. Assessment and learning are priorities with

these two models. Table 6 illustrates the language of the two models, and displays how Arrow Leadership and Integrated Leadership align on their development emphases for a person to develop as an integrated leader.

**Table 6. Similarities Between Arrow Leadership and Integrated Leadership**

<b>Arrow Leadership</b>	<b>Integrated Leadership</b>	<b>Leadership Development Emphasis</b>
Being led more by Jesus	Intrapersonal leadership	Leading self Assessment process Self-awareness Establishing identity and values Learning Developing, following, and assessing a leadership plan to lead self
Leading more like Jesus	Interpersonal leadership	Leading others (leading with others) Assessment process Learning Developing, following, and assessing a leadership plan to lead others Collaboration Care and support
Leading more to Jesus	Strategic leadership	Leading the organization Assessment process Clarity and purpose in the organization's vision and mission Learning Developing, following, and assessing a leadership plan to lead the organization Stewardship of people and resources

Arrow Leadership and Integrated Leadership both identify three domains of leadership to include the individual, the group (those being led by the leader), and the organization. These domains are similar to the focus with The Social Change Model of Leadership Development that focuses on the individual, the group, and the community. The difference between these models is that Arrow and Integrated

Leadership focus on the development of an individual leader, whereas The Social Change Model emphasizes leadership development within the context of leaders working together.

The four models are different in their leadership development aims. The goal of shepherding is for leaders to grow in relationship with God and others, cultivating Christian community, and responding in obedience to God's guidance for his purposes and his glory. Arrow Leadership's aim is for personal, intentional, and transformational development in the life of a leader. The Social Change Model of Leadership Development is for individuals, groups, and communities to work together for positive social change. The goal of Integrated Leadership is for strategic learning and business success.

Despite different aims and varied approaches and expressions, these four leadership development models provided consistency with four principles that became the foundation of a shepherding approach. This included attention to the leadership development journey as a process, an emphasis on integrated learning, collaborative relationships, and a supportive environment.

### **Components for Leaders to Develop Together**

To this point, I have defined leadership development, explained conceptual models of leadership development, and outlined the design of a shepherding approach. To explore the idea of leaders developing together in shepherding principles of relationship, care, and ability, I now examine literature on these topics.

## Relationship

Shepherding as a biblical model of leadership development emphasizes Christian community in an environment that promotes connection, togetherness, and oneness. The Social Change Model of Leadership Development identifies relational values of collaboration, common purpose, and controversy with civility. This idea of promoting relational aspects into our leadership practices is threatened by the individualistic and independent values of our Western culture (Block 2008, 2). Instead of building connections and developing together, our society has created practices that contribute to isolation and fragmentation (Block 2008, 2).

Developing in relationship will require leaders to experience connection with one another and realize that their safety and success depends on the success of everyone in the community (Block 2008, 5). This level of connection will involve the development of social capital to incorporate qualities of belonging, well-being, interdependence, hospitality, and affection (Block 2008, 5). Social capital is measured by the quality of relationships and the level of cohesion in relationships between community members (Block 2008, 5). Block identifies the human task to bring aliveness and wholeness into our practices of leadership, citizenship, social structures, and context (Block 2008, 19). These practices are necessary for people to experience belonging, restoration, and transformation in community and relationship (Block 2008, 19).

Although Western culture creates a threat to relationship in community, human beings are naturally sociable and wired to connect with each other (Goleman 2006, 4-5). Nourishing relationships positively impact our health,

whereas toxic relationships cause deterioration, destruction, and diminishing health (Goleman 2006, 5). Therefore, healthy leadership development will require men and women to pay attention to social intelligence, being intelligent about our relationships, and being intelligent in our relationships (Goleman 2006, 11). Social intelligence involves characteristics of social awareness, empathy, and the ability to manage relationships (Goleman 2006, 331).

The way people interact and how relationships are formed influence the environment and the culture in a business or organization (Lewin and Regine 2000, 26). An organization that is interested to develop health and well-being will focus on relationships between people, relationship among teams, and relationship to the organization's purpose (Lewin and Regine 2000, 324). Development of collective and collaborative relationships begins with the leaders of the organization. At this level, a group of leaders becomes a model of community for the whole organization (Olsen 1995, 9), leading as a community within a community (Briggs and Hyatt 2015, 112).

In a Christian setting, a leadership group will ensure the integration of spiritual practices to develop in relationship with God and one another (Haley Barton 2012, 38). A Christian community of practice will emphasize biblical principles for the development of healthy and life-giving relationships (T. Keller 2012, 319). Leadership development and transformation in relationship is possible when a group gathers together on a regular basis and where members of the group assist one another to focus on responsive relationships with God and each other (Haley Barton 2014, 64). Developing together in relationship is a gift from God

and proof of spiritual life, spiritual growth, and spiritual maturity (Challies 2007, 27-29, 65). A shepherding approach with this project incorporated spiritual practices for SPL leaders to develop in relationship with God and one another.

Relationships require active and systematic cultivation for the benefit of leaders and the people and organizations they serve (Wenger, McDermott and Snyder 2002, 12). This will involve the development of communities of practice, “groups of people who share a concern, a set of problems, or a passion about a topic, and who deepen their knowledge and expertise in this area by interacting on an ongoing basis” (Wenger, McDermott and Snyder 2002, 4). A community of practice incorporates three foundational elements to create and sustain relationships: knowledge, care, and development (Wenger, McDermott and Snyder 2002, 27-29). These elements influenced the design of a shepherding approach.

This section explored literature about the shepherding principle of relationship. Literature reveals that a focus on relationships will be a priority with leadership development. The design of a shepherding approach with this project created space for leaders to grow in relationship with God and one another by learning together (acquiring knowledge), experiencing care, and developing in shared purpose. The next section will address the shepherding principle of care.

### Care

Along with developing relationships, a shepherding approach emphasized care. Care involves compassion and the cultivation of a supportive environment that promotes and brings good. The Social Change Model of Leadership

Development describes caring citizens as those who live ethically, principled, and inclusive in socially responsible ways.

A holistic view of any organization will involve a collective and caring approach with its people and how they work together (Lewin and Regine 2000, 324). Care is described as doing the deep work that strengthens connections, enriches relationships, and leads the organization as a whole to success (Lewin and Regine 2000, 324). Creating care in an organization will require an approach where people are encouraged to discover their passions, developing and working together to be engaged, involved, and effective (Lewin and Regine 2000, 329). When interactions between people involve care, a community of connection will develop (Lewin and Regine 2000, 26). This level of care within relationship creates space for the soul at work, a culture where creativity, productivity, and innovation are encouraged and expressed (Lewin and Regine 2000, 26).

Leadership excellence involves empathy to see everyone as human and everyone treated the same way (Sinek 2014, 11). A leadership development approach will ensure that the environment incorporates responsibility and empathy to help people gain a sense of belonging and value, to encourage sincere care between members, and to help people fully engage their heads and their hearts for the organization to thrive (Sinek 2014, 11). Leadership development will pay attention to energy needs for leaders to be at their best physically, emotionally, mentally, and spiritually (Schwartz 2010, 7).

Care involves stewardship for individuals and organizations to flourish (Laszlo and Sorum Brown 2014, 45, 52). Flourishing involves care as an intrinsic

way of being, exhibited by engaged teams and high performance groups (Laszlo and Sorum Brown 2014, 45). Care requires time and energy, and emphasizes a commitment to human beings (Sinek 2014, 214). An organization of care will promote an environment where people are treated well and feel that they are protected (Sinek 2014, 130). This begins with leaders who are committed to remove barriers of self-protection by promoting expressions of sincere care (Sinek 2014, 130). Such an environment will eliminate the need for leaders to manage politics, promote personal success, or watch their backs (Sinek 2014, 130).

A caring environment will pay attention to the stewardship of good meetings and communication. Lencioni distinguishes between good and bad meetings suggesting that “bad meetings are a birthplace of unhealthy organizations, and good meeting are the origin of cohesion, clarity, and communication” (Lencioni 2012, 173-174). Caring leaders will overcome the temptation of groupthink, a mindset where the values of unity and care distort good process, and affect people’s ability and motivation to think or express varying ideas and perspectives (Kaiser 2006, chap. 2, sec. 4, par. 5). Developing leaders will be alert to biases and develop helpful practices for honest conversations and good decision-making (Heath and Heath 2013, 10-11). Care with meetings and communication will promote effective work together, drawing out people’s individual “slices of genius” and developing, together, a single work of “collective genius” through collaboration, discovery-driven learning, and integrative decision making (Hall, et al. 2014, 2, 16-19).

A community of practice will include a collection of people who care (Wenger, McDermott and Snyder 2002, 27). Interactions and relationships will be established through mutual respect and trust, and all members will be encouraged to participate, share ideas, acknowledge shortcomings, listen carefully, and problem solve together (Wenger, McDermott and Snyder 2002, 28). Learning about, and with, people we are working with promotes care (Wenger, McDermott and Snyder 2002, 28).

The concept of care is addressed in business and social literature as an emphasis for leadership development in the twenty-first century. This section identified care as the deep work for leaders of any organization. A shepherding approach with this project was attentive to the need for leaders to experience care with relationships, meetings, and communication in a supportive environment. As literature indicates, an environment of care provides an opportunity for leaders to develop together with passion, purpose, and effectiveness. This aligns with the shepherding principle of ability and will be explored in the following section.

### Ability

Cultivating relationships in a caring environment will develop leaders in ability. Ability involves skills, knowledge, experience, and competence to faithfully fulfill responsibilities. Integrated leadership development will involve the discipline to grow in ability to lead self, lead with others, and lead the organization.

Leadership ability is one of the primary influences of a healthy, growing church (Lawrence 2004, 10). A shepherding approach will equip leaders with

confidence and skills in their roles (Lawrence 2004, 12), and guide the worshipful work of transforming church boards into communities of spiritual leaders (Olsen 1995, 7-8). Leadership ability emphasizes competence and character of leaders, and healthy interaction and behaviour between leaders (Brown Governance 2014).

The ability to think differently about organizations, leadership, and change is not an easy task. Human experiences become hardwired into people's brains and form habitual practices that are unconscious to us (Rock 2006, 13). Changing habits and developing new patterns of thinking and behaviour with a group will require intentional attention and effort (Rock 2006, 13). Such a practice will depend on the engagement of members and internal development of leaders (Wenger, McDermott and Snyder 2002, 12). Leadership development will involve a continuous learning cycle to acquire and apply knowledge, to develop processes and best practices as a work group or team, and to steward knowledge through sharing, documenting, and validating (Wenger, McDermott and Snyder 2002, 19).

Developing in ability involves five dimensions for people and organizations to work together well (Senge 2006, 6): systems thinking, personal mastery, mental models, building shared vision, and team learning (Senge 2006, 2-10). These five artistic disciplines affect a group's thinking, interaction, and learning with one another, and involves an attitude of lifelong learning for people to acquire skills and abilities (Senge 2006, 2, 10-11). A brief description of these five dimensions follows for application in a leadership development setting.

Leaders who want to develop in systems thinking will pay attention to the various parts of the organization and view all parts as an expression of something

much bigger, the whole (Senge 2006, 6). Developing in personal mastery will involve the discipline to develop vision and focus with energy, to see reality, and to engage with responsibilities and activities with patience and perseverance (Senge 2006, 7). The artistic dimension of developing mental models will assist leaders to reflect and discover truth about assumptions, generalizations, and impressions in how we see and act in the world (Senge 2006, 8). Developing shared vision will bring clarity with principles and guiding practices, to identify goals and values to achieve the mission, and to ensure that the message is consistently shared (Senge 2006, 9). And developing team learning places a value on team diversity, fosters conversation, and promotes an environment of thinking, understanding, and shared meaning for those who work together (Senge 2006, 10).

Developing in ability involves learning. Senge identifies three learning capabilities for teams to grow together in ability: aspiration (personal mastery and shared vision), reflective conversations (mental models and dialogue), and understanding complexity (systems thinking) (Senge 2006, xiii). Learning is an integral component of any living system and involves the ability to experience, reflect, adjust, and create new knowledge for development and action in any social context (Shani and Docherty 2003, 18). Learning involves fluid relationships that are nurtured and recognized as the principal expression of organizational creativity and success (Wheatley 2006, 109-110). One of the most important competencies of an organization is to create conditions for people to

develop the discipline of learning new knowledge, and for that knowledge to be embraced and widely shared (Wheatley 2006, 110).

Much of the best learning occurs informally and experientially where learning is encouraged by the organization and recognized as the responsibility of each individual (Shani and Docherty 2003, 4). Learning requires space, a context where learning can take place, and organizations will prioritize the opportunity for people to gather together to share, create, and utilize knowledge (Shani and Docherty 2003, 19). This learning space is where people interact with the culture of the organization, with others, and with information (Shani and Docherty 2003, 20). In this context knowledge is gained, development occurs, and change is shaped (Shani and Docherty 2003, 20). Collective learning emerges when a group of people develops shared knowledge, attitudes, values, and behaviours (Shani and Docherty 2003, 22). Learning in an organization requires facilitation, implementation, and ongoing management (Shani and Docherty 2003, 187).

Olson and Eoyang propose three factors for leaders and organizations to learn, grow in ability, and change: a container that sets the bounds for the self-organizing system, significant differences, and transforming exchanges (Olson and Eoyang 2001, 11-14). These factors are briefly explained as they relate to the design of this research project.

The container is the space where connection occurs including physical space, organizational space, or behavioural space (Olson and Eoyang 2001, 12). The container sets a boundary, helps define identity and purpose, holds the parts of a system together, and creates the context for process, learning, and development

(Olson and Eoyang 2001, 12). The container of a shepherding approach with this research project created space for nine SPL leaders to gather ten times in a supportive environment to increase connection and care, acquire new knowledge together, and develop in shared purpose.

Olson and Eoyang's second factor for leaders to grow in ability is significant differences. These differences are related to power, levels of expertise, quality, cost, gender, race, and educational background (Olson and Eoyang 2001, 13). Paying attention to differences in the group will help to regulate patterns, process, and results of the system (Olson and Eoyang 2001, 13). A group that is able to focus on understanding a significant difference is more able to develop together with clarity and consistency (Olson and Eoyang 2001, 13). In contrast, a group that is unable to focus on a significant difference may struggle to identify priorities and actions for development and change (Olson and Eoyang 2001, 13-14). This research project provided the opportunity for men and women of different ages, and various leadership roles and life experiences, to join together in relationship and conversation, to learn what it means for leaders with differences to be together fully alive in Jesus.

Transforming exchanges is the third factor proposed by Olson and Eoyang. Transforming exchanges occur between members in the system and can include meetings, e-mail, memos, phone calls, delivery of products and services, and financial transactions (Olson and Eoyang 2001, 14). Transforming exchanges influence the significant differences and patterns in a system (Olson and Eoyang 2001, 14). They have the power to produce positive or negative results, and the

power to motivate people's ability to relate, respond, and adapt (Olson and Eoyang 2001, 14-15). The design, facilitation, and evaluation of a shepherding approach with this research project paid attention to transforming exchanges of participants during meeting times and through communication between meetings.

Collective learning and development occurs best in a small group where unity is valued, differences are appreciated, and group members are able to engage in honest, healthy dialogue and debate (Osborne 2010, 45). Such an environment will support, encourage, and celebrate collective discovery, sharing, and application of knowledge (Gill 2010, 5). This will require development for leaders to learn how to dialogue together and receive feedback well (Stone and Heen 2014, 8). The way an executive team receives feedback establishes the learning culture of that organization (Stone and Heen 2014, 10).

Communal transformation in the church involves lifelong learning and organizational processes that help that community learn how to be the people of God, and to act on that knowledge (Cannell 2008, 13). Accountable leaders are devoted to God's kingdom over self or tribe, and will work together to grow in ability, intentionally cultivating dynamics to sustain a healthy movement (T. Keller 2012, 348-351). Christian leaders will focus on learning together in community to grow in relationship, care, and ability as shepherds of the church.

The literature review on topics of relationship, care, and ability influenced a leadership development approach with this research project. Developing together in relationship emphasized integration of spiritual practices and cultivation of community for this group of leaders to develop in connection with God and one

another. Developing together in care positioned leaders in a supportive environment with attention to good stewardship of people, meetings, and communication. And developing together in ability focused on acquiring new knowledge and clarity about what it means for leaders of the church to be together fully alive in Jesus. I will now discuss literature that further influenced the design and facilitation of a shepherding approach.

### **Design and Facilitation of a Shepherding Approach**

In the theological discussion in chapter two, I identified God's covenant of love and intimacy with his people and God's shepherding principles of relationship, care, and ability. I discussed how this covenant of togetherness and unity is extended through Jesus the good Shepherd and how he invites his disciples to join with him in his shepherding work to build his church. With this in mind, a shepherding leadership development approach will position Christian leaders to experience God's shepherding and develop together as shepherds of the church. This will emphasize relationships of connection and care in a supportive environment that cultivates Christian community.

In this chapter, I discussed models of leadership development and components for leaders to develop together. The literature emphasized the need for a space where leadership development occurs. Olson and Eoyang refer to this as the container where significant differences and transforming exchanges take place (Olson and Eoyang 2001). A shepherding leadership development focused on creating space for a group of Christian leaders to develop together in integrated leadership practices. In this section I will outline the design of a shepherding

approach including the meeting design and role and responsibilities of the facilitator and participants.

### Shepherding Approach Design

The design of a shepherding approach involved clarity about purpose, guiding principles, values, strategy, activity, defining objectives, meeting design, meeting template, and roles and responsibilities. An adaptation of Lencioni's six essential questions assisted this design process: why does a shepherding approach exist? How will we behave? What will we do? How will we succeed? What is important right now? And who will do what? (Lencioni 2012, 77). The following explains the shepherding approach design, and the full outline is included in appendix 2.

The purpose of a shepherding approach was to create space for a group of Christian leaders to experience God's shepherding and develop together as shepherds of the church. The design was based on three shepherding principles of relationship, care, and ability. The values of a shepherding approach included attention to process, integrated learning, collaborative relationships, and a supportive environment. The strategy of the design was to create a supportive environment that facilitated a process for a group of Christian colleagues to develop in integrated leadership practices to lead self, to lead with others, and to lead the organization. The activities of a shepherding approach involved cultivating healthy Christian community, creating space for conversations that matter, and integrating learning with practice. The defining objectives were for leaders to experience increased connection and care, to acquire new knowledge together, and clarify shared purpose as shepherds of the church.

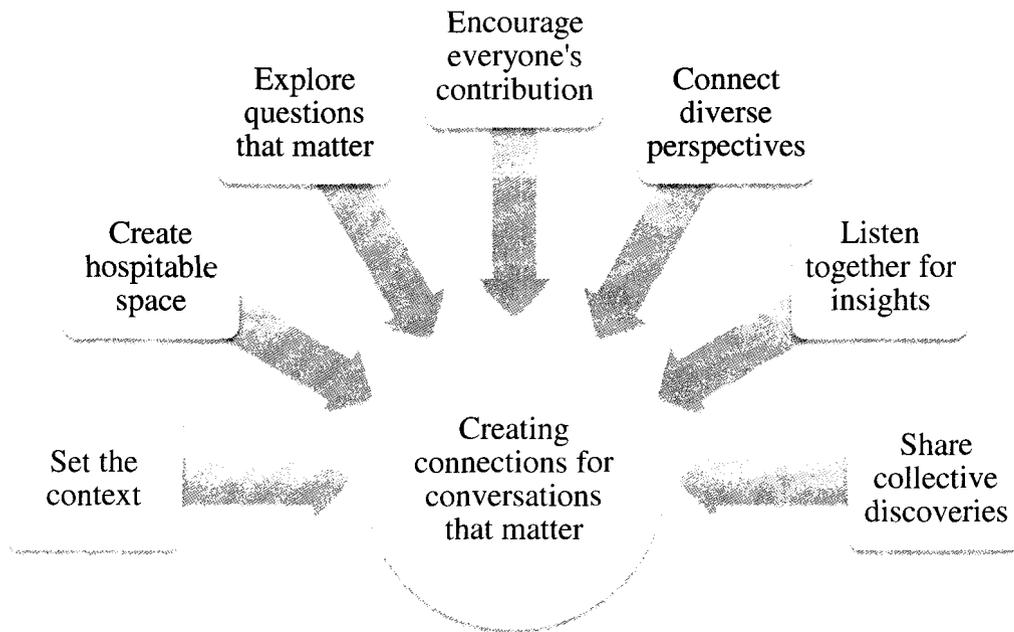
In the design of a shepherding approach, there were questions about who should be involved and how many people are appropriate in a leadership development setting. Lencioni identifies that the ideal number for a leadership group is somewhere between three and twelve people (Lencioni 2012, 21), and Osborne suggests an ideal number to be somewhere between seven and eleven people (Osborne 2010, 45). Arrow Leadership designs their program with twenty-four leaders, and they incorporate training and development to include cluster groups (with 4-5 leaders) and one-to-one coaching and mentoring. Primarily, a leadership group is recognized as a small group of people who are collectively responsible for achieving the common purpose for the organization (Lencioni 2012, 21), to lead wisely and well (Osborne 2010, 45). In the design of this research project, SPL leaders decided to include elders, pastors, and staff ministry directors in a leadership development approach. This involved nine Christian colleagues.

### Meeting Design

A shepherding approach was designed and facilitated to nurture leadership development through the way the group met together. This required attention with the meeting design. Great meetings are central to smart and healthy leadership (Lencioni 2012, 173), and it is the responsibility of leaders to design and lead meetings well (Axelrod and Axelrod 2014, 126-127). Unity and clarity occurs when leaders ensure they are having the right kind of meeting and that those times of meeting are effective (Lencioni 2012, 175). A shepherding approach with this research project focused on meetings that included both spiritual and leadership

dimensions for leaders to develop together as shepherds of the church (Osborne 2010, 140). This type of meeting involved extended time together to focus on connection and care, learning, prayer, and communication.

The World Café design was used as a model for shepherding meetings with this project. The World Café emphasizes the development of conversation and connection in community, to bring together diverse and varied perspectives, and to generate business and social value (Brown and Isaacs 2005, 40). Human beings are designed to want to talk together about things that matter to us, and that talking together “enables us to access greater wisdom that is found only in the collective” (Brown and Isaacs 2005, ix). The World Café is described as a “simple yet powerful conversational process for fostering constructive dialogue, accessing collective intelligence, and creating innovative possibilities for action” (Brown and Isaacs 2005, 3). Seven integrated principles are incorporated to host conversations that matter (Brown and Isaacs 2005, 174). These World Café principles provided a meeting design for a shepherding approach with this research project. Figure 10 illustrates the seven principles of the World Café, and a brief description will follow.



**Figure 10. World Café design**

Adapted from (Brown, Isaacs and the World Café Community 2005)

The seven integrated principles of the World Café design provided direction with the design, facilitation, and evaluation of a shepherding approach. This included setting the context by clarifying the purpose and parameters of each conversation with the group (Brown and Isaacs 2005, 174). It involved creating hospitable space with a welcoming environment and attention to psychological safety that nurtured personal comfort and mutual respect (Brown and Isaacs 2005, 174). The design emphasized exploring questions that matter with conversation that prioritized collective and collaborative engagement (Brown and Isaacs 2005, 174). The design encouraged everyone's contribution by inviting full participation and connected diverse perspectives by focusing on a common purpose or core question (Brown and Isaacs 2005, 174). The group was encouraged to listen together to identify patterns, insights, and deeper questions, and to share collective discoveries through what we were reading and studying (Brown and

Isaacs 2005, 174). Discoveries were captured with visuals using post-it notes, a flip chart, or on paper provided at tables (Brown and Isaacs 2005, 174).

The design of practicing communities involves life-long learning and evidence of being alive (Wenger, McDermott and Snyder 2002, 53). A shepherding approach involved continuous reflection and redesign for a leadership group to thrive and flourish in their learning and way of meeting together (Wenger, McDermott and Snyder 2002, 53). The authors describe this as “a practice of shepherding for the community’s evolution,” and they identify the need for a coordinator to organize events and connect the members of the community (Wenger, McDermott and Snyder 2002, 51). The role of a facilitator in a shepherding approach will now be discussed.

#### Facilitator Role

A leadership development approach requires a coordinator who is a member of the community (Wenger, McDermott and Snyder 2002, 80). This person helps to facilitate the group’s priorities and assists the group to remain focused on the domain of knowledge, fostering relationships, and developing the community’s practice (Wenger, McDermott and Snyder 2002, 80). In this research project, I was the researcher and facilitator of our shepherding meetings.

The person in a facilitator role works as a change agent to create an atmosphere for the group to realize their purpose and values, and assist the group through the change process (Komives, Wagner and Associates 2009, 400). This person will benefit self and the group by having positive perceptions of change, comfort with ambiguity and transition, self-confidence, patience, and a

willingness to step outside one's comfort zone (Komives, Wagner and Associates 2009, 411).

Facilitation of meetings requires attention. The facilitator role can be likened to that of a guide who assists smooth process (Axelrod and Axelrod 2014, 134). Great process requires as much effort in planning as it does with guidance during group meetings (Axelrod and Axelrod 2014, 134). Facilitators are effective meetings guides when they think like a designer, when they are able to describe what they see and hear and ask group members what they want to do about it, and when they work to balance power and make sure that everyone's voice is heard (Axelrod and Axelrod 2014, 134-137). A facilitator will pay attention to three coordination traps that can work against the success of a meeting: doing for the group what the group can do for itself, believing that the facilitator holds the power to cure everything that is wrong with the meeting, and facilitating false participation by not ensuring that every member's voice is heard or resolving conflict in a healthy manner (Axelrod and Axelrod 2014, 12).

A facilitator will benefit from understanding that change is a process, that there will be resistance to change at the group and individual levels, and that strategies to deal with resistance are required to lead well (Komives, Wagner and Associates 2009, 411). This person should demonstrate that he or she has the ability to influence systems and to articulate vision (Komives, Wagner and Associates 2009, 411). This person should also demonstrate the ability to create a sense of urgency and be willing to take a risk to make a difference (Komives, Wagner and Associates 2009, 411). As the facilitator of a shepherding leadership

development approach, I focused on designing meetings and guiding the process for a group of leaders to experience God's shepherding, and to develop together as shepherds of the church.

### Participant Role

Participants of this research project were a small core group of people who actively participated in discussions (Wenger, McDermott and Snyder 2002, 56). Participants were regarded as equal members of the group, expected to attend and participate in meetings, to read resources and prepare for conversations with the group, and to contribute with diverse perspectives and unique personalities. The emphasis was on collaborative relationships where leadership could come from anywhere in the group, occurring relationally as a process among people (Komives, Wagner and Associates 2009, 47).

### Conclusion of a Shepherding Approach Design

The design of a shepherding approach provided clarity about a leadership development approach with colleagues who work together in a Christian ministry setting. The design incorporated purpose, guiding principles, values, strategy, activity, defining objectives, meeting design, meeting template, and roles and responsibilities of the facilitator and participants (appendix 2).

### **Evaluation of a Shepherding Approach**

A shepherding approach with a group of SPL leaders was designed to align with the church's ministry context. It incorporated design principles of relationship, care, and ability to meet three main objectives: 1) to increase

connection with SPL elders, pastors, and ministry directors, 2) to acquire new knowledge together, and 3) to clarify shared purpose as shepherds of the church. Qualitative inquiry methods were incorporated into the design, facilitation, and evaluation of a shepherding approach (see chap. 4). Chapter 5 will communicate the research findings and analysis of a shepherding approach to include: the meeting design, the facilitator role, and the outcomes of the project's main objectives. Chapter 6 will provide a research overview and conclusions.

### **Conclusion of Literature Review**

The literature review emphasized that the field of leadership development is moving toward development of leaders as part of a collective whole and explained the value of leaders developing together within the context of community. This chapter focused on the definition of leadership development, four models of leadership development, components for leaders to develop together, and the design and evaluation of a shepherding leadership development approach.

## **CHAPTER FOUR: RESEARCH METHODS**

The focus of this project was to design and facilitate a shepherding approach of leader development in a local church. Its purpose was to explore what it means for leaders of St. Paul's Leaskdale (SPL) to be "together fully alive in Jesus" (the church's vision statement). Chapter two described shepherding as a biblical model of leadership development that focuses on the integration of relationship, care, and ability. A shepherding approach emphasizes the Lord's shepherding of his people within the context of covenant community. The Christian expression of covenant community is the church. Shepherding will require leaders of a church to develop together in Christian community.

The literature review in chapter three showed how the field of leadership development is moving away from an individual leader model to a model of collective leadership development. The literature review explored leadership development models and outlined principles to design, facilitate, and evaluate a shepherding approach for leaders to develop together. This chapter will discuss the following: the research methodology of this project, the project design, ethical guidelines, data collection, and data analysis.

## **Research Methodology**

In this section the process and language of the research will be discussed. This includes qualitative inquiry, action research and learning, and appreciative inquiry.

### **Qualitative Inquiry**

The approach of this research project was qualitative. The aim of qualitative inquiry is to understand people and their perceptions of the world (Bell 2010, 5). Qualitative research took place in a natural setting, in the context of the participants (Cresswell 2013, 44). Data was collected through personal discussion with the people, and observation of their behaviours and actions (Cresswell 2013, 45). The researcher was involved in the process, facilitating questions to gather information from participants (Cresswell 2013, 45). Many forms of data were collected from work with the participants through the use of interviews, observations, and documents (Cresswell 2013, 45). Data was organized into categories or themes, and the researcher used reasoning skills throughout the inquiry process to clarify and develop the themes (Cresswell 2013, 45). The focus was to learn how the participants viewed and understood the problem or the issue they faced, and the research process was emergent, adjusting according to the discoveries and direction of the participant group (Cresswell 2013, 47). Qualitative research was reflective and interpretive, sensitive to the researcher's background and experience, and the researcher was attentive to the complexity of dynamics and factors within the group (Cresswell 2013, 47).

Qualitative inquiry was chosen as the best approach for this research project because it provided a natural setting with familiar practices for leaders who work together in a church ministry setting. The project started with the framework of the church's vision statement, "together fully alive in Jesus," and the assumption that leaders of the church will exhibit togetherness, a focus on Jesus as Lord, and characteristics of being alive in relationship with God and others. Three intended outcomes included: 1) increased connection with elders, pastors, and ministry directors, 2) acquiring new knowledge together, and 3) clarifying shared purpose as shepherds of the church. Qualitative inquiry and research provided the opportunity for nine SPL leaders to be positioned together in a leadership development setting to experience God's shepherding and to explore what it means to be together fully alive in Jesus. This was accomplished through action research.

### Action Research and Learning

Action research fits within the framework of qualitative inquiry and assists a group to gain greater clarity and understanding of a question, problem, or issue (Stringer 2007, 19). Action research, initiated by Kurt Lewin in the 1940's, views the practice of social change as a partnership between the researcher and the client (Coghlan and Brannick 2010, 44). It is both collaborative and democratic as the researcher and participants explore an issue together (Coghlan and Brannick 2010, 5). The process of action research included planning, taking action, evaluating the action, leading to further action, and cycling back through that same process throughout the research project (Coghlan and Brannick 2010, 5).

Stringer describes action research as a systematic approach that investigates and helps people discover effective solutions within their context (Stringer 2007, 1).

Action research can occur in multiple ways through various methodologies (Coghlan and Brannick 2010, 43). However, the primary feature of all action research is to make a connection between knowledge, theory, and action “so that each inquiry contributes directly to the flourishing of human persons and their communities” (Coghlan and Brannick 2010, 44). In this project, the primary approach of action research was through action learning.

Action learning emphasized the development of the leaders in our organization, and our learning occurred through the experience of doing something together (Coghlan and Brannick 2010, 45). Action learning involved inquiry through programmed learning (knowledge, resources), exploration of the issue through action and reflection, and group interaction that included questioning insight and critical reflection (Coghlan and Brannick 2010). The researcher realized that learning is necessary for change, and most effective when people experience learning through reflection, adjustment, and the ability to create new knowledge together (Shani and Docherty 2003, 18).

This action research project involved several learning cycles taking place at the same time (Coghlan and Brannick 2010, 10). The whole project can be viewed as a large cycle of action research. Other cycles are represented by phases or sections of the project. Additionally, specific actions represent small cycles of action research throughout the project. Table 7 illustrates the cycles of action research in this project.

**Table 7. Research Project: Action Research Cycles**

<b>Action Research Cycle: Whole Project</b>			
<i>Constructing</i>	<i>Planning Action</i>	<i>Taking Action</i>	<i>Evaluating Action</i>
Research project design in collaboration with researcher, elders, and pastors	Developing the plan and objectives of the project with SPL pastors, elders, and ministry directors	The group met together ten times	The researcher analyzed data and prepared a final report to the group
Reviewing, discussing, and defining current leadership development practices with SPL leaders	Participants committed to meeting together ten times over one year	The group members read resources between meetings for discussion when the group met	Findings were presented and discussed at a Session meeting after the project was complete
Project proposal		The researcher provided communication for the group to prepare and review action research activities	

**Ten Action Research Cycles in Parallel with each Research Meeting**  
*Each meeting was a cycle of action research*

<i>Constructing</i>	<i>Planning Action</i>	<i>Taking Action</i>	<i>Evaluating Action</i>
Designing the meeting according to agreed-upon objectives	The researcher sent e-mail reminders and distributed resources to participants	The group met together for two hours in guided activities	The researcher analyzed meeting notes and prepared a summary for the group
	Participants read resources and were prepared to discuss at the meeting	Group responses were recorded on flip chart paper	Communication was sent to participants
	The researcher coordinated leadership responsibilities for different components of the meeting	The group was sometimes divided into smaller groups for discussion and responses were recorded and collected	Meeting analysis and conversation with participants informed the design of the next meeting
		The researcher took notes at the meeting	

**Large Cycle of Action Research: Appreciative Inquiry**

<i>Constructing</i>	<i>Planning Action</i>	<i>Taking Action</i>	<i>Evaluating Action</i>
The researcher studied the AI process and discussed this method of action research with participants	Participants agreed to apply the AI process to the church's vision: what it means for SPL leaders to be together fully alive in Jesus	Facilitating the AI process with the group during ten meetings Discover and Dream conversations on Oct 1 and Nov 26 2013, and Jan 28 2014 Design conversations on Feb 4, March 4, and April 1 2014	AI Process, conversations about destiny / delivery May 1-3 2014 at leadership retreat (meetings #9 and 10)  The researcher analyzed data from research notes

**Small Cycles of Action Research: Specific Actions**

<i>Constructing</i>	<i>Planning Action</i>	<i>Taking Action</i>	<i>Evaluating Action</i>
Adjusting amount of content and expectation for meetings	Researcher designing the agenda accordingly	Testing the adjusted format with the group	Assessing the effectiveness of the approach with participants
Initial design of dates for ten meetings with participants	Communication with participants, participant discussion and agreement with these dates	Unforeseen conflict with some prearranged meeting dates	Group discussion to determine how to address conflict with dates  Rescheduled four meetings
Adjustment of one meeting date created a large gap of time between meetings	Decision by group to provide feedback through anonymous written responses to some questions	The researcher prepared questions and collected responses  Participants provided feedback	The researcher compiled responses and distributed to the group
The researcher identified resources for the project	The researcher ordered resources	The researcher distributed resources	The group read, discussed, and assessed resources
Interviews to learn about the shepherd metaphor	The researcher set up times for three interviews	The researcher conducted interviews	The researcher prepared interview summaries for data notes

## Appreciative Inquiry

Appreciative inquiry (AI) was used as a process to assist the group's learning and discovery to develop in shared purpose as leaders of the church. AI, as action research, builds on the strengths of an organization, and focuses on transformation through positive change (Cooperrider and Whitney 2005, 2-3). The AI process assisted the group to value the best in our people and organizations, and provided a systematic approach to discover what brings life in our context (Cooperrider and Whitney 2005, 8). The 4-D cycle of AI included: discovery (the best of what is), dream (vision of what could be), design (constructing the possible ideal), and destiny (how to empower, learn, and adjust for this reality) (Cooperrider and Whitney 2005, 16).

This research project followed the AI process to clarify shared purpose as leaders of the church and to answer what it means for SPL leaders to be together fully alive in Jesus. The application of appreciative inquiry with this project is explained as a large cycle of action research (see table 7) and in the evaluation of shepherding meetings (appendix 11).

### **A Shepherding Approach of Leadership Development**

This section explains the process to design a shepherding approach for this research project. This includes contextual knowledge, researcher assumptions, project design, and project timeline. An outline of a shepherding approach is included in appendix 2.

### Contextual Knowledge

The design of a shepherding model needed to fit the context, style, and availability of SPL leaders. It was natural for me, as one of the leaders in the church, to identify what we already knew about ourselves. Interviews with SPL leaders further helped to shape the project's design. We identified that SPL leaders desired to reflect the vision of the church to be "together fully alive in Jesus." Pastors, elders, and ministry directors had experience using resources to develop shared language, meaning, and learning as leaders of the church. SPL leaders already prioritized spending extended times together in prayer and had some experience in retreat settings. We identified that leader's schedules were full and that it was often a challenge to find dates to meet. We acknowledged that there was little opportunity for elders and staff ministry directors to be together, and that there was minimal communication and connection between leadership groups. Pastors and elders were in a practice of meeting together monthly in a study and learning focus. This contextual knowledge assisted with the design of the research project to fit the context, style, and availability of SPL leaders.

### Researcher Assumptions

My involvement as an Arrow Leadership alumnus and the SPL discipleship director affected my thinking and design of a shepherding approach for leadership development. My primary focus with discipleship was to equip people of our church to be together fully alive in Jesus. This meant that I was involved in activities that assisted people to grow in relationship with God, to grow in relationship and shared purpose with others, and to be engaged on mission with

God wherever he places us. Most SPL discipleship initiatives took place in small group settings of three to twelve people, and I recognized this format as appropriate for a leadership group in this research project. Another assumption that influenced the design of a shepherding approach was my growing awareness and conviction that the shepherd metaphor is relevant as a biblical model of leadership. In discussions with SPL leaders about my interest in this topic, we agreed that it would be beneficial for leaders of the church to explore a shepherding model of leadership development.

### Project Design

This research project was designed for a group of SPL leaders to experience God's shepherding and develop together as shepherds of the church. The format brought together the primary leaders of the church including three elders, three pastors, and three ministry directors. Elders and pastors were already committed to a monthly meeting for study together. It was natural to apply this practice to this research project and invite ministry directors to participate. The participant group met together for ten two-hour shepherding meetings over one year including an overnight retreat at the beginning and end of the project. This aligned with typical SPL leadership practices within a ministry year, and was agreed by participants as a reasonable expectation for leaders of the church to commit to this timeframe.

A shepherding approach with this project was designed from a collection of contextual knowledge, researcher assumptions, and four leadership development models. The four models that influenced the design of a shepherding approach

included shepherding as a biblical model of leadership development (chap. 2), Arrow Leadership (chap. 2, appendix 4), The Social Change Model of Leadership Development (Komives, Wagner and Associates 2009) (chap. 3), and Integrated Leadership (Pietersen 2010) (chap. 3). The influences of these models on this project design are summarized in Table 8 and in appendix 2.

**Table 8. Influences of a Shepherding Approach Design**

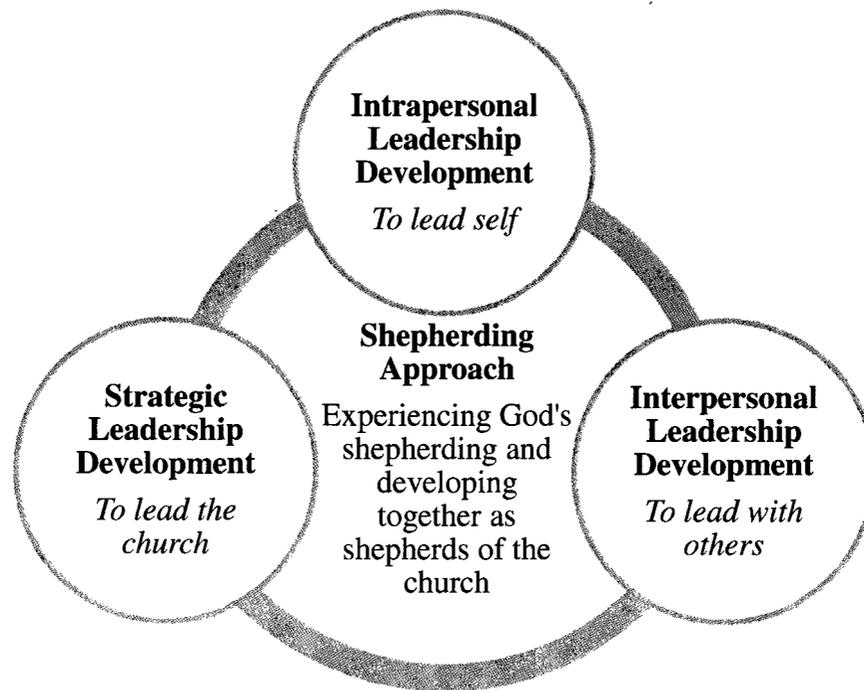
<b>Design Features</b>	<b>Leadership Development Models</b>
Integrated principles of relationship, care, and ability to experience God’s shepherding and develop as shepherds of the church	Shepherding
Process-oriented	All four models
Integrated learning	Arrow, The Social Change Model, Integrated Learning
Collaborative relationships	All four models
Supportive environment	Shepherding, Arrow Leadership
Integrated leadership practices and development – to lead self, to lead others, to lead the organization (ministry, church) <i>The researcher adjusted the emphasis from “to lead others” to focus on a more collaborative approach “to lead with others”</i>	Arrow Leadership, The Social Change Model, Integrated Learning
Cultivating Christian community	Shepherding, Arrow Leadership
Creating space for conversations that matter	Arrow Leadership, The Social Change Model
Integrating learning with practice	All four models

The purpose of a shepherding approach created space for a group of Christian colleagues to experience God’s shepherding and develop together as shepherds of the church. Figure 11 illustrates the image of the container for a group of nine SPL leaders to experience God’s shepherding and develop together as shepherds of the church.



**Figure 11. Creating space for a shepherding approach with leaders**

This approach incorporated shepherding principles of relationship, care, and ability. Leadership development values included attention to process, integrated learning, collaborative relationships, and a supportive environment. This supportive environment enabled the researcher to facilitate a process for Christian colleagues to develop in integrated leadership practices to lead self, to lead with others, and to lead the church. Figure 12 provides a visual of the integrated components for a shepherding leadership development approach designed for this project.



**Figure 12. A shepherding approach designed for this research project**

The meeting design of a shepherding approach included three activities in a two-hour setting. The group met together ten times over one year. The activities of a shepherding meeting cultivated healthy Christian community, created space for conversations that matter, and integrated learning with practice. The meeting template of a shepherding meeting, including activities and allotted time, is illustrated in table 9.

**Table 9. Template of a Shepherding Meeting**

ACTIVITY	TIME
Cultivate healthy Christian community <i>connection, care, spiritual disciplines</i>	30 minutes
Create space for conversations that matter <i>interaction with resources and one another</i>	40 minutes
Break	10 minutes
Integrate learning with practice <i>how does this influence what we know, how we will be, and what we will do as shepherds of the church?</i>	40 minutes

The meeting design was arranged and evaluated according to the principles of the World Café design (see chap. 3) to set the context, create hospitable space, explore questions that matter, encourage everyone's contribution, connect diverse perspectives, listen together for patterns, insights, and deeper questions, and share collective discoveries. An evaluation of shepherding meetings is included in appendix 11.

To cultivate Christian community the group engaged in spiritual practices for leaders to connect in an intimate relationship with Jesus and one another. Practices during shepherding meetings included a variation of scripture reading, silence, reflection, personal sharing, and prayer. Participant reflections were recorded in data research notes and organized in chart form for analysis. A summary of the group's spiritual practices during shepherding meetings is included in appendix 10.

To create space for conversations that matter, each shepherding meeting included interaction with resources. Resources were researched, selected, and distributed by the researcher according to the topic of discussion at each meeting. Participants read resources prior to meeting. Leadership journals were provided for participants to make notes while reading resources and record personal reflections for group conversations. A list of resources used with the project is included in appendix 6.

To integrate learning with practice, the researcher moved with the group through action research, collected and assessed data, and assisted a facilitation process for the group to identify priorities and action points. Regular

communication from the researcher provided participants with meeting notes and information about resources and preparation instructions for the next meeting.

Communication with participants occurred during meetings and through e-mail. A summary of each meeting was prepared and distributed by the researcher to the participants. A final report at the conclusion of the project was prepared and distributed by the researcher to the group.

Roles and responsibilities of a shepherding approach involved a facilitator and participants. I fulfilled the roles of researcher and facilitator. My responsibilities involved participation with the group, coordinating communication and resources, preparing meeting space and coordinating the agenda, connecting members of the group, helping to facilitate the group's priorities, and assisting the group to remain focused with the project's priorities. The other eight participants with this project (SPL leaders) were regarded as equal members of the group, attending and participating in meetings, reading resources, preparing for meetings, and being committed to the priorities and process of this project.

### Project Timeline

The timeline, including design, delivery, and evaluation of a shepherding approach was two years. The project took place between May 2012 and July 2014. Facilitation of shepherding meetings with participants took place between May 2013 and June 2014. Table 10 outlines the project timeline.

**Table 10. Research Project Timeline**

DATE	EVENT
May – December 2012	Preliminary research to outline the project proposal
January – April 2013	Project design, invitation to participants
April 2013	Distribute participant's guide
May 23-24, 2013	Overnight retreat with participants Research project overview, participant agreement form Meeting #1
June 4, 2013	Meeting #2
July 2013	Distribute questions and collect written responses
September 2013	Communication e-newsletter
October 1, 2013	Meeting #3
October 2013	Communication e-newsletter
November 26, 2013	Meeting #4
December 2013	Communication e-newsletter
January 28, 2014	Meeting #5
February 4, 2014	Meeting #6
February 2014	Communication e-newsletter
March 4, 2014	Meeting #7
March 2014	Communication e-newsletter
April 1, 2014	Meeting #8
April 2014	Communication e-newsletter
May 2-4	Overnight retreat
May 3, 2014	Meeting #9 Meeting #10
June-July 2014	Data analysis to prepare final report to the group
July 2014	Final report to the group

### **Ethical Review**

Participants were introduced to the concept of the project in May 2012 and all verbally agreed to participate. In May 2013, full disclosure of information and expectations of the project were communicated (appendix 1). Written consent was received from each of the nine leaders to participate in the action research.

Participants did not receive compensation for the action research. The church paid for costs associated with the research project including resources, hospitality, and supplies. Participants received a participant's guide at the beginning of the

project, regular reports throughout the project, and a final report at the conclusion of the project. Communication samples are included in appendix 8.

Information about the research project was provided to the congregation of St. Paul's Leaskdale (SPL) and the Pickering Presbytery in February 2013. Both bodies granted approval for this study to take place with SPL pastors, elders, and staff ministry directors from May 2013 to June 2014. The project was approved at a SPL congregational meeting on February 24, 2013 and at a Pickering Presbytery meeting on April 16, 2013.

The project was designed to be non-threatening for participants and was used to gather insight and data from a group's perspective. To protect the privacy and reputation of leaders, individual's names were not recorded or used in data collection and reports. With this attention to anonymity in recorded data, the probability and degree of possible harms implied by participation in the research was no greater than what was currently experienced by participants in their leadership responsibilities.

The researcher was not in a position of authority over any of the participants. However, a conflict of interest was recognized for me to be in a researcher role with my colleagues. I reduced my conflict of interest by coordinating shared responsibilities with other members of the group, communicating regularly and transparently with the group, and by removing myself from small group discussions when my voice could potentially dominate or distort the discussion. A culture of equal status was established and promoted throughout the action

research project, and the group was encouraged to communicate any signs of conflict and work together to resolve.

### **Data Collection**

This section explains the timing, methods, and types of data collection for this research project. Data was collected between May 2012 and May 2014 through interviews, church documents and records, participant participation, research documents, and researcher observations. Table 11 provides an overview of the data collection process.

**Table 11. Data Collection Overview**

METHODS	TYPES OF DATA COLLECTION
<b>May 2012 to April 2013 – Prior to research meetings with the group</b>	
Interviews	Consultation with elders, pastors, and ministry directors regarding the action research plan
	Telephone conversation with Dr. Timothy Laniak, Academic Dean and Professor of Old Testament, Gordon Conwell Theological Seminary
Church documents and records	Number of meetings for groups of leaders, year prior to research
	SPL history
	Session insight and direction
	PCC polity
Researcher observations	Identify resources for the group to read/study together
<b>May 2013 to May 2014 – During time of research meetings with the group</b>	
Interviews	Sheep farm visit and discussion with Keith Sinclair
	Sheep farm visit and discussion with Becca Mustard
	Conversations with lead pastor about action research project
	Conversations with administrative pastor about action research project
Participant Participation	Small group conversations and written responses
	Large group conversations – comments recorded on a flip chart
	Written responses – individual, anonymous comments
	Group reflection on resources and activities in the meetings
	Group study and reflection on the shepherd metaphor
	Group reflection about connection, shared purpose, and discernment as leaders

METHODS	TYPES OF DATA COLLECTION
	Appreciative inquiry process for leaders to develop in shared purpose, to be together fully alive in Jesus
Research Documents	Researcher notes
Researcher Observations	Small group and large group responses
	Evaluation and analysis of research meeting notes
	Creation of e-newsletter after each research meeting to communicate group discoveries and provide information for participants to prepare for the next meeting
	Evaluating resources and needs of the group after each meeting
	Evaluating design and delivery of action research after each meeting
<b>June to July 2014 – After research meetings with the group</b>	
Interview	Evaluation with lead pastor about action research project
Researcher Observations	Evaluation / analysis to identify themes and outcomes of the action research with leaders of SPL
Research Document	Final report to the group

### Interviews

Three interviews with individuals beyond the SPL context took place to collect data about the shepherd metaphor. These included a telephone conversation with Dr. Timothy Laniak, Academic Dean and Professor of Old Testament at Gordon Conwell Theological Seminary, an interview with shepherd Keith Sinclair at his farm in Churchill, Ontario, and an interview with shepherd Becca Mustard at her farm in Uxbridge, Ontario. Data from interviews with the local shepherds is included in appendix 5.

Interviews with SPL leaders throughout the project provided data to design and evaluate the delivery of action research. Data collected through these interviews were in addition to data collected from participant participation during the ten shepherding meetings. Table 12 provides a summary of interviews with SPL leaders.

**Table 12. Interviews with St. Paul's Leaskdale Leaders**

<b>Date</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Person(s) Involved</b>
May 26, 2012	Discuss the research project and collect data about contextual knowledge	Researcher Lead pastor
June 12, 2012	Collect data about strengths, challenges, and opportunities for SPL leaders	Researcher Elders Pastors
September 25, 2012	Discuss information about the research project	Researcher Elders Pastors Ministry Directors
January 22, 2013	Discuss and collect data to coordinate research meeting design and dates	Researcher Lead pastor
January 22, 2013	Discuss and plan the leadership retreat	Researcher Administrative pastor
March 12, 2013	Review and collect feedback about the research project meeting dates and design	Researcher Elders Pastors Ministry Directors
May 2013 to May 2014	Participation together in ten shepherding meetings	Researcher Elders Pastors Ministry Directors
April 3, 2014	Evaluate priorities for the final research meetings and plan the format and details for the leadership retreat	Researcher Administrative pastor

#### Church Documents and Records

SPL documents including session meeting minutes, ministry council minutes, and historic communication provided data about the organization, development, and practices of the church. Documents produced by the PCC provided data about Presbyterian polity. Church documents and records assisted understanding about the research context and influenced the design of the project with SPL leaders.

### Participant Participation

The primary method of data collection in this action research project was through participant participation. Each meeting included conversation and reflection by participants in both the large group of nine or in smaller groups of two or three. Group responses were captured on a flip chart in the large group setting, or responses were written during small group work and collected by the researcher. On one occasion, participants provided individual and anonymous written responses with answers to some questions provided by the researcher.

### Research Documents

The researcher took notes during each meeting and collected group reflections and responses. All notes, including researcher notes, flip chart pages, and small group notes were compiled into a data collection document that was used for data analysis.

### Researcher Observations

After each meeting, the researcher analyzed and evaluated the design and delivery of action research. This data was included in the data collection document, and used to create the e-newsletter communication with the group. E-newsletters included a summary of the group's work together and provided information for the group to prepare for the next meeting. Each meeting provided the opportunity for participants to reflect on the communication and provide feedback. At the end of the action research project, a final report was prepared by the researcher and circulated to the group. Researcher observations contributed to the data analysis stage.

## **Data Analysis**

This section outlines the process I used for data analysis to include reflection and evaluation, and content analysis.

### **Reflection and Evaluation**

After each meeting with participants, I compiled and analyzed my research notes and group responses. I reflected on my research concern, research questions, and goals of the study to remind myself about our priorities (Saldana 2013, 21). I concluded each section with researcher observations to analyze the design and delivery of the meeting, what went well, what was challenging, how participants responded, dynamics in behaviour, things that surprised me, things that intrigued me, and things that disturbed me (Saldana 2013, 22). Due to the informal and relational design of the study, I recognized that it was possible for distorted interpretation. I was attentive to analyze my personal opinions and feelings, and worked to ensure that I was reflecting objectivity in data collection, analysis, and interpretation. I was also alert to personalities and voices of individuals and how that impacted group reflection. The aim of my analysis and interpretation after each meeting was to sort through individual feelings, opinions, and reflections, to capture an accurate collective voice of the group. The World Café design provided a template for me to track and evaluate each meeting with the group (see chap. 3, appendix 11). I summarized the meetings of the research group and tracked the date and place of each meeting. This data was used to compare with the number of meetings for leaders in the year prior to research.

At the conclusion of the project, I read through all my research notes and collated information according to the project's three primary concerns: the connection between leaders, learning about shepherding as a biblical model of leadership, and developing in shared purpose as leaders of the church. Taking the complete collection of data notes, I separated out all data statements that were connected to these topics and created a chart for each to include the date, place, how and why the data was collected, and whether it was a group response or researcher observation. The appreciative inquiry process was separated out of the data collection and summarized in a separate chart for data analysis.

#### Content Analysis

In addition to reflection and evaluation, content analysis was used as a suitable technique to analyze data with my qualitative research (Krippendorff 2013, xii). Content analysis is attentive to communication, expressions, and meanings (Krippendorff 2013, xii). Content analysis categorizes research with attention to four classes of data including attributions (concepts, attitudes, beliefs, intentions, emotions, and mental states), social relationships (authority, power, understanding, what is said, and how it is said), public behaviours (values, dispositions, conceptions of the world, and commitments to the way of being), and institutional realities (how people in an organization coordinate their activities, relationships, and practices) (Krippendorff 2013, 78-79).

I used the four classes of data in content analysis as another way to analyze qualitative data with this research project. I assigned a category to each of the four classes that aligned with the design of this research project to include relationship,

knowledge, being, and doing. Table 13 illustrates the application of content analysis to create four data analysis categories. Every datum in the data collection (520 statements) was reviewed by the researcher and chronologically placed into one of these categories for analysis.

**Table 13. Content Analysis Application with this Research Project**

CONTENT ANALYSIS	MEANING	CATEGORY
Social Relationships	How the group connects, interacts, and communicates with each other	Relationship
Attribution	What the group thinks, feels, believes, intends	Knowledge
Public Behaviours	How the group behaves and adjusts behaviours	Being
Institutional Realities	How the group coordinates, organizes, and demonstrates	Doing

The relationship category aligned with one of the main topics of my data analysis for increased connection with elders, pastors, and ministry directors. To strengthen data analysis with this topic, I applied the concept of magnitude coding (Saldana 2013, 72). This approach provided coding with numbers to analyze the presence, intensity, and frequency of the content (Saldana 2013, 73). I developed a rubric to assign a value to each datum statement in the relationship category, and used these subgroups to measure how the group experienced connection through our research together. Table 14 illustrates my rubric for magnitude coding.

**Table 14. Magnitude Coding to Analyze Data**

RELATIONSHIP (CONNECTION) RUBRIC	
3	The statement indicates that the group experiences a strong connection, evidenced by robust expressions of connection
2	The statement indicates that the group experiences a moderate connection, evidenced by reasonable expressions of connection
1	The statement indicates that the group experiences little or no connection, evidenced by infrequent or lacking connection

Datum statements were analyzed chronologically to assess levels of connection between leaders at the beginning, middle, and end points of the action research project. Table 15 illustrates the collection of data utilized for analysis at these measuring points.

**Table 15. Data Analysis at Measuring Points**

BEGINNING	MIDDLE	END
Data from meeting 1 and written statements from participants	Data from meetings 2-5	Data from meetings 6-10

Analysis of statements in the other three categories of knowledge, being, and doing assisted the researcher with understanding about the project's impact for participants to acquire new knowledge together, and to develop together in shared purpose.

Reflection and evaluation, and content analysis, provided insight into research outcomes and interpretation to assess the effectiveness of a shepherding leadership development approach with a group of SPL leaders.

## **Research Methods Conclusion**

This chapter outlined the research methodology of this research project's design, ethical guidelines, data collection, and data analysis for a group of leaders to experience God's shepherding and to develop together as shepherds of the church. Chapter 5 communicates the research findings and analysis of this project.

## **CHAPTER FIVE: RESEARCH FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS**

The focus of this action research project was to design, facilitate, and evaluate a shepherding approach of leadership development with Christian leaders who work together in the context of a local church. St. Paul's Leaskdale (SPL) pastors, elders, and staff ministry directors met together in ten two-hour shepherding meetings during one year to experience God's shepherding and to develop together as shepherds of the church. Appendix 2 outlines a shepherding approach design and appendix 7 includes the research project activities and timeline.

A shepherding approach of leadership development provided the opportunity for SPL leaders to experience attention to integrated leadership practices through the process of action learning together. Research findings and interpretation indicate that the design of a shepherding approach contributed to increased connection between leaders, new knowledge and learning about shepherding as a biblical model of leadership development, and clarity about the shared purpose of SPL leaders.

This chapter will discuss the findings of qualitative data sets collected through interviews, church documents, participant reflection and content analysis, research documents, researcher observations, and evaluation.

## **Interviews**

Interviews provided data that the researcher analyzed for application to the design of a shepherding model. An interview with Dr. Timothy Laniak, Academic Dean and professor of Old Testament at Gordon Conwell Theological Seminary, provided direction about shepherding resources for the group to read and discuss. Resources incorporated into the design of the model included: *While Shepherds Watched Their Flocks: Forty Daily Reflections on Biblical Leadership* (Laniak, 2007), and *The Leadership Opportunity DVD: The Shepherd Leader* (Peacemaker Ministries 2012). These resources facilitated learning about the shepherd metaphor and assisted the group to clarify shared purpose as leaders of the church.

Throughout the project, interviews with SPL leaders assisted the researcher with analysis of participant participation and meeting design (see table 12). An interview with the administrative pastor on April 3, 2014 assisted the researcher to identify and prioritize topics of discussion for the final two meetings with the participant group. Analysis by the researcher and administrative pastor identified that the project highlighted the need for SPL leaders to experience connection, care, prayer, and learning together (Research Notes). This insight informed direction for the leadership retreat in June 2014.

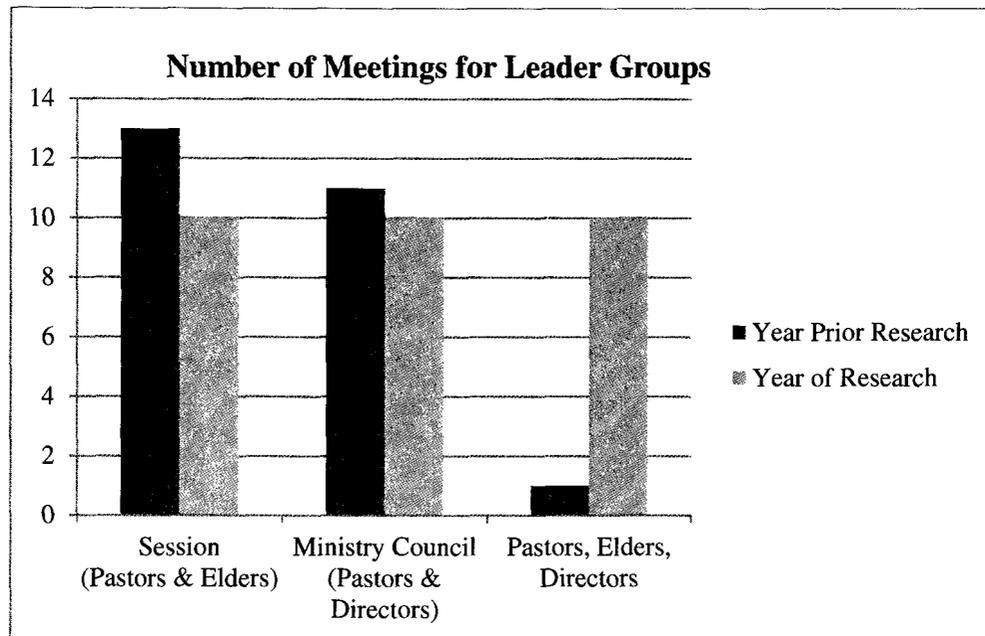
## **Church Documents**

Data analysis and evaluation of SPL historical documents shaped the design of the action research project with SPL leaders. Session minutes from July 2012 identified that pastors and elders recognized a need to grow in connection and shared purpose as leaders of the church. The church's vision statement, "together

fully alive in Jesus,” and the SPL discipleship strategy (appendix 3) were guiding influences throughout the project design, facilitation, and evaluation.

Research and analysis of the Presbyterian Church in Canada (PCC) records identified a resource for learning and acquiring knowledge with project participants: *Equipping Elders* (The Presbyterian Church in Canada 2010). This resource was read and discussed with participants.

SPL session and ministry council minutes were accessed to analyze and compare the frequency and number of meetings for SPL leaders in the year prior to research and the year of research. In the year prior to research, the three groups of leaders met together one time as compared to meeting together ten times during the year of research. Figure 13 illustrates this comparison and affirms that the design of the research project created space for a group of Christian colleagues to increase their connection with one another. This analysis measures the frequency for SPL leaders to join together in a meeting setting. It does not measure the level of connection between leaders.



**Figure 13. Frequency of meetings for church leaders**

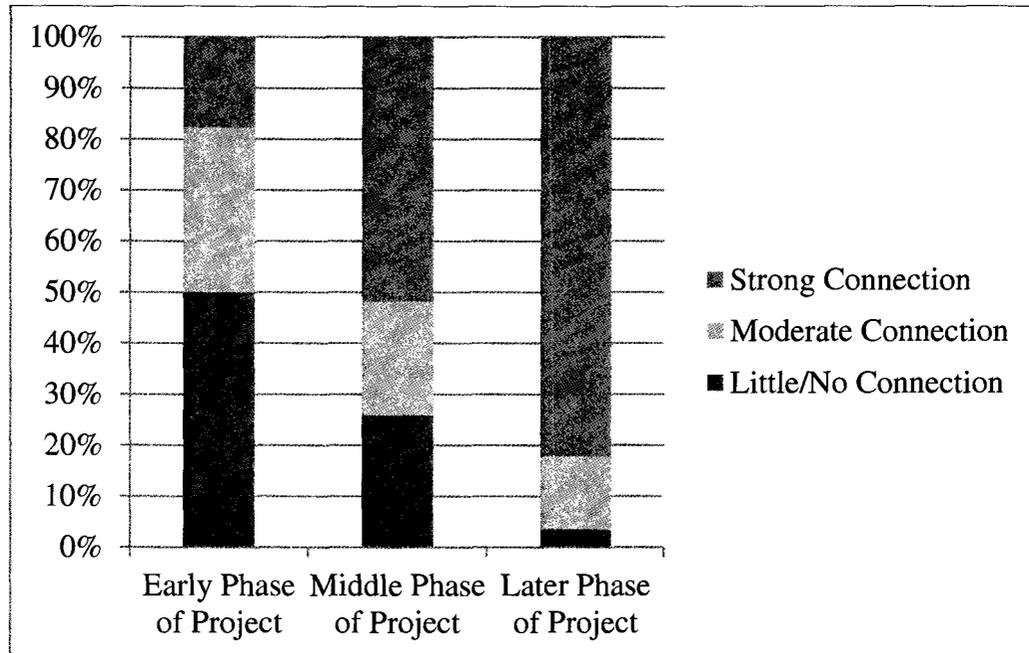
### **Participant Reflection and Content Analysis**

Action research in shepherding meetings took place with nine leaders of the church from May 2013 to May 2014. Data collection and analysis emphasized three themes for leaders to be together fully alive in Jesus: increased connection and care between leaders, acquiring new knowledge and learning about shepherding as a biblical model of leadership, and developing clarity about the shared purpose for leaders of the church. Research findings about these themes are explained in the following sections.

#### **Increased Connection and Care Between Leaders**

The research project was designed to increase connection and care with elders, pastors, and ministry directors. Evaluation of the data indicates that this group of leaders increased in connection and care with each other through the design and facilitation of a shepherding leadership development approach.

Analysis of relationship data statements reflects the group’s assessment of their connection at the beginning, middle, and later phases of this project. Appendix 8 includes a summary and magnitude coding of this data and figure 14 illustrates the findings of this analysis.



**Figure 14. Relationship data statements**

An analysis of this data indicates that 50% of the relationship statements in the early phase of the project indicated little or no connection between SPL leaders. This amount decreased to 25% of the statements in the middle phase and only 1% of statements in the later phase. In the early phase of the project, 18% of the group’s relationship statements indicated strong connection between leaders. This amount increased to 51% in the middle phase and increased substantially to 81% in the later phase of the project. Research findings indicate that the connection between elders, pastors, and ministry directors increased significantly

through the commitment and practice of SPL leaders meeting together during this research project. This is explained further with the following examples.

At the beginning of the project (May 2013), an analysis of the data indicates that there was good connection between leaders when they could spend time together, but they had limited opportunities for this to occur. Factors that made it difficult for leaders to connect included people missing from meetings, lifestyles and geographical distances that were not conducive to building connection in community, and ministry realities that brought distractions and responsibilities making it difficult to develop personal relationships between leaders. The group recognized that the research design for pastors, elders, and ministry directors to meet regularly together was a new way of being, and that it was good for this to occur. This is explained with more detail in the following paragraphs.

During meetings two through five (June 2013 to January 2014), data analysis indicates that connectedness began to shift, and there was evidence of growing connection between leaders. Participants expressed the value of time together to share, care, and pray for one another, our families, and our ministry responsibilities. The group expressed enjoyment to engage in honest dialogue. They indicated that it was good to be together and that it was helpful to get to know each other at this deeper level. One participant shared, “There have been times when I didn’t even know some of the elders. This process together has helped build relationship and trust, feeling relaxed together” (Research Notes, November 26, 2013).

In meetings six through ten (February to May 2014), data analysis indicates that the research design created the opportunity for increased connection and an established sense of team with elders, pastors, and ministry directors. The group acknowledged that this was a level of connection that had not previously been experienced by SPL leaders. One participant commented, “Coming into this group is life-giving, a place where I can be myself, where the condition of my heart is valued and accepted, where I can trust” (March 4, 2014). In one of our shepherding meetings several people shared about personal challenges, and the group listened, processed, affirmed, cared, and prayed together. A leader commented, “It is helpful to get to know each other at this deeper level, it is meaningful for us to take this time” (February 4, 2014). At another meeting a participant reflected, “Being known and knowing one another builds trust, settledness, calm believable leadership. We are experiencing this” (May 2, 2014).

Data analysis reveals that the research project increased the level of conversation, ideas, and information sharing between leaders. Participants identified that retreats are better than weeknight meetings, and spending extended time together with activity, shared meals, time to think and process, and time to relax together all contribute to increased relationship. Research findings signify the participant group’s collective belief that meetings have an impact on leaders and their families, and that life-giving meetings are necessary for leaders to experience expressions of healthy relationships with one another. The one meeting that took place in a home setting, rather than at the church, had positive feedback and results. Participants identified that personal sharing and shared

experience builds relationship and trust, and that getting to know each other better promotes increased connection and compassion between leaders.

Communication with participants was part of the design to develop connection between leaders during the research project. A participant's guide was prepared by the researcher and distributed to participants prior to the first meeting. The guide included information about the purpose, desired outcomes, expectations, ethical considerations, resources, and important dates and topics for our year of research together. A monthly e-newsletter was created and distributed by the researcher between meetings to include information about the group's work together and to provide guiding questions and reminders to prepare for the following meeting. Sample communication pages are included in appendix 9.

Research findings indicate that regular communication assisted the group to stay connected and focused on priorities and responsibilities. Participants came to meetings prepared to discuss resources and engage in conversations that matter. Questions circulated prior to meetings provided the opportunity for personal reflection, prayer, and discernment prior to discussions with the whole group. This contributed to an increase in the level of conversation, free flow of ideas, shared meaning, and knowledge. One participant commented, "Reading and reflecting on material provides a framework for valuable conversations" (March 4, 2014), Another participant observed that, "meeting together has given us focus, to be involved in learning and developing together" (May 2, 2014).

A final report to participants was prepared and distributed by the researcher at the conclusion of the group's research together. This document was filed in SPL

session records as a resource for continued connection, conversation, and development with SPL leaders.

### Acquiring New Knowledge and Learning Together

The project was designed for this group of Christian colleagues to acquire new knowledge and learning about shepherding as a biblical model of leadership development. Shepherding meetings were designed to incorporate practices and resources for the group to experience God's shepherding and learn what it means to develop together as shepherds of the church. Research findings indicate that acquiring new knowledge and learning about shepherding assisted the group's focus on three aspects of integrated leadership development: intrapersonal development to lead self, interpersonal development to lead with others, and strategic development to lead the church. This learning will be explained in the following sections.

#### Intrapersonal Leadership Development to Lead Self

Acquiring new knowledge about shepherding during this action research project revealed that intrapersonal leadership development involves developing in an intimate relationship with Jesus as our good Shepherd. Data analysis identified the group's acknowledgement that our connection with Jesus is the leader's primary focus.

Findings indicate that beginning the meeting with thirty minutes to focus attention on Jesus positively influenced the tone of the meeting and created conditions for participants to connect more meaningfully with Jesus. This was especially evident when participants arrived at the meeting weary and distracted.

An example occurred early in the year of research together, reflected in the researcher observations, “A focus to bring our cares and concerns for each other, and to Jesus in prayer, changed the tone of the gathering, and created a calm, quiet, attentive, settled spirit in the group” (June 4, 2013).

As the facilitator, I planned a spiritual activity for each meeting, either preparing and leading it myself, or asking one of the other members to lead. On one occasion, participants seemed particularly burdened with personal challenges, and the group took more than an hour to listen and pray for each other. In my researcher observations, I wrote:

The time of sharing took more than half the meeting time. I didn’t rush the group. The group needed something like this tonight. More opportunity to connect with Jesus, relate with each other, and pray together. The dialogue following the sharing was very open and collegial. (February 4, 2014)

Preparing a guided activity for the group to come together with a focus on Jesus personally impacted leaders, providing an opportunity for leaders to connect in an intimate relationship with Jesus and receive his care in a safe setting.

#### Interpersonal Leadership to Lead With Others

Acquiring new knowledge about shepherding during this action research project revealed that interpersonal leadership development involves action learning to relate and lead together in healthy expressions of Christian community. The activities of a shepherding meeting focused on interpersonal development by cultivating Christian community, creating space for conversations that matter, and integrating learning with practice.

Action learning was enhanced through the distribution of communication between meetings. Resources were distributed for participants to read and prepare

before each research forum (appendix 6). Group members entered into conversation at our research forums with focus, energy, and collaboration. One leader expressed, “The communication provided pre-meeting was appreciated, useful, and utilized” (October 1, 2013). Another leader commented, “Exposure to research and resources really assists the discussion with a place to start the conversation” (March 4, 2014). There were varied levels of interest around the resources that were accessed. Even so, the group affirmed that the practice of utilizing and discussing resources enhances connection and learning. One participant commented that, “Disagreeing with aspects of resources helps clarify and sharpen our thinking” (March 4, 2014). Another participant observed that it is good to be critical of resources and discerning so that we are attracted to good writing that is Jesus and Gospel centred (January 28, 2014).

Findings of the research indicate that interpersonal development requires a safe environment where leaders know each other and are free to express their thoughts (March 4, 2014). The group identified that a posture of humility, self-awareness, and care with each other will contribute to building trust for good conversations, and will assist the group’s ability to engage in healthy debate and conflict to listen and discover God’s direction (March 4, 2014). Data analysis indicates that SPL leaders have a desire to hear and obey God together, and have existing practice and commitment to seek scripture and pray together (June 4, 2013). Identified competing commitments with these practices with SPL leaders include busyness, lack of time to connect in prayer and conversation, and a lack of information sharing and communication (July 2013). Project findings revealed

that leading together well requires leaders to spend time together, developing healthy practices with communication and information sharing (March 4, 2014).

This shepherding approach provided an opportunity for leaders to focus on relationships, build trust, and engage in healthy conflict and debate for discernment and direction. One leader commented, “It is good for us to be in this together, exploring leadership and learning what it means to be God’s people” (November 26, 2013).

#### Strategic Leadership Development to Lead the Church

Acquiring new knowledge about shepherding during this action research project revealed that strategic leadership development involves developing in ability and shared purpose to lead the church. SPL leaders interacted with scripture, resources, and one another to know what it means and what it looks like to lead together according to shepherding principles. Data analysis reveals the group’s conviction that shepherding is all about Jesus and what he is doing to build his church (January 28, 2014). Therefore, leaders of the church are invited by Jesus and gifted by the Spirit of God to be leaders of his people (January 28, 2014). This leadership is meant to be under the authority of Jesus, joining with him to provide security, teaching, correction, clarity, direction, guidance, accountability, and benevolent use of power for people to be led to Jesus and to experience his good shepherding (January 28, 2014).

The analysis of data through the group’s action learning together recognized that a false shepherd uses others for self-gain and for one’s own purposes (June 4, 2013). In contrast, good shepherding involves accountability with others to lead

together with trust, knowledge, care, and ability (June 4, 2013). SPL leaders recognized the contrast between the Old Testament paradigm of leadership where hierarchy and work ethic were emphasized, and the new covenant where leaders are called together as co-heirs with Christ, each with direct access to the Shepherd (January 28, 2014). With the new covenant we are all called to be the body of Christ, working together according to our gifts (January 28, 2014). In this new covenant way, positions are not elevated and shepherding is not about working harder and feeling all the responsibility (January 28, 2014). Instead, leading the church together involves being in an intimate relationship with Jesus, receiving his care, and being enabled by him to shepherd others (January 28, 2014). Action research with this project facilitated a process of appreciative inquiry for the group to develop together in strategic leadership. This is explained in the following section.

#### Clarity about Shared Purpose as Church Leaders

The agreed-upon SPL purpose statement is that the church will be “together fully alive in Jesus.” Action research provided the opportunity for pastors, elders, and ministry directors to explore the meaning and application of this vision for SPL leaders to lead the way with shared purpose: to be together fully alive in Jesus. Table 16 summarizes the appreciative inquiry process used with this research project for SPL leaders to clarify shared purpose as shepherds of the church.

**Table 16. Appreciative Inquiry Process to Develop with Shared Purpose**

For St. Paul's Leaskdale leaders to be together fully alive in Jesus	
<b>Discover</b> <i>the best of what is</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Leaders' shared love for Jesus</li> <li>• Commitment to Jesus and his people</li> <li>• Prayerful, listening to God</li> <li>• Surrendered, willing to obey God</li> <li>• Watchful for invitation and direction of the Spirit</li> </ul>
<b>Dream</b> <i>what could be</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Leaders have a personal, intimate, growing relationship with Jesus</li> <li>• Leaders are growing in emotionally healthy spirituality</li> <li>• Evident fruit from abiding in Christ</li> <li>• Leaders experience encouragement and development as disciples of Jesus</li> <li>• Leading from a place of health and well-being for others to experience the same</li> <li>• Unity, oneness, togetherness</li> </ul>
<b>Design</b> <i>possible ideals</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Every leader growing and developing in emotionally healthy spirituality</li> <li>• Leaders growing in deepened and more dependent relationships with one another</li> <li>• Working together collaboratively, knowing our shared purpose and priorities, everyone working together to do our unique part, according to our gifts and roles</li> <li>• Develop communication and information sharing between pastors, elders, and ministry directors with special the session and ministry council</li> </ul>
<b>Destiny</b> <i>how to empower, learn, and adjust for this reality</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The design of the shepherding model provided the opportunity for leaders of the church to practice what it means to be together fully alive in Jesus</li> <li>• Meeting times provided opportunity for leaders to grow in relationship with Jesus, grow in relationship with one another, and develop unity and togetherness</li> <li>• Information and communication between leaders increased, promoting collaboration and shared purpose</li> <li>• Reading and discussing the same resources enhanced shared learning, shared meaning, shared language, shared purpose</li> <li>• SPL leaders determined that an ongoing shepherding approach of leader development is a desired practice for SPL leaders to develop together in shared purpose</li> </ul>

Through the appreciative inquiry process, SPL leaders discovered their strengths to include: shared love for Jesus, commitment to Jesus and his people,

prayerful, listening to God, surrendered, willing to obey God, and watchful for the invitation and direction of the Holy Spirit.

The group spent time dreaming about what it could look like for SPL leaders to be together fully alive in Jesus. They identified the value of every leader growing in a personal and intimate relationship with Jesus, and growing in emotionally healthy spirituality. They emphasized being fully alive by abiding in Christ and that the fruit of all our work and service will come from this relationship rather than a culture of working harder and striving more. The group recognized the need for leaders to experience care, encouragement, and development so we can lead with health and well-being for others to experience the same. And the group acknowledged that being together fully alive in Jesus will be demonstrated by unity, oneness, and togetherness.

SPL leaders identified four practices for leaders of our church to be together fully alive in Jesus. One practice is for every leader to be growing and developing in emotionally healthy spirituality. This is evidenced by the commitment for every SPL leader to read and incorporate principles from *The Emotionally Healthy Church* (Scazzero 2003). Another practice for SPL leaders to be together fully alive in Jesus is the priority for leaders to be growing in deepened and more dependent relationships with one another. This is evidenced by leaders intentionally scheduling and committing to meet together, and by incorporating practices during meeting times that promote relationship and care between leaders. Another practice for SPL leaders will be to work together collaboratively with shared purpose according to our gifts and roles. This is evidenced through

ongoing conversations to explore each leader's passion, skills, and abilities, and to steward our collective time and resources well. Another practice will be information sharing between pastors, elders, and ministry directors with special attention to the flow between session and ministry council. This is evidenced by providing regular reports between the two groups and prioritizing at least one annual meeting with all leaders together.

This appreciative inquiry process guided participants to recognize that the design of a shepherding approach enabled SPL leaders to be together fully alive in Jesus. The group determined that an ongoing shepherding approach of leadership development is a desired practice for SPL leaders to develop together with shared purpose as shepherds of the church.

The appreciative inquiry process enabled the researcher to collect data regarding shared purpose and priorities for SPL leaders. This data was analyzed through the grid of Pietersen's three dimensions of leadership to summarize qualities and characteristics that SPL leaders have committed to incorporate into their intrapersonal, interpersonal, and strategic leadership development practices. Statements were divided according to these leadership dimensions to display the group's research. Table 17 outlines qualities and characteristics for SPL leaders to be together fully alive in Jesus.

**Table 17. Shared Purpose and Priorities for St. Paul’s Leaskdale Leaders**

Dimension of Leadership	Qualities and Characteristics
Intrapersonal Leadership Development <i>To lead self</i>	Lover of Jesus, growing in intimacy with him Spiritual practices: worship, prayer, scripture, contemplative reflection Self-awareness Growing in emotionally healthy spirituality Awareness and gratitude for God’s shepherding Attitude of praise, thanksgiving, glory to God
Interpersonal Leadership Development <i>To lead with others</i>	Togetherness, respect, and friendship Unity, accountability, communication, and care with each other Life-giving meetings – enjoyable, positive, mutual regard, working well together Collective listening and discernment Shepherding meetings – once monthly, gathering of leaders for connection, care, prayer, spiritual practices, and learning together Caring well for our families
Strategic Leadership Development <i>To lead the church</i>	Prayer, discernment, obedience, and action to live, lead, and serve as shepherds Leading people with shepherding qualities of relationship, care, and ability Together fully alive in Jesus – leading the church on mission wherever he leads

**Researcher Analysis**

Leading people is a sacred trust. I knew this going into the project, and learned more about it as we explored shepherding as a biblical model of leadership development. There were many practical things I learned about facilitating a group, and I recorded these observations in my research notes. An analysis of the data provides my findings as the researcher of this project.

Early in the action research, through participant reflection, interviews with pastors, and my evaluation of our meetings, I realized that I was planning to accomplish too much within the context of the research meeting. People were coming well prepared and engaged for the discussions, and resources were helpful to stimulate learning and reflective evaluation. There was simply not enough time in the meeting to have more than one or two main topics to discuss. Also, I knew that connection, care, and prayer needed to be central to the design. What I had not anticipated was that there would be occasions when more time for this was both appropriate and needed. In those situations, I led the group to adjust our plans and agree on what we would choose to focus on during the meeting.

Dates and times for ten shepherding meetings were established with participants, outlined for the year together, and communicated at the beginning of the project. These dates included an overnight retreat at the beginning and end of the research together, and meeting approximately once a month over the course of a year on Tuesday evenings at the church from 7:00 – 9:30pm. Early in the action research, a participant requested the group to consider a change of time for the meetings, and the group agreed to adjust meeting times to 7:30 – 9:30pm. This decision required an adjustment to the original design and time allotment for the group's work together. In addition, the group experienced scheduling conflicts with four of the ten established meetings dates. Ethical considerations of this project outlined the desire to accommodate and adjust to promote full participation, and it became my role to help the group adjust meeting dates as determined and required. These changes affected the original schedule and design,

and presented some additional work to coordinate, communicate, and adjust to the timing between meetings.

The World Café design provided a template for the delivery and evaluation of shepherding meetings. I used this template to record meeting activities, researcher analyses, and adjustments required in the ten cycles of action research. Appendix 11 includes a summary and evaluation of the ten shepherding meetings that occurred with this project.

Data analysis reveals that there were some tensions for the facilitator to tend to the focus and priorities of the research project plans and to facilitate the process according to the group's direction. This highlighted the need for prayerful attention to the plan and process, thoughtful preparation for each meeting, honest reflection and evaluation, and flexibility to adjust. For me, it affirmed the relevance of shepherding as a biblical approach with leadership development. The facilitator role is like that of a shepherd, positioning the group to experience God's shepherding. I gained a deepened awareness of the Lord as my Shepherd, and learned another level of trust in him as I tended to the project and the people in my care.

There were times during the project when circumstances and group dynamics created challenges and needed adjustments. I recognized a conflict of interest when I experienced feelings that could distort my objectivity. I took time to process why I was feeling that way and how I should respond. This was either captured in my leadership journal or research notes. There were also times when I

sought outside counsel with trusted advisors who could listen and assist my discernment process.

I learned the importance of establishing a good system to track and store information, and to record notes, insights, reflections, and observations as they happen. When planning a meeting, I realized the strength of referring to previous notes to remind me about our priorities and direction, and to thread conversations together from meeting to meeting. Communication with the group helped the group track together: to communicate what we had accomplished, and to provide information about how to prepare for our next meeting. Participants came to each meeting well prepared.

In regard to group work, I learned that topics of discussion need adequate time during the meeting, and that some people need time to process before contributing or making a decision. I discovered that conversations with our group were not always linear, and that I needed to pay attention to help the group stay on task or determine if a different direction was a better approach. I observed that emotion can override good group work, and that it is beneficial to develop strategies to lead well through heightened emotion and conflict. With all the responsibilities to lead well, I learned that it is important to make space for grace with myself, and others. To be discerning about the right and wrong time to address a topic, and to be attentive and careful with relationships. Finally, I was reminded that God is always at work, even when things seem to move slowly or differently than what I had imagined.

## **Identified Themes from the Research**

Four identified themes from this research project analysis provide insight about leadership development with colleagues who work together in Christian ministry: leaders are whole people with real needs, developing together is a missing piece, learning and practice in community, and life-giving meetings. These themes will be explained in the following sections.

### **Leaders are Whole People with Real Needs**

The findings in the qualitative data repeatedly emphasize how a shepherding approach provided an opportunity for participants to experience a safe place to share personal struggles, challenges, and joys. I suspected that care was necessary with leaders. However, I had not anticipated how meaningful it would be for this leadership group to express real needs and have the group members respond to each other with sincere compassion and devoted prayer.

Shepherding as a biblical model of leadership development begins with the Lord as our Shepherd and leaders are in great need of this shepherding. Although leading others and leading strategically to fulfill responsibilities require attention, the most basic need of those who lead is to connect personally and intimately in relationship with Jesus, to have our needs met by him, to be led by him.

Leaders are whole people with real needs. God's shepherding involves relationship, care, and ability to lead us into wholeness and sustainability through his shepherding characteristics of presence, provision, protection, and guidance. Leaders who experience the Lord's shepherding are then able to lead others to experience the same. A monthly shepherding meeting provided an intentional

focus for SPL leaders to position themselves for God's shepherding within the context of Christian community. It is my hope that SPL leaders will continue to benefit from this practice.

### Developing Together is a Missing Piece

The findings of this research indicate that there are many obstacles for leaders to connect and develop together including lack of time, busyness, family and ministry responsibilities that are complex and demanding, geographical distances, job commitments, and full schedules. Another reality is the lack of intentional design and attention for leaders to connect and learn together, with the pressure of one more thing to do, and one more thing to organize. This research project identified that Christian leaders are vulnerable to isolation and neglect because demands are high, responsibilities are complex, and there is a potential to feel pressure and shame (June 4, 2013). Sustainable leadership will be boosted when leaders of the church join together to promote the development of mutual friendship and trust. This emphasizes that leaders are in this together.

Contemporary theories of leadership indicate a shift from an individual to a collective leadership mindset to include: relational and reciprocal processes, collaboration, authenticity, deep personal awareness, and working together to enhance the common good. According to these theories, redistribution of power, shared leadership, and social responsibility are themes that need to be addressed in practices of contemporary leadership development.

In many ways, the church is well positioned for collaboration and practice in community. The Trinitarian concept of God in community, Christian community

practices, and the body of Christ are images that promote oneness, togetherness, and unity with diversity. This is widely known and available as theory. However, evidence of this theory in practice is often lacking in Christian leadership settings.

Prior to this research focus, developing together with all the primary leaders of the church was a missing piece with SPL leaders. The findings in the qualitative data provide evidence that a shepherding approach provided the opportunity for SPL leaders to develop together as shepherds of the church, and that this practice reflected a biblical model of leadership. At the conclusion of the project, SPL leaders determined to continue in an ongoing practice of monthly shepherding meetings for continued leadership development and support.

#### Learning and Practice in Community

A comparison of the models that were researched and utilized with the design of a shepherding approach identified that leadership development is a process that involves learning and practice in community. Although expressed differently, the models incorporate three domains of leadership development: the individual, the group, and the community (or organization). Integration as a leader requires a focus and blend of all three responsibilities to lead self, lead others, and lead the organization. Learning and practice are inseparable: it is through practice that we learn, and through learning that we develop better practice. Learning together clarifies values, purpose, and direction.

The findings of qualitative data in this research project reveal that SPL leaders developed together through learning. Learning is a continuous journey and best

practice for leaders to develop together in knowledge and ability to faithfully fulfill their responsibilities.

### Life-giving Meetings

Life-giving meetings indicate that there is life in the room, that every person matters, that every voice is heard, and that there is evidence of mutual regard and collaborative practice. The facilitator role demands careful design, diligent attention, and continuous adaptation for the unique configuration and needs of the group.

The World Café design provided a template to think about various aspects to design and evaluate meetings. Attributes of Christian community, communities of practice, learning communities, and facilitating organizational change provided insight into the role of a facilitator. This role may also be called a coordinator, director, chair, moderator, or another term that indicates design and coordination responsibilities with a group.

The findings from this qualitative research indicated that evening meetings were not ideal for this group. It required effort by the facilitator to assist the group to determine meeting times that were conducive to everyone's schedules and that could tap into people's best energy and efforts. Research findings emphasized the positive effect of an overnight retreat for leaders to have more time together in a shared experience: preparing and eating meals together, relaxing and enjoying recreation time, laughing and having fun together, and having space for extended conversation, sharing, and prayer.

Research findings from this project indicated that communication and questions to be thinking about before meetings was a helpful tool to prepare people and make meetings more effective. As the facilitator, I took responsibility to prepare a summary of each meeting, including topics, questions, and resources that would benefit the group's preparation for the next meeting. Participants indicated that exposure to research and resources assisted the discussions and provided a place to start the conversation. Findings indicate that leaders will benefit from increased communication between leadership groups and to help prepare for meetings.

The theme of life-giving meetings affirms the values and activities of a shepherding approach. Values of this design included attention to process, integrated learning, collaborative relationships, and a supportive environment. The activities of a shepherding approach included emphases to cultivate Christian community, create space for conversations that matter, and integrate learning with practice. Research findings indicate that the focus of these values and activities are a positive emphasis for a shepherding approach.

### **Insights to Improve a Shepherding Approach**

With action research, I regarded each shepherding meeting as a small action research cycle to assess the design and facilitation, and make adjustments throughout the project. In addition, there are other things I would do differently. I provide four insights to improve a shepherding approach with colleagues who work together in Christian ministry. This includes attention to resources,

expectations, group ownership, and meeting venue and time. These will be explained in the following sections.

### Resources

With this project, I identified, ordered, and distributed resources for use in our shepherding meetings. The group responded well to the commitment of reading and discussing resources, and indicated that the practice was helpful. It also became apparent that some of the resources were not the preference for some members of the group. If I were doing this again, I would improve the effectiveness of using resources by inviting participants to contribute to the choice of resources. I would do this by asking for suggestions and presenting options to the group for a collective decision about what resources would most adequately and accurately guide our group in the learning process together.

### Expectations

Once we started meeting together, I realized that I was trying to accomplish too much during the meeting time. I felt pressure as the facilitator to stay on task with the planned agenda, tension when I realized that people were tired or disinterested in certain aspects of the format, or when it was taking longer than I had anticipated with discussion points. With an adjustment to my expectations I was more relaxed in my leadership. In a redesign of the shepherding approach, I would remember that this is a journey, and I would focus on the process to lead people from one meeting to the next for us to accomplish our overall objectives together. Although I had planned this to a certain extent, I would think about creative strategies that could assist the group to keep focused on our goals and

priorities within a structure of fluid, flexible practices. Mostly, I would take pressure off myself by trusting in God's timing for his purposes and plans with the group.

#### Group ownership

I observed that the formality of this shepherding approach being connected to a research project created some distraction for the group. Participants sometimes referred to the shepherding meetings as my research and there were indicators that people's involvement was to help me with my educational pursuit. I attempted to diminish this with inclusive language and by involving others in the design and facilitation. However, there was a recurring sentiment by some members of the group that this was my research, and I recognize that this could have inhibited the value of our experience together.

Whether I was doing this again as a research project or as a natural extension of leadership development ministry, I would invite two or three people to join with me on the design team, include them early in the design process, and direct all decisions, communication, and facilitation through this team. As a team, we would prioritize group ownership.

#### Meeting venue and time

The year of shepherding meetings with a SPL leadership group began and ended with an overnight retreat. The findings from qualitative data indicate that retreats contributed to connection, care, enjoyment, and meaningful conversation. This type of venue required planning, coordination, and time and was worth the effort.

One of the shepherding meetings took place in a home environment. Findings from that meeting indicated that this evening was a turning point with this leadership group, evidenced by a deepened level of connection, sharing, care, and relaxed conversation. Whether this was because the group was meeting in a home environment, or because this was meeting number six out of ten, or for another reason, something shifted in our way of being together.

The remaining shepherding meetings took place at the church. Findings from the qualitative research indicated that evening meetings were not the most suitable time for this leadership group. One of the main challenges of the research project was finding suitable times for the group to meet, and four of the ten original meeting dates required adjustment due to unexpected circumstances. Even then, it was difficult to get everyone together.

If I were doing this again, I would explore the concept of meeting in a neutral location, somewhere different than where typical ministry meetings and responsibilities take place. I would continue the practice of leadership retreats, and I would dialogue with the group to determine the most suitable time for the group to meet. Finally, I would work with the group to establish guiding principles and expectations to meet together monthly, and assist the group to remain focused with that agreement.

### **Research Analysis Conclusion**

A shepherding approach of leadership development provided the opportunity for SPL leaders to experience God's shepherding and to develop together as shepherds of the church. Research findings indicate that the design of a

shepherding approach contributed to increased connection between leaders, new knowledge and learning about shepherding as a biblical model of leadership development, and clarity about shared purpose for SPL leaders.

Themes from the research identify that leaders are whole people with real needs and that developing together is a missing piece. The research highlighted the benefit for leaders when they learn and practice together in community. The theme of life-giving meetings affirmed the values and activities of a shepherding approach.

Research findings indicate that four adjustments could improve a shepherding approach with a group of Christian colleagues: involving the group in selection of resources, being clear about reasonable and realistic expectations about what the group will accomplish together, group ownership with the leadership development process, and commitment from the group for the meeting venue and time.

At the end of the research together, the group evaluated that an ongoing shepherding approach with pastors, elders, and ministry directors will be a priority for leaders of the church: to focus on spiritual health, care, support, encouragement, learning, shared meals with one another, and life-giving gatherings where leaders of the church can connect and develop together.

## **CHAPTER SIX:**

### **CONCLUSION**

The focus of this research project was to design, facilitate, and evaluate a one-year leadership development approach with a group of St. Paul's Leaskdale colleagues. The findings determine that a shepherding approach created space for Christian leaders to experience God's shepherding and to develop together as shepherds of the church. The design emphasized shepherding principles of relationship, care, and ability, and facilitated a process for this group of leaders to develop in integrated leadership practices to lead self, to lead with others, and to lead the church.

This concluding chapter summarizes the project outcomes, outlines considerations for future research on this topic, explains how this research project and findings can impact leaders in other ministry contexts, and provides personal reflections about how this project impacted my life and ministry.

#### **Outcomes**

A shepherding approach resulted in SPL leaders realizing the desired outcomes of this project. This included increased connection and care between elders, pastors, and staff ministry directors, acquiring new knowledge and learning together, and clarifying shared purpose as shepherds of the church.

Research questions guided the process to explore what components are beneficial in the design of a shepherding leadership development approach, how to facilitate such an approach, how to evaluate a shepherding approach, and what elements of this approach can assist leadership development with colleagues who work together in a Christian ministry setting. A review of the project findings summarizes how these questions were answered throughout the research process. The following paragraphs present each question and the researcher's answer to these questions.

What were the components to design a shepherding leadership development approach? Four models contributed to the design of this shepherding approach: shepherding as a biblical model, Arrow Leadership, The Social Change Model of Leadership Development (Komives, Wagner and Associates 2009), and Integrated Leadership (Pietersen 2010). A shepherding approach focused on creating space for a leadership group to covenant with God and each other in Christian community, to experience God's shepherding, and to develop together as shepherds of the church. Insight from the four leadership development models emphasized a focus on integrated leadership development to lead self, to lead with others, and to lead the church. Leadership development included activities that cultivated Christian community, created space for conversations that matter, and integrated learning with practice. The design of a shepherding approach is outlined in appendix 2. The research data and analysis indicate that the design of this approach provided the opportunity for SPL leaders to develop together in connection, care, learning, and action.

How do we facilitate a shepherding approach? A shepherding approach built on shepherding principles of relationship, care, and ability to promote attention to process, integrated learning, collaborative relationships, and a supportive environment for leaders to relate and develop together. The World Café design provided a template for the format and facilitation of shepherding meetings. Additional literature in chapters two and three supported and enhanced the design to facilitate connection in a community of practice with a focus on biblical principles of Christian community.

How do we evaluate a shepherding approach? Chapters three and four described the research methodology of this action research project. Qualitative inquiry, including action learning and appreciative inquiry, was used to collect data through personal interviews, historical documents, participant participation, and facilitator observations. Reflective evaluation and content analysis were used to assess the objectives of this project.

How did this shepherding approach benefit SPL leaders? In chapter five research findings indicate that the design and process of a one-year shepherding approach enabled SPL leaders to experience increased level of connection and care, acquire new learning together, and clarify their purpose as shepherds of the church. Identified themes from the research findings identify that leaders are whole people with real needs, that developing together is a missing piece, that leaders need learning and practice in community, and that life-giving meetings contribute to how leaders relate and work together. A shepherding approach provided the context for SPL leaders to experience God's shepherding in a

supportive environment. This was identified as a beneficial ongoing practice for those who lead.

What approach with leadership development is beneficial for colleagues who work together in Christian ministry? Qualitative data gathered from participant participation and facilitator observations explained the need for Christian leaders to develop together as shepherds of the church. Through this action research project, SPL leaders identified that the most effective components of a shepherding approach included: leaders meeting together once a month for this purpose, understanding biblical community and practicing this together as leaders, designing and contributing in life-giving meetings with conversations that matter, growing together in ability as integrated leaders through reading and discussing resources, and caring well for one another.

### **Research Conclusions**

The final section of this chapter will highlight conclusions about this research project to include considerations for future research on this topic, how this research project and findings can impact other ministry contexts, and personal reflections about how this project impacted my life and ministry.

### **Future Research**

This project identified some considerations for further study and action. The following three areas could be explored with continuing research: developing ability and competency in the church, developing men and women together in ministry, and redesign of church meetings.

## Developing Ability and Competency in the Church

Developing ability and competency with excellence is typical for most leadership development approaches. However, for various reasons, there seems to be tension and debate on this concept for the church. More research is needed to help the church theologically understand what it means to faithfully fulfill responsibilities as the people of God, how to work together with gifts, skills, and abilities, and how to appropriately develop leaders together without adding more pressure and demands. Research on this topic could identify how the theological seminary is already assisting churches with this task, and what type of ongoing training practices and partnerships could strengthen ability and competency in the church.

## Developing Men and Women Together in Ministry

This research project provided initial research for a group of leaders to come together in a leadership development setting. This included both men and women as a typical practice and reality for St. Paul's Leaskdale. More research about how men and women can effectively develop together could be explored. In addition, team development and identified best practices could benefit churches by helping them move from individual leadership to a collective leadership practice with men and women working together in day-to-day ministry initiatives and church committees or boards.

## Redesign of Church Meetings

The topic of effective meetings is relevant in literature and was an identified theme with this research project. However, many of our institutions and

organizations continue with meeting practices that are uninspiring. Additional research could awaken the church with strategies and ideas to freshen an approach for Christian leadership groups to engage in conversations, decisions, and actions that promote healthy relationships, effective leadership development, and meaningful impact.

### Potential Application

The application of a shepherding approach is suitable in any context with a group of Christian colleagues. Although designed for a leadership group in a local church, the approach could be applied with colleagues in a Christian organization, a Christian group in the workplace, and Christian peers of equal status or role in a denomination, department or geographical context. This approach is intended to promote relationship, care, and ability, and facilitates a process for Christian leaders to develop together in intrapersonal, interpersonal, and strategic leadership practices. A shepherding approach will cultivate Christian community, create space for conversations that matter, and integrate learning with practice.

A shepherding approach has potential with a dedicated design team of two or three people who are passionate to equip leaders and are attentive to factors in their context. A prayerful design includes planning and coordination of the format, schedule, communication, selection of leaders, choice of resources and assignments, facilitation, and ongoing assessment for a sustainable leader development approach in each unique setting.

## Personal Reflections

The discipline of this research project has stretched and strengthened me as a person and as a leader. Exposure to resources, learning, and thinking has broadened my understanding, character, and development on many levels.

I was grateful for the opportunity to facilitate research in a context with leaders who love Jesus and desire to grow together in him. This research journey has validated and ignited a passion within me to see Christian leaders healthy, mature, and working together well. I believe God has equipped and positioned me to focus my time, energy, and gifts to develop, strengthen, and multiply Christian leaders and leadership teams for his purposes and his glory.

## Conclusion

Christian leadership involves responsibilities that are complex and demanding. The church is designed for Christian community and companionship in ministry, yet many leaders operate in isolation and without adequate support. God's shepherding heart has compassion for leaders. To see us connected in relationship, receiving care, and growing in ability as shepherds of the church.

This study provided a supportive and intentional environment for leaders in a church to experience God's shepherding and to explore what it means to be together fully alive in Jesus. Research findings indicate that a shepherding approach increased connection between SPL leaders, enabled colleagues to acquire knowledge and learn together, and assisted these leaders to clarify their shared purpose as shepherds of the church.

It is my hope and prayer that colleagues who work together in Christian ministry will develop the discipline to live a life worthy of the calling, completely humble and gentle, patient, bearing with one another in love, making every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit, working together rhythmically and easily, efficient and graceful in response to God's Son, fully mature adults, fully developed within and without, fully alive like Christ (Eph. 4:3-13, MSG). It is from Christ that we are called to take our lead and he is the source of everything we do (Eph. 4:15, MSG). He is the one who keeps us in step with each other and nourishes us to grow up healthy in God and robust in love (Eph. 4:16, MSG).

Christian leaders, let us not grow weary or lose heart (Heb. 12:3). Instead, may we fix our eyes on Jesus, throwing off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles, and let us run with perseverance (Heb. 12:1-3). May we establish sustainable practices to strengthen and encourage one another, developing together as God's people, serving together wholeheartedly for his purposes and his glory to prevail.

## **APPENDICES**

## **Appendix 1:**

### **Participant Information and Consent**

#### **Action Based Research for Christian Leaders to Develop Together**

**Researcher:** Sharon Simmonds, DMin (candidate), Tyndale Seminary, Doctor of Ministry Program.

**Research Description:** This research project will provide an opportunity for elders, pastors, and staff ministry directors of St. Paul's Leaskdale to experience connection, care, and learning together. Participants will meet for this purpose in ten two-hour meetings during the course of one year. The goal is to facilitate and evaluate a shepherding approach for leaders to develop together as shepherds of the church.

**Participant Commitment:** Participants of this one-year leadership development journey are expected to:

- 1) Attend and participate in ten shepherding meetings to include two overnight leadership retreats, and monthly meetings held at the church on Tuesday evenings from 7:00 – 9:00pm. Dates are provided.
- 2) Read provided resources between meetings as required.
- 3) Use a leadership journal to record personal reflections and prepare for group conversations.

**Participant Expectations:** Research participants can expect the following:

- 1) The church will pay for all costs associated with the research including resources and hospitality for overnight leadership retreats.
- 2) Resources will be distributed to participants as required.

- 3) Communication will be regularly provided to participants including a final report when the research is completed.

**Voluntary and Informed Consent:** I understand the aims of this research project and the commitment required to be part of this action research study. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I will be informed if anything about the direction of this project changes. I understand that I will not be exposed to unnecessary risks, that I will be treated fairly and equitably, that I can declare discomfort at any point, and that I can withdraw from the study if required.

**Confidentiality and Anonymity:** The researcher has communicated that my name will not be attached with any data and that the research process and findings will not be used to jeopardize my reputation or position. Information will be stored on a password-protected computer and files will be deleted when the research project is completed.

**Risk:** An environment of learning and development will require that I attend meetings, engage with resources, and contribute in conversations with the group. I understand that life circumstances could interfere with my preparation and attendance, and that the group's work together could challenge my attitudes, beliefs, and behaviour. I understand that the disclosure of individual intimate information may take place during group conversations, and that I can use my discretion about what I am willing to share. The researcher has communicated her commitment to address conflict, threat, and sensitivity as required to reduce risk for my involvement with this research.

## Appendix 2:

### Shepherding Approach Design

**Designer** Sharon Simmonds

**Purpose** A shepherding approach creates space for a group of Christian leaders to experience God’s shepherding and develop together as shepherds of the church.



#### **Foundational Principles**

A shepherding approach builds on shepherding principles of relationship, care, and ability, as described:

Shepherding Principles	Description
Relationship	Togetherness, oneness, trust, unity, love, collaboration
Care	Promotes and brings good, supportive presence, compassion, provision, protection
Ability	Skills, knowledge, experience, commitment, guidance, competence to faithfully fulfill responsibilities

**Core Values** Process-oriented  
 Integrated learning  
 Collaborative relationships  
 Supportive environment

**Strategy** A shepherding approach creates a supportive environment that facilitates a process for Christian colleagues to develop in integrated leadership practices: to lead self, lead with others, and lead the church.

**Activity** A shepherding approach will succeed by:

- Cultivating healthy Christian community
- Creating space for conversations that matter
- Integrating learning with practice: knowing, being, doing

**Defining Objectives**  
 Increase connection with elders, pastors, and ministry directors.  
 Acquire new knowledge together.  
 Clarify shared purpose as shepherds of the church.

**Meeting Design Principles**  
 Set the context  
 Create hospitable space  
 Explore questions that matter  
 Encourage everyone’s contribution  
 Connect diverse perspectives  
 Listen together for patterns, insights, and deeper questions  
 Share collective discoveries

**Meeting Template**  
 A monthly two-hour shepherding meeting will include:

- Connection and care
- Prayer and focus on spiritual practices
- Learning with resources and conversation (resources distributed and participant preparation in advance of meeting)
- Application

ACTIVITY	TIME
Cultivate healthy Christian community <i>connection, care, spiritual practices</i>	30 minutes
Create space for conversations that matter <i>interaction with resources and one another</i>	40 minutes
Break	10 minutes
Integrate learning with practice <i>how does this influence what we know, how we will be, and what we will do as shepherds of the church?</i>	40 minutes

## **Roles & Responsibilities**

Facilitator	Participate with the group Coordinate communication and resources Prepare meeting space and agenda Connect the members of the group Help to facilitate the group's priorities Assist the group to remain focused with purpose, values, activity, strategy, and defining objectives
Participants	Equal members of the group Attend and participate in meetings Read resources and prepare for conversations with the group Commitment to values and objectives to move the group forward Contribute with diverse perspectives, unique personalities, skills, experience, and gifts

## Appendix 3:

### St. Paul's Leaskdale Discipleship Strategy

**Purpose** To equip people of all ages to be together fully alive in Jesus

- Growing in a personal, dynamic relationship with Jesus.
- Growing in sincere expressions of love with others in community.
- Growing in active expression and engagement as the people of God, on mission with Him in our church, homes, communities and areas of involvement.

#### Core Values

**Relational** Genuine interest, attention and grace that generates acceptance in community

**Contextual** An understanding of our times that encourages natural connections and creative communication of the gospel to bring redemption and transformation in peoples' lives

**Biblical** Teaching that is rooted in scripture and fully expressive of the gospel

**Jesus-Centred** Living and teaching the principles of the kingdom of God, ministering to people's core needs, alert and responsive to the Holy Spirit

**Life-Giving** Nurturing a culture of full life in Jesus: passion, joy, learning, growth, prayer, celebration, encouragement, care and support

#### Groupings of Discipleship

##### The Church

God brings people of all ages together to be His expression of love and redemption to the world - a worshipping and witnessing community of believers who bring the peace, presence and hope of Christ to the world.

##### The Group

Jesus modeled life in community as He nurtured and developed disciples: relating, learning, praying, serving, healing, sharing, eating, directing, correcting, celebrating.

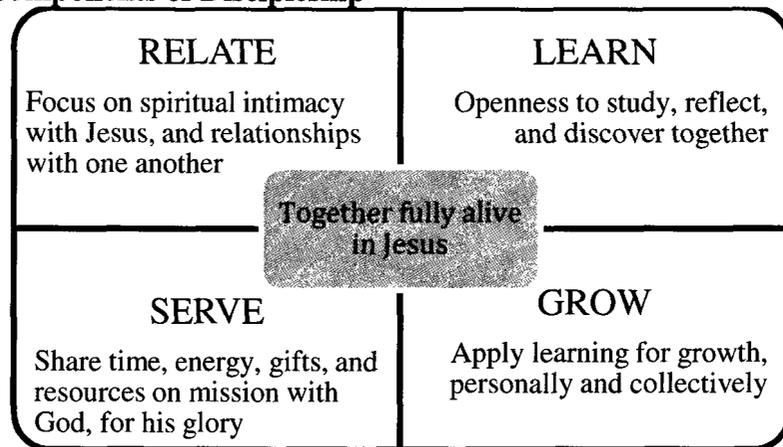
### The Family

God institutes marriage and family as the first point of community for belonging, nurture, growth, development and discipleship. The church is positioned to teach God's design, provide resources and strengthen families for this task.

### The Individual

Every person is special and worthy of attention on the journey of being a disciple of Jesus: discovering who God is; who I am; what I believe; and how I will live in response to the Spirit of God.

### Core Components of Discipleship



### Assessment: What will we measure with discipleship initiatives?

Through our partnership with the Spirit, is there evidence that...

- People are growing in a personal relationship with Jesus?
- People are growing together in sincere relationships?
- People are growing in emotional and spiritual health?
- People are actively learning, growing, and engaged as the people of God in stewardship and service?
- The church is bringing honour and glory to Jesus?

## Appendix 4: Arrow Leadership

### Character/Competency Model

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#### Spiritual Character: Relation with God

<p><i>God calls kingdom leaders to be led more by Jesus, knowing him and understanding his will;</i></p>	Vision and Call	<p>Has a clear vision of God          Has a clear call from God          Has a clear vision from God of what God wants him/her to accomplish</p>
	Heart for God	<p>Has a heart seeking and following God          Is pursuing personal holiness and obedience          Relies on God to minister through him/her</p>
	Spiritual Disciplines	<p>Longs to be in God's presence through prayer; communes deeply with Him          Intercession undergirds ministry and life          Growing through disciplined spiritual exercises and rhythms</p>
	Spiritual Maturity	<p>Has identified and addressed spiritual blockages to life and leadership          Is developing the mind of Christ / biblical perspective          Integrates the Bible in his/her life and ministry; active theologizing and discernment          Demonstrates integrity, consistency, dependability, resiliency and teachability</p>
	Kingdom Seeker Personally	<p>Is a kingdom seeker not an empire builder          Is not concerned to build his/her own reputation          Firm identity in Christ – personal worth separate from ministry success          Worships God with His people</p>
	Life Focus	<p>Has a clear and integrated philosophy of life and ministry</p>

### Leadership: Relation with God's People

<p><i>to lead more like Jesus, enabling his people to be a reconciling community;</i></p>	Personal Maturity	<p>Self-aware – understands how life history, family, culture, personality, gifts, strengths and weaknesses impact life and leadership</p> <p>Maintains his/her physical vigor and healthy life rhythms</p> <p>Has a sense of humor and perspective</p> <p>Understands his/her leadership style and can adapt it to need</p>
	Heart for People	<p>Enjoys people and relates effectively</p> <p>Intercedes for and prays with others consistently</p> <p>Leads and shepherds his/her family well and appropriately</p> <p>Demonstrates an active love for his/her neighbor</p>
	Transforming Leadership	<p>Can articulate and demonstrate a Christ-centered leadership philosophy</p> <p>Has a servant attitude toward others</p> <p>Empowers followers</p> <p>Grasps the role of suffering in leadership</p> <p>Can effectively interpret leadership contexts and effectively lead change</p>
	Communication	<p>Communicates well verbally/in writing</p> <p>Continually engages others for feedback</p> <p>Communicates vision and purpose effectively</p>
	Mentoring	<p>Raises up leaders; a shepherd-maker, 159disciple, and leader developer</p> <p>Is committed to being mentored and accountability relationships</p>
	Team Building	<p>Understands the importance of team ministry</p> <p>Has an effective strategy for problem solving / decision making</p> <p>Can engage conflict redemptively; lead groups to reconciliation</p> <p>Knows how to staff, build a team, cultivate trust, steward culture and supervise</p>
	Ministry Management	<p>Can manage ministry priorities and self</p> <p>Knows how to strategize, plan, organize, control and evaluate</p> <p>Able to manage information systems</p> <p>Can budget, raise funds, and control them responsibly</p>

**Evangelism: Relation with God's Work in the World**

<p><i>to lead more to Jesus, serving his redemptive purposes in our generation.</i></p>	<p><b>Personal Evangelism</b></p>	<p>Has a contagious passion for evangelism Reacts biblically and theologically on evangelism Is a capable and active personal evangelist</p>
	<p><b>Corporate Evangelism</b></p>	<p>Trains and mobilizes others for evangelism Communicates well evangelistically Uses create approaches to evangelism</p>
	<p><b>Cultural Awareness</b></p>	<p>Is aware of the world and trends in culture Understands trends occurring: observes, reflects, discerns and acts Aware of the tension between the gospel and culture</p>
	<p><b>Social Compassion</b></p>	<p>Aware of the community and culture around him/her; assesses people's needs Personally stands and acts for justice, reconciliation and compassion Mobilizes and supports others in justice, reconciliation and compassion initiatives Seeks to transform culture to be more biblical</p>
	<p><b>World Evangelism</b></p>	<p>Aware of the global movements of God's people Has a heart for people in other countries; a world vision Mobilizes ministry to participate in world evangelism and mission</p>
	<p><b>Kingdom Seeker Worldwide</b></p>	<p>Helps other Christ-centered movement grow Understands the sovereignty of Christ's kingship over all spheres Longs for the unity of God's people</p>

## Appendix 5:

### Shepherding Interviews

Visit with Keith Sinclair  
Montclair Farm, Churchill, Ontario  
June 13, 2014



Keith explained his role, responsibilities, and strategies as a shepherd.

The Sinclair's have 200 Border Cheviot sheep – hardy animals that are able to live in the elements all year round. <http://www.cheviotssheep.org/about/breed.html>

Keith has adjusted his strategy from controlled (in the barn) shepherding to grass farming (natural, grazing, sheep in the fields). To make this shift, he researched and explored possibilities. Agricultural research from Cornell University, Michigan and Beltsville, Maryland – and discussions with other farmers using the grass farming methods convinced him to make the shift. Keith refers to “mentors” who have helped him become a better shepherd.

Keith has developed a system of care/protection for the sheep – from the real threat of predators (coyotes). He has a fence around the whole perimeter of his property and divides his fields with fencing. Each wire fence fits tightly to the ground to prevent coyotes getting under the fence with two electric wires above the fence to prevent them from jumping over.

From the barn into the fields – and between fields – Keith has rigged a steel grate with an electric current. It's an open space that he can drive over with his Trail Rider, but animals will not go over it – it keeps the sheep in and the coyotes out.

Keith has two guarding dogs that are members of the herd. They roam between the fields and protect the sheep from predators. I asked Keith where they were and he said, “I don't know.” We didn't see them on our travels through the fields. Keith told me a story of the dogs attacking a coyote, killing it to protect the sheep.

The sheep are divided into groups of 50, with each group in a field. Keith rotates them through the fields for various reasons – to give them taller grass for shelter in the hot sun; to have them graze in another field. In severe weather conditions, Keith may combine some groups to make a larger assembly for protection together.

There is a water and feeding system in each of the fields for additional nourishment – and Keith farms and delivers large bales of hay for the sheep.

The sheep are on an annual cycle – breeding in December, lambing in May, shearing, sorting and pruning the herd in August/September.

The sheep are brought into the barn for additional care – to weigh, give shots, check for parasites, trim hooves, apply elastics to remove tails of lambs, to shear, tend to sickness or other needs. Keith explained about a process for adoption – for a ewe that loses her lamb, and trying to get her to adopt another lamb for care. It takes good shepherding to care for all the needs of the sheep.

Because the whole purpose of shepherding is to multiply the herd (each ewe to produce one lamb each year), Keith takes great care to track information, assess the productivity of each sheep, adjust nutrition and shots for health of the herd, and prune (remove) the ewes that are least productive. Most lambs are raised and slaughtered in August/September – unless Keith removes a ewe, which he will then replace with a lamb to keep his herd around 200.

Keith has an amazing system to plan and track information. He has two professionals that he consults annually – a local vet who helps Keith assess the productivity and health of the herd, and another specialist that helps with nutrition needs. Through these consultations, they establish the right feed balance (nutrition) and a schedule with appropriate shots/interventions (to prevent parasites and sickness).

Keith has an annual calendar on the wall where he writes all the information and important dates. When tasks are accomplished, he uses a different colour to track that information. He also uses a whiteboard to track the date and the specific cause of loss/death of any animal. Some of the causes I noticed were: fell in creek; trampled; dead at birth; frozen.

Keith does not necessarily know each sheep – but he is a presence, monitoring them twice daily, paying close attention when they are brought into the barn for additional care. Keith trusts his careful planning and implementation/care with systems for the ongoing provision and protection of the sheep – his fencing system, the dogs, his care with nutrition and health, consulting with experts, support and connection with mentors and peers, tracking of information, and constant assessment to build and sustain a healthy herd. Keith mentioned that sheep are smart – and that they really do follow; when one leads, they all follow.

Visit with Becca Mustard  
At the farm, Uxbridge, ON  
August 2, 2014



Lambing is stressful

- Tiny
- Have to form bond with mom
- Some ewes aren't great – abandon
- Vulnerable to elements

Sheep

- Inquisitive
- Innocence, incredibly gentle creatures
- Always on to the new thing
- Helpless
- Very social; love to be together
- When parenting – gentle/protect their own; harsh/rough with others
- Different personalities and shapes
- Very fast
- Prone to panic
- You can't move one sheep – if you try, it won't work; move sheep as a group from behind
- Once you've got one going in the right direction – all will follow
- Stress of the caretaker (shepherd) really impacts; a calm leader creates calm; a rushed/abrupt leader creates unsettledness and jittery responses

**Appendix 6:**

**Research Project Resource List**

Resource	Distributed	Discussed
<i>Skimming</i> article (Scazzero 2011)	Retreat – morning May 23, 2013	Retreat – afternoon May 23, 2013
<i>Health Care</i> article (Peterson 2011)	One week in advance	June 4, 2013
<i>Equipping Elders</i> (The Presbyterian Church in Canada 2010)	July 2013 Summer reading	October 1, 2013
<i>The Leadership Opportunity</i> DVD (Peacemaker Ministries 2012)		October 1, 2013 November 26, 2013
<i>While Shepherds Watched Their Flocks</i> (Laniak 2007)	November 26, 2013 Advent focus	January 28, 2014
<i>Guide to Spiritual Discernment</i> brochure (Standish 2008)	February 6, 2014	March 4, 2014
<i>How to make Presbytery and Denominational Meetings more Spiritually Grounded</i> article, Standish (Standish 2008)		
<i>Spiritual Discernment for our Times</i> (Liebert 2008)		
Summary papers of two books, prepared by the researcher <i>Sticky Team</i> (Osborne 2010) <i>The Advantage</i> (Lencioni 2012)	March 10, 2014	April 1, 2014
<i>Managing Polarities in Congregations</i> (Oswald and Johnson 2010)	Teaching about model at retreat May 2, 2014	Discussion at retreat May 2, 2014

## Appendix 7:

### Research Project Activities and Timeline

Meeting	Focus	Date & Location
	Interview with lead pastor to discuss the research project and collect data about contextual knowledge	May 26, 2012
	Interview with SPL session (pastors and elders) to collect data about strengths, challenges, and opportunities for SPL leaders	June 12, 2012
	Interview with SPL elders, pastors, and directors to discuss data about the project	September 25, 2012
	Interview with lead pastor to discuss and collect data to coordinate research meeting design and dates	January 22, 2013
	Interview with administrative pastor to plan the leadership retreat	January 22, 2013
	Order resources	February 2013
	Interview with lead pastor and SPL session to review and collect data about the research project meeting dates and design	March 12, 2013
	E-mail communication to participants with details about the leadership retreat	March 19, 2013
1	Introduction of project Reflective evaluation of current leadership scenario & <i>Skimming</i> article Group connection, care, prayer Scripture study and reflective evaluation on shepherd leaders	May 23-24 2013 Retreat Fair Havens
2	Connection, care, prayer Lectio Divina & listening exercise Scripture study and reflective evaluation on shepherd leaders Reflective evaluation on <i>Reforming Spiritual Health Care</i> article, Eugene Peterson	June 4 2013  Fireside room at the church
	Due to the need to reschedule the next forum date, and the long period of time between these two forums, participants discussed and agreed to answer some questions in written form and submit to the researcher anonymously.	June/July 2013
	Communication E-letter to participants	September 2013

3	<p>Connection, care, and prayer  Appreciative inquiry: building on our perceived strengths, what does it look like for leaders of SPL to be fully alive in Jesus?  Reflective evaluation on <i>Equipping Elders</i> resource  DVD teaching, <i>Shepherd Leadership</i>, Dr. Timothy Laniak</p>	<p>October 1, 2013   Fireside room at the church</p>
	<p>Communication E-letter prepared and sent to participants</p>	<p>October 2013</p>
4	<p>Distributed <i>While Shepherds Watch Their Flocks</i> for Advent reading focus  Connection, care, prayer  Learning: DVD teaching, <i>Shepherd Leadership</i>, Dr. Tim Laniak  Scripture study and reflection on leadership</p>	<p>November 26, 2013   Fireside room at the church</p>
	<p>Communication E-letter prepared and sent to participants</p>	<p>December 2013</p>
5	<p>Connection, care, prayer  Scripture study  Reflective evaluation on resource: <i>While Shepherds Watch Their Flocks</i></p>	<p>January 28 2014   Fireside room at the church</p>
6	<p>Connection, deep level of personal sharing, care, and prayer; reflecting on Sunday's sermon and desire for a widespread fearful movement back to God – as leaders, for this church our community  Reflective evaluation about good shepherding</p>	<p>February 4   Change of venue to meet in a home</p>
	<p>Leadership group outing to Presbyterian Church national office – to connect and understand more about the PCC</p>	<p>February 18, 2014</p>
	<p>Communication E-letter prepared and sent to participants</p>	<p>February 2014</p>
7	<p>Connection, care, prayer  Reflective evaluation on discernment resources: Graham Standish, Elizabeth Liebert  Appreciative inquiry: what does it look like for leaders to be fully alive in Jesus? How will this be demonstrated?</p>	<p>March 4 2014   Fireside room at the church</p>
	<p>Communication E-letter prepared and sent to participants</p>	<p>March 2014</p>
8	<p>Connection, care, prayer  Reflective evaluation on resource summaries: <i>The Advantage</i>, Patrick Lencioni; <i>Sticky Team</i>, Larry Osborne</p>	<p>April 1 2014   Fireside room at the church</p>

	Appreciative inquiry: What does it look like for leaders to be fully alive in Jesus? How will we function?	
	Communication E-letter prepared and sent to participants	April 2014
	Interview with administrative pastor to evaluate the group's work together to this point and plan the format, details, and design of the leadership retreat	April 2014
9	Connection, care, prayer Extended time – meals, conversation, recreation Learning and polarity map exercise: <i>Managing Polarities in Congregations</i> , Roy M. Oswald and Barry Johnson Reflective evaluation: other topics raised for leaders to discuss (ongoing emphasis for appreciative inquiry)	May 1-3 Retreat Crieff Hills
10	Reflective evaluation: the positive outcome/difference in the connection and cohesion of leaders through this year of research together	Retreat Crieff Hills
	Communication E-letter prepared and sent to participants	May 2014
	Communication from researcher to the Business Committee, Pickering Presbytery with a request for them to consider the presentation of my research with the Presbytery; invitation extended for a workshop with the Presbytery on January 20, 2015	June 2014
	Interview with shepherd, Keith Sinclair, about sheep, shepherds, and leadership principles	June 13 2013 Montclair Farm, Churchill, ON
	Final report prepared and sent to participants	July 2014
	Interview with shepherd, Rebecca Mustard, about sheep, shepherds, and leadership principles	August 2 2014 Uxbridge, ON

## Appendix 8:

### Relationship Data Statements

Strong connection = 3    Moderate connection = 2    Little/no connection = 1	
In early phase of research project – data statements and magnitude coding	
Care with each other through extended time of sharing and prayer	3
Excitement and appreciation to be on the journey together	3
Good for the three groups of leaders to spend time together	3
Meditation, stillness, prayer together creates calm, quiet, attentive, settled spirit in the group	3
Times away on retreat are very good at building connection	3
Process of discernment is good – identify concerns, pray, discuss together	3
Conversations in small groups more honest than large group (comparing small group written responses with large group interaction)	2
Good connection when we spend time together	2
Pastors and elders seem connected to a greater extent than elders	2
We have seldom crossed the emotional divide into the deeper places of the Spirit together	2
Not well-connected when compared to the early body of believers where there are indicators of honesty and close connections of their leadership body	2
Increased connection for elders could be achieved through more regular communication and engagement	2
Not well-connected with the church at large	2
Each group seems to prayerfully discern what God is speaking into their leadership, just don't seem to share with each other	2
Desire for unity as companions in ministry	2
Need to develop deeper and more dependent relationships with each other	2
Need to learn to pray and linger longer together in prayer	2
Use of cell phones takes away from sacred space, connection, attention	1
Distracted by outside groups and responsibilities instead of present in the moment with who we are with	1
Lacking in staff updates with session on major topics	1
Elders are coming into church vision conversations mid-way, or coming in and out of conversation	1
Communication between leadership groups is lacking	1
New to have the three groups of leaders meeting together	1
Limited opportunities for everyone to spend time together	1
Loosely connected because we attend the same church and have roles, not truly connected in spirit	1
We don't even really work together, we each have our own call and area, much of the time there is little overlap	1
Not necessarily well-connected, we live our lives separately	1
Lifestyles are not conducive to building community and connection,	1

distances are great, people are busy	
Not well connected as a whole body, absence of communication	1
Some disconnect between elders and ministry directors	1
No overarching connection between the three groups of leaders	1
Sometimes needs of leaders and ministry are not shared or known by other leaders	1
Feel distant most of the time between elders and other leaders	1
Tough for us to genuinely and intentionally communicate with each other as a leadership body	1
Total statements about relationship in early phase	34
Strong connection = 6	
Moderate connection = 11	
Little/no connection = 17	
<b>In middle phase of research project – data statements and magnitude coding</b>	
Lots of chatter and interactions as people arrived and settled at the meeting	3
Good spirit of sharing and reflection	3
The group expresses genuine love and commitment to Jesus together	3
Leader retreats – no differences in roles/positions, unity, having fun together	3
Quotes and scripture in pre-meeting communication prompted good connection, reflection, conversation	3
30 minutes of connection, sharing, and prayer at the beginning of the meeting is a good use of the group's time and is life-giving	3
People naturally gathered and engaged in conversation together	3
People came to the meeting prepared to interact and contribute	3
Communication between meetings is an important tool to help us be prepared and to focus in our conversations	3
Breaking into small groups worked well and gave everyone an opportunity to share and have a voice; deeper conversation	3
Every person contributed thoughts and reflections in the large group debrief	3
Spending time together as leaders is important; to be known, to belong, a place where we are known and heard, a safe place to care for each other – these meetings provide that	3
We want connection with each other	3
Retreats have been some of our most beneficial times together – shared experience, part of something together	3
The group values relationship and intimacy language	3
Difficult to find dates to meet together	2
Good conversations when people are expressing their thoughts and ideas, but sometimes we seem to hold back	2
We express that we want to be together and we value this, but interruptions and interferences continue to cause challenges	2

Missing three participants at the meeting	2
Evening meetings are not the best time for this group; there are limited options for elders who have jobs outside the church during the day	2
Selfishness, self-centredness, fear – the root of the problem in being together fully alive in Jesus	1
Together seems to be our challenge – cost of time; need to be more intentional	1
Seem paralyzed to find suitable times to meet; it takes a lot of time and energy trying to figure out a time that works for all	1
One of the challenges of the project has been to find suitable dates that work for the whole group to meet, already several adjustments have been required and even with adjusted dates there have been absences	1
Constant challenge with dates for the group to meet; another conflict communicated with an established meeting date	1
Ministry directors and elders can feel left out of spending time together as leaders	1
Expressed struggle about what it really mean to belong in community; lacking the ability and experience to connect and be part of an intimate group experience	1
Total statements about relationship in middle phase Strong connection = 14 Moderate connection = 6 Little/no connection = 7	27
<b>In later phase of research project – data statements and magnitude coding</b>	
Several shared about personal challenges; the group listened, affirmed, cared, and prayed for each other	3
Coming into this group is life-giving, a place where I can be myself, where the condition of my heart is valued and accepted, where I can trust	3
Affirmation and hope to be able to share together, to see how God is always at work, to be alert to what God brings to our path	3
These last two times together have been very enjoyable, honest dialogue, good to be together	3
When the group takes time to listen, share, and pray for each other it changes the tone of the rest of the meeting	3
There is a deeper connection between group members when time is spent listening and caring for each other	3
When people feel listened and cared for people who seemed weary and distracted coming into meetings seemed more energized and lighter	3
It is helpful to get to know each other at this deeper level, it is meaningful for us to take this time	3
Sharing took more than half the meeting and probably could have taken longer	3
Conversation following a time of listening, care, and support was very open and collegial	3
Every person shared in group reflection and prayer	3

Being known and knowing one another builds trust, settledness, and calm believable leadership; we are experiencing this	3
This process has helped us get to know one another better	3
There have been times when I didn't even know some of the elders, this process has helped build relationships, feeling relaxed together and building trust	3
The group is familiar, relaxed, and listening well to each other; relationships are settled and comfortable	3
There is honest discussion, laughter and fun as well as serious discussion	3
Good visiting and connections	3
Established sense of team with pastors, elders, and directors that has not been experienced before	3
Level of conversation and free flow of ideas and information has significantly increased	3
Reading and reflecting on material provides a framework for valuable conversations	3
Meeting together has given us focus: something we're learning and developing together	3
Personal sharing and shared experience builds relationship and trust; we are getting to know one another better; there's connection and compassion	3
Broadened shared experiences, info gathering, learning, time eating together around the table, building relationships with each other – these times together are good	3
Some voices in the group have strong influence in the direction of the conversation	2
When people are missing from meetings their absence is felt and it affects the group	2
Indication of tension between two people in a group conversation	2
Question asked: are we really living in unity?	2
Some members were distracted with phones and going in and out of the room during conversation	1
Total statements about relationship in later phase Strong connection = 23 Moderate connection = 4 Little/no connection = 1	28

## Appendix 9:

### Communication Samples

#### Sample Page from Participant's Guide

##### Important Dates and Topics

May 23-25, 2013	Meeting # 1, Leadership retreat at Fair Havens Introduction of the project & written consent
June 4, 2014	Meeting #2 Biblical study on metaphor of shepherds
July/August 2013	Summer reading & reflections – <i>Equipping Elders</i> Snapshot of leaders pre-project
October 1, 2013	Meeting #3 Reflections from <i>Equipping Elders</i>
November 5, 2013	Meeting #4 <i>Shepherd Leader 1 DVD &amp; study</i>
December 3, 2013	Meeting #5 <i>Shepherd Leader 2 DVD &amp; study</i>
December/January	Read and journal, <i>While Shepherds Watch Their Flocks: Forty Daily Reflections on Biblical Leadership</i>
January 14, 2014	Meeting #6 <i>While Shepherds Watch Their Flocks: Provision</i>
February 4, 2014	Meeting #7 <i>While Shepherds Watch Their Flocks: Protection</i>
March 4, 2014	Meeting #8 <i>While Shepherds Watch Their Flocks: Guidance</i>
April 1, 2014	Meeting #9 Ways of being for leaders of St. Paul's
May 8-10, 2014	Meeting #10, Leadership Retreat Review, assess and identify next steps
June 2014	Preparation and distribution of final report

## Sample Page from Monthly Communication to Participants



December 2013

Research Project  
Communication with  
Pastors, Elders, and Ministry  
Directors

### **Advent Reading Resource**

Book – *While Shepherds Watch Their Flocks: 40 Daily Reflections on Biblical Leadership*

These daily readings provide a common focus for our leadership group during Advent and into the New Year. The book is yours to highlight, make notes, and record questions/observations about the shepherd metaphor as it relates to biblical leadership.

*While Shepherds Watch Their Flocks* is an opportunity for us to mutually focus our attention, this Christmas season, on our Great Shepherd, Immanuel – *God with us!*

### **Shepherd Metaphor and Biblical Leadership**

On January 28, be prepared to share:

- Personal reflections on “The Shepherd Leader” teaching Parts 1 & 2 (refer to questions and reflections in the handouts from October 1 and November 26).
- Personal reflections from reading *While Shepherds Watch Their Flocks*.
- Other insights, scriptures, journal reflections from our journey to date.

What have you learned about biblical leadership through the lens of the shepherd metaphor?

What ideas, values, and principles of shepherding could be helpful to integrate into our language and way of being as leaders?

What steps will we take to make this possible?

### **Leadership Meeting Review & Future Meetings**

The January gathering will be the mid-point of our group’s time together – our fifth gathering out of a planned ten times to meet.

It’s time for a mid-way review on January 28:

- What’s been good about our focus and gatherings?
- What could we adjust for the next five gatherings?
- What have we discovered about ourselves as leaders of the church through this process?
- In what ways have we grown and developed together?

### **Meeting Dates**

The group is scheduled to meet on January 28, February 4, March 4, April 1, and May 8-10 (Retreat).

## **Sample Page from Final Report to Participants, July 2014**

### **Collective/shared purpose as leaders of the church**

What are our perceived greatest qualities that give us collective/shared purpose as leaders of the church?

How will we build on this strength?

What do we want to articulate as a consistent, shared purpose as leaders of the church?

We perceive our greatest qualities as leaders of the church to be:

- Commitment to Jesus; intent for meaningful relationship with him; Jesus lovers who stay close to the center of who he is; genuine love for Jesus and his people
- Prayer, praying together, continuing to learn about prayer
- Desire for unity as companions on the journey
- Surrendered to Jesus Christ, not entrenched in form or tradition; open to any and all invitations that God extends to this congregation to reach people
- An openness to new things – a willingness to learn and develop new ways of doing things
- Willing to read and understand underlying theology of what we are involved with
- Personal integrity, honesty, openness
- Care for the St. Paul's community, compassion and caring
- Watchful for leading of the Holy Spirit
- Listening to God, responsive to emerging opportunities
- Aim to not be complicated
- Commitment to the cause – to see people alive in Christ
- Willingness to work and serve

Through the process of identifying our perceived greatest strengths, it became clear that we have genuine love and commitment to Jesus, and we have a desire for unity as companions in ministry.

Building on these qualities, and using our St. Paul's purpose statement, "together fully alive in Jesus," we worked through a process of appreciative inquiry to DISCOVER, DREAM, DESIGN, and DELIVER how we will live with a collective/shared purpose as leaders who work together for the well-being of the church.

**Appendix 10:**  
**Spiritual Practices**

MEETING	SPIRITUAL PRACTICES	IMPACT
1	Sharing & prayer	Collective prayer, petition, thanksgiving
	Reading and discussing assigned scripture passage in small groups, and then in large group	Group discovery about Jesus as the Good Shepherd; and what it looks like for leaders to lead like Jesus
2	Sharing: As we come together, are there any needs or concerns that are weighing heavy on people? Prayer	A focus to bring our cares and concerns to each other, and to Jesus in prayer, changed the tone of the gathering, and created a calm, quiet, attentive, settled spirit in the group.
	Lectio divina – meditation and listening	Group response: Jesus speaks, Jesus calls, Jesus leads, Jesus goes before us
	Resource, scripture & discussion	Group response: Our only hope as leaders of the church is to focus on Jesus as the Good Shepherd; intimacy with Jesus is primary for us as leaders – connection, Sabbath principle, growing in intimacy with Jesus (not striving, but being)
3	Post-it notes with phrases from two scripture verses posted on the white board – invited the group to reflect and share	Good spirit of sharing and reflection – what people heard Jesus saying to them
	Question: What does it look like for leaders to be fully alive in Jesus?	Group responses: unity, union, shared experience, conversation, being together; transparent and vulnerable with each other; praying together
4	Sharing – scripture and emphasis of being the people of God in covenant relationship with Him and each other	Affirmation that it is good for us to be in this together

	Silent prayer and preparation, ended with verbal prayer	Quiet, opportunity to be still
5	Handout for each person; Psalm 23 in three translations; one person read a translation and the group was given a few minutes for silent reflection; repeated with each translation. Listening to a worship song (words provided). Time of prayer.	Focus, remembering Jesus as our Good Shepherd
6	Extended time of sharing (one hour) – several shared about personal challenges; prayer	Affirmation and hope to be able to share and pray together – to see how God is always at work, and to be alert to who God brings to our path
7	Scripture passages for personal reflection. Group reflection Prayer	Every person shared something personal from the reading and mediation
8	One participant shared reflections about leadership as it relates to the shepherd metaphor; closed the time in a prayer of dedication for us as leaders under Christ's lordship and authority.	The shepherd metaphor for leadership and authority is consistent all through scripture. Authority involves the constant use of scripture and teaching to demolish strongholds. Leadership is required for healing, care, and to build up the body. Attention is required for spiritual warfare – sacrifice as leaders for the welfare of others.
9	Sharing and prayer	Connection with Jesus and each other
10	Scripture reading and prayer	Focus together

## Appendix 11:

### Evaluation of Shepherding Meetings

World Café Principle	Meeting #1 Evaluation
Set the context	Overnight retreat at Fair Havens Conference May 23-25, 2013
Create hospitable space	Prepared meals together Sleeping accommodations comfortable Meeting space – mix of indoors/outdoors Recreational time – alone or in groups (as desired) Living room environment with easel
Explore questions that matter	What does the term shepherding mean?
Encourage everyone's contribution	Small group and large group conversations
Connect diverse perspectives	Divided into small groups by roles Divided into small groups by mix of roles Resource: <i>Skimming</i> (Scazzero)
Listen together for patterns, insights, and deeper questions	Interaction with resource Posted large sheets of paper on walls with conversation points and referred to these for continued conversation Small groups reflected conversations on paper (collected by the researcher)
Share collective discoveries	A summary of the conversations was recorded in data collection document
<i>Researcher analysis</i>	Different level of engagement with the resource Difficult to move the group from individual thoughts and opinions into collective discoveries
<i>Adjustments required</i>	Researcher: determine effective strategies to facilitate conversation and guide process with varying opinions

World Café Principle	Meeting #2 Evaluation
Set the context	Met in the Fireside room at the church June 4, 2013, 7:00-9:30pm
Create hospitable space	Refreshments provided Set up chairs in a circle with an easel Reconfigured the room with tables and chairs for small group conversations
Explore questions that matter	What does it look like for leaders to meditate, reflect, and listen together? <i>Lectio divina exercise</i> <i>Audio exercise: listening to a song</i> What conditions are necessary for good shepherding?
Encourage everyone's contribution	Time of quiet reflection Large group reflection, sharing, prayer
Connect diverse perspectives	Resource: <i>Reforming Spiritual-Health Care</i> (Peterson) Scripture study in small groups
Listen together for patterns, insights, and deeper questions	Interaction with resource Large group conversation Notes taken by researcher
Share collective discoveries	A summary of the conversations was recorded in data collection document E-newsletter prepared by the researcher and sent to the group
<i>Researcher analysis</i>	One participant absent, one participant late Caring attention and conversation together
<i>Adjustments required</i>	No

World Café Principle	Meeting #3 Evaluation
Set the context	Met in the Fireside room at the church October 1, 2013, 7:00-9:30pm
Create hospitable space	Refreshments provided Chairs in a semi-circle, use of table and floor lamps White board, easel, TV/DVD
Explore questions that matter	What is the church's mission? What is the church leader(s) role? What would it look like for SPL leaders to be together fully alive in Jesus?
Encourage everyone's contribution	A participant led the group in worship Large group conversation
Connect diverse perspectives	Resource: <i>Equipping Elders</i> DVD teaching: Shepherd Leadership (Laniak)
Listen together for patterns, insights, and deeper questions	Interaction with resources AI Process with large group (discover, dream) Notes on whiteboard, easel, and taken by researcher
Share collective discoveries	A summary of the conversations was recorded in data collection document E-newsletter prepared by the researcher and sent to the group
<i>Researcher analysis</i>	Need expressed to change next meeting date. Need expressed to change the time of the meetings. People were prepared to talk about the topics. The communication provided before the meeting was appreciated, useful, and utilized. Some participants using journals to record thoughts. Felt pressure as the facilitator; some conversation took place that I had not anticipated which took time from the agenda. I clearly expected to accomplish more than what was reasonable or realistic. 30 minutes of connection, sharing, and prayer at the beginning of the meeting is a good use of the group's time and life-giving. This needs to remain a focus. Conversation after the close of the meeting resulted in a meeting after the meeting with a conversation that mattered. It is challenging to find dates that are suitable for all participants to meet together.
<i>Adjustments required</i>	At the request of the group, the meetings times will be adjusted from 7:30-9:15pm. 1-2 topics will be all we can handle in an evening session together. The date of the next meeting is changed.

World Café Principle	Meeting #4 Evaluation
Set the context	Met in the Fireside room at the church November 26, 2013, 7:30-9:30pm
Create hospitable space	Refreshments provided Chairs in a semi-circle Fireplace on TV/DVD
Explore questions that matter	What is our responsibility as a leadership group?
Encourage everyone's contribution	Silent prayer Small group conversations Large group conversation
Connect diverse perspectives	Resource DVD teaching: Shepherd Leadership (Laniak)
Listen together for patterns, insights, and deeper questions	Interaction with resource AI Process with large group conversation (design) Notes provided by small groups and large group conversation notes taken by researcher
Share collective discoveries	A summary of the conversations was recorded in data collection document E-newsletter prepared by the researcher and sent to the group
<i>Researcher analysis</i>	<p>People came to the meeting prepared and all were engaged in the conversation.</p> <p>I was more relaxed in the facilitation of this meeting because I took pressure off how much I was trying to accomplish in one meeting (this created a more relaxing environment for the participants).</p> <p>The group provides indicators that they think of these shepherding meetings as my research.</p> <p>Breaking into small groups is good – it provides the opportunity for every voice to be heard.</p> <p>There is a continued challenge with the meeting dates; the next meeting date needs to be adjusted.</p> <p>The shepherd metaphor is bringing shared language and understanding to the leadership group.</p> <p>It became apparent to me that this really is a process, and that we can be okay with that.</p> <p>In the data collection document, I record several learning points about the facilitator role based on my experience with this shepherding approach.</p>
<i>Adjustments required</i>	It is important to thread conversations together and keep building on what happened at the last meeting.

World Café Principle	Meeting #5 Evaluation
Set the context	Met in the Fireside room at the church January 28, 2014, 7:30-9:30pm
Create hospitable space	Refreshments provided Chairs in a semi-circle Fireplace on CD player
Explore questions that matter	What can we learn from the shepherd metaphor?
Encourage everyone's contribution	Personal meditation and reflection on three different versions of Psalm 23 Listen to the song <i>Never Once</i> , Matt Redman Large group conversation
Connect diverse perspectives	Resource: <i>While Shepherds Watch Their Flocks</i> (Laniak)
Listen together for patterns, insights, and deeper questions	Interaction with resource AI Process with large group (design) Notes on easel and taken by researcher
Share collective discoveries	A summary of the conversations was recorded in data collection document E-newsletter prepared by the researcher and sent to the group
<i>Researcher analysis</i>	Three participants cancelled day of meeting: one sickness; one accident; one family crisis. Evening meetings are not the best time for this group to meet. Developing in close community with others is not a typical practice for most of the participants, and is a learning curve as we experience this together. The group expresses a lack of interest to formalize or become too rigid with leadership principles and practices.
<i>Adjustments required</i>	How can I assist the group to remain flexible and still identify/establish guiding principles/practices for SPL leaders?

World Café Principle	Meeting #6 Evaluation
Set the context	Met in the Fireside room at the church February 4, 2014, 7:30-9:30pm
Create hospitable space	Change of venue to meet in a home environment Living room, fireplace on Refreshments, including specialty hot drinks
Explore questions that matter	How can we be consistent as leaders to shepherd well?
Encourage everyone's contribution	Time of sharing and prayer Large group conversation
Connect diverse perspectives	Pre-meeting communication to the group identified four topics for possible conversation, for the group to decide together what they wanted to discuss
Listen together for patterns, insights, and deeper questions	Gentle, open, flowing dialogue AI Process with large group (design)
Share collective discoveries	A summary of the conversations was recorded in data collection document E-newsletter prepared by the researcher and sent to the group
<i>Researcher analysis</i>	<p>Two participants absent.</p> <p>Participants really enjoyed meeting in a home; people were relaxed, informal, comfortable.</p> <p>When the group takes time to listen, share, and pray for each other, it changes the tone of the meeting; this increases connection between members.</p> <p>The group took more time to relate and connect with each other; some people were dealing with heavy things; this was needed tonight.</p> <p>I was surprised that the group decided to talk about a topic that had been dismissed at our last meeting; this showed me that topics need time and coming at them from different ways for a group to accurately and appropriately respond.</p> <p>Conversations are not linear; it takes skill, prayer, and discernment to facilitate conversations that matter.</p> <p>These last two meetings were only one week apart; perhaps this enhanced the group's connection?</p>
<i>Adjustments required</i>	Our conversation at this meeting opened up a topic I thought was closed at our last meeting, and we were able to have a healthy conversation. I am reminded to remain open, prayerful, and discerning, and to keep my emotions in check.

World Café Principle	Meeting #7 Evaluation
Set the context	Met in the Fireside room at the church March 4, 2014, 7:30-9:30pm
Create hospitable space	Refreshments provided Chairs in a circle Fireplace on
Explore questions that matter	What practices contribute to discernment for a leadership group?
Encourage everyone's contribution	Personal meditation and reflection on different scripture passages. Every person shared something personal from the reading.
Connect diverse perspectives	Resources on the topic of discernment (Standish, Liebert) AI Process with large group (design)
Listen together for patterns, insights, and deeper questions	Interaction with resources Notes taken by researcher
Share collective discoveries	A summary of the conversations was recorded in data collection document E-newsletter prepared by the researcher and sent to the group
<i>Researcher analysis</i>	Two participants absent. The group is familiar, relaxed, and listening well to each other. Relationships appear to be settled and comfortable. There is honest conversation; laughter and fun as well as serious discussion. Participants came to the meeting prepared. Exposure to research and resources assists the conversation; providing a starting place; even disagreeing with the resources helps clarify and sharpen the group's thinking and expressions. There is a willingness to ask for clarification and to seek understanding in a conversation. There are some predetermined positions that make it difficult to have conversations on certain topics.
<i>Adjustments required</i>	Continue to invite the group into deeper conversations, even when they are difficult (this will require me to be okay with tension and conflict; to facilitate controversy with civility).

World Café Principle	Meeting #8 Evaluation
Set the context	Met in the Fireside room at the church April 1, 2014, 7:30-9:30pm
Create hospitable space	Refreshments provided Chairs in circle
Explore questions that matter	How do we lead together as leaders for organizational health?
Encourage everyone's contribution	One participant shared about a personal experience and led the group in a time of prayer.  Listen to the song <i>Never Once</i> , Matt Redman Large group conversation
Connect diverse perspectives	Resources: <i>The Advantage</i> (Lencioni), <i>Sticky Team</i> (Osborne) AI Process with large group (design)
Listen together for patterns, insights, and deeper questions	Interaction with resources Notes taken by researcher
Share collective discoveries	A summary of the conversations was recorded in data collection document E-newsletter prepared by the researcher and sent to the group
<i>Researcher analysis</i>	One participant absent. The first half of the conversation indicated to me that the group did not want to spend time on formalizing organizational health principles; I adjusted this direction and did not do an exercise I had planned. The group identified that it would be helpful to outline what it looks like for leaders to be together fully alive in Jesus, in a written document to pass on who we are, what we've learned, and who we want to be as leaders of the church; this will become a filter for decision and behaviour. The group values the culture of being on a journey, always adjusting and changing, reformed and reforming, Spirit-directed and Spirit-led. The group identified two directives for the future: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Continuing with shepherding meetings once a month after this year together;</li> <li>2) Identifying and developing young leaders with theology and experience.</li> </ul>
<i>Adjustments required</i>	Continue to move with the group as I design the final two meetings. Seek feedback from lead and administrative pastors for direction about the final two meetings.

World Café Principle	Meeting #9 Evaluation
Set the context	Overnight retreat at Crieff Hills May 1-3, 2014
Create hospitable space	Prepared food together Comfortable sleeping accommodations Living room space for meeting and easel Recreational time – alone and in groups (as desired)
Explore questions that matter	What does it mean to manage polarities in a congregation? Individual leadership and shared leadership Compassion and authority
Encourage everyone's contribution	AI Process with large group (destiny / deliver)
Connect diverse perspectives	Resource: <i>Managing Polarities in Congregations</i> (Oswald & Johnson)
Listen together for patterns, insights, and deeper questions	Large group conversation Notes on easel and taken by researcher
Share collective discoveries	Notes posted on walls A summary of the conversations was recorded in data collection document
<i>Researcher analysis</i>	The conversation identified other topics that participants were interested to discuss.
<i>Adjustments required</i>	The identified topics were noted for the session and ministry council to address at future meetings.

World Café Principle	Meeting #10 Evaluation
Set the context	Overnight retreat at Crieff Hills May 1-3, 2014
Create hospitable space	Prepared food together Comfortable sleeping accommodations Living room space for meeting Recreational time – alone and in groups (as desired)
Explore questions that matter	What's the positive outcome/difference in the connection and cohesion among leaders through this shepherding approach?
Encourage everyone's contribution	AI Process with large group (destiny / deliver)
Connect diverse perspectives	Recorded responses on easel paper and posted on the wall
Listen together for patterns, insights, and deeper questions	The group agreed on several points.
Share collective discoveries	Notes from group's discussion included in data collection document, and included in final report to the group

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