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Toward an “Ageless Thinking” Congregation:  
A Study of the Leadership Culture of an Historic Canadian Church in Order to  
Steward its Heritage Ethos in the Adaptive Challenges of the Future

by

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## ABSTRACT

The thesis *Toward an 'Ageless Thinking' Congregation* uses ethnographic research techniques to understand the leadership culture of a congregation in order to be able to steward its heritage ethos into a discontinuous future. The theological rationale underpinning the project focuses on the nature of the church as old and new and the congregation as a complex adaptive family. The literature review focuses on understanding the culture of a congregation, a survey of the transitional leaders' attributes and actions, and a basic understanding of the learning organization. A comparison of one congregation's historic vs. current leadership culture was conducted so as to understand the trajectory of its leadership culture. The historic leadership culture was determined through a group interview with long-term attendees and questionnaires sent to former clergy and lay leaders. The current leadership culture was determined through a group interview of current attendees and questionnaires sent to a group of current attendees.

The research was coded and several themes of both the past and present leadership culture were established. A process to implement the findings was determined and one example of implementing a finding using the pattern was conducted. Conclusions in the form of themes for the church's main leadership bodies to consider are included for further discussion and implementation.

## DEDICATION

This thesis, and in fact, the entire Doctor of Ministry degree, has been an endeavour beyond my natural abilities and energy. To say I could not have done it by myself is a grand understatement and something of which I became increasingly aware as the journey progressed. And the farther I went in my journey, the more people came to my rescue and added their expertise or support. Let me mention some:

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*Deo gratias*

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# CHAPTER 1

## INTRODUCTION

This research paper will attempt to clarify the historic leadership culture of Calvary Church, Toronto, comparing it with the present leadership culture, so as to assist the leadership of the congregation as it applies its leadership culture into a discontinuous future. The project will attempt to understand the normative centre and the functional leadership themes that drive the congregation to do *what* it does in the *way* it does it. Addressing this question will require that we clarify several things. Firstly, the assumption that to meet future changes there must be some carryover of the old order to blend with the new and that this is theologically valid. Secondly, the basic nature of both the church and leadership, as it regards transition, needs to be clearly understood theologically. Thirdly, a review of current leadership literature is needed so as to understand the leadership principles and processes that will be useful to Calvary's leadership as they face the adaptive challenges of the future. Chapter 2 (Theological Rationale) and Chapter 3 (Literature Review) will give insight to these and several other significant concepts affecting the research question.

The research methods to accomplish the project objectives will rely on group interviews of past leaders (both clergy and laity) and current members of the church. Questionnaires specially designed and directed to past leaders and current members will also be used in order to get independent input from those not able to take part in an interview group. Personal reflections by the author as well as documentary research will also provide for direction and data.

The project will also begin the process of moving the findings from information, to verifying the data with a main leadership body of the congregation (the staff team), and then to initial implementation of one of the findings.

### **Understanding the Congregational Setting**

The church is a congregation of people who are “socialized into an already interpreted world” (Osmer 2008, 24) with each congregation having “its own flavour, style and culture” (Snyder and Runyon 2002, 25). Robinson defines culture as “a thick network of symbols, language, and behaviours that characterize and define a human community” (Robinson 2003, 12). If each congregation has its own culture then to understand the community, one must understand its culture and the interconnectedness of people, values and behaviours so as to ascertain what is really going on (Osmer 2008, 15–18). Richard Osmer would call this the “socio-political particularity” (Osmer 2008, 36) of the congregation. Jackson Carroll uses the term preferred in this thesis, the “normative centre” (Carroll 1991, 168) because it communicates that there are central norms upon which the congregation defines itself.

The passage of time may complicate a clear understanding of a congregation’s normative centre. In some congregations this results in a disconnect between the mission verbally espoused by the congregation and what is shown in its behaviour (Osmer 2008, 178). This lack of alignment can go unnoticed by insiders but can be interpreted as lack of integrity by outsiders.

The leadership, in particular, needs to have a clear knowledge of its normative centre as they consider options for meeting the changing needs of the present context in which the congregation serves. Some congregational leaders have tried to enact change by re-orienting the congregation's normative centre, sometimes unwittingly, to emerge as a different entity. The transition to become a "new" congregation might be an attempt to be more modern, ancient, traditional, contemporary, biblical, orthodox, emergent or any of a number of descriptors. However, the principle is still the same—*not* being what it once was.

Other congregations move in the opposite direction (or more accurately, "stay"). Their approach to meeting adaptive challenges (see definition on page 11) of the future is to *not* meet them preferring to preserve what they had. Believing that the congregation, by its very nature, is a conserving organization, the leadership becomes even more entrenched in its inherited behaviours and traditions regardless of whether or not they meet the needs of their stated mission. Of course, there are variations between these two poles.

### The Nature of Change

The aforementioned are just some of the transitional dynamics happening *within* congregations. However, there is an *external* dynamic about the nature of change that analysts and futurists are predicting and which will greatly affect transition. This kind of change is called "discontinuous change" (Nadler 1995) (see definition on page 12). Discontinuous change, in part, means that future ministry will not be a linear, somewhat predictable, extension of today. An

illustration of this is how present day communication has been discontinuously changed through smart phone technology. The smart phone has revolutionized communication by making several different forms of communication broadly accessible and immediate (social websites, text messaging, voice calls, etc.). This was unheard of not long ago and represents the way communication has been changed discontinuously—a non-incremental change that requires a reorientation of thought and behaviour.

The impact of discontinuous change on leadership is bigger than it appears at first. For example, it affects long-range planning. Linear change accommodates long-range planning. When things are changing discontinuously “long-range planning is too incremental and simply doesn’t work anymore” (Malphurs 2005, 27). New transitional methods need to be employed.

### The Heritage Church

The impact of these dynamics is exacerbated within a congregation that has a long history. The passage of time has, quite naturally, caused it to become well-established in its culture. In this thesis I am calling the long-established congregation a “heritage church.” A heritage church is a congregation that has several generations of ministry and momentum and thereby has accumulated behaviours and programs that are layered on over a long period of time. Though he does not use the term per se, Aubrey Malphurs describes the idea using a metaphor: “The ministry programs of these churches have much in common with the white paint on the outside of their building—layer exists on top of layer. No

one has taken the time to scrape any old layers off” (Malphurs 2005, 165). The heritage of the congregation is not so much a function of its age as it is the fact that its founding culture is far enough in its past that it cannot be addressed directly; thus it can only be known by its behaviour and documents. In other words, the ethos of its founding can now only be observed.

One characteristic of the heritage church is ethos-inertia whereby a congregation evolves to maintain the system. It is entirely possible that without a conscious understanding of its unique driving norms a heritage church will experience a disconnect between its publicly espoused mission and its activities (Osmer 2008, 178). As Anthony B. Robinson states, each congregation has its “own genius and heritage, and we will do better to discern and build on that than to regret it or deny it” (Robinson 2003, viii).

It ought to be noted that some congregants prefer an elevated level of stability within their congregation (read: *status quo*). In fact, this is true of all living systems to the point that most systems will resist anything that breaks, weakens or destroys that stability (Shawchuck 1996, 327). “Congregations, like individuals, develop habits. When a habit is threatened, the entire system will seek to balance the new efforts through resistance” (Shawchuck 1996, 327). In their attempt to maintain stability through resistance, a diversion of focus sets into the congregation—from focusing on the original *purpose* of the activities to *maintaining* the activities. As is the case with many long-established congregations, the normative centre (sometimes called “mental models” (Senge 2006, 8)) that once empowered the ministry can sometimes be forgotten in

maintaining the activity. As the heritage church attempts to meet the new realities of discontinuous change it must clearly understand its normative centre so it can make appropriate change-decisions in keeping with its DNA—and meet new and ever changing realities.

### The “Ageless Thinking” Congregation

Since the contemporary congregation serves in the context of much discontinuous change, and future ministry is unlikely to be a logical extension of current methods, the way forward may be for the congregation to become what I will call an “ageless thinking” congregation (see definition on page 12). An ageless thinking congregation is one that is able to reflect on its own culture in light of the discontinuous change it faces and is both connected to its heritage ethos without being bound by it.

### A Brief Personal Introduction

Since this project represents research conducted within the organization of which I am a part, a personal introduction would be helpful. I have been the Senior Pastor of the church for nine years. Prior to becoming the Pastor at Calvary Church, Toronto, I was a business owner/operator for 5 years, an associate pastor for 10 years and the Senior Pastor of a small church for 5 years. As Senior Pastor at Calvary, my role is to be the primary teacher as well as the strategic leader of the church through the staff team and volunteers. Calvary Church has as rich history of being a multi-staff church. Though the job description of the Senior



Pastor has not changed significantly over time, associate staff members have been entrusted with a variety of mandates according to the current need and the individual gifting of the staff member.

It must be noted that many of the respondents in this project know me personally as their Senior Pastor which might influence them to respond according to what they perceived my expectations were in conducting the research. To ensure that the respondents were not influenced by the power of my position as Senior Pastor, questionnaires and cover letters were sent out by a research assistant. She sent her own request and attached my questionnaire. She was also the one who followed up on the questionnaire with those who did not respond. Each respondent was given the assurance of anonymity, though many were quite willing for me to know who was providing the input.

### **The Project**

This research project will provide clarity to the leadership themes prevalent in the history of the church so that this heritage church can steward its ethos and meet the adaptive challenges of an increasingly unknowable future. One of those problems in doing so is the natural tendency for the leadership to *over apply* its historic culture in a way that cannot meet the new chaotic and evolving realities of future ministry. Another problem is the opposite of the first; the inclination for leadership to enact dramatic change in a congregation by making changes that are out of keeping with the congregation's historic DNA. Indeed, church leaders face such a broad array of transitional options; from changing

*everything* (given that everything in culture has changed since the congregation was founded) or changing *nothing* (believing that the church is the preserver of tradition). Examples of either extreme can be found throughout the Canadian church scene.

The essence of the problem might be captured in this question; how can a long-established congregation be *itself* while meeting the needs of each succeeding generation? Or, using my term, how can it be an “ageless thinking” congregation?

In this thesis, past and present leadership themes of Calvary Church are compared, some key areas of interest are highlighted for the current leadership to consider as it stewards its heritage ethos, and a pattern is started for it to become a learning organization.

### **Overview of the Project Design**

Discovering the themes of the leadership culture at Calvary Church involved several waves of research. A series of surveys were conducted in two distinct formats (interview groups and questionnaires) and with three distinct groups of people (former lay leaders, former pastors and staff, and present lay leaders) (Diagram 4.1 on page 68).

The questionnaires were developed with the insight of several church transition consultants (Chapter 4). The questionnaires allowed for independent, reflective input by the participants. Since the project relies much on the leadership narrative of the church, which is experienced differently by each individual, it was

very important to include the opportunity for people to personally reflect on their experience and give independent input. This was done in the form of questionnaires. However, group interviews were also deemed appropriate since they not only allow the participants to give input but also to evaluate their own interpretation of the leadership through the process of the discussion. An added benefit is that long-forgotten memories had the opportunity to emerge as people talked about their personal experience of the leadership at the church. The interview group not only provided information but also gave depth and breadth to the research question.

As mentioned, both of these formats were conducted with each of three categories of people: past lay leaders; former pastors and staff, and present lay leaders. There were a total of 45 people who gave input which was deemed sufficient for themes of leadership to emerge (Chapter 4).

The project design went beyond uncovering leadership data by verifying the data with a main leadership body of the congregation (the staff team), and then to initial implementation of one of the findings. The time frame of the project only allows for the implementation of one of the findings, however, it is anticipated that the pattern will be used with the other main leadership body (the Elders) for each of the findings.

### **The Subject of the Project: Calvary Church, Toronto**

The subject of this project is Calvary Church, Toronto. Calvary Church began in 1928 as a result of a group of people who were discouraged by the

direction of their previous congregation and denomination as recorded in Chapter 2 (page 32ff). Though it was technically a “new” congregation, 297 people were constituted as members on its first Sunday. Very early the congregation purchased property near the corner of Pape Ave. and Danforth Ave. in Toronto, Ontario, and began to build a facility, much of which exists to this day.

The surrounding community has evolved through several changes both in demographics and city services. For instance, during the mid-1960’s the city opened a subway stop immediately across the street. This helped the church leaders to confirm their desire to stay in the city rather than move to the suburbs. In fact, the question of whether to stay in the city or move to the suburbs was debated several times over the years and each time the same answer was *stay*.

Currently, Calvary is served by a pastoral team of four and a support staff of three. It houses or directly supports several ministries: a nursing home, seniors residence, youth drop-in centre, weekly food bank, “out of the cold” ministry, library for those ministering to Muslims, an Ethiopian church, etc. This is in addition to being a fully intergenerational congregation with programs designed to meet the discipleship needs of its attendees.

The church’s mission statement, developed in its current form in 2012, is: *Knowing and following Jesus and calling others to also*. The church’s vision statement is: *We see Calvary Church as a community of disciples of Jesus empowered by the Holy Spirit, whose love for God and others is manifested in: (1) commitment to growth in Christ-likeness, (2) dedication to service, and (3) engagement in proclaiming the good news of Jesus*. These two statements were

developed by a specially appointed Elders task force which had the mandate of (1) developing these statements and then (2) presenting recommendations along with the rationale for each. After much formal Board discussion they were adopted by the Board of Elders in recognition of the fact that they reflect the rich heritage and the passion of Calvary Church. There is more background information about the congregation in chapter 2.

### **Limiters and Delimiters**

A project of this nature has some expected limitations. It is affected by the voluntary input of the respondents and as such it will not necessarily reflect the opinion of everyone, yet the data was validated by a sampling broad enough for a true picture to emerge.

Also limiting the project is the long period of time that is covered (i.e., 85 years) thus not every nuance of change and transition in the leadership culture can be remembered, understood or accounted for. Deceased members and leaders, failing memories, personal interpretations, natural biases toward or against a certain leader or era, also have some limiting effect on the outcomes of the project.

This project focused on qualitative data not quantitative data. Though both types of data are equally valuable, understanding the leadership culture will not be ascertained by numbers and charts so much as descriptions and meanings. This affected the methods used in interpreting the input. This project “themed” rather than measured the data. Other limiting factors are recorded in Chapter 4.

## Definitions

### Adaptive Challenge

In an article entitled “Leadership without Easy Answers” (based on the book of the same name), Ron Heifetz states a key question that regularly faces the leader of any organization: “Is this a problem that an expert can fix or is this a problem that is going to require people in the community to change their values, their behavior, or their attitudes?” (Heifetz 2010). The former is called a “technical challenge” (e.g., car problems require a mechanic, a broken bone needs to be set by a surgeon) and the latter an “adaptive challenge” (e.g., General Motors was re-created due to changing values). Some of a congregation’s challenges are adaptive in nature and require a new kind of thinking and behaviour.

### Heritage Church

This project will use the term “heritage church” to mean a church that is made up of several generations of ministry and momentum and thereby has accumulated behaviours and programs that are “layered on” over a long period of time.

### Discontinuous Change

The term discontinuous change does not define change so much as it does the *type* of change we experience in our current generation. Discontinuous change, as a concept, comes from British management leader Charles Handy, who spoke about change arriving in sudden, unpredictable bursts and means that “the path through time, with society slowly, naturally and radically improving on a

steady course is a thing of the past” (Crainer 1998, 86). This kind of change is not incremental but sudden. The leadership structures that were once thought of as fixed and stable may no longer be helpful. This does not simply refer to a certain amount of change, such as “megachange” (Malphurs 2005, 7), but to the fact that change is no longer a linear, somewhat predictable, extension of today’s context.

### Ageless Thinking

Ageless thinking is a way of thinking whereby a congregation is able to reflect on its normative centre in the light of the discontinuous change it faces. It may involve a reorientation of the way it thinks so as to be connected to its heritage ethos without being bound by it. It anchors into the congregation a way of thinking that assists the congregation in being fluid enough to apply its heritage ethos in ways appropriate to the novel, unknown and sometimes chaotic nature of a discontinuous future.

### The Anticipated Outcomes

Among the “deliverables” of this project were: (1) uncovering, understanding and evaluating the foundational norms that drove the past leadership culture, (2) comparing it against the present patterns of leadership to get a sense of its trajectory and understand the place *from* which to begin transitions, and (3) presenting a pattern for moving the findings from information to implementation through the leadership teams of the church, with the vision that it might begin the process of developing an “ageless thinking” congregation.

## CHAPTER 2

### THEOLOGICAL RATIONALE

There is a systemic difficulty that can make the concept and experience of church transition complicated for many congregations: some of the fundamental purposes of the church are *preserving* in nature. For example, part of the church's role is to preserve both spiritual values and Biblical truth for succeeding generations. How do we make sense of the *preserving* DNA of the church with the concept of transition, which by definition requires at least some *non-preserving* functions in a local congregation?

The problem, however, lies not in the nature of the church but in the “institutionalizing [of] practices that produced the original success” (Nadler 1995, 10). This is an issue that is often more prevalent in the long-standing (“heritage”) church since specific methods accumulate over time making them seem permanently attached to the fundamental purpose of the church. Any change in method can be viewed as a *fundamental* shift.

Present-day church leaders have not always wrestled adequately with the theological issues that support a heritage church—both in its history and practice—in changing its methods to meet a progressively unknowable future. The discipline of transition requires theological rationale to avoid the possibility of being overly shaped by psychology, sociology and such. There are a growing number of books that speak to the topic of transitions in a local congregation from a practical “how to” perspective, however, a theological understanding of the



nature of the church and of the leadership, into which the transitions are being implemented, will ensure that a square peg is not being forced into a round hole.

### **Transition and the Nature of the Church**

This project will survey three theological concepts that help us to understand the nature of the church: (1) the church as both old and new; (2) *ἐκκλησία*, a key descriptive term used in the New Testament, and (3) an understanding of the relational dynamics within the congregation.

#### Church as Old and New

Therefore every teacher of the law who has been instructed about the kingdom of heaven is like the owner of a house who brings out of his storeroom new treasures as well as old. (Jesus in Matthew 13:52, NIV)

This verse helps to form an important theological foundation for this project since it speaks directly to the issue of continuity and discontinuity (i.e., “new” and “old”). This verse, itself a parable, follows a series of parables about the kingdom of heaven and ends with a challenge to the disciples “about their understanding and *future use* of what he has been teaching” (Nolland 2005, 522; emphasis added). Colin Brown in the *Dictionary of New Testament Theology* states, “the contents of the treasure chest is not simply the teaching as such but the teaching as *the occasion for appropriating* the kingdom” (Brown 1975, 2:834; emphasis added). Here Jesus is describing something of what is involved in moving the kingdom forward and, as such, can provide insight into congregational transition.

Interpretations of certain portions of this verse are difficult. The main difficulties have to do with knowing who the “teachers of the law” are and identifying the point of the “is like” comparison. Also not identified by the passage is the “owner of the house.” However, these exegetical difficulties do not concern *what* the owner distributes, which is the issue of most concern in this project. Although the thing that is “brought out” (NIV) is not identified, the description gives us all the insight we need—it is *old and new*. “The point is that his treasure *includes* both the new and the old, and that he can use both” (Gabelein, ed. 1978).

There are six new words used by Matthew in verses 51-52 (“yes,” “scribe,” “disciple,” “thrusts out,” “new,” “old”) which means these verses add a distinctive contribution to our understanding of the kingdom (Nolland 2005, 570). However, Matthew 9:17 (Nolland 2005, 570) helps in our understanding of the main intent of the “old” and “new” reference.

Neither do men pour new wine into old wineskins. If they do, the skins will burst, the wine will run out and the wineskins will be ruined. No, they pour new wine into new wineskins, and both are preserved. (Matthew 9:17, NIV)

The part of this verse that is of interest to this project is Matthew’s understanding of the concept of “old” and “new.” This verse has sometimes been misinterpreted to mean that the old is dismissed by the new. Yet, Matthew deliberately adds something that the parallel passage in Mark (2:22) leaves out; “so that both are preserved.” Matthew is clearly giving us the affirmation that both the old wineskins and the new wine are valued (Boring 1995, 236).

In our main text (Matthew 13:52), the reference to the “teacher of the law” (or “scribe”) gives us further reason to apply this verse to the point of this project. The scribe was far more than a secretary or a law-copier but was considered “the authorized rabbi” and held great influence over people (Hill 1984, 240). By virtue of being a teacher, the old and new that he brings out of the storehouse has to do with what is beneficial to *others* and does not “bring forth things new and old for purely private or personal reasons” (Gabelein, ed. 1978). The storehouse contains old and new for the purpose of the broader community.

Putting it together, this verse has some natural applications to the present day congregation, specifically, a congregation will have some old and new that will be a resource in its progress. Exactly how to define what is old and new in the current context is a matter for each local church to determine, however, some carryover is to be expected. In his commentary on Matthew, Hagner says it this way; “the gospel of the kingdom announced by Jesus, believed in by the disciples and established as the foundation of the Church, is by its very nature a blend of continuity and discontinuity” (Hagner 1993, 33a:402).

The Old Testament provides some rich illustrations on this topic. For instance, 1 Chronicles 22 illustrates the old and new concept as it applies to “old” leaders and “new” leaders. King David was clearly the best person to lead a building campaign for a new temple. He had been given the plans by God (1 Chronicles 28:11-12) and had stored up the necessary resources (1 Chronicles 22:3-5). However, he would not build the temple for the current generation because his tenure required him to be a warrior known for his battles and

bloodshed. This disqualified him as God's ideal candidate to institute a temple-building program (1 Chronicles 28:3). David's desire to build the temple (2 Samuel 7) would be transferred to his successor. The old leader played a big role in the new day. A practical lesson might be that if you are not the one to complete the project, at least help someone else.

Another Old Testament illustration is found in Proverbs 22:28 (NIV), "Do not move an ancient boundary stone set up by your forefathers." The immediate application of the verse has to do with respect for property. Boundaries were sacred because the land was a gift from God to their ancient fore-fathers. But the principle had a broader application than merely to physical boundaries. The *Expositors Bible Commentary* concludes that "the general teaching is that *ancient traditions*, if right, were to be preserved" (Gabelein, ed. 1978; emphasis added). The tradition of land ownership (i.e., boundaries) was worthy to be preserved in that it reflected something beyond the land itself. Similarly, for present-day congregations, some inherited traditions may reflect something beyond the activity. It may well be something that is deeply rooted in the identity of the congregation.

Another nuance in our original text (Matthew 13:52) that has application to the present day church is the sense of urgency in the language used. The word "bring out" (εκβαλει) comes from a verb meaning *to eject* and might be better understood to mean to *hurl* or *fling* (Vincent 2008). Clearly some form of zeal or urgency is being indicated as the owner of the house is not pictured as being passive in his distribution. The issue of urgency will be mentioned in

chapter 3 as an important leadership principle and finds some biblical support in this text.

A better language might help make this concept of “old” and “new” easier to understand and accept within the churches of our time. By experience, “old” and “new” are sometimes burdened by preconceived interpretations by the user; one seeing “old” as inherently good, another seeing it as inherently bad. The heat of the discussion gets turned up when neither recognizes their preconceived interpretations. Robertson in his *Word Pictures* finds the picture of the owner in Matthew 13:52 to be a “fresh-minded” person bringing to his people things that are both “fresh and ancient” (Robertson 2008). This may be a better language when discussing the church as being both preserving and transitioning by nature.

#### The εκκλησια (ekklesia)

The New Testament word most often used for “church” is the Greek word εκκλησια. It does not occur in a number of New Testament books, for example, Mark, Luke, John, 2 Timothy, Titus, 1 Peter, 2 Peter, 1 John, 2 John or Jude (Kittel 2008). This “omission” list does not inform us of anything in particular, but it does mean that the discussion of this word will focus on Paul’s use of the word. It also means that the bulk of our ecclesiology (the theology of the εκκλησια) comes from the Pauline writings. Because of the context and purpose of Paul’s writing, his ecclesiology often pays close attention to how the church should practically function. “Each of Paul’s letters includes educational directions of a practical nature related to church life and practice” (Zuck 2008). Since all scripture is “God breathed,” (2 Timothy 3:16), this is

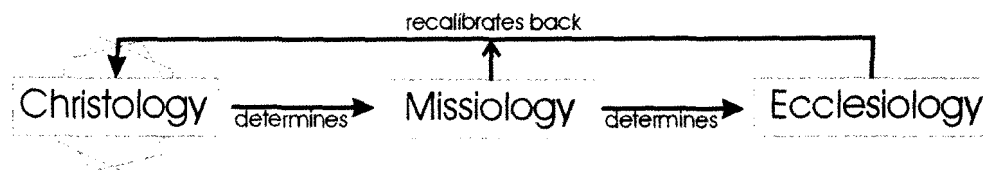
not bad, however, the bulk of Paul's writing is directed to the *organization* of the church not the *nature* of the church (Frost and Hirsch 2009, 31). This may lead us to focus more on how the church is organized rather than the nature of the church. As we will see, Paul borrowed this term from the common usage of his day. In order to get a clearer picture of how Paul understood the nature of the church "it would be helpful to recall in what ways the term *ἐκκλησία* was employed by Paul's non-Christian contemporaries in order to get closer to the original raw material Paul uses in developing his unique ecclesiology" (Frost and Hirsch 2009, 31).

The use of *ἐκκλησία* in the Septuagint (an ancient Greek translation of the Hebrew Old Testament) and the Greek New Testament demonstrates that this term was not used only to denote Christian assemblies (Merkle 2010, 286). Even in the book of Acts, where the development of the Christian concept of *ἐκκλησία* gets its roots, it "appears only in narrative notes and summaries by Luke" and not in a prescribed organizational sense (Zuck 2008). Frost and Hirsch remind us that "in Paul's time, an *ecclesia* was a gathering of the elders of a community...to discuss and deliberate over a variety of social and political dilemmas facing the community" (Frost and Hirsch 2009, 32). Paul takes the term and adds a thoroughly Christian dimension to it which begs the question, "did he choose *ecclesia*, of all the terms he might have used, because it contained this element of community service and value adding?" (Frost and Hirsch 2009, 33). This is not to downplay Paul's emphasis on ecclesiastical organization but is a counterpoint to the over-focus on organizational structure

as an end in itself. This intent is evidenced by Paul’s choice and usage of the word εκκλησια.

A practical principle that springs from this might be that mission determines ecclesiology in the sense that the nature of the church should determine how the church is organized. Frost and Hirsch diagram this concept in a discussion of Christology:

**Diagram 2.1: Mission precedes ecclesiology**



Source: Michael (Frost and Hirsch 2009, 43)

This is significant to transition and change in the church. A church is true to its nature when it meets the purpose of its existence and adapts the organization to suit. Yet there is more to the nature of a church than understanding and being true to its mission. Understanding the *community* nature of a congregation plays significantly into any transitional strategy.

### The Congregation as a Complex Family

Even a cursory reading of the Bible reveals that the local congregation is more than just a simple *grouping* of people. It is a *family* of people—people in filial relationship with one another. Most of the metaphors for salvation use family terminology. For instance, a new Christian is “born again” (John 3:3,7, 1 Peter 1:23). They are “adopted” (Ephesians 1:4,5) into a family, have a new

“father” (Matthew 5:48, 6:14,24,32, et. al.), and new brothers and sisters (Colossians 1:2). The depth of this family relationship is even expressed as being one “body” with the necessary integration of all parts (1 Corinthians 12:12-31).

The local church “family” also fits well into the definition that Marion and Uhl-bien proffer of complex adaptive systems. These are systems where “emergent structures are produced by a combination of microdynamic and macrodynamic forces” (Marion and Uhl-Bien 2001). These forces “represent the bottom up behaviours that occur when individuals interact, leading to both coordinated behaviour and random behaviour” (Marion and Uhl-Bien 2001).

Among the principles at work within the complex adaptive system are:

- objects will interact randomly with each other and cause behaviour that is not always predictable (i.e., random).
- changes in one variable will affect all other variables.
- small changes can lead to significant outcomes (Dickens 2010).

Understanding the congregation as a complex family is a very helpful mental framework because it forces us to recognize each congregation is unique and has a culture all its own. Some distinctive aspects of a congregation will be their:

- Emotional systems—how members relate to each other.
- Value systems—a hierarchy of what they hold dear.
- Traditions—activities that give continuity and identity to the group.
- Power and authority systems—how leadership is earned, expressed and followed (Marion and Uhl-Bien 2001, 403).

Input and change in any one of these—whether good or bad, desirable or undesirable, coordinated or random—creates changes in the rest. Moreover, changes do not necessarily affect everyone in the “family” (congregation) in the



same way, at the same time and with the same impact. The family dynamic within the congregation determines the outcome more than any external technique.

Peter Steinke gives some practical implications of this concept which reinforces the individuality of each church family:

- conflict within the congregation should be expected since the congregation is a system of interrelated parts that have emotional actions/reactions (Steinke 2006a, 28).
- there will be congregations (“families”) that find it hard to manage their anxieties and choose to focus their anxieties on a symptom of the problem or an individual as a scapegoat (Steinke 2006a, 51).
- some congregations may be apt to pay more attention to the reactions of influential individuals than on the problem (Steinke 2006b, 106).

The congregation as “family” and “body” reminds us that “we should conceive of the congregation and its ministry in organic, relational terms, not in mechanical hierarchical ones. The congregation is not so much a rational organization or a social machine as it is a complex organism” (Snyder and Runyon 2002, 56).

### **Transition and the Nature of Leadership**

Understanding the nature of the church forms an important foundation for creating practical strategies to meet the adaptive challenges anticipated by a discontinuous future. However, a more practical foundation is created by understanding some leadership essentials for transition.

#### **Establish Boundaries Not Rules**

This brought Paul and Barnabas into sharp dispute and debate with them. So Paul and Barnabas were appointed, along with some other believers, to go up to Jerusalem to see the apostles and elders about this question (Acts 15:2, NIV).

The problem that brought about the sharp dispute between some Jewish converts and Paul and Barnabus was no small issue. It brought the old vs. new debate to a head. Apparently, Gentiles were being welcomed into Jehovah's family through the Jewish Messiah, Jesus, which caused a sharp debate during a time of difficult transitions. The problem was made clear: "unless you are circumcised, according to the custom taught by Moses, you cannot be saved" (Acts 15:1, NIV). The council at Jerusalem had a tough issue on their hands and each side possessed a goodly share of passionate conviction, as illustrated by Peter's retort; "why do you try to test God by putting on the necks of the disciples a yoke that neither we nor our fathers have been able to bear?" (Acts 15:10, NIV)

The passage points out the important principles that would eventually inform this decision:

- Biblical instruction must take precedence: "Simon has described to us how God at first showed his concern by taking from the Gentiles a people for himself" (Acts 15:14, NIV).
- Theological conviction will be prominent: "No! We believe it is through the grace of our Lord Jesus that we are saved, just as they are" (Acts 15:11, NIV).
- Immediate experience will partly inform the decision to be made: "The whole assembly became silent as they listened to Barnabas and Paul telling about the miraculous signs and wonders God had done among the Gentiles..." (Acts 15:12, NIV). Also, "God who knows the heart, showed that he accepted them by giving the Holy Spirit to them, just as he did to us" (Acts 15:8, NIV).
- Decisions must be made according to priority order: "Instead we should write to them, telling them to abstain from food polluted by idols, from sexual immorality, from the meat of strangled animals and from blood" (Acts 15:20, NIV).

The passage adds one last interpretive help in verse 21, "For Moses has been preached in every city from the earliest of times and is read in the synagogues on

every Sabbath.” Apparently, what helped to frame the decision was not simply the “old” law of circumcision but on how it fit Moses’ fuller teaching.

It would be easy to interpret the outcome in terms of win-lose: the apostles “won” since the Jerusalem meeting decided against those who demanded circumcision. Unfortunately, in the discussion of such things old vs. new, traditional vs. contemporary, ancient vs. emergent, our win/lose language can deflect us from a deeper understanding of the guiding principles that create good decisions. To clarify the decision-making process, Frost and Hirsch use of the terms centred set vs. bounded set (Frost and Hirsch 2003, 47), which they borrowed from Paul Hiebert (Hiebert 1994). A congregation with a bounded-set frame of reference makes decisions based on a set of rules. A congregation with a centred-set frame of reference makes decisions according to its proximity to its central values.

In Acts 15, the Pharisees seem to be imposing a bounded-set of rules based on a singular, narrow law. Yet, ultimately, the decision centred on how it fit the broader values in Moses’ teachings. This interpretation is confirmed by how Paul applied the decision of Acts 15: he had Timothy circumcised (Acts 16:3) but not Titus (Galatians 2:3). Apparently it was not circumcision that mattered *per se*. The apostles had made a decision based on a centred-set that focused on boundaries not rules.

### Interpret Reality

Charles Gerkin is among the first to use the term “interpretive guide” in the context of providing pastoral care (Gerkin 1997, 113–4). Gerkin finds this

term emerged from the late-modern and post-modern context where pastors have lost hierarchical or “positional” authority due to the rise in an educated public, the spread of democratic values, cultural pluralism, the secularization of present day institutions, etc. (Osmer 2008, 18–9). The leader as *interpretive guide* might be a unique term but the concept of the leader/pastor interpreting the times is hardly new.

1 Chronicles 12:32 illustrates this by a group of people who acted as interpretive guides to King David; “men of Issachar, who understood the times and knew what Israel should do—200 chiefs, with all their relatives under their command (NIV).” Some commentators attempt to explain what “understood the times” means by suggesting they must have had a heightened awareness of astrological, political or physical knowledge. However, the statement “affirms nothing more than that the tribe of Issachar (in deciding to raise David to the throne) followed the judgment of its princes, who rightly estimated the circumstances of the time” (Keil & Delitzsch 2008). The source of their insight is not given but that fact of the interpretive nature of their leadership cannot be mistaken.

Further insight comes from Jesus in Luke 12 where he is giving his disciples some warnings and encouragements and then turns to the crowd and says, “Hypocrites! You know how to interpret the appearance of the earth and the sky. How is it that you don't know how to interpret this present time (Luke 12:56, NIV)?” The lessons up to this verse in Luke 12 include the parable of the rich fool, a lesson on not worrying, and being ready servants expecting the master to

return at any time. Each of these situations requires insightful interpretation of the circumstances. Apparently, the audience to which Jesus was speaking was more adept at reading the sky than reading “God's ‘time’ of opportunity and responsibility” (Gabelein, ed. 1978)—and they should have known better. At the very least Jesus indicates that some interpreting of the times is to be expected.

The specifics of how to go about this interpretive role is not outlined in scripture. However, we have some clear examples that *perspective gathering* plays an important role. For instance, Acts 6 records a situation that needed interpreting. The cause of the problem was obvious; there were so many new disciples that some widows were being overlooked in the daily distribution of food (Acts 6:1). Given that the situation had never happened before, it was an adaptive challenge that had no proven technical fix. The solution would be for seven gifted and willing people to organize themselves in order to close this gap in the community. How long it took to interpret the situation is not known but the solution was based on interpreting a new reality—and it worked.

Nehemiah 1 also records an adaptive challenge to solve. Ever since the destruction of Jerusalem by the Babylonians, the Hebrew exiles had been without a walled city in which to live and conduct their spiritual journey. When Nehemiah “heard these things,[he] sat down and wept. For some days [he] mourned and fasted and prayed before the God of heaven” (Nehemiah 1:4, NIV). Even after arriving in Jerusalem with the permission of King Artaxerxes in hand, he took three days to gather further input (Nehemiah 2:11). “Because of the complexity of the problem and the explosive nature of the situation, he wisely

decided to get ‘personal perspective’ before publicly announcing his strategy” (Getz 1974, 149).

The pastor as interpretive guide “does not take people on the same old trip but travels into *new territory*” (Osmer 2008, 19; emphasis added) and as such, will need to be able to interpret the current reality. Moving a congregation to an increasingly unknowable future means that they “have never been this way before” (Joshua 3:1, NIV) and demands understanding the times.

#### Establish Priorities

A leader of the congregation will need to learn how to establish priorities among the many options and needs in the congregation. Once again, Acts 6 and the choosing of the seven to serve the needs of the widows amid the burgeoning number of people following Jesus serves as an illustration. The Twelve determined their main task; “it would not be right for us to neglect the ministry of the word of God in order to wait on tables” (Acts 6:2, NIV). Obviously, these matters were important otherwise they would not have developed a strategy to solve the issue. On the other hand, they were not important enough to take them away from their primary work.

There are several authors of church transition books who speak to the issue of priorities. Hawkins in his book, *The Learning Congregation*, says that leaders must “exercise the gift of discernment, not deciding...*clarifying purposes and complexity* so the congregation can develop shared meaning and decisions” (Hawkins 1997, 62; emphasis added). Thomas Bandy, a Canadian author of several church transition books, uses the language of prescriptive vs. proscriptive

thinking (Bandy 1999). Prescriptive thinking “lists everything that a committee, program or church office can or should do,” whereas proscriptive thinking “defines the [limits] beyond which a ministry team, program, or church leader cannot go, but within which they are free to take initiative” (Bandy 1999, 34). The implication is that the congregational leader must stay further away from ecclesiastical management and closer to establishing priorities—which results in lots of room for creative thinking and interpretive application.

### Focus on Community and Movement More Than Structure and System

Since the primary leader within most protestant congregations is the pastor, it is this role to which we turn our attention. When looking for models of pastoral leadership some congregations have turned to business models. As effective as business models can be in terms of functioning as a *human* organization, they teach us little about being a *body*...a community (Snyder and Runyon 2002, 71). As we have seen, the congregation is a family, and whereas *community* is not the primary concern of the business model, it *is* for the church. In terms of the family/community nature of the congregation, “Eugene Peterson is right in saying that business has nothing to say to the church” (Snyder and Runyon 2002, 70). This may be an overstatement for effect but should cause us to reflect carefully on the model upon which our view of congregational leadership is founded.

The leader of the congregation is the shepherd and gets its primary cues from Jesus the shepherd. The term pastor (ποιμενας, Ephesians 4:11) is the term for a shepherd either figuratively or literally (Strong 2008). It is the same word

used by Jesus of himself (John 10:11,14) and used of Jesus by the author of Hebrews (13:20) and by Peter (1 Peter 5:4). Even as Jesus reinstates Peter (John 21:15-17), Peter is given the tasks of a shepherd, “feed my sheep”, even if not given the title “shepherd.” This pastoral role is not exclusive to Jesus or Peter but is given to some for leadership in the present day church. 1 Peter 5:2 calls the elders (πρεσβυτερος) to be shepherds and 1 Timothy 3:2 indicates an “overseer” (επισκοπος) is to accomplish the shepherd task as well.

My purpose here is not to give a thorough theology of the role of a shepherd but only to indicate that the role of the pastor has more of its roots in Christology (i.e., Jesus the model) than Ecclesiology (e.g., church management). This takes us back to Diagram 2.1, *Mission precedes ecclesiology* (page 21), which Frost and Hirsch developed. Christ, as the predominant example, forms the main metaphor for the pastoral role—sheep-centered rather than organization-centered. This is not an either/or division. There need be no competition between the sheep and the structure, the organism and the organization. This concept is of particular interest to the heritage church since over the years it naturally accumulates multiple layers of organization which can take on a life of its own and distract its primary leader from the sheep.

Among the implications is that the role of the pastor will be primarily relationship-oriented. Business models can focus on economic results and will consider relational aspects (customer service, corporate morale, etc.) mostly as a means to another end—profitability (Snyder and Runyon 2002, 71). Not so for the



pastor. He is more a relational/spiritual professional rather than a CEO or systems manager.

The central model of the pastor is that of shepherd, however, Ephesians 4 outlines the central task of the pastor—to build a ministering community.

It was he who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers, to prepare God's people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ. (Eph 4:11-13, NIV)

Up to this point in the book of Ephesians, Paul's prayers for them (1:15-23, 3:14-21) has been a central reason for writing. He is anxious that they know God and are able to enter into the richness of their election (1:18) with a goal that they would express this richness in holy living (4:20-24). God's imaginative method of accomplishing this, at least in part, is through equipping leaders (4:11-13). Much debate has focused on the definition of, and even existence of, the five roles—apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers. That discussion is not unimportant. However, what matters to this project is the task that is given to the pastor/teachers—“prepare God's people for works of service so the body of Christ may be built up.” Among many other tasks a pastor might be called upon to do, equipping the body of Christ is “the overriding task that gives pattern and focus to everything else” (Snyder and Runyon 2002, 91).

One of the implications is that the pastor is not responsible to *do* or *control* the ministry but release it to gifted people for them to do the ministry. If the pastor does not release the ministry to the congregation, the congregation will increasingly see the leader “as a politician or a diplomat rather than a spiritual

leader” (Bandy 1999, 159). If this becomes the overriding view of the pastor, “it is no wonder that the temptation is so strong for both denominations and congregations to borrow organizational models from surrounding culture and regard the pastor as the tacit CEO of the organization” (Bandy 1999, 159).

Ephesians 4 goes a long way to support a parallel doctrine often called *the priesthood of all believers* (Snyder and Runyon 2002, 91) which became a central theme of the Reformation and many protestant churches. Every Christian is a minister in *some* form seeking in *some ways* to assist the whole community in effective mission. The gifts to the church which are given to people in the congregation, as listed in Ephesians 4, are five in the overarching task of creating a community that can be defined as “mature” and attaining the “fullness of Christ (vs. 13).” And it should be noted that the roles listed here are not endorsed as positions but as gifts to the church—not mainly for control or structure but for equipping and releasing.

The result of the central model (shepherd) and central task (equipping) of the pastor is not that good business models should not be incorporated, or that these are the only roles that the pastor might be gifted and passionate to accomplish. The point is that the pastor’s role is primarily to create a community and movement toward effective mission more than as the keeper of a structure and maintainer of a system which is often the case in the heritage church as it has much more to maintain.

## **A Case from Church History**

Given that this project seeks to understand transitions within the context of the leadership culture of a specific congregation (Calvary Church), it is helpful to know more about its founding and how it helped to form the normative centre of the congregation. Certainly, church history affords many examples of transition in action. Whether it be the transitions within the first-century church, reformation history, or even the rise of denominationalism within the protestant movement—they would all prove enlightening in a more general discussion than this project is addressing. Of greater immediate value regarding the stewarding of leadership norms into a discontinuous future are the origins of Calvary Church and also the denomination of which it is a member.

### **A Brief History of the Founding of Calvary Church**

In 1934, following six years of ministry as a non-denominational church, Calvary Church became a member of the Associated Gospel Churches of Canada. It began as a church split from St. John's Presbyterian Church, and not unlike most church splits, it was not conducted in a spiritually healthy way (Notley 1978). The driving force behind the split seemed to stem from what was considered theological liberalism that was infiltrating the Methodist and Presbyterian church of the day (Bradford 2002, 9). In 1925, the Methodist Church, Congregational Church and the majority of Presbyterian Churches joined to become the United Church of Canada (<http://www.united-church.ca/history>). St. John's Presbyterian Church decided not to join the United Church, however, it was a time of upheaval in the church. A new pastor, William Nisbet (28 years

old), was called from the Presbyterian church in Belfast, Ireland where revival, evangelistic zeal and gospel praise music was in fashion. Nisbet was an ardent evangelical who broke from the traditional Presbyterian worship style and preaching and was not entirely welcomed by many who had traditional Presbyterian backgrounds. Eventually, Nisbet felt constrained to leave the church, forfeit his ordination and return to Ireland. Instead, a large group of people also left the church and an entirely new congregation met on the last Sunday of May, 1928—all from St. John’s Presbyterian Church—with Nisbet as their leader. Two weeks later, June 13, 1928 the church was formally constituted with a membership of 297 people. The church was called *St. John’s Evangelical Church Independent*, a reflection of the desire to carry on the “real” ministry of the original church (they kept “*St. John’s*”) and a new ideology, *independent*. The timeline (Appendix I) gives some of the details of how things progressed from its founding.

#### A Brief History of the Founding of the Associated Gospel Churches

The Associated Gospel Churches of Canada (AGC) was incorporated in the same year as the United Church of Canada started—March 18, 1925 (Redinger 1995, 78)—but it has its roots beginning in the 1890’s. P.W. Philpott is considered the primary founding father. He became a Christian in January 1883, at an open air meeting conducted by two women from the Salvation Army from Toronto. Later he married a Captain in the Army and then became a Brigadier in the Salvation Army in which he served for nine years. But a shift was taking place in the Salvation Army so that in 1892, P. W. Philpott left the Salvation Army and

founded the Christian Workers' Church in 1892. He was followed by many former Salvation Army adherents who, like Philpott, were "dissatisfied with the Army's hierarchical structure and its centralized management of funds" (Draper 2003). A later interview with Philpott in *The Hamilton Herald* (January 24, 1903) recorded it this way:

The brigadier's resignation was tendered on a Wednesday; the next day a meeting was held (to discuss the future). On the next Sunday over four hundred worshippers were assembled in what had been a Presbyterian church to take part in services presided over by P.W. Philpott. On that day was inaugurated an association known as the Christian Workers'—a religious body without pope, primate, metropolitan, bishop or president (Redinger 1995, 8).

Philpott served with The Christian Workers' Churches of Canada (CWCC) until 1922 when he left to become the senior pastor of The Moody Church, Chicago. Eventually the CWCC evolved to become the AGC (1925) and incorporated as "a group of evangelical churches standing in the 'faith once delivered unto the saints'" (Redinger 1995, 78).

#### Some Affinities

There are some common themes that emerge when studying the historic foundations of both Calvary Church and the AGC. An aversion to institutionalism and liberalism, the "independence" of the local church, and a focus on deep spiritual life ("holiness") and Bible preaching are three that stand out. This is confirmed by an article in *The Globe, Toronto* (May 25, 1984), which recorded the events of an early conference.

...the end they have in view, that is deepening of spiritual life among the people. The public meetings throughout the day were crowded and the enthusiasm which prevailed indicated no uncertain need there is for the existence of this body of Christian workers. Christian Workers' is not a

group separated from other denominations but is a company of believers united for the purpose of aggressive spiritual work, whose aim and object is to worship God in spirit and in truth, to exalt the Lord Jesus in all His offices, to honour the Holy Spirit as guide and indwelling comforter of His people, and to edify and strengthen one another in the faith of the Gospel and win souls for Christ (Redinger 1995, 20–21).

Even just this brief historical sketch of the AGC and Calvary Church makes it clear that these affinities between the two translate into the leadership culture to this day. In some cases a church is what it is *because of* denominational distinctives. In the case of Calvary, it seems the church created its own distinctive character or personality and found a denomination with which it was compatible and joined the AGC six years after its founding. Calvary Church shows a remarkable connection to the underlying leadership norms upon which the AGC is founded and currently functions. The aversion to being “institutional”, the desire to be autonomous (“independent” as in the original name), and deep spiritual life through Bible teaching are obvious.

In summary, this theological rationale has helped to give clarity to the nature of the church as being a complex family that applies both old *and* new in its calling to missional living. We have also determined some Biblical leadership dynamics essential to transition: establishing boundaries, interpreting reality, establishing priorities, and prioritizing the community of the church over the structure of the church. Understanding the historical background of Calvary Church and its chosen denomination in regard to some of these theological dynamics will set the stage for the research project to be conducted on behalf of the church.

## CHAPTER 3

### LITERATURE REVIEW

There is a sense in which the heritage church, like a large ocean-going vessel, is harder to turn and takes longer to do so. The goal of this chapter is to review the available literature in order to gather some principles for understanding a congregation's historic leadership culture, as well as some basic transitional leadership attributes and actions so as to keep it from misdirection. The literature review will survey: (1) understanding congregational culture; (2) transitional leadership, and (3) the dynamics of the learning organization. A brief treatment of the later will be included since it is important in creating an "ageless thinking congregation," that is, a church that is able to continuously meet the adaptive challenges of succeeding generations.

Since the congregation is a complex family (see chapter 2) with its historic behaviours and traditions motivating its activities, the historic culture of the congregation is the first lens through which to see what a congregation really *is* and why it does what it does (Ammerman et al. 1998, 13ff). It must be noted that the culture of a church is not one unified item. There are subcultures within a congregation that organize around age, longevity, gender, favourite activities, leadership, etc. (Ammerman et al. 1998, 80). These variations of *culture-within-a-culture* form the whole picture in planning for transition. This project looks at one part of the culture picture.

Over the years it is possible for a congregation to lose its sense of cultural "fit" in a changing and evolving world which requires a "thorough look at the

history, gifts, and passions (the) congregation brings to that world” (Dudley and Ammerman 2002, 8). Grierson says this act of “remembering is essential for the creation of identity and corporate integrity” (Grierson 1996, 55). Ammerman and Dudley call the process of uncovering the elements of history and context as “mapmaking” which makes the “congregational character” visible (Dudley and Ammerman 2002, 61).

Since it is the leaders of a congregation that are predominantly entrusted with the direction of the church, it is important to understand the leadership culture as it regards developing directions for future ministry in keeping with its ethos. Unpacking the leadership portion of the culture is the focal point of this project and is now the focus of our attention.

### **Leadership Culture Basics**

In the transition to the future, the inherited leadership culture of the congregation can be its biggest asset or its biggest liability. Edwin Friedman refers to this as “the presence of the past” which helps us to understand an organization’s “ability to survive and...their inability to change” (Friedman 2007, 249).

There are some motivating influences within the leadership culture that, when clearly understood, help to unpack the leadership culture and position a congregation for transition. One of those influences is something Thomas Bandy calls “addictions” (Bandy 1998, 50). Though a negative term, it does help to elevate the need to understand that which is hindering change. Here are just two



examples of leadership addictions that Bandy provides, each followed by a corrective:

- the youth are the future of your church (transformed adults who are not focused on preserving the past are the future of the church).
- it is the pastor's job to visit the hospitals (his task is to equip people to do the ministry) (Bandy 1998, 51) (Bandy 2001, 29–35).

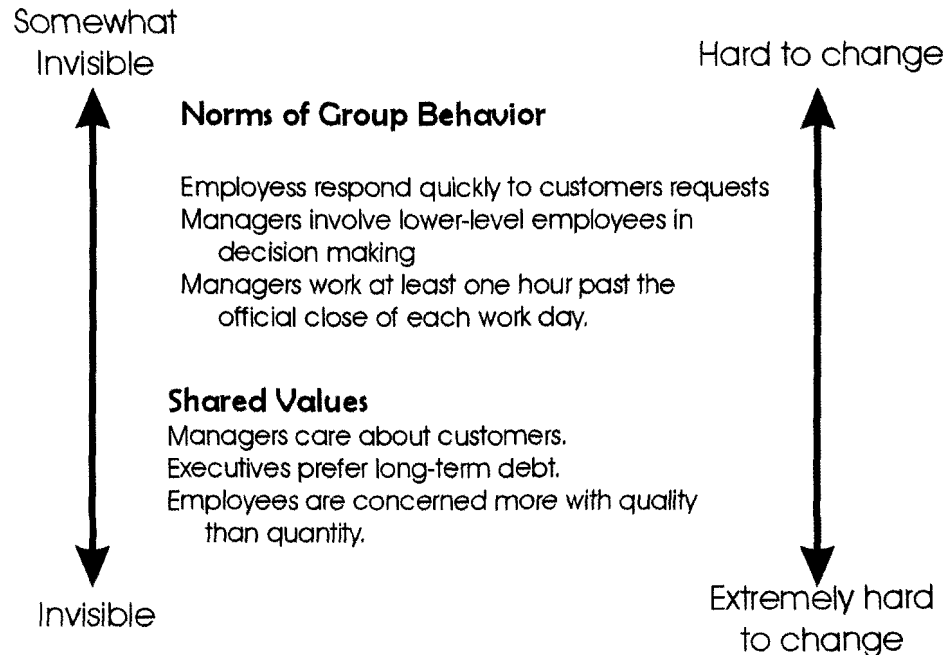
A second influence is found in John P. Kotter's book, *Leading Change*, and is somewhat related to Bandy's "addictions." Kotter calls it the *invisible dynamic*. What he means is that some of the leadership values that energize an organization can be invisible to the very people providing leadership. Because they are invisible, Kotter submits that the behaviour of an organization is more easily changed than the "addictions" that underlie the behaviours. In Diagram 3.1, he gives the example of a high functioning corporate culture that behaves with norms that are mostly invisible to the employees yet still motivate their way of doing business. What is of importance to this project is his conclusion that the more visible these norms are, the easier it will be to enact change. It is for this reason that "history can be a rich resource for congregations in changing communities *when it is used knowingly*, but it is a liability when it uses us" (Dudley and Ammerman 2002, 60; emphasis added).

The goal of understanding a congregation's leadership history is to clarify the "normative centre" (Carroll 1991, 168) that has been created as a result of historic methods and behaviours. These will cause "themes, images and symbols to emerge that can be energizing for the future" (Ammerman et al. 1998, 94). This sense of *centre* can give the congregation a place to stand so as to be able to

change the world *or* a place to stand to stubbornly stay until the world has passed it by.

### Diagram 3.1

#### Components of Corporate Culture: Some Examples.



Source: John P. Kotter, *Leading Change* (San Francisco: Harvard Business Press, 1996), 149.

Leaders who recognize such things as addictions and the invisible elements of corporate culture are needed in order to blaze new trails for each individual complex family (i.e., congregation). Those leaders also exhibit a few common traits which is the purpose of the next section.

### Survey of Change Leadership

Organizational transition is a complex science. Theorists, both in Christian and secular circles, draw on a wide variety of leadership theories to help facilitate

meaningful change in complex organizations such as a congregation. The culture of the organization, in part uncovered by unpacking its leadership “normative centre”, is a necessary step in the movement toward the future. But what specific kind of leadership—its attributes and actions—is necessary for a leader of an organization to be transitionally effective? For the purposes of this project, I will recommend three transitional attributes and four transitional actions because they form a good foundation for meeting adaptive challenges. This list is neither comprehensive nor are the individual descriptions complete. However, it does give focus to the kind of leadership necessary to the transition of a congregation that proposes to steward its heritage ethos while meeting adaptive challenges. This specifically applies to the needs of Calvary.

#### Leader Attributes

The nature of discontinuous change (i.e., non-incremental change that requires reorientation of thought and behaviour) will demand leadership traits where flexibility is a defining characteristic. My personal experience of 25+ years of pastoral ministry has confirmed these as a needed focus of attention in change leadership as well.

#### **Well-differentiated**

Edwin Friedman contends that a primary attribute of a healthy leader is being “well-differentiated” or a “well-defined self” (Friedman 2007, 163). The elements of a well differentiated leader include:

- being clear about *their own* life goals.
- being able to be separate from their role but still be connected to it.
- being able to manage their own reactions and thereby willing to risk displeasing people (Friedman 2007, 14).

The last item on the list captures a good measure of the concept of differentiation in that a leader who can regulate their own “reactive mechanisms” will be better able to *objectively* transform the institution in which they serve. “Differentiation is charting one’s own way by means of one’s own internal guidance system, rather than perpetually eyeing the ‘scope’ to see where others are at” (Friedman 2007, 183). This attribute makes “any leadership theory or technique look brilliant” (Friedman 2007, 20) since leadership theory and technique are only as good as the leader who can be objective by removing their own reactions from the situation. This kind of leader can be described as a “non-anxious presence” (Steinke 2006a, 34) in the midst of the anxiety that often accompanies transition.

As a caution, it pays to remember that differentiation does not mean being a “lone ranger” isolated from the very institution they are to lead. The differentiated leader is both separated *and* connected to the family system they lead. “Differentiation is the capacity to be one’s own integrated, aggregate-of-cells person while still belonging to, or being able to relate to, a larger colony” (Friedman 2007, 184).

But it goes deeper. The transitional leader is not only well-differentiated but takes the next step and becomes a “keen and focused observer of (their) own thoughts, emotions and behaviour” and then *uses it as information* (Kegan 2009, 224). Differentiating self from the situation not only provides perspective and objectivity but also the leader’s own thoughts, emotions and behaviours can provide some of the very data necessary to make transitional decisions.

## **Reflective**

Closely associated with being differentiated is the need for reflective leadership. Reflective leadership is “the capacity, in the midst of the practice of ministry, to lead the church to act in ways that are faithful to the gospel and *appropriate within the situation*” (Carroll 1991, 122; emphasis added). The leader not only subjectively manages their own reactions, uses their thoughts, emotions and behaviour as information, but also objectively reflects on the peculiarities of the specific situation. The leader must be *in* the situation and must be *appropriate* to the particular organization’s culture. The very word “transition” should help us understand that there is movement *from...to*. The transition needs to be appropriate in the current situation (“from”) as well as appropriate for the future (“to”) which requires much reflection.

Reflective leadership is an important leadership attribute for a complex family such as the congregation. Since each congregation is a mixture of emotional and cultural dynamics, “there is no one best way that can be applied in every ministry situation” and each situation necessarily involves “considerable amount of artistry and intuition on the professional’s part” (Carroll 1991, 128). Bandy uses the metaphor of an improv drama where the cast of characters are playing their roles but the script itself is open-ended—the drama “is constrained only by the story that has unfolded thus far, the set and setting, and the capacities of the actors who take part in the drama” (Bandy 1999, 167). The task of the lead actor demands interpretation of the story so far and reflection of how that might play out going forward.

Recall from chapter 1 that the type of change futurists are anticipating is *discontinuous*. This underscores the need for reflective leadership since discontinuous change requires more than tuning or adapting current strategies but re-orienting or re-creating strategies and authority structures (Nadler 1995, 25) which is assisted by the reflective process.

Another reason reflective leadership is needed is that when things are changing discontinuously, “long-range planning is too incremental and simply doesn’t work anymore” (Malphurs 2005, 27). If change is sequential then long-range planning can be a viable way to meet the future. However, when changes are not on a predictable trajectory (i.e., discontinuous) then leadership who are capable of reflecting on the context and culture will be needed to give it direction.

Recognizing the need for a reflective, interpretive leader is particularly necessary for the heritage church since it can naturally rely on the more hierarchical leadership framework of its formative years.

The reflective leader will do more than reflect on the context of the congregation but also on the emotional processes at work within the congregation. Since the “people in any family or institution...are connected by the emotional processes between them” (Friedman 2007, 127), the leader’s role will first have to do with finding the uniqueness of the congregation before finding a particular transition needed by the congregation. It was the early leaders of the family therapy movement that gave us some good insight into how to function in a church “family.” They understood the circumstance a family finds itself in is only part of the problem so they “began to focus on [emotional] relationship processes”

(Friedman 2007, 127) at work within the family. As applied to church “family” leaders, they will need to pay as much attention to the emotional processes between family members as the transition. To put it another way, a pastor may need to pay as much attention to the flock as the individual sheep within it.

### **Adaptive**

A part of the reflective work of the leader will be interpreting if the challenges being faced are *technical* or *adaptive* in nature (Heifetz 1994). A technical challenge is a problem for which a fix or solution exists even if very complex. An adaptive challenge is a problem for which a solution will need to be created and which requires a change in the system (Heifetz 1994). As stated in the introduction, you can determine which of these challenges a transition fits into by asking , “is this a problem that an expert can fix or is this a problem that is going to require people in the community to change their values, their behaviour, or their attitudes ?” (Heifetz 2010). The former is a “technical challenge” (e.g. car problems require a mechanic, a broken bone needs to be set by a surgeon) while the latter is an “adaptive challenge” (e.g. General Motors recreated due, in part, to changing car buyers values). Many of a congregation’s challenges are adaptive in nature and require a new kind of thinking—leaders who “learn their way forward” (Heifetz 1994, 87) and work *toward* a solution, as yet unknown but will become known by means of the process itself.

There are other leadership attributes, yet being *differentiated* (from self and situation), *reflective* (of self and situation) and *adaptive* (learning forward), are key attributes to any transition plan.

## Leader Actions

The three leader attributes help the leader to be a person who is able to accomplish change within their organization. Yet, a leader is not only a leader because of the characteristics they possess but also because of the actions they perform. As was true for leader attributes, discontinuous change elevates the need for certain leader actions in order to accommodate it.

### **Directing attention and urgency**

One of those actions is directing attention to the heart of the matter (Heifetz 1994, 113). Unless a leader can call attention to the *need* for some kind of a transition, the followers are likely to ignore the reality of the need and do nothing. Just like a fish that is unaware of the water in which it swims until it is out of the water (at which point it is too late), so too a congregation can be unaware of its real needs until someone (or something) directs its attention to it.

In the absence of proper attention to the need for transition, the followers might think the leader is recommending some deviant action—something out of character or out of sync with the nature of the congregation. The followers must “readily comprehend the purpose of unusual or deviant behaviour so that it focuses less on the behaviour itself, or the person, and more on its meaning” (Heifetz 1994, 225). Directing attention to the right things then is the first leadership act of transition.

But directing attention is more than facing reality—it also has to do with creating a sense of urgency about it. The opposite of urgency in Kotter’s language is complacency and status quo, which happens when there is no sense of urgency



(Kotter 1996, 5). Regarding complacency, Kotter revealed an interesting research result. He found that in some organizations, the very control and planning systems that were meant to move the organization forward were inadvertently “rigged to make it easy for everyone to meet their functional goals” without ever adding to the overall mission (Kotter 1996, 40). In other words, everyone can be meeting their objectives but the organization itself is standing still. A sense of urgency keeps a congregation from meeting all its departmental “goals” but still not accomplish its mission.

Creating the sense of urgency and breaking from complacency can be accomplished in several ways such as creating a crisis, honest discussions about the organizations problems, providing a lot of information about future opportunities, etc. (Kotter 1996, 44). One method that seems particularly appropriate to the volunteer nature of a church is to have adequate feedback loops. Feedback, especially from unhappy “customers,” will facilitate a good reality check, help a congregation “counteract insider myopia with external data” (Kotter 1996, 49) and ensure attention is directed to the right things.

Friedman issues a caution pertaining to the issues of directing attention and creating urgency; something he calls “the fallacy of empathy” (Friedman 2007, 132). Though it may seem harsh at first blush, he is referring to misplaced empathy, that is, empathy that disguises or deflects attention from the real issue and places it on the sensitivities of an individual (or minority group) within the family system. In other words, empathy that focuses more on the individual rather

than the family system itself. In this sense, the responsibility of the leader is to lead the family and not necessarily any member of it.

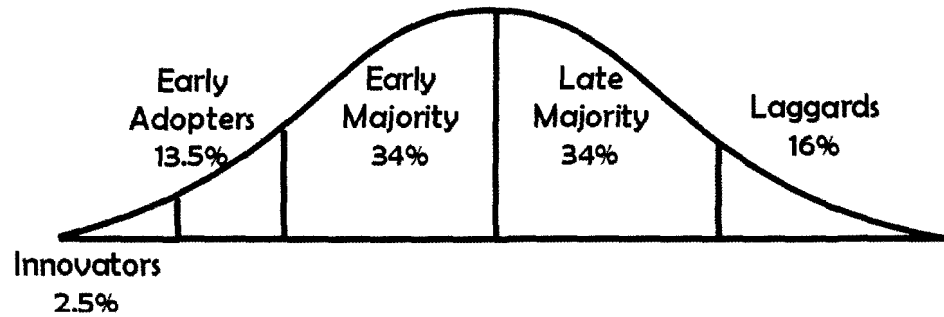
### **Regulating distress and timing**

Among humankind's strongest reactions to transition is a sense of loss. Change by its very nature requires *losing* something for something else (Heifetz 2009, 22). An old leadership maxim states that *leadership is taking people where they did not know they wanted to go*. The emphasis here is on "they did not know," which, for many people, translates emotionally as loss (Osmer 2008, 204). There are at least two practical implications of this "loss" principle for leadership in the complex environment of a congregation. The first, to put it negatively, is that a leader must disappoint people at a rate they can absorb (Heifetz 2009, 27). Disappointment will be common in the presence of change but it must not be so intense as to damage (or lose) the very people the change is intended to help. If people leave the congregation, either physically or emotionally, because their rate of absorption was exceeded, then the leader may not be pacing the adaptation properly. Heifetz would call this "regulating distress" (Heifetz 1994, 139).

There are many studies that have proven that people accept adaptations at different but somewhat predictable rates. Everett Rogers suggests people fit into one of five categories of adopting: innovators, early adopters, early majority, late majority and laggards (Rogers 1995, 262). The categories emerge on a bell curve as can be seen in Diagram 3.2.

### Diagram 3.2

#### Adaptation of Innovations.



Source: Everett M. Rogers, *Diffusion of Innovations* (New York: Free Press, 1995), 262.

The five divisions represent people that have some typical characteristics. The *innovators* are almost obsessed with change and can handle a lot of uncertainty about the outcomes. The *early adopters* are not too far ahead of the bulk of the people in the organization, as the *innovators* tend to be, but are still respected by their peers enough to help lead change. The *early majority* typically deliberate for some time before they accept a new idea. They neither want to be first or last so they tend to be deliberate in adopting change. The *late majority* are the skeptical and cautious ones, waiting for the majority of people to get on board with a change. Only peer pressure and the removal of most uncertainty will tip the balance and make them adopt a change. The *laggard's* only point of reference is the past and therefore they rely almost exclusively on tradition for decision-making (Rogers 1995, 264–266).

In general, according to the chart, up to 50% of the congregation will either get on board with the change late or possibly never at all. Understanding leadership *pace* in a complex family, such as a local church, must take this into consideration.

The second implication of the “loss” principle regards the *process* of adaptation. Heifetz rightly states that the process of change needs to be “iterative and improvisational” (Heifetz 2009, 122). Similarly, Hugh Courtney in his book *20/20 Foresight* speaks of staging adaptations over time (Courtney 2001, 66). One advantage of this iterative process of adaptation is that better information—especially about the future—will be more accurate and available the closer you get to it (Courtney 2001, 66). Another advantage, according to Courtney’s research, is that ultimately it does not “decrease the probability of success” (Courtney 2001, 73). This is likely because a change progressively implemented over time better reflects the reality of that current situation than a rigid strategy, based on a much earlier prediction, possibly could.

### **Directing Not Controlling**

It is possible to slow the pace and process of transition too much by over analysis of the transition. A congregation cannot be controlled or analyzed in any absolute sense. Among other issues, attempting to control the transition assumes the change is just a complicated problem to figure out—a technical challenge. As we found out earlier, when complex systems face adaptive challenges, inputs do not always elicit predictable outputs. Adaptive challenges have a life and a pace all their own and cannot be definitively managed or controlled.

This is confirmed by the role that information plays in assisting a transition. Though it might seem counter-intuitive, information itself does not motivate transition. Friedman observes that over the years of his research it has not been his experience with “stuck marriages, families, corporations, or other institutions that an increase in information will necessarily enable a system to get unstuck” (Friedman 2007, 31). Transition requires not just more information but a shift in the “emotional processes of that institution” (Friedman 2007, 31). Bolman and Deal go so far as to call these emotional systems in a family system “psychic prisons” (Bolman and Deal 2008, 7) eventually softening the phrase to “favoured internal maps” (Bolman and Deal 2008, 33). Experienced church leaders know all too well that “when any relationship system is imaginatively gridlocked, it cannot get free simply through more thinking about the problem” (Friedman 2007, 32). Evidences of this gridlock, though not always wrong in and of themselves, are: either/or thinking; the error of trying the same thing harder, or a *focus on answers rather than questions* (Friedman 2007, 34–40).

To solve this *unable-to-control* problem, the leadership of a congregation must recognize that “a *directionally correct* answer available in a week may be preferable to a finely specified, analytical answer available in three months” (Courtney 2001, 132; emphasis added). The leaders of a congregation will need to recognize that directionally correct answers may be the only answers available at any given time.

This approach to leadership is not for the faint of heart. Leading with “directionally correct” requires a lot of hard work such as forecasting how a

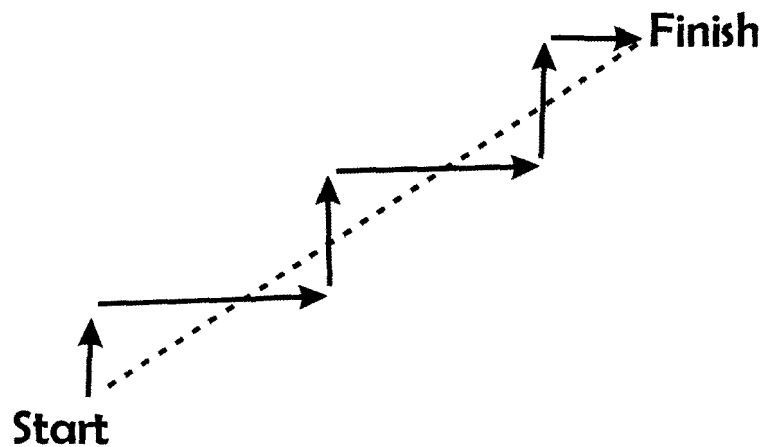
potential strategy meets the organization’s key values, how the strategy itself changes them, and calculating the potential impact (Courtney 2001, 117,118). This is hard work as all adaptive challenges are.

### **Enacting multiple experiments**

The concept of leading with directionally correct answers leads to the method of enacting multiple experiments. Whether you call it “improvisational” (Willhauck 2001, 43), or “reality testing” (Heifetz 1994, 111), or iterative small experiments (Roxburgh and Romanuk 2006, 80), or *leadership-from-the-edges*, it amounts to enacting small changes then debriefing their effectiveness. Roxburgh and Romanuk suggest that the pathway of transition is much like the path of a sailboat as it tacks into the wind towards its destination (Roxburgh and Romanuk 2006, 79). They call it a “Missional Change Model” which looks like Diagram 3.3 below.

### **Diagram 3.3**

**Missional Change Model: the path of a sailboat as it tacks to its destination**



Source: Alan J. Roxburgh and Fred Romanuk, *The missional leader: equipping your church to reach a changing world* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2006), 179.

One advantage of enacting multiple experiments is that it creates “space to learn, adjust, and discover appropriate ways to move forward” (Roxburgh and Romanuk 2006, 80). The experiments that prove effective can be further refined and may begin the movement inward toward core strategies. Another advantage is that the spirit of adventure “optimizes serendipity” (Friedman 2007, 32)—good things just happen by chance. Though some good fortune is at play in the process, it is not a matter of “good luck” since the experiments are based on transitions that are directionally correct in the first place. And in the mean time, the organization is moving forward.

**Table 3.4**

**Summary of Transition Leadership**

**Attributes**

- Well-differentiated...separated from the role yet connected to it
- Reflective... interpretive guide of situation and solutions
- Adaptive...separating adaptive from technical challenges

**Actions**

- Directing attention and urgency...the right things and needs
- Regulating distress and timing...managing pace and process
- Directing not controlling...enacting directionally correct answers
- Enacting multiple experiments...iterative and improvisational small experiments

This literature review has clarified the need to understand the unique culture of the congregation as well as some leadership essentials as it moves into a discontinuous future (see the summary in Table 3.4). Beyond these leadership traits, there is one trait exhibited by the organization at large that helps the congregation to accomplish their mission even in the context of discontinuous change

## Preparing for the Future— The Learning Organization

Though there will be many transitions required by a heritage church as it forges its way into a discontinuous future, at an institutional level, the way forward is made possible by becoming a learning organization.

The concept of learning organizations has a rich body of literature from which to draw. Sarita Chawla and John Renesch's book, *Learning Organizations: Developing Cultures for Tomorrow's Workplace* (Chawla and Renesch 1995) includes several precedent setting authors that speak to various aspects of the learning organization. However, of all the authors writing on the topic of learning organizations, Peter Michael Senge is recognized as an expert. He is an American scientist and director of the Center for Organizational Learning at the MIT Sloan School of Management. Senge defines learning organizations as "organizations where people continually expand their capacity to create the results they truly desire, where new and expansive patterns of thinking are nurtured, where collective aspiration is set free, and where people are continually learning to learn together" (Senge 2006, 4). He narrows the definition slightly when he says "This, then, is the basic meaning of a 'learning organization'—an organization that is continually expanding its capacity to create its future" (Senge 2006, 14).

Clearly the "learning" concept in this context does not just mean acquiring more information. Information is important in as much as it provides a clear picture of what an organization wants to become (i.e., "vision") and a clear picture of what it is (i.e., reality). But it is the "creative tension" (Senge 2006, 132) between these two that generates the learning, not information per se.



Part of the reason that becoming a learning organization is so important is due to the complexity of our time.

Perhaps for the first time in history, humankind has the capacity to create far more information than anyone can absorb, to foster greater interdependency than anyone can manage, and to accelerate change far faster than anyone's ability to keep pace. Certainly the scale of complexity is without precedent (Senge 2006, 69).

Not only is a congregation a complex family (as shown in chapter 2), but the times in which it is to function is also complex. We are on the verge of being overwhelmed by complexity. The solution to the complexity of our time, while still accomplishing the results we desire, as Senge sees it, is to become a learning organization.

#### What Does a Learning Organization Require?

The learning organization has some core disciplines, two of which seem most important to the heritage church as it moves into the discontinuous future. They are striving for personal mastery and becoming aware of mental models.

Senge defines personal mastery as the skill of “approaching life as creative work, living life from a *creative as opposed to reactive* viewpoint” (Senge 2006, 131; emphasis added). Senge's concept of personal mastery is the principle that organizations learn only through individuals within the organization who themselves are learning (Senge 2006, 129). As each individual moves toward non-reactive behaviour (i.e., personal mastery) the organization is more likely to move forward toward its intended goal. It is easy to see how Friedman's idea of the well-differentiation self is a part of personal mastery.

Personal mastery is created when an organization creates a culture where people can safely inquire into truth, challenge the status quo and create visions for the organization—a culture that clearly expresses the value of personal growth and a climate supportive of it (Senge 2006, 162).

A second core discipline is that of becoming aware of mental models, those “subtle patterns of reasoning which underlay our behaviour and...continually (get) us stuck” (Senge 2006, 173). Mental models are “deeply held internal images of how the world works” which ultimately “limit us to familiar ways of thinking and acting” (Senge 2006, 163). Our mental models are very limiting because they determine what we see. In fact, two people who have different mental models can observe the same event but “see” it differently. They describe it differently since each looked at different details and therefore made different conclusions (Senge 2006, 164). Even though the basic data are the same, our mental models determine our perspective.

There are two basic requirements for an organization to create an awareness of their mental models and get beyond their limiting effect: (1) skills of reflection and (2) skills of inquiry (Senge 2006, 175). The skill of reflection is internal in nature, becoming aware of our own mental model even while acting within them (Senge 2006, 176). The skill of inquiry is external, recognizing how we operate with others especially in “conflictual issues” (Senge 2006, 175).

The need for reflective leadership has already been discussed in this paper (see page 43), however, the reflective skill of which Senge refers is reflecting on the gaps between what we say and what we do. An illustration of this gap might

be a person whose mental model is “everyone is worthy of trust” but then jealously guards his possessions and money from his friends (Senge 2006, 177). Acknowledging the gap between what we say and what we do is one step toward surfacing and creatively dealing with our mental models.

The goal is not that everyone would agree with everyone else’s mental model. Rather the goal is a commitment to the reality of the situation (Senge 2006, 187) and determining the best mental model for the particular issue at hand (Senge 2006, 188). As long as everyone acts with integrity, agrees to disagree agreeably (Covey 1989), and works toward a better “product” for the whole, then people tend to pull together for a greater good (Senge 2006, 188).

This chapter has surveyed the current literature that helps a congregation understand the need to comprehend its leadership culture and what will be required of the leadership as it transitions into a discontinuous future. The main themes that I covered were the nature of the leadership culture of a congregation, some necessary transitional leadership attributes and actions, and the need for a congregation to become a learning organization in order to meet the adaptive challenges it will face as it moves forward. Now the focus of this project will be on the process of understanding the leadership culture of an individual church, Calvary Church, Toronto.

## CHAPTER 4

### METHODOLOGY

As established in chapter one, the culture of a church is partly composed of the behaviours and traditions which energize its activity. In order to be true to its nature, among other things, the church is wise to understand its leadership operands if the leaders intend to steward its nature into a new and unpredictable future.

Some of the leadership story of a congregation is composed of thinking that is *transparent* to the congregation. Organizations have two lives; the formal or public life and the informal or private life (Coghlan and Brannick 2009, 114). The formal life is represented by the organizational chart, mission statements, assets, etc. The informal life is “experiential, that is, it is the life as it is experienced by the members; its cultures, norms, traditions, power blocs and so on” (Coghlan and Brannick 2009, 114). It is the informal life of the leadership, or leadership culture, that needs some illuminating so that the church can move toward the future with a clear understanding of why it does what it does. Clarifying the leadership norms is necessary to guard against making plans based more on legend than reality; why we *think* we have always done things rather than *really* why we have done things. Naturally, the long passage of time means this might be more common for a heritage church than for a newer church since “legends” have had time to form.

Studying the leadership culture of the church is not a goal unto itself. Rather it intends to help leaders understand and then move forward with, through

and because of the culture God has provided. The mechanics of how to understand and begin an initial application to the ministry at Calvary Church is also the purpose of this chapter.

### **Ethical Research and Rigor**

Since this project deals with human subjects including their memories and cherished beliefs about their church, I completed the requirements of The National Council on Ethics in Human Research's Tri-Council Policy Statement on the *Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans* tutorial. Among the core principles are respect, welfare and justice for individuals involved in the research and protecting their rights through free and informed consent. This research project conforms to the accepted standards for research involving human subjects. Appendix L outlines the process used to ensure the ethical research was conducted.

The purpose of the project and the way their input was to be used was made clear to all participants in each of the forms of information gathering (Diagram 4.1, page 66). Each interview group was informed on how the information would be used and each were asked to give their consent. The same was done with each questionnaire respondent. As a rule there was great enthusiasm from the participants who realized the positive value of the research for the church. Because of the positive spirit, asking for "informed consent" seemed unnecessary to them. In fact, it was so unusual to be so formal in our church discussions that it actually raised a measure of concern for some

individuals who either wondered what they were getting into or if there was some hidden agenda of which they were not aware. It was communicated that formal research required following formal rules (such as indicated in Appendix L) that these rules were not unusual in research, and that following them did not indicate anything other than the desire for valid input and proper care of the participants. I assume this kind of reaction is something that would not be abnormal when research is done in your own organization, especially in a congregation, and in this circumstance, necessitated verbal rather than written consent. Whatever the case, the explanation of the need for informed consent was made clear to the participants and each person agreed. Additional measures that were taken to assure the ethics of the research and the protection of the participants are described through the remainder of this chapter and in Appendix L.

### **Scope and Limits**

Every project has some limiting factors that affect the way the research is conducted and what outcomes it can reliably hope to address. The scope of this research project was narrowed to those who either provided leadership (clergy or lay) or were well-acquainted recipients of Calvary Church's leadership, both past and present. Obviously, not everyone who has ever led or received leadership can be polled—nor do they need to be. In order to secure a list of the people that adequately reflected Calvary's historic leadership to whom questionnaires could be sent, an interview group of 15 people were asked to give their suggestions. The participants were chosen by a research assistant based on their long tenure at

Calvary Church. They all had been exposed directly to the leadership culture at Calvary over an extended period of time. This process also ensured that I had contacted leaders from each era (see Appendix I for the eras of leadership at Calvary).

Since this research project covers a long time-span (85 years) not all the nuances of change and transition in the leadership culture can be remembered, understood or accounted for. As such this research is affected by failing memories by older respondents, personal interpretations of the past, the natural biases toward or against a certain leader or era, not to mention that some of the best resources are no longer alive. However, the data is validated by the broad sampling of input and multiple methods of data collection which allows a reliable picture to emerge.

Another unexpected limiting factor was a measure of unwillingness by some to evaluate the leadership culture. This was evidenced by the fact that all former senior pastors turned down the opportunity to provide feedback (though eventually one provided a written response). This was disappointing in that these former leaders were the very individuals that significantly impacted the formation of the leadership culture of the church.

Many of the respondents know me personally as their Senior Pastor which might influence them to respond according to what they perceive my expectations were in conducting the research. To ensure the validity of the input and for the protection of the respondents, I gave a full written explanation of the reason for the research (Appendix A) and ensured the respondent's that they and their input

would be anonymous to the readers of the project. Further, to help the respondents not be influenced to respond by the power of my position as Senior Pastor, the questionnaire and cover letter were sent out by a research assistant. She sent her own request and attached my explanation and questionnaire. She was also the one who followed up on the questionnaire with those who did not respond. The only respondents with whom I directly communicated were the former Senior Pastors.

### **Methodology**

From a formal research perspective, this project is an ethnographic study of the leadership culture within my own organization using some of the processes of action research. According to Judith Bell, “ethnographic researchers attempt to develop an understanding of *how a culture works*” (Bell 2005, 14; emphasis added). Since understanding culture is at the core of this project, I determined that it would best accomplish the purpose of the study.

There are some defining characteristics of this kind of research. Firstly, it is conducted in a relational context. Coghlan and Brannick recognize that “the core skills underpinning action research are *relational*; that is, we need to be skilled at engaging with others” (Coghlan and Brannick 2009, 29; emphasis added). Secondly, ethnographic research reflects a good measure of “premise reflection, which is inquiry into the unstated, and often, non-conscious, underlying assumptions which govern attitudes and behaviour, such as might be embedded in language” (Coghlan and Brannick 2009, 13). My own reflections from nine years of serving as Pastor at Calvary Church provided some insights



and helped me to form some questions for the interviews. Thirdly, this kind of research proceeds with a certain amount of “preunderstanding” that both I, the one conducting the research, and the respondents all had. Preunderstanding is pre-existing knowledge about the “cultures and informal structures of your organization” (Coghlan and Brannick 2009, 114). In this project, preunderstanding was tested against a broad range of input so as to ensure accuracy with the data. These are some of the dynamics that make an ethnographic study well suited to understanding the culture of an organization and which I used in gathering and interpreting the data.

### **Methods**

Though there are many practical methods in conducting research of this sort, I followed the recommendations of Thomas G. Bandy, and Nancy T. Ammerman. These authors are well suited to studying the leadership culture of Calvary which is a Canadian ministry (i.e., Bandy) and has a long timeline (i.e., Ammerman). Bandy’s research questions in *95 questions to shape the future of your church* (Bandy 2009) and church transition recommendations in *Moving off the map; A field guide to changing the congregation* (Bandy 1998) were particularly helpful. These documents speak directly to the purpose of this project. Furthermore, Bandy is a Canadian church growth author and therefore sensitive to the issues unique to the Canadian context. Ammerman’s *Studying congregations: A new handbook* (Ammerman et al. 1998) provides practical helps based on a thorough background of research and experience. Ammerman emphasises the

importance of a congregation's history, recommending that an understanding of the congregation's culture can become clearer when the various eras of ministry are diagrammed in a timeline.

### Uncovering the Historic Leadership Culture

To uncover the past leadership culture, the questions about former leaders paid attention to such things as:

- their major accomplishments and how they did it;
- how they are remembered in their character and position;
- what made them effective or ineffective;
- what (if any) of their legacy lives on today and why (Dudley and Ammerman 2002, 77).

Dudley and Ammerman suggest some questions that would generate a representative portrait of the leadership culture:

- When was this person a leader here?
- What were this person's most significant accomplishments?
- What made this person a good leader?
- Was there a down side to this person—things that irritated or alienated people?
- What is the legacy of this person's leadership? What has lasted and why? (Dudley and Ammerman 2002, 78)

Based on Bandy, Dudley and Ammerman, two sets of questions were developed, one for former lay leaders and another for former clergy, that would elicit feedback that was sensitive to the uniqueness to Calvary Church (Appendices B and F). The questions used in each of the questionnaires and group interview meetings were developed by myself from these authors and then submitted to a research professor and my project advisor for further input.

An group interview was also convened to gather similar data as the questionnaires, however, the group was also instrumental in (1) gathering data for

the timeline and (2) creating a list of past leaders to whom to send questionnaires. The interview group was composed of “long-timers” at Calvary Church with the primary criteria being that they had a long tenure at the church. A simple search of the database of the church provided names of people who have attended Calvary for no less than thirty years (the only exception was me). When the total years of attendance at Calvary, among the participants, was added up it amounted to more than 707 years of experience. There were 15 participants which was sufficient to cover the entire period of the church’s existence. The number of participants and their tenure ensured that the stories were confirmed within the group’s discussion and accuracy attained as much as possible. The conversation was recorded upon agreement of each individual and transcripts were created for future reference. Three other “long-termers” who were unable to attend were given the opportunity to submit their input in writing.

#### Uncovering the Present Leadership Culture

The *history* of leadership was only part of the process, however. The next step was to compare the historic leadership against the present patterns of leadership in order to help analyze the place *from* which to begin transitions and also help get a sense of its trajectory.

The questions to discern the “themes and patterns that characterize the congregation’s current leadership” (Dudley and Ammerman 2002, 83) were modeled after Dudley and Ammerman’s suggestions, such as:

- Do you see similar patterns in historical and contemporary leaders?
- What is the pastor’s or key lay leader’s role?
- How are key influencers related to each other? Along family lines? As old and dear friends? As leaders in key departments of the church?

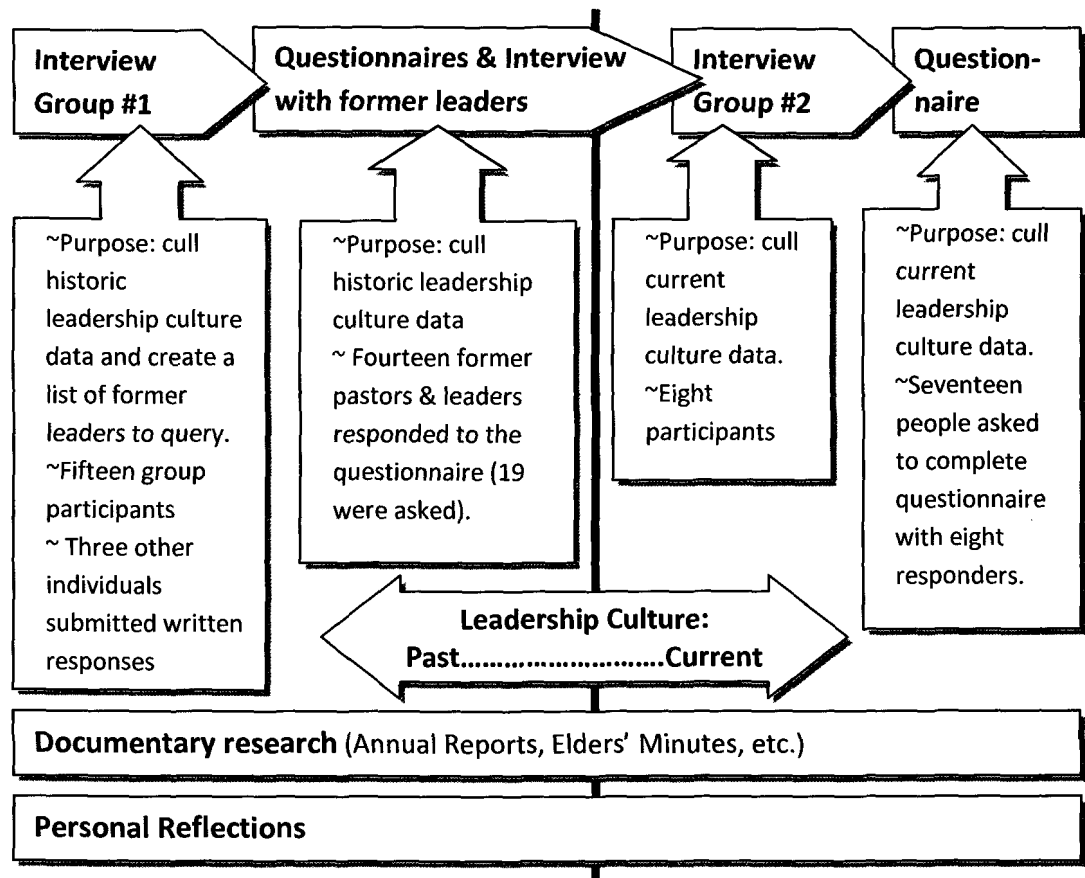
- What groups are most involved in sharing information and making decisions?
- In what areas are official processes identical with unofficial processes? When are these processes most distinct? (Dudley and Ammerman 2002, 84–85)

The questionnaire that was used to help guide the group interview and individual respondents with regard to the current leadership culture is Appendix D.

### Collecting Data

Data was collected over a period of 10 months and included several forms of data collection which are illustrated by Diagram 4.1:

**Diagram 4.1: Overview of the Data Collection Process**



As mentioned earlier, an interview group (“Interview Group #1” on the diagram) was conducted, which was the first wave of data collection. Fifteen people attended the interview group. It was conducted first so as to get a good list of former leaders to send questionnaires. To my great surprise, much more information was gleaned than a list of former leaders. Leadership themes and values that energized the leaders were made clear and confirmed by those in attendance.

The second wave of data was intended to come from former Senior Pastors. Calvary Church has been blessed with faithful and long-serving Senior Pastors and as such there are only three former Senior Pastors still alive. An introductory letter (Appendix E) and a questionnaire (Appendix F) were sent and then I followed up by phone call and/or email. As mentioned previously, all former pastors turned down the opportunity of providing feedback even after three requests and three different feedback options. Eventually, one provided some written feedback.

One former long-serving (34 years) Associate Pastor gladly agreed to be interviewed. The interview was recorded and transcripts were created. This interview turned out to be among the most helpful parts of the process since his tenure covered a good portion of the history of the church. With a clear memory and very little need to see history with “rose-tinted” glasses, the input served as a grid through which to understand some of the other feedback.

Concurrent with the questionnaires sent to the former Senior Pastors, a questionnaire (Appendix B) with an accompanying introductory letter (Appendix

A) was sent to 19 former leaders who were identified by the focus group. The input from 14 respondents was gathered over a two month period with those who failed to respond given three reminders. The group interview, the former clergy questionnaire and the former lay leader questionnaire formed the basis for understanding the past leaders' culture.

Subsequently, another interview group ("Interview Group #2" on the diagram) was convened in order to clarify the current leadership culture and provide a basis for comparison. A letter of introduction and request was sent out by the moderator of the interview (Appendix C) and preparation questions were provided (Appendix D). Once again each participant was asked to give their permission to have their input recorded and used in the context of this project. Since this group centred on the evaluation of the current leadership culture—of which I am a major part by virtue of my position as Senior Pastor—this group was moderated by another individual and I did not attend. So as to maintain the anonymity of the respondents, the transcripts of the focus group were produced but did not include the name of the individuals who made the comments. The participants were informed of this process and gave their permission to be recorded. Eight people attended plus the moderator and a research assistant, who operated the recording device, prepared the room and typed the transcripts. Seventeen questionnaires were sent to individuals who were not able to attend the group and eight individuals responded and their responses were also used in the outcomes in Chapter 5.

Assisting the process of data collection were the personal reflections that I brought to the process. Over nine years as Senior Pastor at Calvary, I have noticed many of the themes of which the respondents spoke. In the process of data collection, my personal reflections were used mainly to provide anecdotal illustrations in the interviews and when collating themes. My personal reflection was used mainly to clarify and not add data.

Documentary evidence was also used to give clarity and was used to creating the history timeline of the church.

### **History Timeline**

To help visualize the impact, activities and specific leaders that form the history of Calvary Church, a timeline was developed (Appendix I). A timeline is an exercise in data collection under specific categories so that the readers can understand the leaders, flow of history, accomplishments and context in which the leadership culture was developed. A chart with columns divided into units of history was created and then filled in with church happenings, such as: facilities built, crises faced, new ministries begun, leaders coming and going, etc. The chart provides the big picture of the congregation in its context—a 35,000 foot view, so to speak.

A lot of documentary evidence was used to develop this timeline. Though no formal archive exists at the church, a well-researched booklet, entitled “The Jubilee Story,” that was created for the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the church (Notley 1978) proved to be invaluable. Of great help were the Annual Report booklets that

were gathered from various people and places. These small booklets were produced every year for the majority of the history of the church. They include mostly information about the people (e.g., members, marriages, births, baptisms, departmental and pastoral leaders, etc.) and the budgets through the years. Currently, we have booklets for every year dating back to 1928, the first year of Calvary's existence, with the exception of six of the years between 1999 though 2011.

### **Theming the Data**

Interpreting input that is qualitative in nature is a unique endeavour. The input does not give itself easily to charts and numbers. This is not to say that it cannot in some way be understood or "measured" but that the methods of understanding the input will be appropriate to the kind of input received. In the case of this research project, the input covered a broad range of people, each with unique experiences at the church, ways of stating their experiences, and their own interpretations of their experiences. My approach to understanding the normative centre was to identify the themes in the data, which is called "theming the data" (Ryan and Bernard 2003). The techniques of theming data are of particular help for ethnographic research in a congregational context since it mainly concentrates on "themes that characterize the *experience* of the informants" (Ryan and Bernard 2003). Group interviews are particularly suited to gaining "rich, complex narratives that need to be dissected to ascertain values-related themes" (Ryan and Bernard 2003).



Identifying the themes is what grounded theorists call *open coding* and it is the uncovering of “abstract, often fuzzy, constructs which investigators identify before, during, and after data collection” (Ryan and Bernard 2003). In analyzing the data, I paid special attention to “word-based techniques (which) are typically a fast and efficient way to start looking for themes...(and) particularly useful at early stages of theme identification” (Ryan and Bernard 2003). The word-based techniques, to which they refer, is the process of analyzing individual words or larger portions of texts that point to themes. These include indigenous categories, key-word-in-context and abbreviating (Ryan and Bernard 2003) which I used in developing chapter 5 (the outcomes).

#### Indigenous Categories and Key-Word-in-Context

It is common for individual’s within an organization to use specialized terms used in unique and unfamiliar ways to those outside the organization (Ryan and Bernard 2003). These are called *indigenous categories* and have the potential to uncover some of the values that underlie the data. The *key-words-in-context* technique is much the same as indigenous categories since it deals with the specific words used by the informants. The difference, however, has more to do with the repetition of a word rather than the specialized nature of its use within the organization.

#### Abbreviating

James Spradley coined the term “abbreviating” for the technique of paying attention to what is *not* mentioned (Spradley 1979). As any organization develops there are things that everyone thinks everyone knows. Things that “go without

saying” often go without saying because they are assumed. Therefore, some of the cultural dynamics within the group are simply left out of the feedback.

### Ensuring Accuracy

A caution must be observed when using these kinds of techniques to interpret research within *your own* organization; be careful not to *overfit* the data (Ryan and Bernard 2003). In this project, it would be particularly easy for me to apply my preconceived notions and pre-understanding to the research and simply find that for which I was looking in the first place. This “prior theorizing” (Charmaz 1990) can also “inhibit the forming of fresh ideas and the making of surprising connections” (Ryan and Bernard 2003). I used an expert panel to protect against this potential problem. First of all, my analysis of the data was given to a research assistant who read the all the questionnaire responses and transcripts and compared them against the outcomes. To get a further sense of whether the conclusions were accurate the three other pastors on the staff team were given a verbal description of the outcomes. Finally, a long-term Calvary member was given the printed copy of Chapter 5 to evaluate. All verified the outcomes as accurate.

### Applying the Data in the Church

The project went beyond uncovering the leadership culture and the leadership principles necessary for transition in adaptive challenges faced by Calvary Church. It began the process of moving the findings from information to

verification with a primary leadership body of the church, and finally to initial implementation of one of the findings.

The two leadership bodies in Calvary Church that carry the responsibility for much of the direction of the church are (1) the staff team and (2) the Elders' Board. The Elders' are a governance board that evaluates directions and needs of the church. They are not responsible for the implementation plans. The staff team is entrusted to propose strategic plans and move them along with implementable recommendations. The process of moving these findings into workable items, in the context of Calvary, is through these two teams. The time frame of the project provided for developing partial implementation plans with the staff team.

#### Processing the Implementation with the Staff Team

The outcomes (see chapter 5) are validated by the process outlined in chapter 4. However, they also need to be affirmed by the staff team since they are responsible to interpret and implement the findings. The staff team was included in a formal presentation of the findings in an address given to a ministerial meeting of our church's denomination. Three of my professors (advisor, second reader and hearing chairman) were also in attendance so as to meet the program qualifications for a doctoral presentation. Subsequently, the staff team was provided draft copies of chapter 5 (outcomes) and chapter 6 (conclusions). They read each chapter completely and were asked to prepare a personal assessment and any anecdotal evidence for or against any of the findings. Then a meeting of the staff team was convened to: (1) confirm the accuracy of the findings ("Does this look like us?"); (2) develop some actionable options to be discussed by the

Elders for one or two of the conclusions (“What are the ways forward?”), and (3) determine some implications of each plan. The result of this process is in chapter 5.

#### Processing the Implementation with the Elders’ Board

Since the board did not have the benefit of the formal ministerial presentation, a similar presentation of the findings will be made to the board. To facilitate the conversation an executive summary of the findings and conclusions will be circulated beforehand. As the staff team did, the Board will also need to affirm the accuracy of the data and discuss the implications of moving forward with the conclusions outlined in Chapter 6.

## CHAPTER 5

### OUTCOMES

The research in this dissertation was conducted in order to uncover the leadership culture of a heritage church so that it can steward its leadership ethos while meeting the adaptive challenges of a discontinuous future. During each phase of the research, I noticed the respondents often offered their personal interpretation on what they believe *motivated* the leaders at Calvary Church to act the way they did. This was especially true of the interview groups which seemed to enjoy answering not only the *what* but the *why* of leadership. Three things were highly valued and partly explain the “why” of the leadership at Calvary: foreign missions, outreach (or evangelism) and prayer.

Foreign missions is consistently mentioned by each of the groups who were asked to submit their input. One respondent stated that it was “always highly valued.” Another response noted that a steadily increasing missions support over the years is a “significant accomplishment.” For another the value of missions was illustrated by the purchase of at least four homes for returning missionaries to use while on furlough. The function of housing for returning or retiring missionaries was even expanded when the church constructed a seniors’ residence (Nisbet Lodge) in part for this purpose.

Closely associated is outreach—evangelism is a term that is often used interchangeably with outreach in the responses. Bus ministries, coffee houses, evangelistic crusades and such were all referred to as evidence that this was highly valued. Two pastors were hired (Ernie Dyck, 1980s, and Gary Cockburn,

2000s) with the specific purpose of outreach to the community. One respondent even commented that Calvary's commitment to outreach was not insignificant even when compared to what he considered "mega-churches" of the time (The Peoples Church, Avenue Road Church and Knox Presbyterian Church).

Prayer was the third item that has historically been highly valued. Many respondents said that prayer motivated the past and present leadership of the church. Some examples of this were the high priority given to the mid-week prayer meeting, a month long prayer program in order to plant a Greek congregation, and such. One respondent summed up her perspective on why the pastors of Calvary Church are considered leaders—because of "clear direction underpinned by prayer."

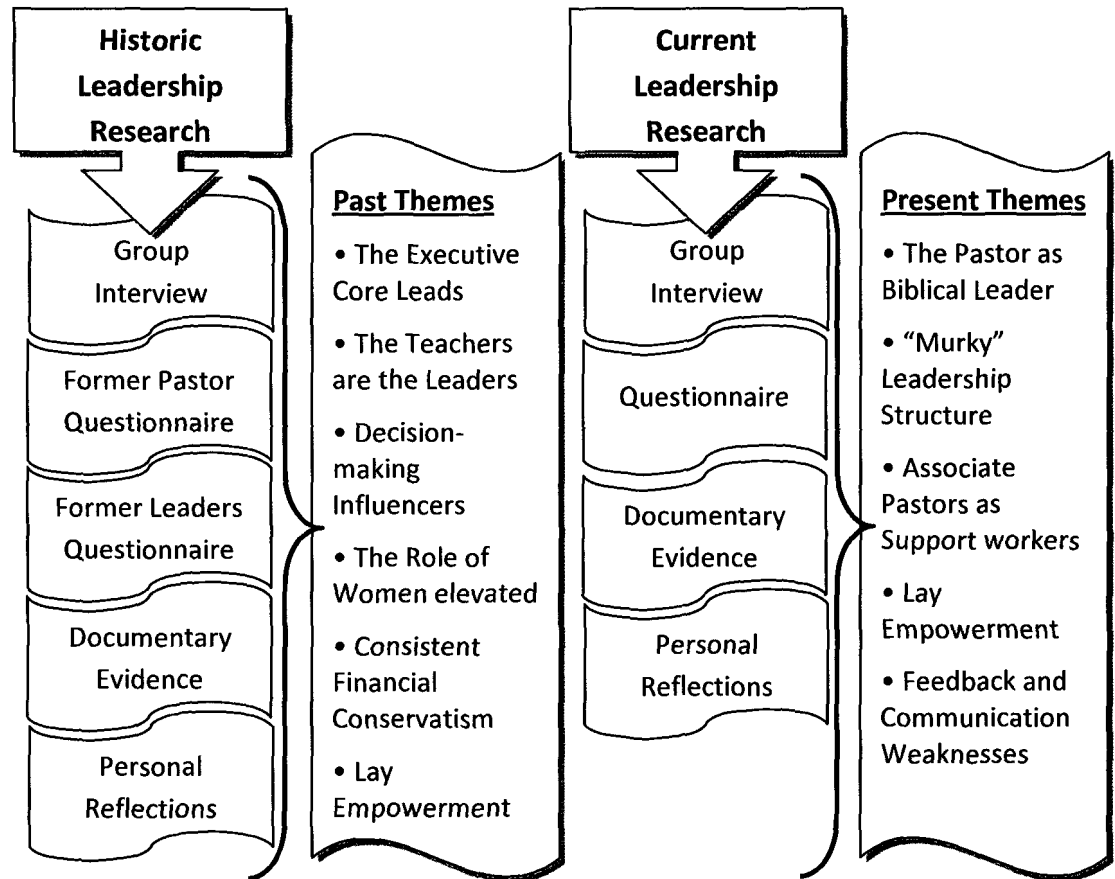
The research revealed a rich affinity between Calvary Church and the denomination of which it is a part (The Associated Gospel Churches of Canada). Both organizations were founded upon the express value of independent—sometimes called autonomous—ministry. It is not without purposeful intent that the original name of Calvary Church was St John's Evangelical Church *Independent*. While neither organization claims roots in the holiness movement, they have a common trait that ministry should focus on the development of a deeply spiritual, practical life. Even though these indirectly affect the culture of leadership, no questions about this relationship were asked in order to determine the extent of this affect.

Beyond these general observations, the research data was analyzed according to the process outlined in chapter 4 and it revealed six historic

leadership themes and five current leadership themes. It is these themes that will form the basis for some directional conclusions in chapter 6. Diagram 5.1 gives an overview of the findings and provides structure to the written explanations.

**Diagram 5.1**

**“Theming the Data” Overview**



**Historic Leadership Themes**

As the chart shows, several specific themes were uncovered that emerged from the responses and give depth of understand to the leadership culture and why the leaders acted the way they did. I divided the themes into more validated and

less validated. I explain, in the introduction to each section, in what ways they are more or less validated.

### More-validated Leadership Themes of the Past

A theme was judged to be more validated if a direct question resulted in the repetition of a similar answer, using the same or similar words, in at least three of the five sources of input. Several of them were also confirmed by my personal reflections from my nine years as the Senior Pastor.

#### **The Executive Core Lead (“Leadership-by-the-few”)**

One of the strongest leadership themes that emerged was that only a small, inner circle of people made most of the decisions and formed the primary leadership of the church. In fact, for major periods of time, church directions and decisions were made by only three men. This exclusive leadership team concept was confirmed by each group of people surveyed (group interview, former pastors, former leaders). Three of the former staff members, who were very close to the decision-making process, indicated they had clear knowledge of this *leadership-by-the-few* in action. A former Senior Pastor, the only Senior Pastor to respond to my research requests, stated “there was evidence of deference” to three leaders at the board level, which he named. Representing another era of church history (and thus a different group of three individuals), a former Associate Pastor went so far as to label this group of three as the unofficial “executive committee” who were the *de facto* leaders. Using his terms, they “ruled the roost” and could “put a damper on things” by their leadership. According to this former staff member, evidence of this “top down leadership was that I was put on virtually



every committee at the direction of the Senior Pastor whether or not I felt gifted, called or had time for the task.” This “executive” leadership culture spans at least 40 years—almost half of the history of the church. This *executive core* is a key insight into the informal leadership culture—how things get done despite what the organization chart or constitution says.

I asked some other questions in an attempt to intentionally “get behind” the official forms of leadership (i.e., Who influenced the decisions by informal power? How are the key influencers related (a) to the church and (b) to each other?, etc.). The responses seemed to give evidence of a “second level” of what I am calling *leadership-by-the-few* at Calvary Church. Apparently, this “second-level” over the years has been composed of men who were: (1) businessmen, (2) of positive spiritual reputation, and (3) who were also substantial financial supporters. This three-fold description came out of responses from every form of input. Less common descriptors, yet still key to understanding this second level, were that they were “relationally driven” or “had strong spousal support.” Of interest is that three of the respondents mentioned that there was also a familial association to the Senior Pastor that connected this second level of leadership. In their opinion, this gave them authority within the church even if they were not part of the executive core.

The research revealed two other observations with respect to the small executive leadership core. Firstly, women were never a part of the core though, as will be expanded on later, they played a significant role in the church. Secondly,

for a significant period of time nepotism was a driving force behind many of the leadership decisions—a fact that was mentioned several times.

It is important to note that this *leadership-by-the-few* was not considered to be negative. This is indicated by the fact that none of the respondents spoke of it in negative terms or with a seemingly critical spirit. Only one individual ventured to use what might be considered a critical term; he said that the leadership might have been “unhealthy” since few people would ever try to “oppose” one individual’s decisions. Otherwise, the memory of these leaders is quite positive and even endearing. In fact, they are commonly remembered as men of “godly character”, “spiritual reputation” or “spiritual depth” even by those who worked closely with these leaders. Four former staff members mentioned these as common traits of the leadership during their tenure. These descriptors were not just true of the *executive team* (the three) or the *second-level* of leadership, but of the entire Board of Elders. The longest serving Associate Pastor (34 years of ministry at Calvary) described the Board as “very spiritually minded, seeking unity and peace in the group.”

In summary, Calvary Church has gone through periods of a balance of power concentrated, not so much on the Senior Pastor, but on a few key leaders. Yet, no one seemed to be afraid to name names because they were dearly loved even if the reason for their authority varied (biblical knowledge, business acumen, finances, family relationships, etc.). Still, congregational leadership seemed to be centralized on the few.

## **The Teachers are the Leaders**

There were several questions that related to what the respondents considered were the main roles of the pastoral staff members. One of the survey questions in this regard was: From your experience, what phrases might describe the main role of (a) the Senior Pastor and (b) the Associate Pastors? The questions were intended to elicit general responses from which to discern a theme (Appendix B). The words “teach” and “preach” are found at least 32 times in response to this question, with “teacher” being the preferred term in 18 of them. The significance of this can be seen not by the number of times that it is repeated but by the fact that every source of input points to this theme. Six respondents applied a descriptive, technical term, “expository,” to explain the *kind* of teaching to which they were referring.

To a certain extent the teach/preach responses were to be expected since, as far as the congregation at large is concerned, this is the most visible activity of the pastor. However, it far out-numbered any other activity of the pastor listed by the respondents; more than pastoral care (counselling, visitation, leadership development, etc.) or administration (Board direction, building projects, programs, etc.).

Anecdotally, this theme was confirmed through several responses. For instance, a discussion ensued at the second group interview convened to get feedback on the current leadership culture. The discussion went off on a tangent as to whether the Pastor could be considered the CEO of the church. They decided that, although there were some features of a CEO in terms of his formal

relationship with the Board of Elders, his role had more to do spiritual teaching and direction of the church. Another instance was a passing comment made by a participant at the first group interview. This person had a long history at the church and knew the ministry of every Senior Pastor in the church's 84 year history. Concerning an Associate Pastor, she commented that "he wasn't really classified, I guess, as a pastor." It is clear from the language used that only the main teacher is the pastor—the rest may do some teaching but the pastor leads *because* he is the teacher.

The role of teaching was also highly valued *beyond* the ministry of the Senior Pastor. Several respondents revealed information about one of the key former leaders of the church, Harry Wild (1940-1960s). Apparently, he came from a non-believing family and immediately sensed his own lack of Bible knowledge. However, he made up for it through personal study and strongly emphasized Bible study and knowledge to others as well. After a few years of self-teaching, he conducted a Bible teaching class that eventually became compulsory for anyone who wanted to teach in the expanding Sunday School ministry of the church (655 students in 1956). And it was a two year course. The fact that this course became Board-mandated training for prospective teachers, represents not only a very high standard but also indicates the high value placed upon the teacher in the ministry of the church.

From these responses, a picture emerges of the former pastors and their individual contributions to the culture of Calvary Church. Of interest is that they

all reflect a core ability to teach the Bible and it is this function that provides the authority to perform the rest of their tasks.

### **Decision-making Influences**

Several research questions were helpful in giving a better picture as to what influenced the decisions that have been made: 1. Which groups were most involved in sharing information and making decisions? 2. Were the leaders, in general, anxious or open about creative new ideas? 3. How so? 4. In what ways was their leadership not helpful? 5. Name 3 or 4 key values that seem to provide the impetus for leadership decisions. Understanding the decision-making culture is rather complex and has many subtle influences. However, there are some clear influences in the decision making culture of Calvary Church that emerged from the research.

Some of the respondents indicated that a lack of openness to change had affected the decision making. This was indicated in several of the responses, most notably by former staff members. Three former staff members indicated a reluctance to change which was attributed to: (1) a culture of social “legalism” that pervaded the church; (2) “little pressure” to change, or (3) just because the centralized leadership were personally “traditional” in nature and did not want to change. One respondent, whose father was a charter member and was full of warm, positive memories, also described the leadership as “dogmatic and legalistic.” Indeed, some of this can be attributed to the prevailing mood during seasons of the Canadian church milieu. In fact, the longest serving Associate Pastor (who gave his permission to be quoted) recognized this as the spirit of the

times in his comment regarding a long serving Senior Pastor: “he was the leader, yes, but the people fell right in line with that because it was a legalistic era.” But the change-hesitance, that has been true of Calvary, goes beyond what was happening in the general church milieu. One respondent stated quite eloquently:

I think the church in many ways had to escape the chains of “inside-ism”, a term used to describe the myopia that sets in after years of doing things the same way and not understanding objectively what new and progressive avenues are more efficient, relevant and necessary.

Whatever the reason or descriptors used, there appears to be a historic change-hesitance that was at work during the various leadership chapters at Calvary.

Also affecting the decision-making process is a notable inclination to avoid discord at any cost. As would be expected, former staff members had the most to say about this since they were closest to the decision making process. One former staff member described the desire for unity as “peace at all costs.” Another Associate Pastor stated, “I don’t remember anything being passed by consensus. It was almost always unanimous.” The drive for unanimity in decisions led one long term staff member to conclude that “seeking unity and peace in the group” was a key motivator behind the decisions made.

This *avoiding-discord-at-all-cost* extended beyond the Elders to the congregation as well. One respondent who is among the longest attending individuals polled recalled some of the earlier Annual General Meetings at the church. Having attended the church for several years, then serving for a time in overseas missions, then returning to the church, he commented on former and later business meetings in this way:

Always, there have been members of the congregation who have questioned and even vehemently opposed their leaders' decisions. I can remember very loud and forceful arguments. However, these discussions did not result in any serious alterations to the decisions made. Generally the membership sided with the Board of Elders. Very seldom do I see those kinds of meetings happening now-a-days. I'm not sure what has changed to maintain reasonable calmness in the meetings.

Given that none of these respondents commiserated on their responses; most are no longer a part of the Calvary Church family, or even attending the same church as each other, is clear evidence that this is a theme in decision making at Calvary.

Another decision-making influence had to do with the role of communication in the church. One of the questions asked was "which groups were most involved in sharing information and making decisions?" Interestingly, a few of the responses focused on the single word, "*sharing*." One former staff member summed it up by saying there was little sharing of information: the Elders' "knew all, determined all and drove all." Another lay leader confirmed this view with this statement, "information was not so much 'shared' as 'released'." Yet another response indicated there was not much communication even between the upper leaders and those involved in the day-to-day ministry.

A couple of the respondents took the issue of communication a bit further by suggesting that there was an actual *resistance* to input and "an inability to comprehend dissent from the lower ranks." How true this is cannot be confirmed by the research done to date, and whereas it might make for an interesting focus of attention for another cycle of research, it at very least confirms that there is very little formal communications associated with the decision making process.

## **The Role of Women Elevated**

An observation that cannot be ignored is the role of women in the ministry of Calvary Church. This first became noticeable during the first group interview. One purpose of this focus group was to create a list of past leaders who should be recorded on the timeline and, if still alive, polled. Reviewing the transcript of this meeting reveals that there were slightly more women mentioned than men (18 women and 17 men). Additionally, the only Senior Pastor to respond to the questionnaire includes references to some of the “pastoral counselling ministry” provided by ladies, particularly mentioning Mrs. L.A. Wright. He recalled clearly the “social work done by ladies in Regents Park” and the many “lady teachers in the Sunday School” to whom he endearingly referred to as “Mothers in Israel.”

Gladys MacIntosh was mentioned in the group interview, and confirmed by documentary evidence, as deserving recognition since she was the Sunday School Superintendent (circa 1940-42, Appendix G) during a time when the Sunday School ministry in both the AGC and Calvary was flourishing (the total AGC Sunday School enrolment from its 30 churches was 4,462 with average attendance of 2,996 (Redinger 1995, 36)). The fact that a woman was the key Sunday School leader at Calvary Church is particularly significant since, as was stated earlier, the teaching ministry has always been a cardinal value. Furthermore, it was during the time, in most evangelical churches, when few women would have held such an important ministry role. Also of note was that she was the Secretary to the Board of Elders from 1952-60.



Other notable women were mentioned in the group interview, documentary evidence and one questionnaire respondent—the Dorcas Group. The Dorcas Group was led by at least two women (Anne Chambers and Stella Pickins). They were responsible for the care of returning missionaries which is significant since overseas missions has consistently been one of the most cherished activities of the church. In fact, the care of returning missionaries was so important to the ministry of the church that Calvary ultimately purchased three houses immediately adjacent to the church which were commonly called “missionary” homes. These missionary homes were eventually razed and replaced by a seniors’ residence (currently, Nisbet Lodge) whose initial mandate included housing for returning missionaries. What is of interest is that men also served on this committee, yet key leadership roles were assigned to women (over men) by the church leadership on this important ministerial committee at Calvary Church.

Ruth Fox’s name was mentioned in the group interview, in documentary evidence and by several questionnaire respondents. She was mentioned as a significant contributor to the ministry of the church. She was the church secretary for 38 years and was given the title “deaconess” due to the many other leadership roles she played in addition to her duties as secretary. At least two other women were given this title (Appendix H) dating back to 1928. Researching the early yearbooks shows that the title of “deaconess” was also given to Theresa Robson since she was responsible for pastoral visitation and the benevolent care (budget and expenditures) on behalf of the Pastor.

Of interest is that my research found that in the AGC women held leadership roles as far back as 1923 when the Gospel Tabernacle Mission in Oshawa was under the care of Miss Lida M. Lynn. She was given the label “Deaconess” in the Second Annual Conference of the CWCC since “the CWCC evidently had no guidelines as to female overseers” (Redinger 1995, 27). The AGC has since made a constitutional decision not to ordain women but otherwise leave the role of women in leadership as a decision to be made by their local churches.

In stark contrast to these anecdotal references to the inclusion and significance of women in ministry at Calvary, were responses given by two women, one a former volunteer, the other a former staff member. They mentioned, in the “unhelpful to leadership” question, what they perceived to be a strong “gender bias” against women in leadership. One respondent mentioned that whatever the Bible said regarding a topic was the primary value, however, when “the gender issue was discussed...only verses that supported the notion of women *not* to be in a place of leadership equal with men” were used. The other respondent mentioned that the church was “totally closed to a broader acceptance of women in leadership roles.” This was illustrated by a Board of Elders’ decision (in approximately 2000) neither to allow women to serve on the Elders’ Board nor to allow them to hold the title of AWANA commander, which is the prime leader of a mid-week ministry to children.

## Less-validated Themes of the Past

A theme is less validated if I did not ask a direct question yet there were multiple responses that mention similar data anyway and thus I had less data pointing to these conclusions. Again, personal reflection added verification to some of the less validated findings as well.

### **Consistent Financial Conservatism**

None of the questions directly addressed the issue of financial values in the leadership culture and practice of the church. Thus, it was of great interest to me that five individuals commented on the financial values of the church. The five respondents represent over 70 years of history: two staff members from forty years ago; one staff member who grew up at the church and served full-time from 1999 until 2003, and two lay persons.

The theme that emerged can be stated as a penchant to financial conservatism. A former staff member responded that the leadership was careful not to accept debt, which in his opinion, led them to paying him improperly. His opinion may be tainted by a conflict of interest (his salary), however, this same conservatism was reflected by others who said that decisions were made on the basis of financial caution.

Related to this conservatism is that for several years the church had a financial patron who gave a substantial amount to the annual budget. One of the longest attending respondents (and a current Elder) recalls that rumours circulated that this benefactor contributed up to one third of the budget. Another individual, in response to the question “in what ways was their leadership not helpful”, stated

that these leaders had “power” due to their financial “weight.” It must be noted that, though it might seem to be unhealthy to be dependent upon one individual, none of the responders questioned the motivation of the giver. In fact, he and his family “had positive and significant impact on finance, vision and direction of the church in both fiscal and spiritual matters.” No respondent commented on any contradiction between the motivation of the giver and the purity of their leadership. Another iteration of research directly addressing this theme would help clarify it to a greater extent.

### **Lay-empowerment**

Another set of responses, to a question not directly asked, impacts the understanding of the leadership culture of the church. Several people in each source commented that there was a willingness to empower people to new create ministries and expand existing ones. The initial interview group’s transcript records the example of Mrs. L.A. Wright who held several church positions such as the “cradle roll.” However, she expanded it to take care of mothers outside of the recognized church activities and eventually began a ministry in Regent Park. She added to this an evangelistic ministry conducted from the front steps of the church. Another illustration cited was the Property Committee, formerly called the Board of Managers. The “managers” were elected at the Annual General Meeting just as Elders were and they served three-year terms. Care for the building was entrusted to this group, yet they greatly expanded their role beyond their mandate to the point that, according to one respondent, it was deemed wise to disband it as a “board” and designate it as a “committee.” Some of the

responders remembered that this change was not well received by the Property Committee since it was perceived as a restriction of its authority. One former staff member summarized this *spirit of empowerment* when he said that people had the freedom to “experiment with the things that God was drumming up within your heart.”

The issue of lay-empowerment was not the purpose of any particular question and it reflects an indigenous category. This theme is included in several of the responses and as such is worthy of further investigation.

### **Present Leadership Themes**

When I refer to the present in this project I mean the years from 2000 to today (2012). The church has been served by two Senior Pastors during this time; one, who served for the first two years in this time period , and the author, having served from 2003 to the present. Over this period of time there have been six associate pastors; one who retired, two who left for other ministries and three who are currently on the staff team. Only one associate was hired to fulfill the exact role of his predecessor. Otherwise, new job descriptions were created and then individuals were found whose gifting matched the new description.

As mentioned earlier, I, as Senior Pastor, was not present at the group interview which was convened for the purpose of discussing the present leadership culture. Also, no Associate Pastor who served during this period of time was included in any of the questionnaires or group interviews. Certainly,

there would be value in getting their feedback in order to confirm or clarify the findings, however, I was attempting to remove as much bias as possible.

As indicated in the Methodology Chapter (4), a group interview was convened and individual questionnaires were distributed, the focus of which was to understand the current leadership culture to enable the church leaders to draw a more effective trajectory to the future—or diverge from it, if necessary. One of my observations is that the respondents vacillated between what they believe *is* the leadership culture and what their perspective of what it *should be*. I surmised that this is to be expected since all 16 of the participants are *internal* (members or adherents) and might perceive that they have something to gain by discussing the present leadership. Either way, the feedback shows some themes that are either connected to the church’s history or different from it.

#### Pastor as Biblical Leader

There is broad agreement among the respondents that being “anchored in the Word” is a key value of the current leadership, particularly expressed by the key leader, the Senior Pastor. Someone mentioned the Senior Pastor is “the most fluid voice of the Bible” and “theological soundness” is a characteristic trait of his leadership. The first Senior Pastor of the current era apparently had some “unpopular” things to communicate yet he was perceived to have preached authoritatively because he used strong Biblical rationale. In fact, it is commonly held among the respondents that it is this very trait—biblical preaching—that places the Senior Pastor as the leader at Calvary Church. One of the respondents took this concept further—into the boardroom. It was his opinion that part of the

Pastor's leadership role is to evaluate the work of the Board as "determine(d) from the Scriptures."

As you can see there is a mixture of *what is* and *what should be* in these statements but it is clear that the *pastor-as-Biblical-leader* is a significant theme in the leadership culture of the church.

#### "Murky" Leadership Structure

Much less clear in the minds of most people is the "chart of responsibility" as one individual called it. Some of the ministry systems of the church are unclear—"murky" was the term used. For instance, the roles of the Associate Pastors were mentioned. Whereas it was commonly agreed that they are to support the Senior Pastor in his duties, and that each Associate Pastor was fulfilling the role God has placed on *their own* heart, their actual roles were, as one respondent indicated, a bit of a "mystery." This was backed up by someone who responded with their own series of questions: "where exactly is the leadership?; the Elders only? Elders and pastoral staff? the mysterious 'they'?" At least for some people, the leadership structure of our church was a mystery.

At first blush this would seem to be a negative comment regarding the leadership of the church. And for some I am sure that is true. However, it is by no means unanimous that this was a negative thing. The "murky" system was labelled as "OK" by one respondent recognizing that this provides for flexibility as new needs and ideas arise. The evolving associate roles were mentioned positively when she said about hiring them that, "we seem to define them with each new hire—quite reasonably, I think."

## Associate Pastors as Support Staff

A direct question regarding the individual roles of the Senior Pastor and the Associate Pastors was asked (i.e., What phrases might describe the main role of (a) the Senior Pastor and (b) Associate pastors?). This question elicited some very specific responses. For Senior Pastor: Bible teacher, counsellor, etc.; for Associate Pastors: program drivers, people mobilizers, etc. The follow-up question (“what traits of the pastor help him to be perceived as a leader?”) was left intentionally vague as to which pastor, senior or associate, it was referring. This allowed respondents to answer regarding the role about which they wanted to comment. The respondents automatically defaulted to talking about the Senior Pastor using similar terms that they had provided in the first question (i.e., What phrases might describe the main role of the Senior Pastor?). In fact, all of the responses focused on the Senior Pastor. The Senior Pastor is consistently cast in the light of a leader and each associate staff is consistently cast in the light of support for the leader. None of the responses criticized the roles of the Associate Pastors, however, they are described more in terms of the specific functions for which they are responsible and, primarily, in terms of their support of the Senior Pastor—function and support but not leadership per se. This might explain why in the history of Calvary Church many of the staff members were designated as “directors.”

## Lay-empowerment

The second group interview spent some time discussing a topic not necessarily addressed by any question—committees that independently initiate



programs and are given a great deal of authority to act on behalf of the church. As an illustration, the Missions Committee (a group of 11 people) spends one third of the total budget. The Property Committee also has broad power to change and update the primary asset of the congregation. Currently, the Capital Redevelopment Committee (a group of 12) has the power to shape the direction and mindset of the entire congregation with regard to a major facility renovation. The group interview recognized that this kind of delegated authority was justified based on biblical examples from Moses' leadership and from the Book of Acts. The group also decided that this was a good trait at Calvary because it gives ownership and "involves a lot more of the congregation in leadership."

#### Feedback and Communication Weakness

The responses that centred on feedback and communication were remarkably juxtaposed. One respondent remarked that the pastor is perceived as a leader by his ability to listen to "feedback, positive or otherwise, and is able to learn from that feedback or put it away graciously." The second group interview was clear that the pastors' were good at listening even if they are not always able to respond to everyone's wishes. One response stated that the present pastor is "firm but not ossified, able to change his mind on non-theological issues." However, in stark contrast were comments that the leadership was marked by an "inability to comprehend dissent from lower ranks." Even one of the currently serving Board members recognized that, "they (the board) don't share information nearly as well" as other standing committees of the church. Further research

should be conducted on what it means to have a culture of listening by the leaders but not a culture of communication and understanding.

### **Processing the Findings with the Staff Team**

As was indicated in chapter 4, the two main leadership bodies at Calvary Church are the Elders' Board and the staff team. In keeping with the Elders' governance model at Calvary, they are sometimes referred to as the "keepers of the vision," whereas the staff team is considered the "stimulators of the vision." As such, the staff team makes plans and submits proposals to the Board for their input, adjustment and authority. Thus, it is appropriate for the staff team to meet first to discuss the project findings in order to confirm their accuracy and to prepare some implementation options for the Elders to consider.

In the meeting, the staff team confirmed all of the findings previously discussed in this chapter, though three of the findings took priority and were recommended as items for Board discussion. These were: (1) the executive core leadership; (2) the teachers as leaders, and (3) financial conservatism.

#### **Executive Core Leadership**

The staff team confirmed that the historic theme of "executive core leadership" has some present similarities. The staff recognized that the core "executive" leaders of the past were men with professional careers and who were either financially supportive or had financial skills to offer. Currently, there is more of a mixture of individuals on the board, albeit it is still not well represented by working class individuals of various economic means and a few of the men

still hold the primary influence. Thus the staff team still continues to see nuances of the historic executive team concept in the present leadership.

In recent years, the Board implemented an Elder nomination process on behalf of the Nominating Committee that assessed and vetted potential Elder candidates. This has been very helpful in properly preparing potential Elders and has been instrumental in broadening the level of congregational representation at Board level. Although it has provided a better representation of the congregation it has not broadened the kind of individuals who make the decisions or distribute the influence beyond of a few of the men.

#### The Teachers are the Leaders

The findings showed continuity between the past and present leadership culture with regard to the teachers as leaders. Under this concept each individual who teaches the Bible, in the various venues of the church, is given leadership authority in non-teaching aspects of the church. This was illustrated when one of the staff members (a Pastor) took on a new mandate to provide leadership to the Sunday morning children's ministry which includes implementing some new directions. He began his new mandate by teaching in one of the departments and thereby was given authority to enact changes in the overall program which he otherwise may not have had. The teacher-as-leader can also be used inappropriately as was evidenced by one adult Sunday School teacher who does not support the leadership of the church and has negatively influenced people against the church's leadership.

The staff team discussed at length which direction to go with this aspect of the leadership culture. For example, do we spread out the teaching ministry, such as a rotation of pastors preaching, as well as using preaching-capable Elders' in some venues? This would seem to give individuals in both the staff and Elders' team some added authority to their leadership. Or would it be more appropriate to adjust the staff roles so that the Senior Pastor becomes more of a "Teaching Pastor"? This might have the effect of strengthening the authority of the primary leader. Given our governance structure, the issues that surround these questions are best dealt with by the Board of Elders.

#### Financial Conservatism

One of the less validated findings (from page 88) was the evidence of financial conservatism. The staff discussion revealed clear anecdotal evidence to confirm this finding. For instance, there have been few recent instances of financially stretching goals. The feedback from a recent congregation-wide survey included a comment that we should not cap the Missions budget but instead reduce the salary of the highest paid staff member. This is particularly interesting in that we have never discussed capping the Missions budget. Furthermore, the staff salaries are known only by the members of the Finance Committee. As far as the staff is concerned, this was an indirect indication of an unwillingness to stretch financially.

Besides doing more research on this topic, as is indicated at the end of chapter 6, the staff recommended that the Board of Elders discuss the question "does financial conservatism indicate a lack of faith?" Another recommended

discussion item has to do with legacies (inheritance money) the church often receives from its long-term members which are held in an investment account. The staff team agreed that, in the context of financial conservatism, a discussion of the stewardship of these “excess” funds is overdue.

### **Implementation a Finding: A Pattern**

One of the conclusions that can be made from these findings is the need to involve women more in the leadership of the church. As the research revealed, women play a much larger role in the leadership of the church, especially in the first 40 years, than has been recognized or implemented in more recent times. As I indicated earlier, a decision (circa 2000) not to allow women to serve either as Board members or to hold leadership titles, such as AWANA Commander (a mid-week children’s ministry program), was made by the Board of Elders.

My personal observations gave me an opportunity to experience women playing important leadership roles, but without recognition, title or position, over the past 9 years of my ministry at Calvary. I especially noticed that returning women missionaries are given the opportunity to preach the sermon portion at the evening services at Calvary but never at the morning worship service. Several years ago, I interviewed a now-deceased female missionary whom Calvary supported for many years and whose missionary service has been lauded among the congregation. She told of being the pastor of several churches over her missionary career. This is not a role that would be allowed in her supporting church.

Two of the findings in the research process were the significant role of women in the congregation and the centrality of the preacher/teacher in its historic leadership. The initial group interview and several of the first questionnaires all confirmed my own personal reflections in this regard. The natural question that came from this finding is; “should women be given the opportunity to preach at Calvary Church?” I asked the Board of Elders to engage in a biblical discussion of this question. The question was taken seriously by the board in that I asked, and was granted permission, to have a woman preach in two successive Mother’s Day worship services. Since this risked setting precedent, a formal decision needed to be made. To that end, an Elders’ task force of three individuals was formed which consisted of myself (Senior Pastor), an Elder and a well-known Bible scholar who is a member of the church. The main question was, “what does the Bible say about the role of women preaching in the worship service?” The second question was, “should women preach at Calvary?” These questions roughly correlate to the questions the staff team was asked (listed in chapter 4, page 73) regarding the findings of chapter 5. The task force conducted a study over a 6 month period and the findings were gathered into an executive summary (Appendix J). The summary was discussed at length at a regular monthly Board meeting. Subsequently, a specially-called Board Meeting was convened to fully discuss the question and to make a decision. A vote was taken and the conclusion was; yes, it is appropriate for women to preach in the worship service, and thus all other public meetings, at Calvary Church. This decision has further implications on which I will comment in chapter 6.

This represents a pattern of implementation of one of the findings in this project and a similar pattern is anticipated with each of the items listed in the chapter 6.

### **Where Do We Go from Here?**

Themes were uncovered and one has been processed through the main leadership body of the church. Though I have mentioned some further research would be helpful in order to clarify some details, there is enough solid data to recommend further discussion on directional matters. Chapter 6 outlines some of the items for further discussion and planning.

## CHAPTER 6

### CONCLUSIONS

This research project was conducted in order to address some of the issues that the heritage congregation may face as it moves toward an increasingly unknowable future. One of the issues is the natural tendency to over apply historic culture in a way that cannot meet the new and evolving realities of future ministry. Another issue is almost the opposite of the first: the inclination to enact dramatic changes in a congregation to meet the new context of its ministry which are out of keeping with the congregation's historic DNA. As I wrote in the introduction, the essence of the issue might be captured in the question: How can a long-established congregation be *itself* while meeting the needs of each succeeding generation? Or, How can it be an “ageless thinking” congregation?

#### **Comparisons Past and Present**

One of the goals of the project was to compare the past (pre 2000) and the present (post 2000) leadership culture of Calvary Church. The value of such a comparison is to help the congregation's leaders to draw a more effective trajectory to the future. This might entail continuing to do the same things or diverging from them when necessary.

The findings reveal three clear similarities of the past and present leadership themes: the Bible teacher is the leader, lay people are empowered, and the existence of a culture that has significant communication weaknesses. There is one clear dissimilarity of the past and present leadership themes—the way the



decisions are made by the leadership. These four items will be woven into the questions I pose to the leadership teams in the *Things to be Considered in the Near Future* section.

### **Aids in Answering the Questions**

Answering the questions I pose to Calvary's leadership teams in the next section will benefit greatly by the findings of chapter 3, specifically, the *Adaptations of Innovations* diagram (Diagram 3.2, page 49). As was recorded in chapter 4 (page 73), the staff team at Calvary Church is responsible for the creation and implementation of ministry plans which means the staff team tend to be the “innovators” or “early adopters” of change and thus are among the 15% of people who typically fit into the front end of the change distribution curve. On the other hand, the Board of Elders is a governance board which balances new directions with other needs of the church (page 73). This means they function right at the mid-point of the distribution curve—neither early adopters nor late adopters. Answering the questions that arise from the data will be helped as the two leadership bodies account for the differences and tensions that occur due to their place on the change distribution diagram.

Another aid in answering the questions posed in the *Things to Be Considered in the Near Future* section is the congregation as a family system metaphor (see chapter 2, page 21). Recall how the unique emotional dynamics within a family system is a prime determiner of how to proceed when faced with an adaptive change. The uniqueness of each individual family system will not

only aid in making the specific decision but help determine the timing of the change as well. Changes that steward the congregation's heritage ethos *and* recognizes the emotional implications within the family are both required and create a decision-making grid.

### **Things to Be Considered in the Near Future**

The topics listed here are framed as topics of discussion rather than formal recommendations. This is necessary because the two main leadership bodies, the staff team and the Board of Elders, need to review the data and findings. Once this has been done they will have to discuss: (1) the implications the findings have; (2) what implementation strategies are most appropriate, and (3) what is the best order and timing for the applications deemed necessary. These topics were developed as natural outcomes of the findings and should not be understood as comprehensive or absolute but suggestive and as a primer for further discussions.

#### **Centralized or Distributed Leadership?**

The data made it very obvious that, historically, the leadership and decision making function at Calvary Church was centralized on a few influential individuals. It was not only clear *how* things got done but *who* did them. Comments on the current leadership culture tell a completely different story. However, the lack of clarity as to how things currently get done and who does what should not be oversimplified as being a matter of a lack of information. Information of this kind is widely available because the organizational chart, as well as staff mandates have been posted around the church for several years and

even re-printed in a recent newsletter. Given that the formal leadership structure is available, and that a “murky” leadership system is acceptable, is it possible that the historic leadership culture, which centred on the few, is not the *desired* leadership culture? Furthermore, the idea that the Senior Pastor is the primary leader with other staff playing supportive roles (i.e., not really “pastors”), may be indicative of a former generation but not necessarily of the current generation.

In the Theological Rationale (chapter 2) we learned that the *ἐκκλησία* is primarily a *community* and that each member is a *priest*. This gives some theological credibility to a distributed form of leadership and has also been an important value in my own training and leadership. The review of current literature also showed that the pastor’s leadership role is best applied to interpreting reality and establishing priorities rather than being a commander-in-chief over all activities and decisions. The leaders of Calvary Church will need to discuss which of these two forms of leadership—centralized vs. distributed—best fits the adaptive challenges it will face.

#### Should Women Be Included in the Leadership?

Clearly women have held important leadership roles and titles, especially during the first half of Calvary’s existence. The research revealed that in the latter half of Calvary’s existence women were performing leadership tasks but not recognized with the formal roles and titles. In many ways, the current manner in which women are being used in leadership at the church is incongruent with its early history. As mentioned in the previous section, there is theological credibility for *each* member being a priest (i.e., *every* Christian a minister). In

particular, the *pastoral* role of women may need to be addressed in a more robust way.

In this regard, the Elders have made a significant step in clarifying the role of women in leadership by recognizing a woman's right to preach in Calvary's worship service (and thus all other venues). As I wrote in chapter 5, this decision was made by a process that is deeply valued by Calvary—a thorough study of the biblical teachings. The study was initially conducted by a task force of Elders and the Pastor, then by the Board as a whole. As outlined in chapter 2, one emphasis of leadership is to establish boundaries instead of rules. The process, used by the leaders to determine the right for women to preach at Calvary, was clarifying the boundaries. The implications of this boundary, beyond specifically the preaching role, have not been addressed by the Elders Board. The authorization of women to preach quite naturally leads to them also taking on truly pastoral roles and titles within the ministry of the congregation. The leadership team will need to discuss the implications of having a rich history of women in leadership as well as making a recent decision to allow women to preach. They will also need to understand clearly the impact of this on the emotional dynamics of the family system since the church community (ἐκκλησία) has not recently experienced women performing tasks and holding titles that have been reserved for men.

#### What Are the Implications of the Teacher as the Leader?

The research showed that the *teacher-is-the-leader* is firmly entrenched in the culture of Calvary Church. This may be true of many congregations since

the preacher, in most congregations, is the most visible leader and preaching/teaching is their most obvious task. However, this seems to be far more prevalent in the psyche of Calvary. Content-oriented (some say “expository”) teaching provides for more than simply communicating biblical or theological data, but subtly lends the authority to lead in all other aspects of congregational life.

This is not without its value. The preaching task provides informal authority in the broader ministry of the congregation; however, the teacher may not be competent to make decisions in all aspects of congregational life. Furthermore, the teacher is not the CEO as was indicated by the model of the pastor-as-shepherd and modeled after Jesus (chapter 3). The business model of pastor-as-CEO was discussed at some length by the second interview group.

This has some direct implications that the Calvary Church leadership will want to consider. As I indicated in Chapter 5 (page 96), the leaders might consider developing a plan to include Associate Pastors in the preaching role more intentionally so their leadership authority is elevated in the mindset of the congregation. Similarly, for preaching-capable Elders; they could take on the teaching role (*in venues such as the evening service*) and thereby elevate their perceived authority to lead the congregation. This would also serve to augment the movement toward a distributed leadership if this is the desired direction for the future. The alternative is for the Elders to focus the preaching role more exclusively on the Senior Pastor making his role more of a teaching pastor so as to elevate his authority and augment his leadership in the congregation.

## How Can Communication Be Improved?

One of the similarities between the past and the present at Calvary Church is the historic weakness in its communication. The culture is one where there is neither opportunity for feedback nor where leaders share the information they *do* have. Recall the response of one individual who said “information was not so much ‘shared’ but ‘released’.” The independent spirit of its founding and denominational affiliation may have been taken too far as evidenced by such things as: little communication, a three member executive decision making team, and non-engaged Annual General Meetings.

That lack of feedback and/or communication does not add to effective leadership in a congregation. In fact, it works against the community nature of the church (ἐκκλησία) and the complex emotional systems at play in the church family. The leadership teams at Calvary will need to address the issue of communication weakness and determine what is not being communicated, what is not being heard and what mechanisms best accommodate communication in the context of this particular congregation. It seems that, contrary to the history of Calvary Church, multiple feedback loops and communication systems will be required in order to move the congregation together as a community.

### **Additional Research and Exploration**

Chapter 5 referenced several findings that would benefit from further research and clarity. These include:

- the denominational leadership values and their affect on Calvary Church;

- research into the extent to which the leadership is hesitant to receive input;
- greater details with regard to the financial values and the impact on the leadership culture;
- further research into the reality and extent of the “spirit of empowerment” within the congregation;
- seeking input from currently serving pastors and staff;
- clarification of the communication culture as a listening but not as a responding culture.

Each of these would add depth of insight to the normative centre of the congregation and would be helpful in creating a “go forward” plan, however, the timeframe of this project did not accommodate another round of research.

### **Summary**

This project has revealed many things. It has provided a rich theological framework that helped to understand the nature of the church as a family system that functions as a community moving toward its mission with behaviours and a culture that reflect some carryover of the old order to blend with new changes as it meets adaptive challenges (chapter 2). It has also highlighted that adaptive challenges require leaders capable of being detached from the immediate challenge in order to be better able to interpret, and adapt to, the context (chapter 3). Furthermore, transitional leaders must pay more attention to the issues of urgency, timing, regulating distress and enacting multiple experiments (chapter 3).

Using some of the processes of action research outlined in chapter 4 (group interviews, questionnaires, etc.), the project researched the leadership culture of one heritage church, into which the concepts of the theological rationale

(chapter 2) and literature review (chapters 3) will be applied. The data (chapter 5) revealed several themes that give clarity to the heritage ethos of Calvary Church, such as; leadership by an executive core, teachers are the leaders, the important role of women in leadership, consistent financial conservatism, etc.

Several topics of discussion were then developed that will help Calvary church lean into the adaptive challenges of the future in the light of the theological rational and literature review (chapter 6). These include: making some decisions on distributing leadership authority, elevating the role of women in leadership, and improving communication. Though the findings in chapter 5 and the conclusions in chapter 6 apply to one church, Calvary Church, Toronto, the process may function as a model for other churches.

The staff team, Elders' Board and pastor are poised to help one heritage church steward its ethos into a discontinuous future as an ageless thinking congregation.



## Appendix A: Request Letter for Past Lay Leader Input



September, 2011

*Oh no...not another survey request!!!* You get them all the time...I know I do. And your reaction might be the same as mine: *ya, when I get the time!* But this is a different kind of survey request. Read on if you will...

I am currently well into a Doctor of Ministry program with an emphasis on leadership. As is true of all doctorates, I am required to write a dissertation. The topic I have chosen will focus on the leadership culture unique to a long-established (“heritage”) church. More specifically, my project seeks to understand and develop a leadership culture that stewards a congregation’s heritage ethos while meeting the adaptive challenges of a discontinuous future. (The word often used in church circles, “missional”, will not be out of place in this project.) I am creating a leadership and history timeline of the 85 year history of Calvary Church. My goal will be to formally uncover the leadership culture of the past and present, and then forecast how to steward the key values of our church into an unknown and complex future.

This is where you can be of help. Because of your connection to our church, I would like your input. I have developed a list of questions for you to answer. Try to answer as many as you can by giving careful consideration to the questions for which you can provide insight. Simply type your answers (bullet point form is sufficient) into the document and send it back. Or if you prefer, the questions may be a primer for a conversation...even about other leadership activities not directly mentioned in the questionnaire. Let me know if you would like to talk!

I anticipate collating all the responses in summary form so that all the input I receive will be anonymous to those who read the project.

You have been a blessing to the church, and I would like you to consider adding to that blessing as we move toward the future.

His & Yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Tom". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Tom Lamshead, Senior pastor

## Appendix B: Questionnaire for Past Lay Leaders



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### *Your experience...*

What years were you at Calvary?

What role(s) did you play in the church?

Why did you start attending Calvary?

What made Calvary Church meaningful to you during your time?

### *About the Church...*

Briefly describe any memorable or significant accomplishments and why are they memorable or significant?

What challenges (and when) did the church have to overcome to realize these accomplishments?

### *About the leaders...*

#### *Pastor(s)*

From your experience, what phrases might describe the main roll of:  
the Senior Pastor?  
the Associate Pastors'?

The Sunday morning sermon is among the many tasks for which a pastor is entrusted. Would you characterize the Pastor more as teacher (content-oriented) or preacher (transformation-oriented)?

With whom did the Pastor invest time and energy to help guide the church in its mission?

What traits of the pastor helped him to be perceived as a leader?

Other leaders

Name one or two important leaders in the church during your time.

What made them a good leader?

In what ways was their leadership not helpful?

As far as you know, what legacy from them still lives on today, if any?

Who influenced the decisions by informal power?

How are the key influencers related:

a. to the church (e.g., by committee role, by long-term attendance, spiritual reputation, etc)?

b. to each other (family, as old friends, etc.)?

Leadership culture

Which groups were most involved in sharing information and making decisions?

Were the leaders, in general, anxious or open about creative new ideas? How so?

In what ways was their leadership not helpful?

Name 3 or 4 key values that seem to provide the impetus for leadership decisions. If possible, give an illustration of each.

*Thank you so much! Your input will add much value to the future of Calvary Church.*

## **Appendix C: Invitation to Interview Group Participants**

*An invitation to a different kind of meeting in order to help make a difference!*

I appreciate having been asked to assist Pastor Tom in a very important survey of our church. Tom is conducting a formal, in-depth research project on the historic and current leadership norms of Calvary Church so as to create strategic leadership plans for the future. *The Lord has provided us with strong leadership roots and it behooves us to understand and hold onto the values that got us where we are!*

The research will be part of a doctoral dissertation that will focus on the leadership culture unique to a long-established (“heritage”) church. To put it into more academic terms, the project seeks to understand and develop a leadership culture that stewards a congregation’s heritage ethos while meeting the adaptive challenges of a discontinuous future. (The word “missional” will not be out of place in this project!)

To that end, a leadership and history timeline of the 85 year history of Calvary Church is being developed with the goal of formally uncovering the leadership culture of the past and present, and then forecast how to steward the key values of our church into an unknown, chaotic and complex future.

Here’s where you can help. On Tom’s behalf, I would like you to join a focus group meeting with several other Calvary people for a guided discussion on the current leadership culture and processes at work at Calvary. With your permission, I would like to record the conversation so as not to miss any comments (transcripts will be produced and will be make available to you if you would like). We will be collating all the responses and all input will be anonymous to the readers of the project. To ensure an open conversation, Tom has asked me to moderate the discussion so that neither he nor other pastors will need to be present.

**Meeting: October 24, 2011 at 7:30-9:00 pm**  
**At: Calvary Church**

Having been associated with Calvary Church since 1956, I’m grateful for the ministry and leadership with which we have been blessed. *And I know we all want it to continue!* I believe this project will help build on its strong foundation and your help will...help! Simply “reply” to let me know you’re going to join this formative meeting.

Sincerely,

Bob Morris

## **Appendix D: Questionnaire for Current Lay Leadership**

### **Preparation Questions**

#### ***Leadership Values***

What similarities (or patterns) do you see between past leaders (pre-2000) and current leaders (post-2000)? List 2 or 3, with illustrations where possible.

Name 3 or 4 key values that seem to provide impetus for current leadership decisions. Give illustrations where possible.

#### ***Pastoral roles***

What phrases might describe the main role of:  
the senior pastor  
the associate pastors.

With whom do the Pastors invest time and energy to help guide the church in its mission?

What traits of the pastor help him to be perceived as a leader?

#### ***Leadership culture***

Think of one or two important leaders over the last decade (name them only if you wish).

What makes them a good leader?  
Are there ways in which their leadership was not helpful?

In general, are the leaders anxious or open about new ideas? How so?

Which groups are most involved in sharing information and making decisions?

## Appendix E: Interview Request Letter to Past Clergy



July 20, 2011

Greetings from Calvary Church! I know how much Calvary Church has meant to you over the years and I want you to know that you have not been forgotten. It is a tribute both to the church and to the former leaders that a rich relationship continues well after their time of formal ministry. You have been a blessing to the church, and I would like you to consider adding to that blessing as we move toward the future.

I am currently well into a Doctor of Ministry program with an emphasis on leadership. As is true of all doctorates, I am required to write a dissertation. The topic I have chosen will focus on the leadership culture unique to a long-established (“heritage”) church. More specifically, my project seeks to understand and develop a leadership culture that stewards a congregation’s heritage ethos while meeting the adaptive challenges of a discontinuous future. (The word “missional” will not be out of place in this project!) I will be creating a leadership and history timeline of the 85 year history of Calvary Church. My goal will be to formally uncover the leadership culture of the past and present, and then forecast how to steward the long-held values of our church into an unknown, chaotic and complex future.

This is where you can be of help. Because of your significant role as a former leader of our church, I would like your input. Would you be willing to meet with me (preferably by the end of July) for an interview regarding your time at Calvary Church? I have developed a list of questions for you to consider in advance. Feel free to write down your responses, however, with your permission, I would like to record and transcribe our candid conversation so as to not create too much advance work on your part and so that I can accurately reflect our conversation in my findings. The questions are really a primer for an open conversation. It might also generate a conversation about other leadership activities not directly mentioned in the questions. I anticipate the interview to last 1 ½ hours and we can meet at your home or office.

I will contact you in a week or two to set up an appointment. Thanks for all your help in the past, and now through your input, even *in the future* of Calvary Church!

His & Yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Tom". The signature is written in a cursive style with a horizontal line above the name.

Tom Lamshead, Senior pastor

## Appendix F: Questionnaire for Past Clergy

### Personal Reflections on Your Leadership

1. Tell of two of your fondest memories of your time serving at Calvary Church? Why are these so special to you?
2. Regarding the Sunday sermon, some pastors consider themselves mainly as a teacher while others see themselves as preachers. How might you define the difference? Into which of these two categories would your sermons primarily fit into while at Calvary?
3. Some pastors are more extroverted in nature (i.e., get their energy from the programs and activities of their ministry) while others are more introverted in nature (i.e., get their energy from planning, study and personal work). How would you place yourself in these categories?
4. Pastors juggle many priorities. Listed below are a few. Circle two or three (add some if necessary) that were priorities during your tenure.
  - a. finances
  - b. staff issues
  - c. sermons
  - d. communicating vision/future
  - e. leadership
  - f. evangelism
  - g. congregational relationships
  - h. other (please specify)
5. Pastors are called on to fill a variety of leadership roles. In what order would you place your style of leadership during your ministry at Calvary.
  - a. missions motivator
  - b. directional leader
  - c. visionary inspirer
  - d. shepherd caregiver
  - e. other (please specify):
6. Leaders are called on to divide their time among many activities. Please place the following list in the order that you typically applied your time in any given month. Feel free to add to it as necessary.

- a. Teaching/preaching
  - b. Meetings and administration
  - c. Prayer and personal spiritual growth
  - d. Pastoral care, counselling and spiritual direction
  - e. Evangelism and community affairs
  - f. Strategic planning and staff direction
  - g. other (please specify):
7. As you transitioned from your time at Calvary, what made you sense it was time to leave?

### **The Context of Your Leadership**

1. List three or four prominent and influential lay people at Calvary Church during your tenure. What, specifically, was their contribution and level of authority to fulfil their ministry?
2. How would you describe the Board of Elders during your tenure? Consider such things the size of the Board, a general description of who was on the board, how they functioned, how decisions and discussions were conducted, etc.
3. What major changes took place in the church during your tenure?
4. What were the key issues or obstacles facing the church during your time (please include dates if possible)?
5. What were the greatest relational controversies or crises the church faced during your time? How were they solved?
6. What were some of the primary outreach ministries during your tenure (both local and global)?



## Appendix G

### Sunday School Superintendents 1928-2011

Years	Superintendent	
1928 - 33	Andrew Chisolm	
1934 - 37	C. Ernest Falconbridge	
1938 - 39	Austin Chambers	Gladys McIntosh Assistant
1940	Gladys McIntosh (Acting)	
1941- 42	Gladys McIntosh	
1943 - 51	Alf Rose	
1951	Rev. D. Raymer	Craig Lougheed Assistant
1952 - 55	Craig Lougheed	
1955 - 57	Norman Notley	Craig Lougheed Associate
1957 - 65	Craig Lougheed	Norman Notley Assistant
1965 -66	Craig Lougheed	
1966 - 67	Dave Rose	
1967 - 73	Dave Rose	Dr. C.W.J. Morris Assistant
1973 - 77	Jack Edwards	
1977 - 90	Gord Hamilton	
1990 - 96	Lorna Arndt	
2004	Carol Morris (Acting)	
2006	C. Morris (Children's Min)	
2007 - 11	Coordinating Team	
	Laura Wiebe	Children's Ministry Coordinator
	Steve Kiriakidis	

## Appendix H Pastors, Associates and Lay Leaders, 1928-2011

Year	Senior Pastor	Associate & Roles					
1928							
1929							
1930	Rev. W.A. Nisbet	Miss M. Willison					
1931		Deaconess					
1932		Mrs. McBain Deaconess					
1933	Rev. Anderson						
1934							
1935							
1936							
1937	Rev. W.A. Nisbet						
1938		Miss T. Robson Deaconess					
1939		Miss E. Drewe					
1940		Sec. District Visitation					
1941							
1942							
1943							
1944							
1945							
1946							
1947							
1948-49							
1949-50	Rev S. Boehmer						
1950-51							
1951-52							
1952-53		Rev. W. Howlett					
1953-54		Assistant Pastor					
1954-55							
1955-56		D. Hendricks					
1956-57		Dir. of Religious Ed.					
1957-58		Rev W.M. Crump					
1958-59		Dir. of Religious Ed.					
1959-60		Miss R. Fox					
1960-61	Dr. A.P. Lee	Deaconess	Rev. M.L. Hicks				
1961-62			Assistant Pastor				
1963-64							
1964-65				Rev. D.G. Evans	C. Cook		
1965-66			Minister of CE	Director of Music			
1966-67							
1967-68			Rev A. Roberts Dir. CE				
1968-69							
1969-70	Dr. G.B. Griffiths	Rev. W. T. Wilson	Pastor of Visitation				
1970-71					L. Barber Youth		
1971-72							
1972-73					D. Morrison Youth		
1973-74							
1974-75							
1975-76							
1976-77							
1977-78							S. Bramer Youth
1978-79							
1979-80							
1980-81			Rev. G. Hamilton	E. Dyck	P. Havercroft Youth		
1982-83			CE & Music	Visitation & Evangelism	G. Weeks Youth		
1984-85							
1985-86							
1986-87							
1987-88							
1988-89					B. Reilly Youth		
1989-90							
1990-91				R. Scullard			
1991-92				Visitation			
1992-93					W. Morris/K. Dorscht Youth		
1993-94	Rev. I. Campbell			W. Morris/K			
1994-95				Vandermeer Youth			
1995-96				K. Dorscht,	W. Morris/ L. & J. Wray Youth		
1996-97				Discipleship/Small			
1997-98				Groups			
1998-99							
1999-2000							
2000-01							
2001-02							
2003							
2004	Rev. T. Lamshead						
2005				N. Kane/J. Belbeck			
2006				Jason Morrison			
2007				Youth & Worship			
2008-09							
2010			Rev. G. Cockburn	Rev. A. Butryn	D. Lombardo/S. Kiriakidis Youth		
2011			Community Engagement	Worship & Family Life	D. Lombardo Youth		

## Appendix I: Timeline of Calvary Church, Toronto

### 1925-1940

#### Pastoral Staff

William Nisbet (28-32, 34-41)  
J. Fisher Anderson (33-34)

#### Key Lay Leaders

Mrs McBain (28-32, Deaconess)  
Andrew Chisholm (28-33)  
Ernest Falconbridge (34-37)  
Miss T. Robson (37-38, Deaconess)  
Miss E. Drewe (39-40, Visitation)

#### Important Events

In 1925 the Pastor of St. John's Presbyterian Church joined United Church, the church didn't follow.

Split was not conducted in a spiritually healthy way.

Wm. Nisbet called to St. John's Presbyterian Church...ardent evangelical who broke from Presbyterian tradition in worship style and preaching resulting in a split within the congregation and from the Presbytery

Pledge cards and loans from congregation employed to fund new building.

Feb. 2, 1930 new building opens.

1931: Sunday School enrolment; 584

Anderson (33-34) bore the pressure of change from Presbyterian denominationalism.

Nisbet (34-41): numeric decline but sustained mission work home and abroad.

1935: Joined AGC

Membership: 454

### 1940-1955

#### Pastoral Staff

Stewart Boehmer (43-56)  
William Howlett (52-54)

#### Key Lay Leaders

Harry Wild  
Stella Pickens  
Mrs. Cromie  
Robert McClintock  
"Ambassadors"  
Gladys McIntosh  
Walter Scholey (Life Elder)  
John Beattie (Life Elder)  
Robert Gill (Life Elder)

#### Important Events

Stewart Boehmer (43-56): trained at Moody following business career.

Strong missions leadership (purchase of missionary homes, AIM Canadian office in church, car available for home assignments, etc.)

Sunday School moved from afternoon to before Worship.

1948: Morningside Mission (church) was planted.

1951: after overcoming resistance, new sanctuary was completed to a burst of new life.

Sunday School offerings were now all given to missions and saw a dramatic increase in gifts.

Graded curriculum was introduced. Enrolment reached all time high of 655 in 1956.

Boehmer resigned (1956) to be president of TBC/Tyndale Sackville Street Mission dissolved and joined Calvary Church.

Membership: 409

### 1955-1970

#### Pastoral Staff

Stewart Boehmer (43-56)  
Arthur Patterson Lee (58-66)  
Gerald Griffiths (67-90)  
D. Hendricks (55-56)  
Bill Crump (57-  
Murray Hicks (60-61)  
Willard Wilson (61-78)  
Craig Cook (63-67)  
Don Evans (65-67)

#### Key Lay Leaders

Ruth Fox (58-61, Deaconess)  
Norman Notley  
Craig Loughheed  
Ann Chambers  
Eunice Brennan  
P.A. Jackson (Life Elder)  
T. Abernathy (Life Elder)

#### Important Events

Parkway Bible Church planted with most of the building funds from sale of Sackville Street Mission (1956).

Lee (58-66) came from Scotland was known for able preaching & visitation.

1957-67: community ethnic ratio changed from 90/10 Anglo vs Ethnic to 10/90.

Conscientious decision made to stay in the community.

1962: Christian Education building erected as symbol of staying in the community.

1966: Subway and adjacent parking is opened creating a subtle shift from community church to city church.

1968: special month of prayer to discern how to minister to growing Greek population.

Radio program began

Membership: 489

## 1970-1985

### Pastoral Staff

Gerald Griffiths (67-90)  
Gord Hamilton (68-04)  
Ernie Dyck (78-88)  
Laurie Barber  
David Morrison  
Steve Bramer  
Gary Weeks  
Paul Havercroft

### Key Lay Leaders

Norman Notley  
Robert McClintock  
Craig Lougheed (Life Elder)  
Albert Turner (Life Elder)  
Robert Downing (Life Elder)

### Important Events

1970: Italian services held in Christian Education building by two missionaries.

1971: Spanish congregation asked to be accommodated.

1971: Major renovations to Sunday School rooms.

1971: Family Night instituted bringing all mid-week ministry onto one night, including an adult bible study with teaching by the pastor.

1973: Springing out of the Sunday sermon radio broadcast, a "Visit with Mrs. G" begins airing.

1973: Inspired by Robert McClintock, Nisbet Lodge was opened to accommodate an aging population in society.

1978: during 50 years, over 100 people have become missionaries and full-time Christian workers through the ministry of Calvary.

"Praise & Power" Sunday evening area youth ministry  
50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary celebrations,  
"The Jubilee Story" published

Membership: 515

## 1985-2000

### Pastoral Staff

Gerald Griffiths (67-90)  
Ian Campbell (92-01)  
Gord Hamilton (68-04)  
Robin Scullard (88-93)  
Warren Morris  
Brent Reilly  
K. Dorscht  
Kathy Ribble

### Key Lay Leaders

Craig Lougheed  
Paul Frew  
Bill Louth  
Kevin Vandermeer

### Important Events

1993: McClintock Manor, retirement apartment for independent seniors was opened.

"Red Carpet" new immigrant assistance initiative.

"Blended" worship initiated

Day Camp ministry initiated as a ministry to church families

Tri-Q (small groups) home Bible study groups

"Out of the Cold" ministry to homeless people

60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary celebrations

Ethiopian Evangelical Church invited to use Calvary's facilities

Membership: 312  
(incorporation removed  
"affiliate" member status)

## 2000-2012

### Pastoral Staff

Ian Campbell (92-01)  
Tom Lamshead (03-present)  
Gord Hamilton (68-04)  
Garry Francis (04-07)  
Jason Morrison (04-07)  
Gary Cockburn (07-present)  
Alan Butryn (07-present)  
Dave Lombardo(08-present)

### Key Lay Leaders

Paul Frew  
Craig Lougheed  
Carol Morris  
Frank Frew (Life Elder)  
Ed McComiskey (Life Elder)

### Important Events

New staffing directions including Coordinating Chaplain, Community Impact Pastor and Youth Unlimited partnership.

Revival of local community impact initiatives: Pape Youth Centre Daily Bread food bank, Narcotics Anonymous, Sportball etc.

Capital Redevelopment Committee renewed to make strategic facilities decision; not to develop joint facility with Lodge but extensively renovate church facility.

New Mission, Vision Values documents developed.

Day Camp expanded to become Performing Arts summer outreach

75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebrations

Membership: 220

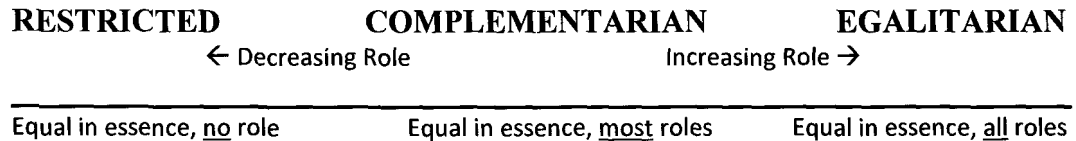
**Appendix J:  
The Preaching Role of Women at Calvary: Elders' Discussion Guidelines**



**Should Women Preach at Calvary Church?**

*Prepared by: Bob Morris, Paul Willis and Tom Lamshead*

**1. Current Women in Ministry Views**



While each view (Restricted, Complementarian, Egalitarian) claims to have biblical and reasonable arguments, we are proposing that the Egalitarian and Complementarian views represent the most viable positions for the Board's consideration. As well, while we want to encourage full debate of the issue, with freedom to differ, we must be mindful not to allow this issue to degenerate into divisive behaviour and speech.

**2. Common Points of Agreement**

- Women can teach and can teach men and women (1 Cor. 11:5, 14:31)
- Women may pray in public assembly (1 Cor. 11:5)
- Women can sing hymns and spiritual songs (Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16)
- Women are given spiritual gifts incl. prophesying, teaching, counseling, encouragement, pastoring (but not the "Office") (1 Cor. 12:7, 27-31)
- Jesus' attitude towards women gave them a significant role in the Christian community (Luke 8:1-3; John 4:4-42)
- Men and women, as human beings, are made in the image of God and equal before God (Ontological), but have distinct roles (Functional); submission and servanthood do not imply inferiority. (Gal. 3:28)
- Authority of any preaching, teaching and prophesying comes from the Word of God and the church's leadership – not from gender. (Heb. 4:12; 2 Peter 1:21; Psalm 119; John 17:17)

### 3. General Principles for interpreting the Bible passages

- Is the passage/illustration prescriptive or descriptive?
- Is the passage *contextually* bound or universal? (i.e. Or to what *extent*?)
- How does the current situation and Calvary church's specific heritage affect the application?
- Are teaching, prophesying and preaching distinct disciplines?
- What did Jesus intend us to understand ("conclude?") from his attitude and teaching about women?
- Who is the audience to which this Scripture is intended to apply?

### 4. Interpretative (Hermeneutic) Principles Related to Individual Passages

#### Re. 1 Timothy 2:11-15

- Determine the kind of teaching women are to engage in
- Determine what term "women" refers to (i.e. "wives" specifically or "women" generally?)
- Determine what "authority" means and in what context (i.e. marriage, church, etc.)

#### Re. 1 Corinthians 14:34-36

- Determine the extent of "silence"
- Determine the kind of silence indicated
- Determine what "God's law" refers to and is it a qualification or prohibition on women speaking

#### Supportive Passages to consider

- 1 Cor. 14:3-5; 18-19, 22,29-31 re. "prophesying" as a spiritual gift
- 1 Cor. 11:2-10 re. women may pray & prophesy but must cover heads
- 2 Tim. 4:2-3,5 for possible insights on or distinctions between preaching, teaching and prophesying
- 1 Cor. 12:27 & Eph. 4:11-14 re. God's appointment to church (apostles, prophets, teachers, evangelists, pastors)
- Acts 18:24-26 – Apollos instructed by both Priscilla & Aquila

### 5. Definition of Terms

For the purpose of this discussion (re. can women preach?), we have agreed to understand these meanings for the following terms:

**EGALITARIAN** – Men and women are equal in essence and function. No role distinctions can be made between them in the church.

**COMPLEMENTARIAN** – Women have freedom to minister in most roles except elder or teacher of men. They are equal in essence but have a different function => **taking into consideration** the AGC “Women in Ministry” (Pt. 7) clause: *“The Scriptures indicate that a woman may participate actively in corporate worship. She may minister in church services or church-related meetings so long as her primary purpose is not to have authority that befits the office of the pastor/elder.”*

**PUBLIC ASSEMBLY** – Church worship service

**OFFICE** – A charge or trust, of a sacred nature, conferred by God.

**AUTHORITY** – (1) Organizationally: the authority of the Elders to govern the preaching and teaching ministry of the church is given by the congregation, and  
(2) Spiritually: the authority of the teaching/preaching is the Scripture.

**PASTORING** –Pastoring as a “spiritual gift” distinct from “office”

#### **PREACHING/TEACHING/PROPHESYING**

- Although distinctive gifts, recognition of the fact that each of the above three has an instructive element.
- Authoritative instruction is that which does not usurp the authority of Scripture or the authority of the congregation (the church). Examples: heresy or philosophy of ministry.

#### **6. The Decision Process**

- Each elder will commit to undertaking sufficient diligent study and reflection upon the key scriptural (and suggested) passages identified, as well as any other passages that they feel legitimately pertain to the matter of women preaching in a corporate worship service.
- The freedom and encouragement to read more deeply on this issue for the purpose of bringing greater clarity of insight if it is deemed helpful to the formulation of an opinion.
- The importance of seeking additional clarification from the working group, concerning any aspect of the task at hand, should the need arise, so as to stay on topic.

**Appendix K:  
A Prayer that Summarizes the Project**

The first “wave” of data collection was a group interview. It was comprised of people who collectively had been attending Calvary Church for 707 years. As I concluded this meeting, I ended with prayer. Prayer at such meetings is not unusual. However, upon reading the transcripts, it seemed this spontaneous prayer of mine was more than perfunctory. It is a summary of some main points and purpose of the entire project. And it is the summary of this published document.

*Once again Lord, I find myself wanting to, first of all, say thank you. Thank you for the beauty of this conversation. Thank you for seven hundred and seven years of corporate experience within the ministry of our church...and that you by your grace have sustained this work enough that we can even have seven hundred and seven years worth of experience in this room. We understand that is only by the grace of God that a church exists and that a church maintains. And that a church actually accomplishes kingdom values. And we recognize that. We recognize that it is only by the Holy Spirit that all of these things have taken place. And yet Lord we are finding ourselves very grateful for the leaders that you have placed within and among us. We thank you Lord that there have been so many self-initiating people who out of love for Christ have just gone ahead and done the ministry and we have been the recipients of it...and we are truly grateful. And we are excited Lord to be a part of **this** generation. We're glad that we stand now in this generation and we have the opportunity of being the mentors and the people who*



*hold the heritage of our church...and we're grateful Lord to have task and that role. Give us the grace to release the ministry to people who might be younger and more creative and even more adventurous. But help us Lord to consistently bring all of our leaders back to some of these key values--the things that you have made us to value and made us to trust. So Lord we are most thankful to you for all of these years and all of these memories. And I pray father that you would give us the joy of continuing on this church and this ministry and being the ones that the next generations will look back on with great thanks and with great joy. So we give the glory to you in Jesus name. Amen.*

## **Appendix L: Ethical Considerations**

The research in this project conformed to the ethical standards as outlined in: the Tri-Council Policy Statement (2010) of the Canadian Institutes of Health Research, Natural Sciences Research Council of Canada and Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada. This is the joint statement regarding ethical conduct for research involving human subjects. To meet these standards, each participant was provided with a description of the project and how their input would be used (see appendices A and C). They were each given the opportunity to opt out of any of the questions whether given in the group interview or in the surveys. They were also given the opportunity to opt out of the process entirely. Each individual was made aware that there was someone, other than the author, with whom they could discuss any concerns they may have had and who was aware of, and had access to, a Tyndale Seminary advisor. In the case of the second interview group, a third individual was also available with whom the participants could talk. Each participant was made aware that the information would be used for a Doctor of Ministry thesis and to provide input to the leadership of the church. They were also made aware that the data would be collated in a way that provided anonymity for all participants.

Each participant in the group interviews was directly asked for their “free and informed consent” for the conversation to be recorded and transcribed. Everyone was made aware that the final project would be made available for them to read so that they could see how their input was used. In the case of the second

group interview, an experienced moderator (see page 68) led the conversation so that the author could not bias the conversation. This interview group was also given of the same information which was provided to the first interview group. As well, they were informed that the transcripts would omit all names so that the author would not be able to know who made the comments. Everyone in both group interviews gave their verbal agreement since a written consent would have been problematic for accurate feedback (see page 59). This is in keeping with Article 10.2, *Modalities of Expression of Consent*, of the Tri-Council Policy Statement.

All the participants, who completed the questionnaires, were given the same instructions as those who took part in the group interviews. They were given the opportunity of submitting their information through a research assistant if they wanted to remain anonymous to the author. None of these participants felt the need to be anonymous.

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