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Kern, Paul Roland. "Trinity Matters in the Church: One Congregation's Journey to Connecting Identity, Worship and Mission to the Trinity." D. Min., Tyndale University College & Seminary, 2015.

Tyndale University College and Seminary

Trinity Matters in the Church:
One Congregation's Journey to Connecting Identity, Worship and Mission to the
Trinity

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

By

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May 2015

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ABSTRACT

This thesis provides a rationale for connecting the Trinity more deliberately with identity, worship and mission in the church, and a description and evaluation of a project in a particular congregation to accomplish this purpose.

A small Wesleyan congregation in Ontario was taken on a journey from tacit to intentional Trinitarianism by emphasizing the Trinity in sermons, sacraments, study, worship, and mission. Resources included Natural Church Development's *Three Colors of Ministry* and *Color Your World*, Trinitarian liturgical material, and a self-developed small group curriculum. The assessments indicated growth in Trinitarian identity and intentional Trinitarian praxis, both in the project facilitator and members of the congregation.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This project is about a journey. Journeys are far more enjoyable when you do not have to go them alone. I am grateful to everyone who joined me.

To my DMin director, Dr. Paul Bramer: You truly went the extra mile for me. Thank you for opening your library as a personal workspace for me to plug forward in my writing, and for giving me so much of your time to help me.

Dr. Mark Chapman: You went from being the professor I feared to a friend with whom I could enjoy coffee, a meal of good Indian cuisine, and a Sunday morning church service.

Colleagues and friends: I have eaten with you, attended church with you, taken your sweaters, stayed in your homes, went to games with you, panicked with you and rejoiced with you.

To the faculty and professors who poured themselves into us: Indeed, we had some of the highest quality people teaching us, and I am grateful to God for that opportunity.

Dr. Kevin Livingston my thesis advisor: Thank you for the hours you spent with me over Skype and the phone to challenge me at every turn, and to sharpen me to be able to come up with something I could dare to submit.

All my brothers and sisters in Christ at Highland Park Wesleyan Church in Ottawa who had to endure this project through three years: Many of you willingly became a part of this project and helped me in so many ways. Thank you so much for coming on this journey with me.

Ken and Joyce Hayward (my Parents-in-Law): If you are reading this, you finally have the copy you have been asking for virtually every time we spoke on the phone. Your support has been astounding and has made so much of this thesis possible.

Albert and Wendy Kern (Dad and Mum): This project began when I was a child and you both had the wisdom to take me to church, read the Bible to me every night, teach me what hard work is, and show your undeniable love and support.

Charis and Caleb: You didn't ask to come on this journey. Thank-you for those times you visited me down in our basement while I was working on this because you simply wanted to be with Daddy.

Heather, my wife: I dedicate this entire work to you. Without you, your encouragement, your calling into the ministry and your love, this work would be nothing and is nothing.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS, ACRONYMS

AR: Action Research

CAV: Cognitive, Affective, and Volitional

CYW: Color Your World (2005)

HPWC: Highland Park Wesleyan Church

NCD: Natural Church Development

PAOC: Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada

TCPS: Tri-Council Policy Statement (for Ethics in Research)

TNIV: Today's New International Version

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

This is a project about how a particular local church has attempted to live out Trinitarianism. Authors like Jurgen Moltmann (1981), Leslie Newbiggin (1988), and Andrew Stirling (2002) believe the church's identity begins with the Trinity. In other words, it is the Triune God who establishes the church and not the other way around. These theologians share a general concern about a trend in the local church to profess a creedal belief in the Trinity, but rarely connect church life, worship and mission to the Christian God who is Triune (Sanders 2010, 8). These writers and others such as Torrance (1996) and C. A. Schwartz (2001) have also claimed however that many churches are unconsciously Trinitarian in that they engage in activities that are in many ways connected to the Godhead, but without realizing the Trinity's foundational role in these activities.

This project set out to use the resources and ministries that already exist for the local church to bring about a better understanding of Trinitarianism and to refresh Trinitarian identity in worship and action. This involved helping the people of the church reconnect their minds, their emotions and their practical actions to the Trinitarian identity.

Use of Gender Inclusive Language

In an effort to maintain fidelity to gender inclusivity in this thesis, I have decided to use feminine and masculine pronouns interchangeably. I have also

chosen to quote Scripture, unless otherwise noted, from a gender inclusive version of the Bible - *Today's New International Version* (2005).

This writer believes God transcends gender. I do, however, refer to God in the masculine throughout this thesis which is consistent with how the Wesleyan/Methodist tradition refers to God.

Context

When I undertook this project I was the senior pastor of a small congregation in the Westboro area of Ottawa, Ontario, Canada. This church, Highland Park Wesleyan (HPWC), is the primary focus and context of this project.

My background includes experience in a variety of denominations. I was baptized as an infant and started attending the United Church of Canada and later, with my family, joined the Presbyterian Church. Throughout my teenage years I was deeply involved in both the Wesleyan Church and the Pentecostal Church. I later made the choice to be baptized by immersion as a young adult by a pastor friend who is a Baptist. I eventually made the decision to receive ministry training at a Pentecostal Bible College, was later ordained and spent my first 12 years as a pastor in the Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada. In 2008 I, along with my wife and two children, made the move to HPWC and into the Wesleyan denomination. These ecumenical experiences brought me into contact with different emphases on particular persons of the Godhead. I explore what this means theologically and pragmatically for denominations in chapters two and three.

HPWC is a congregation of two separate mergers. The latter of the two took place between two groups in 2006. The goal of the merger, according to all those involved, was to see the merged church “revitalized.” One group was the original congregation of HPWC, once known as Highland Park Standard Church. This congregation, at the time of the merger, consisted mainly of seniors who once belonged to the Standard Church of America (SCA). In 2003 the Standard denomination had merged at the denominational level with the Wesleyan Church. As the pastor of HPWC it was common to hear talk from congregants who still thought of themselves as “Standard.” The other group who came over in the congregational merger was primarily made up of young married couples who left a thriving sister (Wesleyan) congregation to come to HPWC. The congregation they came from had different dynamics and demographics in size, worship style and location. It was also different in issues of soteriology, Sunday service structure, and had its understanding of the church’s mission. HPWC thus experienced significant changes in congregational dynamics, ethos, and denominational identity during the five years after the denominational merger. Since these two mergers, HPWC has been a church searching for both identity and mission but with members having differing priorities. Some people came over in the merger hoping for a more liturgical tradition, while others had a genuine desire to focus on Christian social justice and even ecological concerns of faith. All the while, the formerly Standard congregation was expecting to remain a church that reflected traditional SCA practices such as evangelistic altar calls. Additionally, a few in the congregation considered themselves to be Charismatic,

hoping for opportunities to dance at the altar or even experience and manifest the gifts of the Spirit.

Based on my own experience as the pastor of HPWC, and after conducting an analysis of the congregation's context before beginning this project, I became concerned that I was pastoring a congregation that was searching for an identity to guide its worship and mission. Examination of the context and my own ecumenical experience led to the idea that an emphasis on Trinitarian self-discovery had the potential to positively contribute to the development of HPWC's identity. As will be shown in chapter five HPWC was already Trinitarian and benefited from a project like this to connect the dots to reveal a more holistic picture of their latent Trinitarianism. By the end of the project the congregation had moved closer to a shared identity. This included congregants having a better awareness of personal gifts and values. This identity helped the church to develop a more defined mission and fostered an approach to worship that was rooted in Trinitarian theology.

Rationale And Opportunities

Unintentional though it may be, churches such as HPWC sometimes function more as quasi-Unitarians than Trinitarians when it comes to worship and practice (Torrance 1996, 20). This means congregants tend to ignore each divine person's simultaneous role in our approach to God or His approach to us during worship. Alan Torrance explains, "I doubt...there is any other factor which undermines the mission and worship of the church more tragically than the widespread failure to appreciate the Trinitarian dynamic of worship" (Alan

Torrance in Parry 2005, vii). Robin Parry describes this situation as endemic to the evangelical church, claiming

those who do ‘understand’ the contours of Christian claims about the Trinity often don’t see why the doctrine matters ... For many of us, the Trinity is one of those things we know we believe in but that seems unconnected to the rest of our life and faith ... therefore the Trinity is an abstract doctrine that matters in theory but not in practice (Parry 2005, 5).

The disconnect between identity, worship, mission and the Trinity could be observed at HPWC in my conversations with congregants, during times of teaching and worship. There is no shortage of resources, both historical and contemporary, that can help us address this disconnect. Part of this project was to explore and implement some of these resources to help the congregation relate the Trinity to identity, worship and mission and also to discover that much of what we already do is Trinitarian.

Most of HPWC’s adherents already agreed that the doctrine of the Trinity was important as a matter of creed and tradition. Likewise, the church was already familiar with many of the Trinitarian hymns and Trinitarian formulas in both our prayers and sacramental liturgies. As a Wesleyan church we were already a part of a great tradition that upheld many of the same values already asserted among the congregants of HPWC. And to this Kevin Daugherty writes, “The understanding of the Trinity as God’s own mission-oriented nature has been made possible by a rediscovery of the doctrine’s practical implications” (Daugherty 2007, 152). The opportunity was to explore how a doctrine perceived as cerebral can be practical. Daugherty concludes, “the point of the Trinity has two referents. First, it refers to what the doctrine of the Trinity...says about God. The

second...asks, ‘what are the implications of the doctrine of the Trinity for Christian living?’” (Daugherty 2007, 162)

The goal of this project was a step in ecclesial transformation by introducing and following through with a cognitive, affective and volitional (CAV) shift among the people of the congregation, in order to return the activities of the church’s life to its Trinitarian foundation. The hope was to see this shift on three levels: personal, the leadership and on the congregation. This transformation would be seen not so much in *what* we did as a church, but in *how* we did these things, and even *why* we did these things.

Response and Innovation

Merely stating a belief in the Trinity does not make one Trinitarian. This project was about experiencing, living, and teaching that the doctrine of the Trinity is more than mere belief. Being Trinitarian is a lifestyle for which we have been created, in the image of the One who lives, works, and acts eternally in Triune community.

This project initiated an ecclesial shift at HPWC by engaging the pastor (myself), the leadership team and the congregation on a journey of change, exploring various Trinitarian resources from a variety of Christian traditions that are applicable to my church setting, and applying them in order to foster a transformation. This journey began with a shift in the mind (Cognitive) where the Trinity becomes more than latently held. The journey continued into the heart where the Trinity brings transformation for how we worship God (Affective). Eventually, the journey ended with teaching us how being Trinitarian influences

our hands and feet, in other words, what we do in mission specifically because we are Trinitarian Christians (Volitional). This journey employed a variety of methods and innovations such as changes in the Sunday worship services, creating a mid-week program, and inviting participants to join in study groups using material developed by Natural Church Development (NCD). As the researcher, I also involved myself in a journey of personal transformation that was intentionally grounded in Trinitarian theology and worship. This was in connection with the method of Action Research, where the project involves the researcher as both participant and observer. The particulars of Action Research will be discussed later.

Methods and Methodology

The project generated practical changes that would enable the congregation to encounter the Trinity as more than a vague concept, or merely a single sentence in the church's constitution or statement of beliefs. The primary way I did this was by researching various Trinitarian resources and traditions and applying them to our church setting, after which I would re-evaluate how these innovations worked to bring about a church that is practically and deliberately Trinitarian.

Guiding Questions and Methodology

There are three guiding questions I have set out to answer with this project.

Why is the Trinity important to the Church?

This first question is the most important one because if the Trinity is nothing more than an esoteric tidbit for theological discussion, the subsequent questions are moot. However if the Trinity is vital, not only for orthodox belief but for matters of identity, purpose, ecclesiology and praxis, then such a project is necessary, especially if there are dangers of the local church losing its awareness, or even interest, in the truth and practicality that God is Triune.

Much of this first question will be addressed in chapters 2 and 3. This is because being aware and convinced of the vitality of being Trinitarian is, in my argument, the main catalyst in bringing about the kind of shift in the mind, heart and actions all this is aiming to bring. The methods employed in this project are not all-inclusive for all churches setting out to be Trinitarian. Rather, my strategy was to employ methods that are pertinent to the context of HPWC. I hope readers will be convinced of how important it is for the church in the 21st century to regain and grow in its Trinitarian design and identity. Simply put, if God is Triune, then the church must exist to worship and glorify God in three persons.

How can a church become more fully Trinitarian than it already is?

This second question can be asked in a variety of ways. Mostly it stems from what a church might do differently than it is already doing. Most statements of faith and church constitutions already profess belief in the Trinity. Likewise many churches are familiar with the hymns, choruses, and prayers that contain the names of the persons within the Godhead. Many churches even have the name

“Trinity” in their name (e.g., Trinity Presbyterian Church). The fourth chapter of this thesis details how I tried to answer this question by using methods and methodologies to reintroduce these treasures in the church as specifically Trinitarian.

As mentioned above, the tools I utilized to bring about these changes were not all the tools available. Rather these were instruments either already used in our congregation, or appropriate to the context of HPWC. The idea was to employ them after determining what might best suit the context of HPWC. The fourth chapter of this thesis describes how I employed various innovations in our church praxis and worship to bring about the intended CAV shift. There were six specific areas where I initiated change:

1. Changing Sunday worship services (liturgy, prayers and music)
2. Doing a specific preaching series
3. Doing a midweek Bible Study
4. Making use of NCD’s Trinitarian resources
5. Engaging in a personal journey of change
6. Developing a new Mission statement for the church

In these six areas I have looked for measurable results using the methodologies of Action Research and the use of narratives. I also included the methods discussed just below.

Did a CAV shift take place?

Action Research (AR) was the best approach to help answer this question. AR was the primary research methodology for this project. This makes sense especially in light of the purpose of AR where, “The aim is ‘to arrive’ at recommendations for good practice that will tackle a problem or enhance the performance of the organization and individuals through changes to the rules and procedures within which they operate” (Bell 2005, 8). Further explanation of the AR cycle and how it was used will be discussed in the fourth chapter.

Another methodology used to answer this third question was mostly the study of people’s narratives. The point of these personal narratives was to get an accurate sense of HPWC's story. The methods I used to conduct this research were personal interviews, group interviews, a focus group, journaling, and a mid-week program held at HPWC. I also employed the research tools created by Natural Church Development (NCD) called *Color Your World*. The course of this project will be discussed in both the 4th and 5th chapters. The diagnostic tool in NCD’s material provided a way of measuring if there was movement or change within the congregation.

Scope

The scope of this project covers three areas. It began with the personal work of this researcher as a participant in the project. It also involved the leadership team of HPWC as influencers of the general congregation.

Personal

Early in the project I determined the best place to begin was to see how much of a CAV shift I could observe in myself by exploring and implementing new practices related to Trinitarian study, worship and ministry. As the senior pastor of the congregation, there was little doubt that such changes would influence how I conducted my own work in the context of HPWC. The primary resource I used to measure changes in myself was a journal, where I also documented deliberate and specific changes in my own ministry and personal praxis of worship.

Leadership Team

Secondly I wanted to initiate a cognitive shift within the staff and leadership of HPWC. To that end, the team was asked to participate as a focus group for the project.

Congregation

Initially the congregation was deemed to be beyond the scope of this project. As will be reported in chapter 5, the congregation ended up being more pertinent to this project than even the leadership team.

Over the Course of the Project

Over the course and development of this project there were notable changes in my perception and understanding that need to be mentioned at this early point in the thesis. When I started, my impression was that HPWC, as an assembly, was deficient in its Trinitarianism. However, I have come to realize that my presuppositions reflect data related to a few individuals in the assembly, but

not the congregation in and of itself. As will be shown in this thesis, HPWC had an existing Trinitarianism that could be defined (cognitive), celebrated (affective), and used in ministry (volitional) with the aid of this project.

Definitions and Key Terms

Book-ends of Christ's earthly mission

A term used throughout this thesis in reference to how Jesus' earthly ministry was both inaugurated at his baptism with the presence of the Trinity, and *ended* just before his ascension with the commission for us to go out and baptize in the name of the Trinity.

Causative Agent

A term used by theologian Dennis Ngien to explain how the entire Godhead is the primary cause of our worship and not just the focus or object of our worship (Ngien 2008).

CAV Shift

Cognitive, Affective and Volitional Shift. A term coined for the purposes of this thesis. It is the notion of a deliberate and conscious paradigm shift in one's way of thinking, worshipping, and doing as a Trinitarian Christian. This will be continually be associated with the Head, Heart, and Hands.

Differentiated Unity

In reference to the Trinity, it is how each member of the Godhead is in perfect and eternal unity with one another in purpose and function. At the same time each

person of the Godhead is identifiable, or holds his identity by way of how he functions and has revealed himself to humanity.

Economic Trinity

How each person in the Triune Godhead relates to each other in mission and role, and how each relates to the world in history, salvation, church formation, mission, activity and role. It is how the Triune Godhead relates and interacts with creation.

Imago Dei

Latin term meaning *Image of God*. “It is men and women in their wholeness, in their natural community with one another, who are God’s image . . . This is a social concept of what is meant by being made in the image of God.” (Nengean 2013, 2)

LBA - Local Board of Administration.

These are board members who hold membership in the local church in which they serve. LBA members have voting privileges when it comes to final decisions. As church members they have agreed to uphold and live by the requirements and standards of holiness written in *The Discipline of the Wesleyan Church*.

Missio Dei

Latin term for Mission of God. “The classical doctrine...as God the Father sending the Son, and God the Father and the Son sending the Spirit [is] expanded to include...Father, Son, and Holy Spirit sending the church into the world.” (Bosch 1991, 390)

Missional (church)

“An attempt to recalibrate the mission of the church around the person and work of Jesus” (Frost and Hirsch 2009, 15). It is where a church redefines itself as “God’s sent people” (Guder 1998, 6).

Modalism

A heresy that sees God as one person manifested in three different ways.

Natural Church Development (NCD)

A series of church growth resources using seminar training, publications and web tools distributed all over the world. Founded and developed by Christian A. Schwarz.

Participatio Dei (or Participatio Christi)

Latin term for Participation in/with God.

Perichoresis

A Greek term relating to the doctrine of the Trinity... The basic notion is that all three persons of the Trinity mutually share in the life of the others, so that none is isolated or detached from the actions of the others (McGrath 2001, 586).

Practical Theology

The practical application of theology to everyday life. It is bridging the academy and ministry” (Osmer 2008, 13).

Practical Trinitarian Theology

Expanding Trinitarian theology from mere creed to include church praxis, worship, liturgy, and Christian life as a living experience of what it means to be a Trinitarian Christian.

Praxis

The process by which a theory, lesson, or skill is enacted, practiced, embodied, or realized. "Praxis" may also refer to the act of engaging, applying, exercising, realizing, or practicing ideas.

Positional Trinitarian Theology

Upholding an orthodox belief that God is one in three persons as a matter of creed.

Sacrament (as understood in the Wesleyan church)

Water baptism and Eucharist are the sacraments commanded and ordained by Christ as a means of grace when received through faith to quicken, strengthen and confirm our faith. (Discipline of the Wesleyan Church, 2008, 242).

Sign of the Cross

The prayerful physical act of using one's fingers and hand to cross one's self. In doing so, one acknowledges both the power of the cross and the reality of the Trinity. Accompanied with the words *Father, Son and Holy Ghost*.

Standard Church of America

A Holiness/Methodist denomination started by Bishop R. J. Horner in the late 19th century. The denomination merged with the Wesleyan Church in 2005.

Trisagion

An Orthodox Christian term referring to the act of saying the words of worship *Holy, Holy, Holy*. Commonly used when reflecting on the Trinity.

Unified Diversity

Similar to *Differentiated Unity*. The recognition that a working system is united and functional as each member of the whole has a different function from the other members.

The Discipline of the Wesleyan Church

The general constitution for the Wesleyan denomination, all local churches, and official schools under the governance of the world headquarters. In order to be a member of the local church, one must agree with the written standards and theological distinctive written in the Discipline.

Summary

Wesley said, “knowledge of the Three-One God is interwoven with all true Christian faith” (Wesley 2002, 205). This project set out to bring a Wesleyan congregation to rediscover what it means to be fully Trinitarian in identity, worship and mission. Wesleyan theologian M. Douglas Meeks captures the essence of what drove this project forward. In summarizing Jurgen Moltmann’s convictions, Meeks notes that for Moltmann,

The Trinity serves as the primary criticism of all sub-Christian conceptions of God (and) is simultaneously the theory of the practice of the church’s life and mission to the world...The Trinity is not a speculative doctrine but contributes substantively to solving practical problems of Christian living as a function of worship of the Triune God...the Trinity would be neither critical nor practical were it not also doxological. (Meeks 2006, 14)

CHAPTER TWO: THEOLOGICAL RATIONALE

This chapter sets out a case for the importance of the doctrine of the Trinity and its practical applications in the life of the church.

Throughout the Bible and church history it is a fundamental creed that God is one. The Hebrew Shema, “Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one” (Deut. 6:4) is a central point in the Old Testament. The New Testament affirms this truth “of one God” (eg. Mk. 12:29; Rom. 3:30; 1 Cor. 8:4-6; 1 Tim. 2:5; and Jas. 2:19). The Nicene Creed (325) opens with this very same confession, “We believe in one God”.

It is also a fundamental belief that God is love. Psalm 136 celebrates this truth by repeating the words, “His love endures forever”, and 1 John 4:8 categorically states, “God is love.” Charles Wesley captures this central virtue in his hymn *Amazing Love*. Likewise, Frederick Lehman’s anthem (1917),

Oh, love of God, how rich and pure!
How measureless and strong!
It shall forever more endure –
The saint’s and angel’s song.

While the Nicene Creed affirms that God is one, its primary purpose was to establish that God is Triune. That is, that God exists eternally in three persons commonly named as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. These three persons exist in a

unity of love. And while self-sufficient, God's love does overflow toward us. C.

S. Lewis captures this progression of thought when he writes,

And that is how Theology started. People already knew about God in a vague way. Then came a man who claimed to be God; and yet he was not the sort of man you could dismiss as a lunatic. He made them believe him. They met him again after they had seen him killed. And then, after they had been formed into a little society or community, they found God somehow inside them as well: directing them, making them able to do things they could not do before. And when they worked it all out they found they had arrived at the Christian definition of the three-personal God (Lewis 1952, 5).

To be a historic orthodox Christian is to be Trinitarian. Sharon Tam in her thesis on a Trinitarian model for leadership development declares, "without the Trinity, Christianity collapses" (Tam 2007, 51). Accepting God as a Triune community of overflowing love should foster discussion as to what this means and how it looks in the church.

Literature on the subject of the Triune God in Scripture, theology, and practice is vast. Even so, there is an unfortunate amount of discomfort, confusion and indifference when it comes to the Trinitarian distinctive. Many authors (e.g. Torrance 1996, Fiddes 2000, Stirling 2002) express concern about this indifference, which presents a grave problem for the life and health of the church. The purpose of this chapter is to present selected biblical, theological, and historical resources that explain and support practical Trinitarian theology.

Biblical Support for Trinitarian Themes

There are various theological views surrounding the doctrine of the Trinity. While the aim of this chapter is not to report exhaustively on various

Trinitarian theories, it would be good to briefly examine some of the more predominant ideas surrounding the doctrine.

Churches vary in the degree to which they emphasize each of the persons of the Trinity. The Wesleyan Church is Christocentric. That is, much of our identity involves being seen as followers of Jesus Christ. The Wesleyan church, in common with many Protestant traditions, has two sacraments which are baptism and communion. Further, *The Discipline of the Wesleyan Church*, as with most of Christianity, declares the Bible to be the authoritative Word of God. And, while the Bible presents a considerable number of scriptures that can lead to discussion about the Trinity, I will focus on two particular themes. First, I will focus on the Trinity's role in the earthly ministry of Jesus and how it relates to the *missio dei*. After this I will reflect on how the church can be Trinitarian in worship, and is Trinitarian in her sacramental practice of baptism and communion.

The Trinity, the Ministry of Jesus, and the Missio Dei

God's specific work in our world and in our history is the *Missio Dei*. Likewise it can describe how the church and individual Christians can be involved, by God's graceful invitation, in his work.

An important example from Scripture that points to the Triune God's work is the *Missio Dei* and what I refer to as the bookends of Christ's earthly ministry. The life of Jesus Christ, particularly his three-year ministry, is a manifestation and living example of the *Missio Dei* "bookended" between his Baptism/inauguration (Mat.3) and in the *Great Commission* (Mat. 28). Here we can see that the Trinity and baptism are integral components to the Mission of

God, as found clearly represented at the beginning and at the end of Christ's earthly ministry. We can make better sense of our identity, how we worship, and what we do when considering how we might participate in God's mission from these two vital components of our orthodoxy and orthopraxy. Further, the church's identity and the Christian identity are drawn from the identity of God revealed in his Triune nature.

The word *Trinity* appears nowhere in the Bible. The term *Missio Dei* does not appear either. Nonetheless, both ideas are prevalent in Scripture, in salvation's story, and throughout history. A primary way the story of salvation is made manifest and experienced is in the act of baptism. It is a demonstration and testimony of how the Triune God of mission brings about the salvation of his people. Much of the church universal includes the baptismal formula, "I baptize you in the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit".

The way in which the Trinity and baptism encompass the Mission of God is seen most directly in Matthew's Gospel. Jesus' baptism by John the Baptist in the Jordan River seems to have inaugurated his public ministry.

Then Jesus came from Galilee to the Jordan to be baptized by John. But John tried to deter him...Jesus replied, 'Let it be so now; it is proper for us to do this to fulfill all righteousness.'...As soon as Jesus was baptized, he went up out of the water. At that moment heaven was opened, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and alighting on him. And a voice from heaven said, 'This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased'. (Matthew 3:13-17).

Two things are noteworthy here. First, Jesus' mission is inaugurated at his baptism as an act of obedience to the one who sent him. Secondly, all three persons of the Godhead are manifestly present. Jesus then moves into three years of Spirit-led and empowered ministry. Jesus is sent by the Father to fulfill the *Missio Dei* in the

power of the Holy Spirit (Lk 4:18ff.). From this it is clear that the *Missio Dei* in Jesus' ministry is inaugurated with the common unity of the Trinity and baptism. Eventually Matthew will come to the end of his Gospel after writing his account of what Jesus did and taught, completing his narrative with Jesus' final words before his ascension, which bears a striking relation to the beginning of his ministry. He says, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, *baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit* (emphasis mine), and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you." (Matthew 28:18-20a). Volf gives his own perspective on this saying, "it is obvious...that the Triune God stands at the beginning and at the end of the Christian pilgrimage and therefore, at the center of the Christian faith. Christians are born as they come out of the baptismal waters...in the name of the Holy Three" (Volf, 2006, 3).

Writing on the subject of Christ's baptism and the presence of the Trinity as integral to the inauguration of God's mission through Christ, Fred Sanders writes,

The Work of the Holy Spirit surrounds the work of Jesus Christ, as he goes before and after the incarnate Son like a set of Holy parentheses embracing the story of salvation in Christ. The encouragement to watch Jesus and think Trinity can change the way we read Scripture and enable us to see things there that we may have overlooked before...Perhaps their (the other members of the Godhead) presence is impossible to ignore at Christ's baptism...The baptism story should give us the interpretive key to the rest of the New Testament...because the Holy Spirit's anointing power...and the Father's good pleasure in his beloved is the secret of everything Christ does (Sanders 2010, 135-136).

At Jesus' baptism several things stand out. First, the Trinity is about community. At this event we hear the Father's intent and read about the descent of the Holy

Spirit to lead, guide and empower Christ who was sent. Secondly, Jesus' baptism was about mission, that is, God's mission. There was work to be done. Finally, Jesus' baptism was about obedience and salvation. Jesus had no need to be saved (cleansed) from any sin, but his baptism was an act of obedience and still pointed to God's desire to save.

In the second chapter of Acts, the church was inaugurated with baptism and the descent of the Holy Spirit for the purpose of empowering Jesus' followers to join God in his mission. Baptism, for the Christian, is an act of obedience, and for the Wesleyan an experience of salvation. This is one reason Wesleyans accept baptism as a sacrament.

The Trinity's role at Jesus' baptism, then, can be understood as a *blueprint* for his earthly ministry, and likewise for the church as seen throughout Acts. "Our participation in the twofold mission of the Son and the Spirit is not only our salvation but our employment in the Mission of God" (Sanders 2010, 191). The church, at its birth, experiences its own inaugural baptism following in the Way of Christ, as Jesus said would happen (Acts 1:5). "In Acts (the baptism) has the same primary charismatic meaning for the mission of the disciples as the anointing by the Spirit had for the ... Mission of Jesus" (Stronstad 1995, 97). When Jesus was baptized we see evidence manifested that he already was part of the divine community that the church has come to call the Trinity. When we are baptized we identify ourselves with a Church that was inaugurated and sent by the Trinity, as our Lord was inaugurated and sent with the Trinity.

The primary mandate in the great commission is to make disciples. The importance of the sacrament of baptism in the Triune name is a crucial part of discipleship and while baptism is not a requisite for salvation, the Trinity and baptism are evident markers for the Mission of God as an experience in God's salvation story.

Trinitarianism and baptism are also a practical means to the related issue of the *Paricipatio Dei*. To be baptized is to participate in and experience Jesus' obedience and relationship to the Trinity. In Romans 6:3-4, Paul writes,

Don't you know that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life.

The presence of the Trinity in baptism and the *Missio Dei* is integral to understanding the church's identity and mission. Katherine Grieb describes Paul's own Trinitarian conviction as it relates to the church's identity and mission as a community of God,

Because Paul insists that the Spirit he describes is the Spirit of God and the Spirit of his Son, and because Paul holds together the Father and the Son so tightly (Rom. 5:8), he also insists that the great narrative of what God has done in Jesus Christ is the defining narrative for the community called by God, baptized into Christ, standing firm in one Spirit (Grieb 2005, 250)

The sacraments are a response to join in community. John, in his gospel (14:15-31) writes about this invitation and experience with the community of the Trinity. "Christ's baptism is one of the many conversations within the Godhead that we are invited into" (Sanders 2010, 82).

When the believer walks in the same obedient steps as the Son, she is also baptized into both mission and community. And while baptism is about joining a

community, communion is about experiencing common unity with the other members of the body of Christ. “The nature of God’s being, not just God’s commands, is integral to the character of Christian beginnings and ends... to enter into communion with the Triune God” (Volf, 2006, 3). The church community is an emulation of the Trinity and, I believe, a sort of experience in how we have been created in God's image for community.

Differentiated Unity

When persons are baptized into the Christian community, they are immediately a part of one body. This is not to say each individual suddenly becomes like everyone else. Paul specified this in 1 Corinthians 12:12: *The body is a unit, though it is made up of many parts; and though all its parts are many, they form one body. So it is with Christ* (NIV). In this way, the church itself emulates the Trinity in design. Similarly, within the Godhead we recognize that the Father is not the Son, nor the Son the Father, nor either of them the Spirit. Each member, while exactly the same in nature, are different in action and person. The diagram below is a common illustration used to explain this concept.

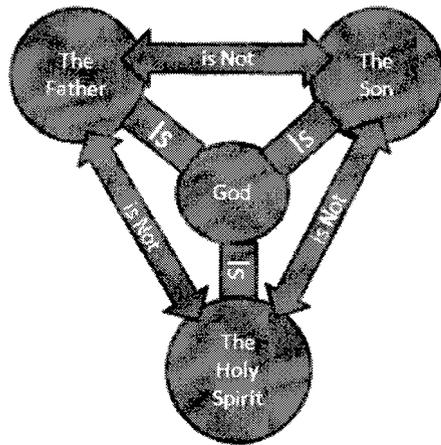


Figure 1: Scutum Fidei or Shield of the Trinity. – Public Domain. Image mine.

The mystery is that they are differentiated as three but in unity as one God.

Dwight Friesen describes this as *differentiated unity*.

Differentiation is not a new concept. Church writers such as Augustine and Aquinas both developed their Trinitarian thinking from Plato's initial ideas of oneness and self-differentiation (Thom 2012, 3, 19, 133). God is indeed one, but each person of the Godhead fulfills a different, yet complementary role. The nature of Jesus' prayer in John 17 is a good example. Here, Jesus is acting as the high priest and intercessor, sitting at the right hand of the Father and interceding for us. Presupposing everything Jesus did in mission since his baptism was led by the Holy Spirit (Lk 4:1,16-19 Acts 2:38, Phil 2), it may be deduced that even his prayer was by the Spirit's invitation. God's mission happens in perfect unity as each person of the Trinity works in a specific role, demonstrating unity in diversity. Even viewing the nature of prayer can be renewed when considering the Trinity in differentiated unity. Differentiated unity is not only God's Trinitarian state of being, but also defines his state of *doing*.

Now let us consider the practical ramifications of this for the church and for a Christian, speaking here specifically of prayer and worship. God relates to us and invites us to relate to him. Essentially, we see the Trinity revealed, but we also can see how the Trinity works, and how we work in relation and response back to God. Christians pray and worship to connect with God. As Jesus told us, we pray *Our Father* (Mt. 6:9). However, we are also given the role of the other members of the Godhead in our prayer or worship. First, we are told the Spirit intercedes for us (Romans 8: 26, 27), in many cases, giving us the words to pray after inviting us in the first place to commune with God. And the reason we can even have access to the Father is because of the work of Jesus Christ, the Son, not only as the intercessor at God's right hand, but also as the high priest whose death and resurrection tore the temple veil in two. Indeed, it was the Father who sent the Son and the Spirit to both invite us and intercede for us in their unique way. As Saunders describes it, "It is because of God's triunity that we have communion with God in prayer" (Sanders 2010, 211). The Father sends, the Son is sacrifice and high priest, and the Spirit encourages, indwells and invites, all in a way as to restore humanity to communion with one another and, even more importantly, with God.

This differentiated unity of the Godhead is not only apparent in Jesus' prayer in John's Gospel, but we see it fulfilled and working on a practical level in the Pauline epistles. Grieb has offered extensive work on the Pauline understanding of the differentiated unity of the Godhead and how it is expressed in the life of the church through praxis and mission. "Paul uses three

ecclesiological terms [People of God, Body of Christ, Fellowship of the Holy Spirit] to characterize the life in God of the one church community he addresses as he writes to individual...churches around the Mediterranean" (Grieb 2005, 232). According to Grieb, Paul sees the church's mission and identity in a three-fold manner that reflects the three persons of the Godhead. Paul's understanding of the Godhead was both theoretical and practical. Grieb writes, "As Paul attempted to address their ethical and ecclesiological issues, he found it necessary to speak of God's complex identity...and before long he was speaking about one triune God" (Grieb 2005, 227).

Every person is created in the image of God. The church also lives with the design and mandate to exist in differentiated unity as a reflection of the Trinity and to share in the *Missio Dei*. The Apostle Paul sees this differentiated unity in a Triune way, namely the People of God, the Body of Christ, and the Fellowship of the Holy Spirit. And this mystery is experienced and expressed in the sacraments. Friesen writes, "The uniquely Christian understanding of God as triune paradoxically draws 'otherness' together in oneness. It is this kind of differentiated unity that we seek" (Friesen 2009, 26).

As Jesus' baptism inaugurates his mission and involves each member of the Triune community, the Church, in a similar fashion, was created and baptized as a community for the Mission of God. The mission of the Trinity is intended to be seen in baptism, the church, and in the Christian. The concept of the Trinity explains and makes sense of the Mission of God in and for the church and is celebrated and expressed in the sacraments.

There must be a way of making the sacraments a living experience rather than only a momentary confession. "Paul had to decide what the community conformed to the story of what God had done in Jesus Christ must be like in its confession and praxis" (Grieb, 251). The importance of baptism and communion are redefined in the church when both are an invitation into and experience in the life of the Trinity. These sacraments allow the church to celebrate and understand itself in the context of differentiated unity. The apostle wrote,

Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace. There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to one hope when you were called; one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all. (Eph. 4:3-6).

The three persons of the Godhead were present at Christ's baptism to inaugurate his mission and Christ's final words were for people to be baptized in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. This means Jesus was essentially commissioning his disciples to make disciples who are to be baptized believers in community and common unity. Therefore the common unity of the church can be an expression and experience of the common unity of the Godhead. This demonstrates how integral sacramental practice and mission are to being Trinitarian. The church's common unity as an experience of God's own differentiated unity is God's answer to Christ's prayer for his disciples and the future church,

Holy Father, protect them by the power of your name, the name you gave me, so that they may be one as we are one ... that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you. May they also be in us so that the world may believe that you have sent me. I have given them the glory that you gave me, that they may be one as we are one—I in them and you in me—so that they may be brought to complete unity. Then the world will know that you sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me. (John 17:11b, 21-23.)

The *Missio Dei* is evident in this prayer as Christ's words link mission and oneness together.

Unified Diversity

Another term closely associated with differentiated unity is *unified diversity*. "This is a God who has not shown Godself to be a 'standalone lighthouse'; rather God has revealed Godself as a dynamic city, diversity in oneness. And the church has understood this diversity in oneness as 'Triune'" (Friesen 2009).

Unified diversity can explain the practical ramifications of relationship and salvation. One of the central claims of Christianity is that it is possible to have a relationship with the living God through Jesus Christ. In reference to Christ's relationship with the other two members of the Trinity, Fred Sanders writes, "unless we see Jesus in this way, we fail to see him as who he actually is. The consequences are inevitably confusion and a loss of spiritual power, usually brought about by substituting Jesus into a role that ought to be fulfilled by the other persons of the Trinity" (Sanders 2010, 169).

We seek relationship with the living God because we believe unity with God is made possible through his grace and love. But, "whenever a union with God is proclaimed in non-Trinitarian terms, evangelical testimony becomes shrill and insupportable. People expect to be close to God in some undefined way and try to come to terms with this misunderstood promise without the guidelines of adoption" (Sanders 2010, 164).

Our desire for unity with God stems from God's primary invitation toward us. The very reason we seek unity is because God, who is tri-unity, is the causative agent of our desire to seek him and worship him. (Ngien, 2010)

Throughout this chapter I have stated that both the individual and the church as a whole are expressions of God, in that we are created in the *Imago Dei*. Newbigin even connects this in a practical way to marriage claiming, "The Bible is the story of relationships. At the outset, it characterizes human nature created in the image of God as the mutuality of man and woman" (Newbigin 1986, 97).

We are enabled to express who we are in God through our worship as a fellowship, as a community, as one body united in diversity. Biblically, the term used is *koinonia* (literally fellowship). The idea is to move beyond words and creed into actual practice. "How is the integrity of God to be communicated to the many believers who call upon the name of the Lord? It is precisely at this point that the '*koinonia* of the Spirit' holds such promise" (Grieb 2005, 249). The "*koinonia* of the Spirit" is an experience among believers that is a reality within the Godhead. The Father loves the Son and the Son loves the Father in the unity of the Holy Spirit. We see this throughout Christ's mission on earth in all his obedience to the Father out of their love for each other. Everything Jesus did was led and directed by the Holy Spirit. God is living, and that means there is something happening within *himself*. The word we use to describe this relationship within the Trinity is *perichoresis*. This is the theological term used by the early church fathers in an attempt to describe the intimacy of God and how the persons of the Godhead interrelate (Moltmann 1981, 174).

There have been several metaphors presented as an attempt to explain *perichoresis*. Notably, C.S. Lewis referred to the ongoing intimacy and work of the Godhead as a dance (Lewis 1960, 136-137). Sharon Tam employed this language of a dance as the foundational approach for leadership development within the church. To move beyond words into actual experience Tam suggests, "the best way to know the Trinity is by entering into a relationship with the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit and participating in the dance of love together with the triune God of grace" (Tam 2009, 57).

Perhaps God could also be viewed as a jazz ensemble or as one of J. S. Bach's masterpieces with his use of counterpoint where there are differing melodies interdependent for harmony, yet independent in contour, playing one song simultaneously. While metaphor has its uses, experience and practice are the crucial factors to a better understanding of the mystery of the Trinity. To fail to be Trinitarian is to miss the fullness of the Church or even self as an individual. Newbigin, who had a keen grasp of the Trinitarian Mission of God, wrote,

The Christian testimony is that it is a reality within the being of the triune God...and that those who believe and follow have been enabled through the presence of the Spirit actually to participate in the shared life of mutual love, which is the being of the Trinity (Newbigin 1986, 89).

Theological Support for Missional Themes

Jesus and God's mission can only be fully understood in the context of the Trinity. Contemporary authors such as Michael Frost and Alan Hirsch take a Trinitarian approach in laying a foundation of what it means to be Missional. In this section of the chapter we will explore how the Trinitarian *Missio Dei* is

experienced as a practical theology for the church. This will include looking at the related concepts of *Imago Dei* and *Participatio Dei*.

The Missional Church

The word missional has become widely used and can be difficult to define. "The term... brings up more than half a million hits on a Google search... Yet the meaning of the term remains unclear" (Billings 2008, 560). A church may identify itself as missional for a variety of reasons but "for a theology to be 'effective in mission' it must also be 'Trinitarian in nature'" (Tam 2009, 59). While it may be difficult to define, Darrel Guder suggests that it does, or should, define "the church as God's sent people" (Guder 1998, 6). A better place to begin then would be to define Mission, which means sending (Guder 1998, 4), and "mission is understood as being derived from the very nature of God. It is thus put in the context of the doctrine of the Trinity, not of ecclesiology or soteriology" (Guder, 1998, 5). The missional church, then, is defined by the Trinity who is a God who sends His created church (the body of Christ) to emulate the Son he sent in the power of the Holy Spirit.

The term missional is naturally a matter of practical theology, and perhaps most importantly, it is a concept based in the Trinity. Therefore a church should not ask "what do we need to do to be missional?" but rather "What is God doing that we can connect to?" This idea of "connecting" is important of theologically understanding how a connected church can emulate a God who exists in connectivity. There is a reason the church is called the body of Christ. Christ was sent with a mission by the Father, and inaugurated to do so in the power of the

Holy Spirit. "In this respect the church bears a marked resemblance to the incarnation of Jesus" (Guder 1998, 13).

The Missio Dei

God's being in three persons is not a static thing in that relationship has always been a part of God's internal nature. However, out of his love and nature, God continues to move from inside of himself to invite us into this relationship (Moltmann, 1981). God has made a way to make his way into our lives with the incarnation being the greatest example. To look at Jesus Christ is to see that, "He (God) does not dispense blessings, but himself...the soteriology of God's self-giving is immediately relevant to our lives with God" (Sanders 2010, 124). When Jesus was on earth, humanity was able to encounter this first hand. Subsequently, God sent the Holy Spirit and the church came alive. Once again we see God's desire to be with us through this notion of sending and being sent.

This matter of "sending" is a vital aspect to understanding the *Missio Dei*. Fred Sanders explains it this way,

The way God gives himself to us is that the Father gives the Son and the Spirit, sending them to redeem us and reveal the Trinity. In Trinitarian theology, the word for the sending of these two persons is Mission...bearing in mind that the two missions are not separate from each other but mutually entwined (Sanders 2010, 151).

And it can be added that the church's mission is entwined with the mission of the Trinity. The church joins in this mission of sending and being sent. "The story of what God has done in Jesus Christ is also the defining narrative for the "body of Christ" (Grieb 2005, 249). To know Christ is to know God (John 14:6-14). To know God is to know the Trinity. To know the Trinity is to know, through

experience, this mission of sending and being sent (John 14:12-17). In John 14:6ff, we can see all three members of the Trinity mentioned, but not only that, Jesus specifically tells his disciples they will be engaging in the very same work with which he himself was engaged. After saying this, he encourages them further with the promised sending of the Holy Spirit. Andrew Purves summarizes this perspective when he writes,

Knowledge of God is knowledge of the *Missio Dei*, of Jesus' ministry to the glory of the Father, in the power of the Holy Spirit, for the sake of the world. Revelation and the Mission of God are held together christologically for the church as a practical knowing in which the act of God reveals God's being, and God's being is the ground of God's act. (Lk. 10:22) (Purves 1998, 2).

To understand God in the context of the Trinity is not only to understand the *Missio Dei*, but to understand how the church was, and is, created and fashioned in the *modus operandi* of the Trinity. This is so not only for the church as a body, but also for each individual Christian. Suffice it to say that the *Missio Dei* is connected to the *Imago Dei*.

Imago Dei

Imago Dei has important implications when it comes to practical theology. It can mean the church and the individual Christian are designed to be in relationship, to be sending, and to be sent. Miroslav Volf asks a question that is virtually identical to a primary question of this project when he asks, "How does the nature of the triune God impinge upon the character of the Christian life?" (Volf, 2006, 4) An identity defined by the Trinity can really help in knowing mission.

The very mention of the “individual Christian” is somewhat contrary to the context of being created in God's image. "Individualism contradicts the true being of humanity since we are not meant to be alone" (Thompson 1994, 111). The context of the early church can reveal much about God, his mission and our identity in him. Dwight Friesen, in reference to the *Imago Dei* writes, "The capacious narrative of Scripture reveals that God creates human beings in God's own image. Often those words roll off the tongue with such ease that we forget that the God in whose image we are created is triune (Friesen 2009, 66). Being Trinitarian is not only about the nature of the mission, but also about the pragmatic aspect of doing God's mission. Purves writes,

Nothing could be more practical than the teaching about who God is in relation to us and the concern to live in that relationship with God as the fundamental or constitutive basis of what it means to be human in the first place, and the church, in the second (Purves 1998, 2).

As the human being and the church are both created in the *Imago Dei*, then it is agreed that, " the life of the Trinity is therefore a society of persons and is seen as the original or archetype for the social teaching of the church" (Thompson 1998, 108).

Going back to communion, the sacrament of the Eucharist manifests our *Imago Dei*, in that we are persons within a community and common unity. This goes beyond celebration and reaches into our identity and who we are as a church. "None of us apart from relationship fully know what we need to live, but we are, by God's design, mutually dependent" (Friesen 2009, 27).

Being Trinitarian will explain to an individual his role and interdependence within a family, the church, and even society. Without

Trinitarian thinking, there is a potential for these things to break down out of an unconscious loss of identity pertaining both to self and the other. John R.

Thompson, in *Modern Trinitarian Perspectives*, discusses Moltmann's concerns about the possible repercussions of not being Trinitarian,

Moltmann's concern to relate the Trinity to society stems from his particular view of God as a union of three divine persons... The Trinity forms the social paradigm since it is a mutually loving, interacting, sustaining society... Moltmann believes that the concept of person, stemming largely from the Christian doctrine of God, has had a permanent effect upon Western political thought... This stems from the fact that God was conceived too much in a monotheistic way rather than as a God of Trinitarian unity and community. Moltmann therefore sees the social view of the Trinity as being... a proper paradigm for society (Thompson 1994, 106).

By his very nature, God exists to love through connecting. He loves within himself as a connection of mutual, selflessness between the Father and Son in the love of the person of the Holy Spirit. The Church and the individual are created in the image of God. Therefore, the individual and the church are created for mutual interdependence. "When I speak about human 'imaging' of the Trinity, I mean that human beings receive themselves as created in the image of the Trinity by the power of the Spirit" (Volf, 2006, 6). To understand our humanity, we can look to the triune God and understand what is beyond our cognitive grasp, but within the reach of experience and expression. In discussing Barth's views, Thompson writes,

One may sum up the position of Earth in this way: our humanity in Christ and so in us as co-humanity is the image of God. Our humanity, therefore, has the nature and possibility of partnership; imago Dei is the very nature of our creatureliness... Thus in its very being humanity reflects God. (Thompson 1994, 113).

Participatio Dei

At times I have been challenged with the question, "Why bother praying, especially in concern for an individual's salvation, if God already knows the outcome?" A partial answer is that we pray because we are invited to pray. We are invited to pray because God desires us to be a part of his story, his work and his mission. God wants us connected to what he is doing, despite the fact that he is entirely sufficient in and of himself, that is within the Godhead. Through grace we are invited into this relationship both in position and in pragmatism. According to Purves, "pastors (should) do what they do because of who God is and what God does" (Purves 1998, 2). This statement can be broadened to include all Christians and the entire church. Indeed, Purves does broaden his comment by further adding, "churchly practice arises out of our sharing in the practice of God, and it is only... practical... insofar as it does this. Nothing could be more practical than the teaching about who God is in relation to us and the concern to live in that relationship with God" (Purves, 1998, 2). Knowing God as a relationship is essential to the work of the Church and the individuals who make up the church. Volf uses a more blatant Trinitarian term for this when speaking about participating in God's mission and calls it *imitatio Trinitatis* (Volf, 2006, 7). The church exists to work in the world, by the invitation of God, based on who God is. This means the work of the church, insofar as it points to God, is at its best when participating in the God's work as Trinitarians. Trinitarian leadership is a good place to begin. According to Sharon Tam,

Trinitarian leadership... is the gift of participating with what God is doing already in the congregation and in the community. It is receiving God's vision, allowing the life of Christ to shape one's character and corporate culture, and surrendering to the Holy Spirit's guidance (Tam 2007, 62-63).

Here, Tam connects the *Missio Dei* with *Participatio Dei*. She further comments on the necessary centrality of the Trinity to Christian leadership by saying, "the biblical certainty of the Trinity is essential for developing Christian leaders, so they can navigate a culture confidently" (Tam 2007, 58).

The sacraments and liturgical practices of the church are practical ways of knowing you are participating in God. Likewise participating in God's mission is done by finding out what God is doing and joining him in his work. Authors such as Hirsch and Frost rightly raise important issues such as a Christian's responsibility to build relationships as we represent a God who is essentially relationship. However, Hirsch and Frost come against what they call "temple theology" (cf. Frost and Hirsch 2009, 27). Here they take issue with sacramental practices and other liturgical aspects of traditional Christianity, claiming these things box God and the church into a more or less useless Christianity. However, it can be argued that these things are what visually and contextually separate the church from any other social club. Further, the sacraments and liturgical practices have a powerful influence on the cognitive, effective and volitional (CAV) acceptance of the Trinity when it comes to the Orthodoxy, Orthopraxy and mission for the Christian.

This brings the conversation back to Christ's earthly work beginning and ending with the sacraments and the command to connect with others, "Go and make disciples of all nations baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the

Son and of the Holy Spirit” (Mt. 28:19) . Christ's work did not officially begin until he was baptized with the Trinity present. This is with the presupposition that Christ's baptism was an inauguration. Likewise, Eucharist is powerful for participating in the common unity for which we were created, and was an ordinance given to the church on the night before the crucifixion and on the road to Emmaus (Lk. 24:13-35) where he explains his mission, yet it was in the breaking of bread where *their eyes were opened* (v31). These sacraments are essential when considering church life, as it all relates to the Mission of God, our being created in the image of God, and participating in God. Sanders warns that if these things are practiced by vain rote, then we have lost something significant, "Baptism in the name of the Trinity is not merely a ritual performed as the right formula is spoken...but is actually viewed as a mysterious, physical immersion in the life of the triune Godhead via the death and resurrection of Christ, sacramentally mediated to the individual baptized" (Sanders 2010, 54).

I have also been asked from within my Protestant/Evangelical circles, “if baptism is not essential for salvation, then why bother?” The answer is because Wesleyans do believe that baptism is a sacrament. It is both an experience and manifestation of God’s grace in the person and into the community. We should baptize because baptism is a manifestation of the believer becoming a follower of Christ, as a participant in Christ's mission, and as one conscious of the presence of the Trinity. "It is the blessing signified in our baptism. Being immersed into water in the Trinitarian Name...points to our being immersed... to participate in the Name, to participate in the inner life of the Trinity” (Johnson 2002, 75).

How we experience and participate in the life of the Triune God is precisely what I was referring to when I referred to the power behind the sacraments of Baptism, Eucharist and even the experience of a married life. "The uniquely Christian understanding of God as triune paradoxically draws 'otherness' together in oneness. It is this kind of differentiated unity that we seek" (Friesen 2009, 26).

The Trinity in Church History

After the day of Pentecost and the formation of the church, there followed 2000 years of theological development as Christians endeavored to experience, express, and understand the mystery of God. "One finds already in the New Testament: hymns in honor of Christ, baptismal language linking Christ and God, Eucharistic language describing his presence to the community, and exalted language describing his role in creation and his session at the right hand of God" (Grieb 2005, 229). However, hymns continued to be written, and sacraments continued to evolve from humble meals of bread and wine in the early church homes to the glorious performance of priests amidst the stained glass and great halls of a cathedral. Theological ideas and understandings about Eucharist continued to multiply and divide the church over such matters as transubstantiation, consubstantiation, and mere symbolism. Polemics concerning infant baptism versus adult baptism made their way into congregations and denominations, where differing ideas created new congregations and new denominations. This is ironic given that both baptism and the Eucharist are expressions of unified diversity and essentially an experience, by invitation, into the mystery of the Trinity. For instance, in Eucharist we remember it was a Father

who gave his one and only Son, and it was the Spirit who led Christ to the cross. In baptism we remember the presence of the Trinity at our Lord's baptism and we also find meaning as to why we are baptized in the Triune name.

"Confession of the triune God is the *sine qua non* of the Christian faith. As such, it provides a foundation for the development of all other doctrines and praxis" (Packer 1973, 16). The purpose of this section is to briefly explore some of the historical issues that are applicable both to Trinitarianism and the ecclesiological context of Highland Park Wesleyan Church as a local church in the greater evangelical community. After this we will look at how these ecclesial items of antiquity have evolved into some contemporary church trends today. Historically, the Evangelical church is Trinitarian. And, "(t)he way forward for evangelical Trinitarianism is to get in touch with the deep, Trinitarian roots of our own history as evangelicals" (Sanders 2010, 44). With these words, evangelical theologian Fred Sanders is specifically speaking about what it means to be historically and distinctively evangelical. The Wesleyan church is also both historically and distinctly evangelical.

Today we use the word *Trinity* as a familiar theological term. As mentioned, the word *Trinity* itself does not appear in the Bible, leading some to hold it with a measure of discomfort. Katherine Grieb opines that,

while contemporary theologians usually begin with the doctrine of the Trinity as given, in order to explore its social and ethical implications for the church, the church's first theologians addressed social and ethical issues arising in the church and found themselves writing in ways that would eventually be called "Trinitarian". (Grieb 2005, 226)

Historically, the Trinity has been the *causative agent* (Ngien 2008) of church praxis and mission. Essentially, this means the church responds in worship to God

who made the initial contact through the work of the Holy Spirit. God's mission is Trinitarian because he is a Trinity, and what we do in both worship and work is already a response to him being Triune.

Over the centuries the church has worked to express *who* or *what* it is based on who God has revealed himself to be. In other words, the Church is what it is because of who God is. The church is the body and the Son of God is its Head (Col. 1:18). Over time Christians have developed ways of experiencing, expressing, and worshipping the Trinity. "There are words and gestures through which the Creator and Sustainer of the world has spoken and acted" (Newbigin 1986, 88). In the same manner there are words and gestures the church has discovered. The church explains its orthodoxy, not only with creed, but also through the actions of liturgy, symbol (i.e. crossing one's self), worship, and in the actual deed of being sent and sending. This is significant when considering the cognitive, affective and volitional (CAV) aspects of a congregation consciously being Trinitarian. This is also related to the idea of bringing Trinitarianism from tacit acceptance into something that is openly and consciously displayed, which is the entire idea behind this project.

Historically, the church has demonstrated a marriage of sorts between doctrine and expression. "Doctrine is important, but is not an end in itself, there is to be an experiential reality, moment by moment" (Schaeffer 1985, 264). As Schaeffer eludes further, "We must first intellectually realize the fact of our vital relationship with the Triune God and then in faith begin to act upon that realization" (Schaeffer 1985, 362, 363). There are many treasures from antiquity

still extant in the church to help us intellectually and experientially realize our Trinitarianism.

In his book, *The Trinity and the Kingdom*, Jurgen Moltmann describes how Friedrich Schliermacher is largely responsible for introducing a return to Trinitarian thinking where “experience (is) a means of access” (Moltmann 1993, 2). And while someone like Karl Barth will discuss the nature of the Trinity in an ontological sense, Moltmann adds that the “world has become pragmatic” (Moltmann 1993, 5). He later adds that people are less interested in attempting a theoretical comprehension of the Trinity and desire to “mirror God’s love through experience and expression” (Moltmann 1993, 6). Moltmann points out that one should not leave the doctrine in pursuit of pragmatism, but suggests the two are not mutually exclusive. “The rediscovery of the meaning of the doctrine of the Trinity begins when...pragmatic thinking is overcome, and when practice is liberated from activism, so that it can become a liberated practice of the gospel” (Moltmann 1993, 9).

It is in rediscovering the Trinity’s influence of our practice of the Gospel that led to missional thinking, much of it beginning with Leslie Newbigin’s *Trinitarian Doctrine for Today’s Mission* and *The Open Secret*. We are more than a decade into the new millennium and much of Newbigin’s Trinitarian ideas are experiencing a revival in the missional writings of Hirsh, Frost, David Bosch, and Miroslav Volf. The practical theology of the Trinity and the missional church in relation to these authors will be discussed in the next chapter.

When speaking about the people of HPWC, they were often asking for pragmatic sermons, and wanted a pragmatic vision for the church. Likewise, the majority of congregants openly expressed a deep appreciation for liturgy and sacrament. Theologically, this church was ripe for Trinitarian experience and expression through worship, sacrament and mission.

I will now discuss the specific context of Highland Park Wesleyan Church and look at how the Methodist movement, specifically through the Wesleys' (John, Susanna and Charles) experienced Trinitarianism, bringing about arguably one of the most significant experiences, expressions and examples of the *Missio Dei* through the Holiness Movement.

Wesleyan/Methodist History and Theology

Christians “first need to look at how their various church traditions can inform a Missional identity” (Billings 2008, 59). John Wesley was a missional Christian leader centuries before the term became the trendy buzzword it is today. One of Wesley's most famous quotes is, "The whole world is my parish" (Wesley, Journal, June 11, 1739). John Wesley was also thoroughly Trinitarian and much of his Trinitarian understanding informed both his theology and practice of ministry as an evangelist and churchman. Jason Vickers, in his *Guides for the Perplexed: Wesley*, surveyed much of Wesley's own missional distinctive, shared with his brother Charles and their mother Susanna. "Wesley was deeply committed to the Trinity” (Vickers 2009, 9). However, in all his writings, sermons and theological treaties, Wesley says very little about the Trinity. Vickers points this out saying, "The truth is that Wesley produced no single work of significance

on the Trinity. Moreover, he showed virtually no interest in the heady debates about the Trinity that took place in late seventeenth and early eighteenth century England" (Vickers 2009, 104). This is similar to the particular church setting of HPWC. Wesley, for the most part was not interested in arguing or even preaching about the mysterious details of Trinitarian doctrine. Yet he was thoroughly Trinitarian, and his approach was practical for the church and Christian. Vickers continues,

In what sense, then, can we justify the claim that Wesley was a Trinitarian theologian? ... While Wesley was not particularly interested in the manner of the relations between the three persons of the Godhead..., he was clearly interested in the relations between the three persons of the Godhead and human persons. (Vickers 2009, 113).

Wesley did not have to engage in Trinitarian polemics because he was already engaged in the Trinitarian mission. The missional definition stemming from the Trinity is in the concept of sending and being sent, which explains much of the rapid growth of the Methodist movement. Returning to the first book-end of Jesus' inaugurated ministry, Jesus is sent by the Holy Spirit immediately after his baptism into the desert for forty days and nights of testing. After his successful battle against hunger, fatigue and temptation, Jesus enters the temple and says these words, "The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor, and he has sent me to proclaim freedom...and recovery of sight to the blind" (Luke 4:18). Then in John's gospel, at the closing of Christ's earthly ministry we see a wonderful example of God's invitation for us to enter into the Trinity's *Missio Dei* of sending and being sent. "Again Jesus said, 'Peace be with you! As the father has sent me, I am sending you.' And with that he breathed on them and said, 'Receive the Holy Spirit'" (John 20:21-22). These

words of Jesus convey how possible it is for us to experience some of the formality he first experienced at his own baptism. The Trinity is there. We are inaugurated into the same mission, and we too are sent in the power of the Holy Spirit to do the will of the Father.

Throughout Acts, Luke writes about how the Spirit sends the disciples, as he did Jesus, to engage in the work God is already doing. In Acts 8:26-40 it is clear that God was already doing a work in the heart of the Ethiopian eunuch, to whom the Spirit *sent* Philip to engage in that very work to see that man's life eternally changed. God sent Jesus. And regardless of one's view on the *filioque*, we can agree that God sent the Holy Spirit. The Trinity is found in this process of sending and being sent for the purposes of redemption and global change. All this Biblical theology can relate to Wesley's methods of ministry. This work of sending and being sent in Wesley's day not only emulated the economic Trinity, but brought about, arguably, one of the world's greatest revivals. Therefore, with Vickers, "we will contend that, in the light of his doctrines of the atonement and the work of the Holy Spirit, Wesley is rightly viewed as a theologian of the economic Trinity" (Vickers 2009, 84).

How all this translates for a Wesleyan church like HPWC today can go far beyond historical reminiscing. Contemporary Methodists can recapture how practical and powerful Wesley's Trinitarian methods could be for transforming society, as many of the people share the same values, particularly social values, which Wesley held. Wesley was not interested in getting caught up in confusing discussions about the Trinity. Instead, he was concerned about participating in the

Missio Dei of the Trinity and bringing Christians around him to join in on this transforming work of God.

Wesley had an ethic of social concern, and abhorrence to alcoholism. He established ministries for the protection of woman and children. In Wesley's day, "addictions to gin and gambling, rampant sexual immorality, the profaneness of the theatre, the poverty of the lower classes, the abuse of children, and England's role in the slave trade...were the birth pangs of the modern age" (Vickers 2009, 38). Much of the congregation at HPWC have already shared in work against the modern equivalents of these evils such as human trafficking, and the reality of 21st century slavery that is prevalent in contemporary capitalism with its dependence on cheap labor in manufacturing and fair trade in agriculture. Wesleyan/Methodists today, may be more kindred to Wesley than they may realize. Confessing belief in the Trinity, while important, may continue to foster confusion if it never moves beyond confession. "True Methodists translated their belief into sanctifying actions: love toward God and neighbor" (Tucker 2001, 224).

Allowing Wesley himself to have the last word would be beneficial.

God is continually breathing, as it were, upon his soul, and his soul is breathing unto God. Grace is descending into his heart, and prayer and praise ascending to heaven. And by this intercourse between God and man, this fellowship with the Father and the Son, as by a kind of spiritual respiration, the life of God in the soul is sustained: and the child of God grows up, till he comes to 'the full measure of the stature of Christ'. (John Wesley, Works, 1:288.)

Summary

Thus far, we have demonstrated that church praxis should be rooted in a Trinitarian foundation. Our relationship with God makes more sense in light of the Trinity. Each person in the Godhead is better known in *his* relationship with the other two. This has a biblical foundation, "No-one can call Jesus Lord, but by the Holy Spirit" (1 Cor. 12:3). To know the Father one must know the Son. Congregants can know the doctrine as being more than traditional or historical; God's nature as Triune is missional, current, and relevant.

This chapter has explored the biblical, historical and theological foundation behind the practical theology of the Trinity. In the next chapter we will explore specific literature that demonstrates how being Trinitarian must move from creed alone into practice. Much of this involves how practicing theology can bring the desired CAV shift in believers and the congregation.

CHAPTER THREE: PRECEDENT LITERATURE

This chapter is going to review contributions by particular authors who have addressed the topic of the church and the Trinity. Four specific areas will be discussed in this chapter that related to the project.

The first section of this chapter will review works by authors raise concerns when it comes to issues of lethargy, confusion and complacency toward the doctrine of the Trinity. Secondly, there will be a review of works by authors who see a practical and foundational connection between the Trinity and the Missional church. Thirdly, we will review works/resources that are examples of practical Trinitarianism. Finally, we will examine literature that explores Trinitarian worship. J. I. Packer, in his devotional *Knowing God*, asks a very sobering question, "are we sure that the God whom we seek to worship is the God of the Bible, the Triune Jehovah?" (Packer 1973, 50).

Overlap in some cases is virtually unavoidable. This is not a bad thing. For instance, many authors who perceive problems will also posit solutions, often through practical theology and missional theology.

Additionally, we also need to ensure that the God whom we seek to worship is the God whom we seek to serve in ministry.

As we begin, we will examine what other key authors have written, and how they have contributed to the pertinent matter of a practical Trinitarian theology for the church.

Concerns for the Local Church

This section is a review of ideas and writings by scholars who have written extensively and specifically to address the problems and negative effects the church will encounter if it is deficient in its Trinitarianism.

The books and their authors specific to this part of the section are:

- *The Deep Things of God. How the Trinity Changes Everything* (2010) by Fred Sanders
- *Exclusion and Embrace* (1996) and *After Our Likeness* (1998) by Miroslav Volf
- *Foolishness to the Greeks* (1986) by Leslie Newbigin.

Both Volf and Newbigin have made a considerable and influential contribution to the ideas of the Church's Trinitarian vitality. Their influence can be seen in many current sources written on the same subject matter. As a result, both Newbigin and Volf's contributions will be noted throughout this part on precedent literature as their own work has remained precedent not only to this project, but to other works of literature as well.

In his book, *The Deep Things of God: How the Trinity Changes Everything*, Sanders asks, "How has it come about that so many evangelicals are cold toward the doctrine of the Trinity, confused about its meaning, or noncommittal about its importance?" (Sanders 2010, 8)

Sanders suggests there is a sort of fogginess about the doctrine of the Trinity, and even an outright rejection of the importance of the doctrine. A concern sometimes conveyed in the contemporary congregation is that the doctrine is “man made” and irrelevant to Gospel work. In relation to this issue, Sanders points out that a common thoughtful question among the laity is, "Isn't it (the Trinity) a speculative distraction from the serious business of the Gospel"? (Sanders 2010, 8) Throughout his book, Sanders' claim is that the pressing counter to this query is that both the Gospel and the work of the gospel are, foundationally Trinitarian. Sanders discusses at length how evangelicals are tacitly Trinitarian. He states that, "our beliefs and practices all presuppose the Trinity, but that presupposition has for too long been left unexpressed, tacit rather than explicit, and taken for granted rather than celebrated and taught" (Sanders 2010, 11). Sanders explicitly calls for a cognitive shift saying,

If it's possible to be subliminally Trinitarian as a Christian, what benefit is there to taking the next step of being explicit about it? The advantages are too numerous and comprehensive to list, but all of them flow directly from making that cognitive jump from unawareness to awareness (Sanders 2010, 45).

Thus, “an extended exercise in calling the Trinity back to remembrance is necessary” (Sanders 2010, 19). This idea contributes much to the notion of taking the congregation on a necessary journey where the Trinity becomes a matter for the head, the heart and the hands which I refer to as the CAV shift.

Sanders emphasizes that this is not change for the sake of change. Indeed, "there is more to Trinitarianism than just thinking well. Specifically, the starting point for a durable Trinitarian theology is not primarily a matter of carrying out a successful thought project" (Sanders 2010, 27).

In this Sanders addresses the issue of the Trinity having become too theoretical, which has led to much of the confusion and rejection Sanders is concerned about. Sanders has difficulty with the many attempts of clergy and laity to explain away the trinity through metaphor, be it a shamrock, ice, or an egg. He admits, "although the doctrine may still be dutifully taught and... learned, it has long been viewed as an abstract series of propositions, an undigested lump of tradition or of revealed ideas. Like anything that should be living but is dead, it stays in its place and decays" (Sanders 2010, 44.)

Here Sanders suggests it may be dogmatism people are kicking against more so than the Trinity itself. Out of a sense of duty, and with the need to defend what has become so confounding, leaders in the church have fallen back on metaphor to explain what many feel is unnecessary in the first place. Sanders concludes that rather than trying to explain the Trinity theoretically, cognitive change will make more sense when the Trinity is explained as necessary for both mission and identity. "It would be good if evangelical theology would lay hold of its tacit resources for Trinitarian theology and fulfill its potential" (Sanders 2010, 59). In other words Sanders is pointing out that the church already has a vast reservoir of resources. These resources encompass what this project has been calling CAV. His claim is that we not only use them to bring us close to God, but back to our Triune God. Sanders' words are encouraging in a context like HPWC, "From Wesley's hymns to contemporary choruses, affective worship experience is a recurring mark of evangelical church life. This emotional depth...provides a rich and engaging context for Trinitarian theology"(Sanders 2010, 58). To be

Wesleyan or Evangelical, according to Sanders, is to remember that our roots go beyond theory to recapture our practical movement which is built foundationally on the Trinity. "The most exciting thing about recovering the Trinitarian depth of the gospel is that it equips us to use familiar terms with a greater understanding of what they have really meant all along" (Sanders 2010, 157).

Miroslav Volf, Systematic theologian at Yale Divinity School makes it clear that the Gospel we preach and do cannot be separated from who God is as a Triune being. He contends that, "a genuinely Christian reflection on social issues must be rooted in the self-giving love of the divine Trinity" (Volf 1996, 25). Here, Volf identifies a problem with church and Christian identity when removed from the identity of God found in the Trinity. For Volf, not only is the Gospel and church inseparable from the Trinity, Christ's identity is also understood within the Trinity. "The self-giving love of Christ is rooted in the self-giving love of the triune God" (Volf 1996, 25).

Miroslav Volf does more than introduce his readers to the necessity of the church's return to a Trinitarian identity. While commenting on some of Joseph Ratzinger's (Pope Benedict XVI) own Trinitarian theology, Volf writes, "the entire life of the church, including its spirituality and structures, is shaped in correspondence to a certain understanding of the Trinity" (Volf 1998, 67). The primary issue raised throughout Volf's book is how churches are influenced by culture, and how this can skew a congregation's view of mission, particularly how to accomplish it. In identifying trends and their ecclesiological effect, Volf

suggests ways that authentic and deliberate Trinitarianism will shape church culture, rather than Westernized culture influencing church culture.

For authors like Sanders and Volf, there is an issue of identity. Their claim is that how we identify Jesus and God is how we will come to identify ourselves. They point out in their works that to neglect the Trinity is to start the process of an endemic identity crisis within the church. They suggest that neglecting is a method of inducing a self-inflicted amnesia. Sanders claims that, "forget the Trinity and you forget why we do what we do" (Sanders 2010, 9).

There also exists the problem of bad Trinitarian Theology. Missiologist Leslie Newbigin brings this to the forefront in his well-known books: *Foolishness to the Greeks* (1986) and *The Open Secret* (1978), as well as in his book, *Trinitarian Doctrine for Today's Mission* (1988).

According to Newbigin our deficiency in Trinitarianism is a bi-product of theological relativity. Back in 1986, Newbigin wrote, "With respect to ultimate beliefs, pluralism rules, and thus each individual has to make a personal decision about ultimate questions. In that sense, we are all now subject to the 'heretical imperative'" (Newbigin 1986, 11).

In the past, orthodoxy was the means of "guarding the trust" (1 Timothy 6:20), However, as Newbigin writes, "there is no such a thing as orthodoxy in the old sense. We are all heretics in the original sense of the word, that is, we make our own decisions about what to believe" (Newbigin 1986, 16). Newbigin ties this specifically to Trinitarianism remaining tacit for too long. Rather than just trying

to explain how three-in-one may work logically or not, one can instead point out the purpose of Trinitarianism in the *Missio Dei*.

When it comes to knowing the Trinity in a personal sense that is beyond just fact, the church would do good to pay attention to language. This is where liturgy, hymns, praxis, etc., play such a key role in bringing cognitive change to the congregation. Newbigin says, "our ordinary language conveys very simply the sharp distinction that we draw between the most expert knowledge of the facts *about* a person and the experience of knowing that person" (Newbigin 1986, 87). These ideas presented by Sanders, Newbigin, and Volf suggest a church's mission and work must deliberately derive out of the Trinitarian nature of God. Therefore the church would do well to re-obtain "(a) whole new habit of associative thinking, that we gain from attending to the economy (Sanders, 2010 157).

The Trinity and Mission

This section will cover particular works by authors who see the Trinity as foundational to being missional. The authors and their works in this section are:

- *Experiencing the Trinity* (2002) by Darrell W. Johnson
- *The Open Secret* (1978) and *Trinitarian Doctrine for Today's Mission* (1988) by Leslie Newbigin
- *Missional Church* (1998) edited by Darrell L. Guder

A primary mission of the church is to preach the Gospel with the assumption that the Gospel will generate a change in culture. Darrell Johnson, in his book *Experiencing the Trinity* makes a personal appeal for this kind of change when he

writes, "the Gospel of God as Trinity overwhelms me. I only wish I had understood what I now understand much earlier" (Johnson, 2002, 84).

According to Johnson a deliberate change in church culture will revive a church's identity as it stands apart from other social or secular organizations. Not only will it revive a holistic view of the God we worship, it will also provide distinctive to church work and mission, and even affect how we encounter one another. Johnson writes, "I cannot think of anyone without seeing them within the circle of the Trinity...How can we help but love them when we know and feel the love of the Trinity for them? (Johnson 2002, 67).

In this book, Johnson also addresses the sociological concerns of how church culture is becoming increasingly individualistic. Expression in worship, work and theology can either foster an ethic of community or individuality. The Trinity needs to be foundational to defining these things within church culture. Church culture is often defined in its praxis and, as Johnson writes, "You can see that the three great disciplines of discipleship - worship, community, mission - cannot be separated, because they are grounded in the Trinity" (Johnson 2002, 69).

Johnson's book offers foundational matters for identity which is crucial to mission. Essentially, who we are defines what we do, and who we are in mission needs to be defined by the Trinity. The Trinity is related to mission and this should eventually lead a Trinitarian church to inevitably be missional.

Earlier we briefly referenced Leslie Newbigin's book, *Foolishness to the Greeks*. There are two other works by Newbigin that specifically speak to this issue of

being missional and the church's role as it pertains to the *Missio Dei*. In *The Open Secret*, and also in *Trinitarian Doctrine or Today's Mission*, Newbigin enlightens his readers as to when and where the term *missional* began to see revival among the ecclesial community. In speaking specifically about the Trinity, Newbigin shares his own concerns that the doctrine is "treated" by the church community as a "timeless, passionless monad beyond all human knowing" (Newbigin 1978, 26). Using a parable as a reference, Newbigin says the Trinity "has been treated like the talent that was buried for safekeeping rather than risked into the commerce of discussion" (Newbigin 1978, 27). However, when the Trinity is "accepted by faith it becomes the basis of a new way of making sense of the world, not just by speculative science, but by practical wisdom" (Newbigin 1978, 26). This practical wisdom can then be integral to what it means to be missional. In *The Open Secret* Newbigin takes a Trinitarian approach that focuses on the context of Christian mission which, according to him, is "proclaiming the kingdom of the Father, ...sharing the life of the Son, and...bearing the witness of the Spirit" (Newbigin, 1978, 29).

In *Trinitarian Doctrine for Today's Mission*, Newbigin writes about the importance of having a balanced Trinitarian church for mission. He writes this several decades before Christian Schwarz of *Natural Church Development* comprised the Trinitarian resource *The Three Colors of Ministry* (examined later) which promotes church health through focus on all three persons of the Godhead. Here, Newbigin writes about the danger of leaning too far in one direction. For example, he states that, "there are movements in our time which lay such

exclusive emphasis on the work of the Holy Spirit that they appear to be in danger of distorting their witness by failure to recognize that the mission is the mission of the Triune God (Newbigin 1988, 79).

Two other authors, who agree the church must be missional and that in order to be missional one has to be Trinitarian, are David Bosch and Darrell Guder. These authors have developed much of their ecclesiology of what it means to be missional starting from a foundational theology of the Trinity. In 1998 a book called *The Missional Church* was published and edited by Darrell L. Guder. This book had contributions from authors such as Alan Roxburgh and Craig Van Gelder, and it is in the very first chapter that the book begins with a Trinitarian platform of what it means to be missional. "This Trinitarian point of entry into our theology of the church necessarily shifts all the accents in our ecclesiology (Guder 5, 1998).

The common theme within this book is the *Missio Dei* as defined by the Trinity. Within Guder's publication is a consistent reaffirmation that the church is to be a sending church as a way of emulating the sending God. "God's character and purpose as a sending or missionary God redefines our understanding of the Trinity" (Guder 1998, 4). But it does not stop there. The church is not only *sending*, but also *sent*. Knowing this will help a church move from thinking it is responsible to send a few individuals but, as an entity in relation to the Trinity, see the entire body as the one sent. The idea of an essential CAV shift is also brought up early in the book. "This Trinitarian point of entry into our theology of the church necessarily shifts all the accents in our ecclesiology" (Guder 1998, 5)

The unanimous notion among the scholars in Guder's book is that a strong social ethic is rooted in Jesus Christ, and therefore must naturally be rooted in the Trinity. Knowing this will help to ground a congregation in both identity and purpose. "God's character and purpose as a sending or missionary God redefines our understanding of the Trinity (Guder 4, 1998). The contributing question from the writers in Guder's book is: how can anyone think of the foundation of the church and its mission without thinking of the Trinity?

Practical Trinitarianism

Thus far we have identified and reviewed works pertaining to the problems of losing a Trinitarian identity, and then how the missional church is founded on the very reality that God is a sending God in three persons. In this section we will look at how being Trinitarian moves from theory alone into what we do as Trinitarian Churches. The review will explore literature that embodies practical theology in the areas of ecclesiology (connectivity), leadership dynamics, and worship.

The works to be reviewed in this final section are:

- *Thy Kingdom Connected* (2009) by Dwight J. Friesen
- *The Trinity as a Model for Leadership* (2007) by Sharon Tam
- *Color Your World with NCD* (2005) by Christian Schwarz
- *Worship Community and the Triune God of Grace* – by James Torrance
- *The Celtic Way of Prayer* – by Esther De Waal

Connectivity and Trinity

People come to church to connect. This connectivity which is so essential is brought about in emulation of the Trinity. The practical implications in this relationship of connectedness are fundamental to church purpose and identity. Included in the following discussion will be a brief examination of Dwight Friesen's contribution to this notion of "connectivity" from his book, *Thy Kingdom Connected*.

The Trinity is a community at work. Friesen's book addresses the reality of how disconnected people are becoming in everyday life. Many individuals now work at home, and the internet has provided fodder for an ever increasing separation between work and community. Friesen laments that the matter of faith has become more about the individual's choice rather than wisdom gained and shared out of the community. This trend, no doubt, will continue to contribute to one's sense of losing sight of why the doctrine of the Trinity is needed in the first place.

Friesen's recent book uses the realities of our current information technology and social networks (i.e. Facebook, and the internet) as a template for how people have an inherent desire to be connected. Likewise, he addresses the issue of identity. As one understands God's identity as a community, so also a person understands 'self' in community. In fact, Friesen suggests that, "the only way to understand yourself is to be in community and conversation with other people (Friesen 2009, 64). To be intentionally in community is to be Trinitarian. Friesen asks, "What might it look like if your church focused even more intentionally on becoming a connective space? (Friesen 2009, 108).

Friesen presents a threefold Trinitarian model early in his book, "in terms of being relationally connected with God, one another, and with all of Creation." (Friesen 2009, 31). This also corresponds with the balance in Schwarz' *Color Your World*, which is discussed later in this chapter, focusing on God (Father), One another (body of Christ), and the Community (Spirit filled evangelism). Friesen's idea is that Christians should be intentionally and strategically connected as they emulate the Trinity. To do this is to better understand God, ourselves, and what we are to do as Christians and as a church. "How we understand *Missio Dei* will shape everything we are and everything we do" (Friesen 2009, 91). Friesen's understanding of the *Mission Dei* begins with the Trinity. For Friesen to be missional is to be intentionally Trinitarian and is,

to see God, humanity, and all of creation as being interconnected. And when this relationship paradigm is applied to the study and praxis of ecclesiology, the people of God will be better prepared to live into the image of God, thus incarnating the Mission of God" (Friesen 2009, 20).

Cultivating such a pragmatic Trinitarian paradigm shift can begin in the leadership. Friesen addresses this need for such a shift in the leadership of the church, stating, "True authority is participation with God in God's mission of the redemption of all things and the re-creation of heaven and earth" (Friesen 2009, 115). Participating in God's mission is sharing in his Triune nature as we have been designed to do. A leader will thus bring about affective change by emulating and constructing a Triune model of connectivity.

When being intentionally Trinitarian begins in the leadership and with the leader, the patterns and comprehension of Triune connectivity will cascade into the rest of the congregation. "Wise pastors and ministry leaders will help form a

close, differentiated community that is unique from other communities" (Friesen 2009, 151, 152)

This provides segue to a discussion of introducing a change toward intentional Trinitarianism beginning in the leadership. Here, we will look into a doctoral thesis by Sharon Tam as she sets out to demonstrate the prudence and necessity of church leaders practicing an intentional Trinitarian model of leadership.

The Trinity as a Model for Leadership

Sharon Tam, in her own DMin thesis, now a published book entitled *The Trinitarian Dance*, sets out a model for leadership development in the church which is constructed around an emulation of the Trinity. Tam maintains that, "The biblical certainty of the Trinity is essential for developing Christian leaders, so they can navigate a culture confidently" (Tam 2009, 58). For Tam, the Trinity is a living and economic reality for a church to experience in praxis and mission. "Practically, the Trinity makes sense and makes a difference to leadership that is needed to awaken the apathetic in Canada to restore Christ's kingdom" (Tam 2009, 58).

Tam uses the image of a dance to explain the theological understanding of *perichoresis* saying, "*perichoresis* is extremely practical and relevant for the practice of Christian leadership in a postmodern country, like Canada" (Tam 2009, 62). Rather than church leaders trying to explain the Trinity for the sake of creed, Tam develops an entire system of leadership development where leaders gain understanding of the mystery through experience and practice, rather than

only in theory. In her own thesis she offers a contemporary model for leadership that generates a type of leadership, modeled after the Trinity to which people can connect and identify. The main idea is for a leader, and thus a church, to be balanced which, in a way, emulates and illustrates perichoresis.

It was stated earlier that that churches will often have a leaning or a tendency toward a certain aspect of ministry that might reflect one member of the Godhead. However, to do so can be problematic. NCD's founder, Christian A. Schwarz argues that our "problems start as soon as we isolate one of these dimensions from the others" (Schwarz, 2001, 15).

It is to the church resource *Color Your World* that we now turn as we continue to explore how various church leaders and authors are endeavoring to return the church to being fully and practically Trinitarian.

Color Your World

Sharing his own concerns, Christian Schwarz writes, "It's a tragedy that the doctrine of the Trinity is regarded, by and large, as a lifeless, irrelevant concept that, though theologically central, has nothing to do with our daily lives (Schwarz 2005, 71).

Whereas up to now we have been speaking of leadership embracing a practical Trinitarian theology, Schwarz offers a resource for the entire congregation to regain and revive within itself what it is to be truly Trinitarian. He does so with *Color Your World*, published by Natural Church Development (NCD). Early in this book, Schwarz introduces his readers to a plan of church transformation that is both Trinitarian and similar to the cycle of Action Research

(Schwarz 2005, 43). His cycle begins with gathering information (Green - the Father). He then moves into application (Red - the Son) which can be associated with *Innovation*, and finally ends with transformation (Blue - the HS) which is the fruit or the results of the cycle, which corresponds closely to the *Implementation* stage of the AR Cycle.

Schwarz also shares in the concern that the Trinity must not remain conceptually theoretical. He writes about the need for transformation saying, "our minds had been illuminated, but our hearts and hands (CAV) had not been affected in any significant way (Schwarz 2005, 48). Later, on the same page, he reminds his readers, "There is no schizophrenia between theology and practice" (Schwarz 2005, 48). This speaks to the nature of this project, which is to experience the reality that there is no schizophrenia between the doctrine of the Trinity and the practice of mission. "The truth only becomes manifest when people holistically experience who the Trinitarian God is, with their heads, their hands, and their hearts" (Schwarz 2005, 71).

Theologically, Schwarz believes God has revealed himself in three specific ways, which are reflected primarily through the three persons of the Godhead. He also associates each person to three major events in Biblical history: Creation, Calvary, and Pentecost. From this, he aims to show how church communities have particular tendencies associated to one of these three revelations. Schwarz believes Liberal churches often have a concern for eco/social ethics and concentrate on creation. He would place these churches in the "Green Zone" whom he associates with the Father. Evangelical churches (red)

tend to be Christocentric, and keep both the cross and the need for salvation from sin and sinfulness as a primary focus. Finally, Charismatic churches (Blue) have more of an experience in relation to the Holy Spirit, as Schwarz sees it.

The book itself is interactive and very helpful as a diagnostic tool. On pages 72-79 the readers are asked to take a survey that Schwarz calls *The 3 Colors Trinitarian Compass test*. “The Trinitarian Compass focuses on the question of how we “relate to the Triune God” (Schwarz 2005, 69). There is a multi-purpose aspect to this test. First, using a series of questions, each having a numerical value corresponding to an aspect of the Godhead, the individual can get an idea of where he or she has leanings or tendencies when it comes to the Godhead (or three colors). Subsequently, each reader is to turn their score into the pastor who then can determine where his/her church leans in relation to one of the colors. One of the problems Schwarz is attempting to remedy is that of a church’s tendency to focus on only one of these three areas. His idea is that a church will find better health when each member of the Godhead is brought into the practical workings of the community in a more deliberate way. This is the Trinitarian balance he is seeking. Schwarz states,

The dilemma of Christianity is that, while we might give intellectual assent to this threefold revelation, when it comes to everyday practical experience, most of us are miles from integrating all three dimensions into our personal lives... Very seldom do I find a truly 'three-colored,' Trinitarian church (Schwarz 2001, 10).

Schwarz also offers three dangers that come with being imbalanced. To be only focused in the green area leads to syncretism. To be focused in the red area alone leads to dogmatism, while focusing solely in the blue area can lead into spiritualism (Schwarz 2005, 61, 63, 65).

The Difference in Worship

It was through James Torrance's book, *Worship, Community, and the Triune God of Grace* that I made the personal discovery that I was engaging in worship that reflected more of a Unitarian style rather than worship toward a God who exists in the unity of the Trinity (Torrance, 1996, 20). It was Torrance's book that began generating the beginnings of a cognitive shift to being consciously and deliberately Trinitarian. "How we worship God must reflect who God is – the triune God of grace" (Torrance, J. 1996, 10) Torrance writes about the connectivity between Trinitarian worship and mission stating, "I doubt...there is any other factor which undermines the mission and worship of the church more tragically than the widespread failure to appreciate the Trinitarian dynamic of worship" (Torrance, A. 2005, vii).

Works on Trinitarian Spirituality

Hymns, choruses and songs are a primary medium of theological expression and teaching. There are numerous hymns commonly sung in churches today that have Trinitarian content. The two most specific that come to one's mind are *The Doxology*, and Reginald Heber's anthem, *Holy, Holy, Holy*.

In this final segment of precedent literature I will review two books that represent a genre of spiritual writing when it comes to experiencing the Trinity as a matter of the heart. The genre I am referring to is Celtic spirituality. A tendency in Celtic Christianity is to immerse one's self into the mystery of the Trinity by structuring prayers and hymns to recognize God in his three persons both by naming the 3 persons, and by envisioning triadic themes both in nature and in

how the prayers are actually written. The attempt is to gain understanding of the Trinity through experience and example.

Esther De Waal in her book, *The Celtic Way of Prayer: The Recovery of the Religious Imagination* identifies the human being's need to move beyond a cognitive attempt to know God. In writing about herself she says, "My own religious upbringing had been so intellectual and cerebral" (De Waal 1997, xiii). She then adds it was through Celtic Christianity that she was "confronted by the power of image and of symbol...(taking her) beyond the rational and intellectual and cerebral"(De Wall 1997, xiii). De Wall devotes the entire third chapter of her book to the topic of the Trinity because the Trinity is so very foundational to Celtic worship. Almost immediately she claims, "The God whom the Celtic peoples know is above all the Godhead who is Trinity, the God whose very essence is that of the threefold unity of persons, three persons bound in a unity of love" (De Waal 1997, 38).

De Waal's description of the Celtic Christian describes a person who does not have to spend time wrestling with the concept of the Triune Godhead explaining these are "a people who are deeply Trinitarian without any philosophical struggle about how that is to be expressed intellectually" (De Wall 1997, 38). In contrast to Sander's ideology we find in De Waal's book, Christians who revel in metaphor and find "analogies (to the Trinity) not only in nature but also in daily life" (De Waal 1997, 39).

De Waal's destination with Celtic Trinitarianism is kindred in every respect with this project when she writes, "So I take up these ideas and try to

make them a part of my own praying journey... I want to be able to take my Trinitarian understanding to my daily life, in to my praying and living" (De Waal 1997, 43, 45). Her premise is that this can be possible when adopting a spirituality of imagination, hymnody, metaphor and prayer all structured around a deliberate Trinitarianism.

While De Waal writes about the ways of Celtic spirituality, David Adam has written many books that are a creative piece of spirituality in the Celtic genre. In his work, *Tides and Season: Modern prayers in the Celtic tradition*, Adam writes a volume filled with both images and prayers that bring us to centre upon a God who exists in three persons. The images are often geometrically triadic in nature, designed to help the person of prayer meditate on God's three-in-oneness. His prayers are written for many occasions, such as baptism, or for certain points of the day. For instance, a morning prayer he offers is entitled, *Rising Prayer*,

Thanks be to the Father
I arise today.
He gives me light
He guides my way.

Thanks be to the Saviour
I arise today.
He gives me love.
He hears me pray.

Thanks be to the Spirit
I arise today.
He gives me life
With me to stay (Adam 1989, 8).

What one may find refreshing in Celtic Trinitarianism is the amount of understanding and teaching about the persons of the Godhead in such a devotional and simple manner.

Concluding Remarks

In conclusion, I would like to bring the conversation back to Fred Sanders' book, *The Deep Things of God. How the Trinity Changes Everything*. Sanders, along with the other figures presented in this chapter, believe change is possible, practical, and necessarily Trinitarian. In his book, Sanders quotes Nicky Cruz's in reflecting on his own Trinitarian shift,

What I am talking about is something different from merely believing in the doctrine of the Trinity...God has developed in me a sense of the separate relationships I can have with the Father, Saviour and Holy Spirit...He has taught me to feed off the Trinity for my daily sustenance, rather than just having some vague feeling that the Trinity is somehow true (Cruz in Sanders 2010, 33).

CHAPTER FOUR: PROJECT AND METHODOLOGY

The primary goal of this project was to connect HPWC's identity to the Trinity and see it renew our worship and mission. The idea was to initiate a process whereby Christians would engage and experience the Trinity cognitively, affectively, and volitionally. This has been referred to throughout this thesis as a "CAV shift". An initial analysis of the context in 2010 led to the conclusion that there were issues that could be addressed through an application of Trinitarian theology to individuals and to the corporate church's identity. The primary concerns raised out of the analysis of context and opening interviews were indifference, confusion, and disbelief in the doctrine. Belief in the Trinity is integral to Wesleyan Orthodoxy and therefore to identity. To be intentionally Trinitarian is to view God in particular way and therefore it informs our worship. One's identity can be associated with what one does and therefore, Trinitarianism can also be definitive for the Wesleyan Christian's mission. And while some persons at HPWC exhibited some of these issues, many in the congregation were looking to be pragmatic as a church. They wanted to be practical in ministry rather than a church of symbols and theories. Since congregants understood the Trinity in mostly a cerebral sense my goal was to bring about a more holistic experience that included the affective and volitional aspects of a person's faith. The primary approach to the project was to engage in Action Research, the

collection of narratives and the study of materials on practical Trinitarianism (see chapter 3). I then implemented a project that addressed the context of HPWC to reveal the Trinity already at work within the congregation. Finally, the project called for measuring whether it worked, and how well it worked.

This chapter will discuss Action Research, narratives and the methods used to collect and analyze data in order to determine if the congregation had developed in Trinitarian identity as manifested in understanding, worship and mission (CAV). Changes in worship and mission were initiated by being intentionally Trinitarian in activities that HPWC was already doing, specifically in preaching, mid-week Bible study, the Sunday Liturgy, and developing a mission statement. These same activities were examined to identify any change in Trinitarian identity over time. After discussing methodologies this chapter will cover the various data collection methods employed throughout the project which include an analysis of HPWC's context, journaling, the use of interviews, surveys, focus groups and use of NCD's resources. Following this will be an account of how the actual project was implemented in the personal work of the pastor and then at the congregational level. This chapter concludes by documenting how ethics in research were foundational to this project.

Figure 2: Overview of Project-Thesis

	2010												2011												2012											
	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
Analysis of context																																				
Project Journal																																				
Research of precedent literature																																				
Liturgical changes (Sunday AM)																																				
Opening Interviews SGA																																				
Mom's Bible Study (SGA)																																				
Closing Interview (SGA)																																				
Special Sermon Series																																				
Creating new mission statement																																				
Hidden Treasure Bible Study (SGB)																																				
NCD Church Color Profile #1																																				
Color Your World study group (SGC)																																				
Closing Interviews																																				
Focus Group Session with SGC																																				

Methodology

This is an Action Research project. Action Research (AR) involves the researcher as both the observer and the participant. Data was collected using narratives because gathering stories is a natural way for a pastoral researcher to collect data. Listening and discerning one's context is a large part of pastoral ministry. This was a way of determining if any shifts or changes had taken place throughout the different stages of the journey. What follows is a report on how these approaches were employed through this project.

Action Research

AR involves the researcher and participants identifying a need, researching the issues, developing a plan and implementing the plan as observer and participant. Finally, the researcher evaluates, adjusts the plan and re-enters the cycle again as observer, participant, planner, executor, and evaluator (cf. Coghlan 2010).

This project followed the AR cycle as it began by first identifying the need for a Trinitarian identity. Further research brought about the idea for a CAV shift. The plan that was developed and implemented involved the following ministries: a preaching series, mid-week bible study, and two focus groups. The cycle ended with evaluating and assessing the data to determine how the project influenced the Trinitarian identity of HPWC. I will also later discuss how I arrived at these conclusions. This project was initiated in partial fulfillment for a Doctor of Ministry Degree. Reengaging in more cycles anticipated but not included in this thesis-project.

Narratives

Getting to know a person's story and walking with her through the process to see how her story develops along the way became a primary method of collecting data. As Amia Lieblich writes, "People are storytellers by nature...One of the clearest channels for learning about the inner world is through verbal accounts and stories presented by individual narrators about their... experienced reality" (Lieblich 1998, 10).

This kind of research helped me to understand how, or if, the Trinity was an "experienced reality" to the people of HPWC. Their stories told of how they understood God, how they experienced God, and what their understanding of the Trinity was. I conducted this research using personal interviews, focus groups and journaling. After reviewing the narratives, I then set out to exegete them by categorizing and coding the data contained within them. Narratives were useful in three ways. They helped establish the context by painting a picture. They helped keep me connected to the context as a researcher. And they helped me evaluate if the picture was changing, throughout the life of the project.

Data Collection

This section is about the methods I used to collect data. Data was collected at two levels: 1) personal and 2) congregation-wide. This was done in three stages: before the project, during the project and after the project. The methods used were analyzing the context, interviews, journaling, use of NCD's survey material, and focus groups.

Following is a chronological account of how these methods were employed to collect data. This section will also discuss how the data was collected and analyzed.

Table 1: Data Collection

July 2010	Analysis of Context: HPWC Congregation	Survey Interviews
Sept 2010 – December 2012 (Duration of the project)	Collection of Narratives	Journal documenting the journey, observations, collection of stories and unsolicited data that was relevant to the project. Interviews
Sept 14, 2011 – Feb 1, 2012	SGA (Study Group A): Mom’s Bible Study	Opening Interview NCD: 3 Color Gift Test Closing Interview
Oct 4, 2011 – Apr 24 - 2012	SGB: Hidden Treasure Bible Study	Interviews Journal
Nov 6, 2011 – Nov 18, 2012	SGC: Group committed to working through NCD’s “Color Your World”	NCD Survey: Church Color Profile Focus Group Session Interviews

A number of steps were used to analyze the data. These steps were similar those used in thematic analysis which is to familiarize yourself with the data, transcribe it, search for and define the themes from the data, and then produce a report (Braun and Clark 2006, 87).

Analysis of Context

From July to September, 2010, an analysis of HPWC’s congregational context was conducted. This analysis included both a survey for the entire congregation and nine personal interviews. The analysis was based on my own observations and pastoral concerns and meant to investigate if/how HPWC’s recent mergers (explained in chapter one) had created systemic differences among groups in the congregation. I wanted to see how different the host congregation

was from the newer group who had merged over in how they viewed spirituality, worship, mission, God, discipleship and self-identity. The data collected in the analysis confirmed these differences and also revealed the need for better Trinitarian experience and understanding. Examination of the data from the analysis will be documented and analyzed in the next chapter.

Journaling

Throughout the entire project I used a journal, being careful to record changes in praxis, conversations, and unsolicited data that appeared to correlate to the project. “A journal also allows one to grapple with the deep and lasting effect that fieldwork produces . . . which is often more evident when analyzing the data than when collecting it” (Blaxter 2010, 48). The purpose of this journal was to record my own and other peoples’ narratives. This was done by documenting my personal observations as researcher and participant throughout the duration of the project. This process also included the collection of stories and unsolicited data that was relevant to the project. Unsolicited data included e-mail correspondence, personal notes, and material submitted by persons wishing to contribute to the project.

Interviews

Work began in 2010 with opening interviews. There were nine participants and the sessions were audio recorded with the permission of the individuals. The aim was to get a general idea of how people were already tacitly Trinitarian, or if they were. Specific individuals were selected in order to represent the various demographics of the congregation. I followed a process

referred to as *Situation Analysis* (Pietersen 2010, 49), which includes the following four steps

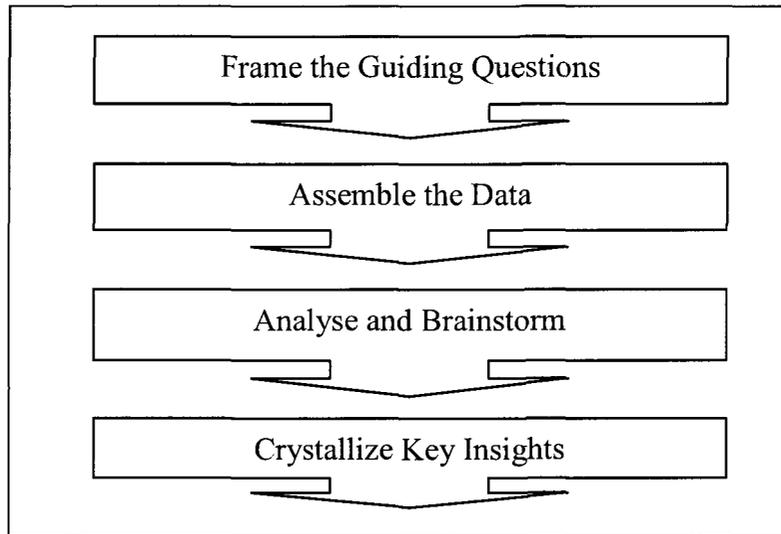


Figure 3: Situation Analysis Process

Data from these interviews helped determine if one's experience with the Trinity was mainly in theory and creed, or if it included how he worshipped and lived. With these interviews I was also able to learn more about their own experience of how they were taught about the nature of the Trinity. The idea here was to see how much influence the church, clergy, and parents already had in one's Trinitarian understanding. This was done as a matter of research to gather information on what worked in the past. In other words, I wanted to know how the individual's pastor(s), parents, church(es), Christian education experiences all shaped and influenced his Trinitarian understanding.

Interview Questions:

- Do you believe in the Trinity?
- Do you think belief in the Trinity is necessary?
- As best as you can, explain to me what you believe about the Trinity.
- How does belief in the Trinity influence your Christian life and worship?

These questions were developed out of the issues raised by the authors discussed in chapter three. I also wanted to confirm my conclusions from the analysis of context that these were issues needing to be addressed.

Closing interviews were also done with nine people, those having engaged in the project from beginning to end. There were two individuals of the nine not present for the closing interviews because they had moved away from the congregation. Examples of the closing interviews are found in Appendix F. Two additional people were added who participated in the *NCD Color Profile* and the mid-week program, *Hidden Treasure Bible Study*. While I did not have the advantage of an opening interview with these individuals for comparison, I was still able to obtain some information from their narratives to help answer my guiding questions. Change and growth was also determined by comparing the results of their first color profile with the results of the second. Data from the profile (reported in greater detail in chapter five) indicated whether there was growth, change, and a balancing of the three colors (Trinitarianism) within both the individual and the congregation. The explanation of how the NCD surveys work is explained later in this chapter and the results of the congregational profile

are in Appendix E. The following steps outline the process I followed in the closing interviews.

- Each interview was recorded, with permission, and transcribed.
- Transcripts were read and re-read, making note of initial ideas.
- Initial codes and categories were generated.
- Noting commonalities that could be interpreted as potential themes.
- Noting themes that might support initial assumptions
- The final step was to interpret and report findings (chapter-5).

These five steps were developed according to the methodology set out by Carl F. Auerbach and Louise B. Silverstein with regard to their five steps for coding. Since much of my approach to this research was in order to try and confirm initial pastoral observations, the fourth step in the following list was not as applicable.

1. Begin with relevant text
2. Look for repeated ideas
3. Find what these ideas have in common
4. Construct these themes into a theory
5. Interpret these themes in narrative (the report) (Auerbach 2003, 37-40).

Study Groups

There were three study groups as a part of this project: Mom's Bible Study (SGA), Hidden Treasure Bible Study (SGB), and a group of 10 congregants who participated in NCD's *Color Your World* (SGC).

After the nature of the project was determined in the fall of 2011 a mid-week Bible Study of ten mothers agreed to participate as a study group for this project (SGA). This group consisted of people both from HPWC and from a variety of other churches. This was mostly because the group had already been formed before this project began and the group agreed to participate. However it also provided a different point of reference for comparison between multiple churches. I was able to find out, through interview if any of the participants from other churches had a more holistic Trinitarian understanding and experience, or if their ethos was generally similar to those who attended HPWC.

In early October, 2011, I began a Tuesday night midweek program called Hidden Treasure Bible Study (HTBS) also referred in this thesis as SGB. The general design of the program was to teach and lead the participants through the anticipated CAV shift. The details of HTBS will be discussed later in this chapter in the section called "Project Implementation". Data from this study group was collected through interviews and journaling. A record of the interviews is found in Appendix B

In November of 2011 a different group of ten people representing HPWC (SGC) was formed from the congregation in order to make full use of the surveys provided by NCD's *Color Your World* and use the data to measure any changes in holistic balance and growth within the congregation.

The purpose of the Study Groups A and C was to determine if the NCD material was an effective resource to generate the desired CAV shift and, by using

the NCD surveys, measure if change did occur. This was to hear the group members' opinions about NCD's material for several purposes.

- To listen for and identify if there are unsolicited Trinitarian themes in their speech during the study group interviews. This was to see if NCD's material moved their thinking from tacit to deliberate thinking about the Trinity.
- To get an account of their emotional and volitional experiences as a result of using the material.
- To get their opinion about the material. While this is not a project on the NCD's resources, a major component of the project was to find specific Trinitarian material that was practical and determine if it was useful for reaching the desired outcomes.

In both study groups, data was collected through three methods which were interviews, surveys and focus group sessions. In September 2011 an opening interview was conducted with Study Group A (SGA). This interview was given as an introduction to the work they would be completing over the next nine months with NCD's *Three Colors of Ministry*. In this opening interview (Appendix B) questions were asked in two categories:

- Primary assumptions and understanding of Trinitarianism
- CAV experience of the Trinity

Data was coded under the first category was as follows:

- Tacit/unspoken Trinitarian references.
- Comparison between those from HPWC and other churches

Based on my reading from the materials of chapters two and three, and in developing the goal of a CAV shift, these are the categories I identified in my data:

- Cognitive understanding of the Trinity
- Affective/emotional experience of the Trinity
- Volitional understanding of the Trinity

In November 2011 SGC was given NCD's *Color Your World*. The group was asked, via a letter, to complete the *Trinity Color Profile* before reading the book and submit the results immediately. They were also asked to take the survey again at the end of the project and after reading the book. The purpose and benefits of this survey are discussed below.

On February 1, 2012 I conducted a group interview with SGA, and later a focus group session with SGC on November 14, 2012. SGA was audio recorded with permission, and SGC was videotaped with permission as I now had a camera at my disposal allowing me to view body language.

Guiding questions for me as the researcher in the closing interviews with the Mom's Bible Study were developed out of the unique advantage of being able compare the data of those who attend HPWC with those who do not. The actual data will be discussed in the next chapter however, it can be said there was a notable difference between the two groups. The general questions I was looking to address in the closing interview with SGA were as follows:

- 1) (Comparison between those from HPWC and other churches) Did participating in the project implementation at HPWC make a measurable difference compared to those who were not members?
- 2) Was there mutual influence between those who attend HPWC and those who do not? I wanted to see if opinions had changed in some of those who had either an unorthodox view of the Trinity, or did not believe in the doctrine.
- 3) Was there still an observable difference between the two groups, and why?
- 4) Was NCD's material helpful/instrumental as a resource for bringing about the intended CAV growth? Again, these are based on a deductive method rather than inductive as I was specifically looking for:
 - a) Growth from tacit to cognitive understanding
 - b) Growth in emotional/affective understanding
 - c) Growth in deliberate practical Trinitarianism
- 5) Were the participants conceptually experiencing God differently? Was their church/Christian life different and based more so on a Trinitarian understanding?
 - a) Less confusion and more self-awareness in being Trinitarian?
 - b) Changes in answers based on book and discussion
 - c) Belief changes and how so?
 - d) Changes in self expression, worship, and ministry practice based on Trinitarian model.

Surveys

Four surveys were used to collect data throughout this project, three of which were resources from Natural Church Development.

1. Analysis of Context – July 2010
2. Personal Change Compass (NCD) – May 2011
3. Three Color Gift Test (NCD) – September 2011
4. Color Profile (NCD) November 2011 and September 2012

Analysis of Context - July 2010

I surveyed the entire adult (16 and older) congregation as a part of an analysis of HPWC's context. The original intent of the survey was to assess the differences in ecclesial ethos between congregants in relation to the recent merger. Forty surveys were given and 23 surveys were returned. I asked a number of specific theological questions in the survey. Those related to the Trinity were due to my own reading of the Torrance's book, and I wanted to see if a number of the concerns he raised in his book were evident in my own congregation. As a result, part of the survey was to assess:

- If there was anyone in the congregation who did not believe in the Trinity.
- If there was anyone in the congregation who was indifferent to the Trinity.
- If there was anyone in the congregation who felt the doctrine was of little importance to the church itself and/or to his or her own personal life.

Data was analyzed by categorizing and coding the information gathered from the interviews and surveys in the analysis in the same method as mentioned earlier.

After reading the data several times I listed it under three primary categories:

Those who represented the host/SCA congregation, those who came over in the merger, and finally, those who came to HPWC after the merger. First I looked for the commonalities that were distinct to any of the three groups (i.e. the host congregation, and those who came over in the merger). As stated, the members of host congregation were older on average than those who came over in the merger. Subsequently, I also looked to see if the distinctions were related to the differences in denomination as most of the host congregation was formerly from the Standard Church of America.

Personal Change Compass (NCD) – May 2011

At the beginning of the project, as a part of the implementation process, I had the leadership team of HPWC participate in a survey called *the Personal Change Compass* (Schwartz 2010, 34-37). The group consisted of five people including myself. The objective of this survey was to give someone an idea of how his gifts, interests and passions can lean toward a member of the Trinity or a blend thereof. This was helpful in developing the volitional aspect wherein a person will begin to relate the Trinity to her own personal work as a Christian. In practical terms a person also learns more about herself. After working through the *Personal Change Compass* the members of the staff were to share their findings with one another and seek to determine how, and if, the data could be applied to personal growth as a leader and to their specific area of ministry in the church. This is keeping in mind that the material is thoroughly Trinitarian in design.

Three Color Gift Test (NCD) - September 2011

The second survey in *The 3 Colors of Ministry* is called “The Three-Color Gift Test” (Schwartz 2010, 64-86). Its purpose is to determine how one can best fit into her church by thriving in her gifts. In relation to the Trinity, the purpose of this test is practical and intended to increase church health by making it more holistically Trinitarian. Schwartz believes a church body is primarily comprised and balanced as a Trinitarian whole when individuals commit themselves to thriving in their own *color* (Schwartz 2001, 34). In other words, he believes God designs every church to be Trinitarian. Greater detail of Schwartz views is discussed in chapter three, whereas the results of this survey are explained further in the next chapter.

Color Profile (NCD) – November 2011 and September 2012

This survey is found in *Color Your World* and is referred to as the “NCD Color Profile” (Schwartz 2005, 72-79). The purpose of this survey is three-fold. First, it helps determine one’s own Trinitarian balance. Secondly, it helps determine a church’s Trinitarian balance or bias. Finally, the test is to be taken again after taking time to work through the book and participate in the project. This was in order to determine if there had been movement or growth in the person’s and congregation’s Trinitarian balance. Giving the Color Profile to SGC allowed me to evaluate the initial Trinitarian balance of HPWC and later compare it to the second survey at the end. Again, with this I could see the evidence of growth, change and balance in the three-color profile of HPWC.

Unsolicited Communication

Over the course of the project I collected and documented e-mails, documents and personal encounters from individuals that were either directly or indirectly related to the theme of the project. This information was not specifically asked for, but brought to me by individuals and used with their oral consent. I intentionally went to the person and asked if I may include the specific information in the written portion of the thesis project.

I analyzed the data deductively in order to answer these questions:

- 1) Why did the individual offer this information?
- 2) Was this information:
 - a) a result of better cognitive understanding?
 - b) an indication of volitional or emotional awareness?
 - c) out of a desire to dialogue regarding the Trinity?
 - d) out of an awareness of my interest in the Trinity and a simple offer of material they thought I might find interesting?
- 3) Did this the information contain specific content such as the new Trinitarian Mission statement?

When the data sets were collected over time it allowed for generating a story about the church as to how the project was influencing individuals both inside and outside the congregation to be more holistically Trinitarian.

Project Implementation

The following is a report of what took place over the course of the project and is detailed chronologically.

The analysis of context revealed the need for identity, and confirmed there was confusion and indifference toward the Trinity. Therefore, attention was given to researching three specific areas as they relate to church identity:

- Practical Trinitarian theology
- Whether these issues were common in the local church as seen by other writers
- Works related to worship and Trinitarian spirituality.

I gathered and researched doctoral theses, Wesleyan/Methodist works specific to HPWC's context, and practical church resources with a Trinitarian design.

This project began as a proposal to develop a Trinitarian identity within HPWC. This was based on the perspectives discussed in chapter three. HPWC's missional heart could be connected to a Trinitarian identity. Personal conversation in a session about the nature of this project with Dr. Paul Bramer in May 2011 brought about the idea of the need for a cognitive shift in the congregation. If people changed their thinking about God, then they may change their thinking about themselves. In turn, this would impact how they *did* church. This reasoning led to expanding the idea of a cognitive shift to include the *affective* and *volitional* experiences. This design was adapted from the common pedagogical structure of the syllabi used in the institution where I completed my undergraduate work. Each course outline for every syllabus had this tri-fold objective for the students' learning and was written as *Cognitive*, *Conative*, and *Affective*. From the beginning, this project sought to move Trinitarianism from creed alone and be

redefined for a person and the church to be much more. The resources developed by NCD bore the closest resemblance to this very idea.

Much of the project was not implementing something entirely new, but infusing what the church already had as a part of its weekly program with the Trinitarian material discovered during preliminary research. The objective was to move the church through the CAV shift by reorienting church praxis to be identifiably Trinitarian. Work was conducted in two spheres: Personal and Congregational. Some work was done with individuals outside of the congregation in order to generate a point for comparison. The idea of the CAV shift was a matter of *connecting the dots*. The dots were already there, as it were, in worship, praxis, liturgy and mission. The project was to connect these dots where a picture of the Triune God would be drawn for the church.

Personal Work of This Researcher

As explained in the first chapter, I am an ordained minister in the Wesleyan denomination. HPWC is also under the authority of the Wesleyan denomination. Given the Wesleyan context, personal work included the study of worship material that involved Trinitarian hymns written by Charles Wesley, and Wesleyan theology on The Trinity's role in practical ministry. However, the background of those attending HPWC itself is multid denominational. It is attended by persons outside of the Wesleyan tradition. As stated in chapter one, HPWC has members from the Charismatic movement and also a number connected to Roman Catholicism. In conjunction with researching Methodist Trinitarianism there was also exploration into traditions of worship that were outside of the common

practice of the Wesleyan church, which involved engaging in the sign of the cross as a regular part of personal prayer. There was also exploration and implementation of Celtic worship, which is deeply rooted in Trinitarianism. This included Celtic prayers and use of imagination and imagery to relate things in nature to God's Tri-unity.

Being an active participant also meant participating in the surveys developed by NCD and found in *The Three Colors of Ministry* and *Color Your World*. In reference to the pastor's role, Schwartz writes,

Take a closer look at your own life before getting sidetracked thinking about your church... Don't...(proceed) with the following question in mind, 'How could my people strive for more balance in their lives?' Instead, ask yourself, 'How can I become more balanced?'(Schwarz, 2005, 173).

A good leader participates in the change personally, perhaps even before expecting her congregation to do so.

The purpose of this first step was to gain knowledge through personal experience as to more adeptly reflect the journey in my life as a leader. "One of the most sustainable contributions that a leader can make is to model the process of personal growth" (Schwarz, 2005, 173).

Congregational Work

Sunday mornings also played a role in the pragmatic component of this project. As the pastor, I wanted to the church to deliberately practice and experience our Trinitarianism. The following chart give a basic overview of what was implemented for the general congregation, followed by a more detailed description of each item.

Table 2: Congregation's Trinitarian Experience

Trinitarian Orthopraxy	Connecting the dots of what is already a part of HPWC's tradition to generate a view of the Trinity in what we already do.
Sermon Series	Teaching the concepts introduced by NCD and using the pulpit deliberately to teach the congregation what it means to be a Trinitarian church.
HPWC Mission Statement	Redesigning the Church's mission to specifically adhere to a Trinitarian foundation.

As the pastor of HPWC, I engaged the congregation more holistically with Trinitarian praxis. The analogy consistently used in this project is that of connecting the dots in order to reveal the image of the Trinity in what we already do. This involved taking a more proactive role in implementing the many Trinitarian modes and methods the church has employed since antiquity. This was not a research component of the project, but an endeavor to function and exist from what the research taught us about Trinitarian ecclesiology. At the end of the project, I was able to get some notion of whether these practices were “connecting the dots” after listening to peoples’ narratives during the closing interviews and in collecting the unsolicited data. Below is a chart explaining how this was accomplished.

Table 3: The Trinity in HPWC's Orthopraxy

Sacraments	Specific engagement in teaching and using Trinitarian formulas for baptism and communion. Goal was to learn how the Trinity is involved in, and crucial to our own understanding of the Wesleyan sacraments.
Using the Christian Church Calendar	<p>On June 3rd, 2012, - recognition of the significance of <i>Trinity Sunday</i>. Examination of <i>Shrove Tuesday, Ash Wednesday, Lent</i> and <i>Holy Week</i> from a Trinitarian perspective.</p> <p>The congregation experienced and engaged fully in different liturgies that linked the Trinity to the season of Lent and to each day of Holy Week. This included choosing specific responsive readings from the Wesleyan Church Hymnal, and teaching, through song and sermon the role of the Trinity in the passion of the Christ.</p>
Weekly Sunday Services	<p>Deliberately finishing every prayer in the Triune name Teaching the significance of the Sign of the Cross. This was in relation to the number of people in HPWC who still practiced this tradition, which included a Franciscan monk who periodically would visit HPWC. Making Trinitarian choruses and hymns a more regular aspect of the music experience. Using the Triune Benediction at the end of every service (2 Cor. 13:14). Singing the <i>Doxology</i> after each offering.</p>

In 2011, I conducted a five-week sermon series based on NCD material. The purpose of the sermon series was to teach the practical implications of what it means to be Trinitarian and teach the two dynamic markers at the beginning and ending of Christ's earthly ministry.

The series was timed so that the topic of the Holy Spirit fell on Pentecost Sunday and included Trinity Sunday. The chart below explains the breakdown of the sermon series. The first three sermons were based on NCD's idea of how both the Godhead and church mission are defined in the events of Creation, Calvary, and Pentecost. The final two Sundays were tied into the church calendar (Trinity Sunday) and a sermon "Worshipping the Triune God" grounded primarily in

notions brought forth by Torrance in “Worship Community and Triune God of Grace” (Torrance, 1996).

Table 4: Trinitarian Sermon Series

Date	Topic	Trinitarian Focus	NCD Connection
May 6	Creation	Father	Green: The Socio/Eco Gospel
May 20	The Cross	Son	Red: The Evangelical Gospel
May 27: Pentecost Sunday	The Church	Holy Spirit	Blue: The Charismatic Gospel
June 3	Trinity Sunday	The <i>Missio Dei</i> in Christ’s ministry.	
June 19	Worship	Worshipping the Triune God.	

As a supplement to the Sunday morning services and teaching, members of the congregation were invited to attend the mid-week program, *Hidden Treasure Bible Study*. As mentioned earlier HTBS was a study group designed to bring the participants more deliberately through the CAV shift. The group consisted of about eight to ten people who would experience a journey for a season that began with cerebral knowledge (the head), moving to worship (the heart) and ending with ministry (the hands and feet).

The diagram below illustrates what the goals were for HTBS and the entire project. Early in the endeavor of AR it was made clear that being Trinitarian meant experiencing God, not in part, but as a whole. Doing this meant being Trinitarian as a whole person (Illustration mine).

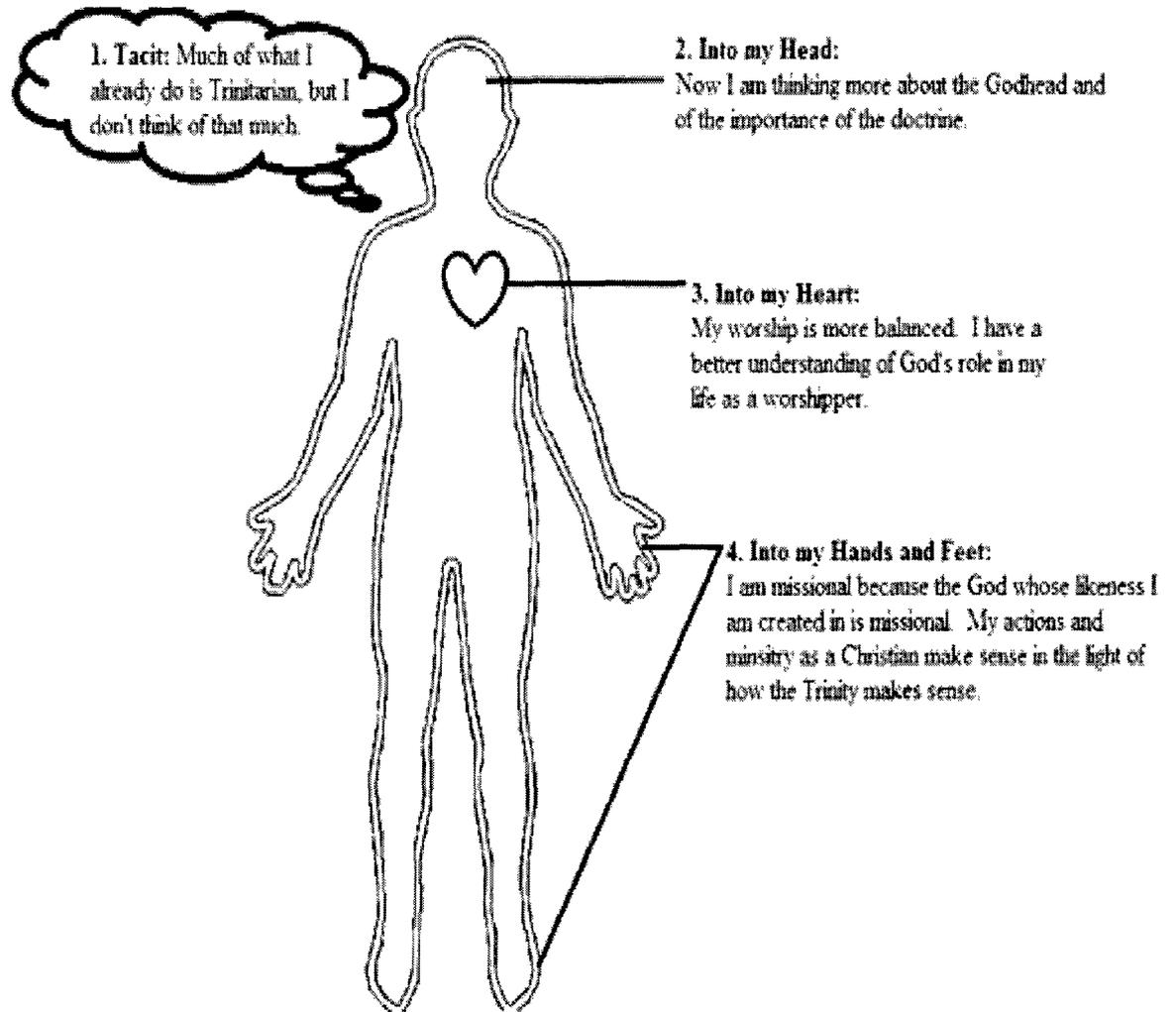


Figure 4: Illustration of CAV shift.

The term *Hidden Treasure* comes from Proverbs 2:1-5. The first four weeks of the program involved teaching and discussion on whether or not there is any evidence of God's Triune nature in the Old Testament. HTBS began in October 2011 with a layperson's look at hermeneutics called "How to Read the Bible for All Its Worth", taken from the book *How to Read the Bible for all its worth* (Fee 1982).

Soteriology was the topic for November with a study called, *Salvation Belongs to our God*. The purpose here was to create segue into Advent. Three weeks were set aside to study the role each member of the Godhead takes in Salvation. The underlying idea was to more deeply explore and draw out the tacit understanding we already have of God's salvation by focusing on how each member of the Godhead is essentially the same in essence, but different in role when it comes to how we have been saved by grace.

In December, there was a shift from tacit exploration to a more deliberate look at the Trinity. The timing was intentional as there is so much emphasis on *The Son* at Christmas. The intension was to discuss His Deity in the incarnation and how both the Father and the Spirit were present in the Christmas story. The title of the December series was *So Who Is God and what Does He do? A look at the Trinity*. The series was divided into three parts, leaving the fourth empty for the holidays.

Table 5: HTBS December Topic Schedule.

Week 1	God the Father	Our Destination
Week 2	Meeting with Jesus	Where we Begin
Week 3	Come Holy Spirit	How we Begin

In January 2012, the group moved into deeper and even more deliberate Trinitarian study. While still focusing on a cerebral understanding, the group

made further preparation for the journey to the heart by studying and discussing the practical implications of being Trinitarian. The title of the January series was *So What do we Do? Experiencing the Trinity*.

Table 6: HTBS January Topic Schedule

Week 1	In God's Image, Mission, and work	The relation between Imago Dei and Missio Dei
Week 2	Prayer, Community, and Networking	How the church and sacraments are true experience of God's nature in community
Week 3	Healing and the Supernatural	Exploring the Holy Spirit's current work on Earth, and a responsible examination of healing and the spiritual gifts
Week 4	The Hot Seat	Discussion for any questions on this month's topics.

February and March covered the topics of Ecclesiology, Eschatology, and Pneumatology. Over these two months participants engaged in worship, church praxis and seeking God's plan (mission) from a Trinitarian foundation and framework.

In April the group set out to put Trinitarianism into actual practice in areas of worship and ministry. The emphasis was that to be missional is to be Trinitarian and to be Trinitarian is to be missional as discussed in the second and third chapters. As a group we participated in volunteer outreach to experience the *hands and feet* of what it means to be Trinitarian. This began with a prayer walk to seek the Holy Spirit and pray for the community around us. We then offered to

assist a church next door to our own in making sandwiches for the homeless. These are two examples of how we desired not just to do ministry and reach out – but to do so because we were missional and sent out by the Father as Christ was sent, as the Holy Spirit is sent and so we, the church, are sent. The biblical mandate to love one’s neighbor was a major reason as to why God *sent* and therefore the endeavor was to engage in the social concerns of our community and world around us (Luke 4:18ff). Here we were experiencing and expressing our Trinitarian theology. As mentioned, many in the church were asking for practical ministry opportunities. I implemented this as a part of the project to help draw a line between our Trinitarian identity and our being sent to do God’s kingdom work.

Finally, as the pastor I took a deliberate step at HPWC in formulating a new mission statement that was meant to reflect a vision to be deliberately Trinitarian,

Our mission is,

To Connect to God (The Father)

To Connect to Each Other (The body of Christ)

To Connect to the Community (In the Power of the Holy Spirit). The mission statement is meant to create a mental image of how a Trinitarian church relates to the Triune God in identity and mission. It also reflects and relates to NCD’s three colors. The church board, missions committee and staff were the three primary groups involved in the creation of this mission statement.

Another sermon series was used to introduce this mission statement to the church. I began to promote it through conversation, using it in the weekly bulletin, in church letterhead and business cards, and finally as the staff signoff in letters and e-mails (cf. appendix C for example).

E Mail Example,

Yours in Christ,

(Rev.) Paul Kern
Senior Pastor

Highland Park Wesleyan Church

To Connect to God (the Father)
To Connect to Each Other (the body of Christ)
To Connect to the Community (in the power of the Holy Spirit)
HPWC - A great church to get connected!

This Trinitarian mission statement became a platform for much of our church ministry and programs which will be discussed further in chapters five and six.

1. In summary, these implementations to the life of the church are related to the earlier mentioned areas of research:
2. Analysis of Context – Determining what the church is already doing that is tacitly Trinitarian and reworking it to reveal the role of the Trinity and our Identity therein.
3. Research of Missional Theology and Ecclesiology – What a church does and why the church does what it does must be understood by beginning with the Trinity. This was clear after researching the precedent literature of Chapter Three.

4. Research of Practical Trinitarian Material – NCD was chosen strategically as the Central Canada District of the Wesleyan church was already encouraging churches to use NCD’s material. CYW was Trinitarian in design and deemed a reasonable resource for this project.

Evaluation

Evaluation of the implementations was conducted through journaling and interviewing participants. Particular attention was given to:

1. If and how leaders and congregants were using the Mission statement.
2. Use of Trinitarian references and language that could be an indication of a shift from tacit understanding to more cognitive.

The final phases of the project Study Group C (SGC) was called together for a focus group session and asked specific questions in an endeavor to reach three objectives (Debus 1990, 44):

1. To determine if their unconnected use of Trinitarianism had shifted at all into a more deliberate and practical understanding of the Trinity which is a notable goal of the NCD resource.
2. To draw more formative conclusions about the NCD resource *Color Your World* as to whether the group thought it was a valuable resource for holistic church health and to listen to determine if they were speaking in more deliberate Trinitarian terms, describing a more adequate Trinitarian understanding of self and church mission.

3. To listen to what they felt and thought the next steps should be as a result of this journey. Attention was given to use open-ended questions and to completely avoid dichotomous questions (Krueger 2002, 6) with the goal of moderating a good discussion between the volunteers, while leaving out personal opinion. In this case, my only participation was to ask questions, ask for clarity, and to observe.

With preparation and research beforehand, care was given in deciding on the size and make-up of the group, making sure it was an adequate representation of the congregation in both age, gender and years of attendance. The seating arrangement was around a conference table in the comfort and privacy of the church fireside room, creating an ambiance of comfort in order to help foster openness among the participants. (Debus 1990, 14). There were 8 participants. A videotape of the session was made, rather than audio recording, in order to "make note of factors (that would) aid analysis such as... body language, or non verbal activity...that would indicate level of agreement, support, or interest" (Krueger 2002, 9).

The decision was made to have the focus group members write their answers down on a provided piece of paper before verbally sharing their opinions. Mary Debus writes, "Because focus groups generally deal with personal attitudes and beliefs that are not readily verifiable, there is a danger that group members will verbalize responses that simply go along with what other respondents have said and that do not express their true individual feelings (Debus 48)".

The following chart outlines how the collection of data was initiated, acted upon, and measured.

Ethical Considerations

As a researcher all research, implementation, and involvement of persons was conducted with the highest ethical standards. There are several sources from which I derived the standards of ethical research pertinent to this thesis.

Sources of Ethical Standards

TCPS: The Tri-Council Policy Statement for Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans. This is a policy statement issued by three research organizations in the government of Canada to promote and guide researchers in their conduct of research involving persons.

Central Canada District of the Wesleyan Church. As a credential holder and clergyman in this denomination I am obliged to uphold the standards and polity set forth by the Discipline of the Wesleyan Church.

Tyndale Seminary: Tyndale Seminary has documented expectations for academic life which included standards of honesty and accuracy in both citations and referencing. Particular to the Doctor of Ministry degree are the ethical procedures to be used in the project-thesis.

The Bible: Honesty, fidelity and conducting yourself to be above reproach are primary guidelines I have endeavored to maintain as a result of the teachings of this book.

This project underwent two levels of ethical review. The first review was conducted as a peer review which included the thesis advisor to this project. The second review was conducted by the Ethics Review Committee for the Doctor of Ministry program at Tyndale Seminary.

Ethical Objectives Specific to this Project

Before beginning the Doctor of Ministry degree and before starting the project-thesis I sought and received the blessing of the LBA and PAC of Highland Park Wesleyan church. Free and informed consent letters were issued to each volunteer so each person would know beforehand exactly what volunteering involved. Individuals participating in surveys, interviews, case studies, and other methods of research did so by their own consent. Participants in HTBS were not given a letter of consent to sign because the nature of this part of the project was to avoid direct mention of the purpose so as to defer from bias on the part of the participant. However, a mid-week Bible study was also a regular part of the church's weekly program and those interviewed in HTBS after the program ended gave consent in an audio recording. "In some projects, the information in the consent statement/information letter may be given to participants orally" (www.communityresearchethics.com/news-events-resources). They were fully aware of the parameters before they agreed to participate. No vulnerable persons were asked to participate in the project. Research methods were kept at a level of minimal risk as defined by the TCPS (TPCS 2010, 194).

Privacy and Confidentiality

Those participating in interviews were kept anonymous in that I did not use specific names in the writing of this project. Confirmation of consent was achieved in different ways depending on the nature of participation. Vital and personal information (age, sexual orientation, political views, etc.) were not disclosed without the participants' permission. Any information that threatens private or confidential matters of the volunteers who wished to remain anonymous was not used. All participants of the NCD surveys and focus groups were given a letter beforehand; defining the parameters of participation and assured of anonymity this included providing their signature to the NCD material as willing participants. "An information letter may replace a signed informed consent statement for survey research in which the return of the survey is considered implicit consent" (www.communityresearchethics.com/news-events-resources).

All participants gave verbal consent on tape to be volunteers and for their information to be used and shared for the purposes of this project. All participants were given the option to see the results of the NCD surveys (Scripts of verbal consent are found in the appendix).

Concluding Remarks

As pastor of HPWC, I was already an active participant in the life of the church. Through Action Research, I was able to take what was already happening in the life of the church, and connect the dots using preaching, liturgy, mid-week

programs, and church mission to understand our identity in light of our participation in the life of the Triune God.

A major part of doing this was to know the story of the people through narratives. Collecting and researching the stories of HPWC helped to discover and confirm that the congregation was in need of a Trinitarian identity, but also became a part of HPWC's developing story throughout the project which has been identified as the CAV shift. Finally, researching the collected narratives would help provide a final picture of HPWC's journey and demonstrate what the church looked like at the end of the project. Getting a picture of HPWC's identity after two mergers, and multiple ethos of congregants was accomplished through conducting an analysis of the context, use of interviews, participation of two focus groups, journaling, and using NCD's survey material both at the beginning and end of the project to measure change and determine the reasons for the change. This project was conducted with full consideration given to ethics in research, using the Tri County Policy Statement for Ethics in Research as the primary platform for procedure.

CHAPTER FIVE: OUTCOMES AND INTERPRETATION

The purpose of this chapter is to report on the results of this thesis project and compare them with my original expectations. The chapter is structured chronologically and the data is categorized according to the CAV shift which was the primary endeavor of the journey. The chapter will begin with a brief review of the project objectives. Second, there will be an exploration and organization of the results (data) received throughout the project. The chapter will conclude with interpreting and commenting on the data. The results do show a measure of some growth and change identified with results from the interviews, the personal journal and NCD's survey material; however the reasons for these changes are harder to identify.

Project Objectives

As a result of the denominational and congregational mergers (cf. chapter 1), HPWC was a church with multiple identities. Three differing groups of people were originally identified with pastoral observation and with an analysis of the context conducted in order to confirm pastoral intuitions and expectations I had about the congregation regarding its Trinitarian identity and conflicting group dynamic. It will be shown that the three primary groups identified in HPWC could connect with one of the members of the Godhead in how they worshipped, and in how they understood mission which was a primary function of the tools provided

by NCD (cf. chapters Three and Four for a detailed explanation of the NCD resources used in this project). The results provided by NCD and will be discussed later in this chapter; however the chart below illustrates how Schwartz connects personal/group ethos to a member of the Godhead.

Table 7: Three primary areas of NCD

ETHOS	Associates with:	NCD Color
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Traditional Evangelical Christianity • focus on altar calls for salvation from sin 	Jesus and the Cross	Red
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emergent • Evangelical • Christianity with a focus on social concerns. Salvation of the poor and oppressed. 	The Father and his Creation	Green
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Charismatic • Evangelical • Christianity with a focus on prophecy, dynamic worship and a desire to see the charismatic gifts. Also a strong desire for spiritual formation 	The Holy Spirit and Pentecost	Blue

One of the outcomes of this project was that congregants had a picture of the role of the Trinity in the regular life of the church that they would not have seen otherwise. Activities in the project were designed so participants could recognize and relate their church work and lives to being Trinitarian rather than on just the work itself. The congregation was invited to participate in a journey, referred throughout this thesis as a CAV shift. The congregants were engaged on three levels in order to learn and experience that much of what we do is already tacitly Trinitarian. First there was the cognitive level where people are deliberate

about being Trinitarian. Second, would be the emotive or affective level where the Trinity is engaged in worship and also recognized as the catalyst of our worship. Finally, the volitional level was for people to deliberately work in relation to who God is rather than try to define God from our work. God is a community of perfect unity. The idea was that emulating the Trinity would foster community and unity within the congregation, but done so deliberately, rather than tacitly. For this reason Schwarz' NCD materials and concepts were implemented as a very good fit to the dynamic of HPWC.

Another reason for this project was to solidify our doctrinal position on the Trinity. This was attempted by developing and implementing a new mission statement and by teaching the practicality of the doctrine through a sermon series, midweek Bible studies, having groups participate in the NCD material, and organizing the Sunday service schedule to include deliberate Trinitarian material. While the church was brought through my pastoral leadership to participate in all this activity, the final results did not give any clear data to suggest how these activities generated any kind of internal or lasting shift in the congregation. Early in the initial stages of the research through analyzing the context and opening interviews, it was discovered that the doctrine of the Trinity was of little to no importance for many people in the congregation. This contradicts Wesleyan doctrine. With this project, people would begin to openly see not only how important and vital the doctrine is for the church, but also how crucial it is for understanding God and mission. And, as a church the congregation could better identify as to what it means to be Wesleyan. However, in the end there was no

indication that the congregation felt any greater connection to the denomination by holding a fidelity to the Trinity.

This journey meant the people of HPWC experienced the Trinity as more than matter of creed. The goal here was to see the people of the church “doing” based on their Trinitarian “being” in matters of knowing God, worshiping God and servicing God. While we practiced Trinitarianism in everything from hymns, prayers, sermons, work to Bible studies and responsive readings, whether the congregation was convinced of the doctrines practical importance in the end was undeterminable in the data. Likewise, it has not been determined if the congregation no longer holds an unintentional Unitarian view of God rather than a Trinitarian view (Torrance, 1996).

Results

The three areas of focus for this project were *personal*, *the congregational leadership*, and *the congregation*. The hope was to see a CAV shift on each of these levels. The following is a report on what happened in these areas of the project.

Personal

According to Willie Pietersen, “leadership comprises three key domains (the first domain being) leadership of self” (Pietersen 2010, xxi). At this first level (domain) I discovered both movement and growth Cognitively, Affectively and Volitionally (CAV) as a Trinitarian. To bring about this personal shift I set out to increase my portfolio of spiritual resources. One way of doing this was by studying and adding Trinitarian elements of worship and praxis from other

traditions within Christendom. Personal worship became more holistic as it changed in how I worship and pray. Results of this shift were supported by taking the NCD color profile twice and comparing the two. It will be shown that the results confirmed: 1) better personal balance, and 2) growth and connectivity between my ministry and the Godhead.

Personal data came primarily from journaling and then analyzing the data therein to draw conclusions. I saw three spheres of data that influenced me personally. The following diagram outlines these three spheres:

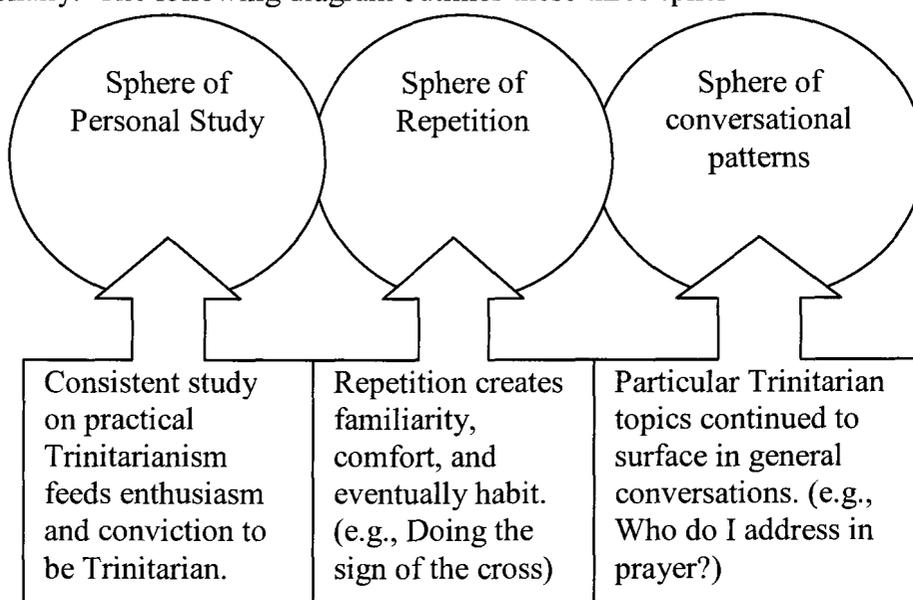


Figure 5: Three Spheres of Personal Data

Below is a more detailed description of the results of this project on the personal level. Studies revealed that a personal CAV shift (labeled below as Head, Heart and Hands) would influence a congregational CAV shift.

Cognitive Development

The first personal cognitive change came with further study of John Wesley's Trinitarianism. As was expected it was very practical; however Wesley refused to make the Trinity an issue of much discussion. In other words, he appeared to be content with people holding a tacit view of the Trinity. I had to wrestle with this because a primary concern of this project was to move congregants beyond their tacitly held Trinitarianism.

Secondly, I found there was a danger of starting to read the Trinity into everything. Such awareness helps one to be aware of personal bias. Alan Hirsch, while not speaking specifically about the Trinity said, "If the only tool you have is a hammer, then everything begins to look like a nail" (Hirsch, Lecture, 2011). Thirdly, another cognitive shift brought about with study was discovering that a spiritual snobbery had been generated within my mind. I noticed this when attending a prayer conference lead by Jim Cymbala, the pastor of *Times Square Church* in New York City. Pastor Cymbala spoke much about the Holy Spirit, and gave out complimentary copies of his book about the Holy Spirit. My initial reaction was to complain that Jim was focusing too much on one person of the Godhead, with no mention of the Trinity in his sermon. It dawned on me that I wasn't only in danger of reading the Trinity into everything, but looking to put the Trinity into everything. Such awareness did indeed lend itself to helping me wrestle less with Wesley's Trinitarian position. However I am not about to concede that implicit Trinitarianism is enough, recognizing we do not have to always overemphasize a particular theology. Even so, from my journal and personal experiences, I now rarely hear a lecture, enter prayer, or think about God

without it being in the context of the Trinity. A personal shift in cognitive thinking is evident.

Affective/Devotional Development

Now, as my prayer journal has shown repeatedly, personal prayer, sermon preparation, and devotional time is saturated with an awareness of how the Trinity is at work as one God. I made a conscious effort to be intentionally Trinitarian in Spiritual Formation. I sought to engage and experience what it meant to be Trinitarian beyond personal acknowledgment.

In the discipline of study I moved beyond the Wesleyan tradition, adopting and incorporating Trinitarian praxis of other traditions, being careful to note their effect in my personal life. Determining that making the Sign of the Cross was a visible expression of worshipping the Godhead, I prayerfully added it. This was a cautious incorporation and not to be merely an experiment. I made this devotional practice a consistent part of my own devotional life. It was practiced mostly in private, but also while serving at a weekly ecumenical service and specifically when ending prayers in the Triune name. It was not done in the context of HPWC. It may have been counterproductive to many in the congregation as it is not a part of the Wesleyan tradition. Through repeated self/journal examination there was a notable change from discomfort to familiarity, and then to it becoming natural. There are still former members of the Roman Catholic Church in attendance at HPWC who continue with this practice when I pray in the Triune name. Whether it is intentional or not, I do experience a personal connection to others when they/we make the sign of the cross.

Another addition that was outside of the Wesleyan tradition was the study and inclusion of Celtic worship and prayer. The primary reason for choosing Celtic resources was because of the very common sensitivity to the Trinity found in these traditions. The valuable discovery in Celtic worship was the thriving examples of three-in-oneness. These were experienced, not so much to explain the Trinity, but to delight in God. With these I discovered a natural relationship between the worshipping Celtic culture and the Trinity. Here was a primary example of having a truly Trinitarian identity in the mind, the heart and the hands. I was drawn into the theology of the worship. It was simple, but very deep. I discovered in these traditions an understanding of each person of the Godhead that explained the three colors differently than NCD's resources. Rather than changing from God to metaphor as NCD does, Celtic Trinitarian worship keeps God at the forefront and moves in the other direction – from metaphor to God. I approached these traditions with some skepticism, but almost immediately was drawn to the wholeness of God as I picked up a Celtic worship book and started each day with a devotion using this material carefully recording my impressions in a prayer journal.

There was a danger of choosing material that combines pagan worship with Christian, as was the case with one of the resources I encountered entitled *Carmina Gadelica*. This worship book had incantations that still integrated Trinitarian awareness, but as a formulaic attempt that can appear to have a syncretism of Christianity with paganism.

Another change was how I came to address God in prayer. In this was confirmation to approach the Father as the primary Person of the Godhead. Personal study rekindled the nature of several conversations experienced years before this project even began. In a conversation with a professor during my undergraduate years (1992-1996) he stated his belief that we are to address the Father in prayer. On another occasion, in that same context, another professor repeated the very same thing to me. While this is anecdotal data from personal memory, this conversation did come up several more times in interviews during this project. I experienced further confirmation of this way of praying in my sphere of study, specifically after reading Torrance's book which, in great detail throughout, explained how each member of the Trinity is involved in prayer. The most prominent biblical text that influenced this was Jesus' words in Matthew 6:9ff where he taught us to pray *Our Father*. These words in conjunction with Christ's role as high priest, specifically throughout Hebrews, and the Holy Spirit's role as our prompter and intercessor (Romans 8:26-27) fit together and made sense of how I can approach God. This is in no way to insinuate that I think or believe approaching the other members of the Trinity in prayer is wrongful. Being Trinitarian is to acknowledge that all the members of the Godhead are active and present in our worship in the first place. The Nicene Creed sustained, "And in the Holy Ghost, the Lord and Giver of life, who proceedeth from the Father, who with the Father and the Son together is worshiped and glorified" (Nicene Creed, Council of Constantinople, 381). Further, John's Apocalypse ends with the prayer, "Amen. Come, Lord Jesus" – a prayer I believe Christians are to echo

until it is answered. What I am saying is that my normative view of God during prayer is to see both Jesus and the Holy Spirit as intercessors who enable us to cry out *Abba, Father* (Rom 8:14-17; Gal 4:6). This also brought to life the theological significance of what Dennis Ngien refers to when he talks about the Trinity being the *causative agent* of our worship, a term used consistently through his book *Gifted Response*. (Ngien 2008). The Trinity makes sense of my prayer life and the Trinity makes sense in my prayer life.

Volitional Development

As mentioned in the previous chapter, the choice was made at this point in the journey to implement a different NCD resource, entitled *Color Your World*. *CYW* has an additional Trinitarian survey that adds more information to the Trinitarian compass called *The NCD Color Profile*. The idea of the profile is to first discover which person of the Trinity you most identify with. After this, one uses his self-discovery as a practical springboard to launch into healthier levels of spiritual maturity by seeking to grow in the areas where he has not been as strong. The idea is to work toward Trinitarian balance; that is, a life that includes each member of the Godhead. This is practical Trinitarianism, and Schwarz' fear was that it would not be used this way. He writes, "I recognize that the majority of those who complete the Color Profile will never do anything practical with the results" (Schwarz 2005, 77).

There were 36 questions, each having one of 6 possible answers. There was then a key provided where each answer was added and calculated with a numerical value of between 10 and 80. After this I had to diagram a triangular

indicator on a graph depicting my level of Trinitarian balance and maturity. My personal results were:

Table 8: Personal Color Profile Results

NCD Color	Corresponds with	Focus on	Profile Score
Green	The Father	Social Justice, Eco - Responsibility	52
Red	The Son	Evangelism	58
Blue	The Holy Spirit	Spiritual Power	67

(Schwarz 2005, 47)

The advantage of this graph is that the survey was to be taken again later to determine if there was growth or movement in one's Trinitarian balance. The results of the second survey are shown and will be discussed just below.

With the initial results I knew I would be higher in the Red and Blue areas than in the Green. However, I was surprised to see how much higher I was in the blue. As mentioned before, my understanding is that this is a reflection of my having spent twelve years as a pastor in the Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada. However, I should mention that my experience in the Charismatic movement was actually 17 years.

According to NCD these results indicated a need to grow spiritually in areas of social justice and environmental responsibility. This is something that would resonate well with many at HPWC.

At the end this project I returned to NCD’s *Color Your World* to take the personal survey again, compare it to the one I took at the beginning of the project and measure any changes or growth. I knew there would be some changes, but I was overwhelmed by the scale of change. The following chart provides the comparative results:

Table 9: Personal Color Profile Comparative Results

NCD Color	Initial Score	Second Score
Green (Father) – Social Justice, Creation	52	66
Red (Son) – Soul Salvation, Cross	58	66
Blue (Holy Spirit) – Charismatic gifts, Pentecost	67	65

These results demonstrated movement in two significant ways. Initially, it demonstrated maturity (or growth). Further, it indicated movement to a greater personal balance. While there was a very slight decrease in the Charismatic (Blue) area, there was increase in the other two areas of social and ecological issues and in evangelicalism. Knowing these results were a catalyst for change because awareness is a great way of connecting the dots, which was a goal of this project. A common theme throughout this project was the issue that confusion about the Trinity could potentially foster indifference. Introducing the tools and symbols and practices of Christendom created a platform for understanding and connectivity between the doctrine and our understanding. *Color Your World* does increase self-awareness.

Secondly, I believe that as an active participant combined with being the pastor, I was brought to immerse myself far more in these three areas as I prepared sermons and a midweek program to help foster growth and balance. As mentioned, my own desire to see the Wesleyan church return to its historical ethos for social justice (i.e. anti-slavery and issues of human trafficking) has increased significantly as a result of this project. Admittedly, this is perhaps the most significant change from who I was to who I am now as a result of this project. By the end of the project the three areas of CAV, or - head, heart, and hands, were becoming blurred, which makes sense. One cannot separate one's self into categories any easier than one can perhaps separate God in whose image we have been created. My personal response to God as Triune had become much more than a cerebral relationship. My cognitive approach became part of my emotive approach. It was here that I concluded that the CAV shift was not a matter of different points to move through on a journey, but rather each became a companion to bring along. The goal was holistic rather exclusive.

Leadership Team/Staff

The initial intention was to also have the staff work through *The Three Colors of Ministry*. Those on staff were persons who oversaw various departments in the church, primarily Christian Education, Worship, Family ministries, and nursery.

Cognitive Development

In the journal it was noted there was an increase in the number of Trinitarian hymns and songs included in the morning services and I made note of

these changes. These songs were selected by those leading the worship service. From personal observation and documentation it can be determined that this increase in hymns was not solely for my benefit, but because there was some cognitive activity happening among those leading worship. With this I recorded a slight increase in the worship leaders giving more commentary to the nature of the hymns being Trinitarian. Whether this was simply because they thought it was what the pastor wanted or not, it still indicates movement from tacit to conscious Trinitarianism in that they were at least thinking directly about it now.

Affective Development

At this point in the cycles, it was too early to determine if there was any measurable change at the emotive level of the leadership team.

Volitional Development

The measurable rise in Trinitarian hymns and choruses can be an indication of a deliberate attempt to apply Trinitarian worship to Sunday services, and in this respect alone, can be seen as practical. However, the reasons for such changes could not be determined this early in the project.

While the staff members participated in the Color Change Compass, it was discovered that with the turnover of volunteers, the data collected at this point was unreliable. This meant reworking the plan for how the leadership team could influence the congregation. Essentially, there was not enough information to know what happened.

The Congregation

As discussed in the previous chapter I initially engaged members of the congregation using interviews in order to retrieve their stories and gain insight into their own Trinitarian understanding and position. This was also done to determine where congregants were in terms of their CAV understanding. I will begin by first summarizing the data and then follow up with an analysis of that data.

Opening Interviews

To recap: questions related to my concerns were asked related to the interviewees' views on:

1. Do they believe in the Trinity?
2. The Importance of the Trinity for them personally
3. The Importance of the Trinity for the Church
4. Why they thought the Trinity was important in each case

With each question attention was given to how each interviewee responded. nine people were chosen, one being a person from outside of the congregation to help with comparative perspective. The following table provides a comprehensive outline of these interviews.

Table 10: Opening Interviews

1. Whether they believed in the Trinity.

Interviewee Representing:	Answer
1. Group coming over in the merger	Unsure if Trinity exists, but leaning toward "No". This person was raised in a family who changed churches many times
2. Group coming over in the merger	Yes. This person was raised in a small, traditional, Methodist church.
3. New to HPWC	Yes. This person received formal theological training
4. The host congregation	Emphatic Yes. This person received formal theological training
5. Group coming over in merger	Yes.
6. Group coming over in merger	Cautious Yes. Person was very slow in responding, and body language conveyed uncertainty.
7. The host congregation	No. This person has had some formal theological training
8. New to HPWC	Unsure. This person thought he/she did, but further discussion revealed confusion where she asserted belief in three separate gods.
9. Person connected to HPWC but attends different church	Emphatic Yes.

2. The Importance of the Trinity for them personally.

Interviewee Representing:	Answer
1. Group Coming over in the merger	No personal importance at all.
2. Group Coming over in the merger	Some importance, but does not think about it much.
3. New to HPWC	Very important mostly due to upbringing and theological training
4. The host congregation	Very important. Interview revealed this was so as person identifies deeply with the Methodist tradition and classical Christian doctrine.
5. Group coming over in merger	Very important as creed is important for establishing and holding church beliefs.
6. Group coming over in merger	Not something this person thinks about very much.
7. The host congregation	No importance at all, seeing how this person does not believe in the Trinity.
8. New to HPWC	Unsure. This person expressed a desire to know and love God, but was confused as to who each member was/is in relation to the other, or how we are to approach each member
9. Person connected to HPWC but attends different church	Very important as this person wanted to be clear about worshipping God for whom He truly is.

3. The Importance of the Trinity for the Church.

Interviewee Representing:	Answer
1. Group coming over in the merger	Should not be important and should not be a requirement to hold church membership.
2. Group coming over in the merger	Some importance, but should not be a requirement to hold church membership.
3. New to HPWC	Important, out of fidelity to church creed. This person believes not believing in the Trinity is a form of heresy.
4. The host congregation	Very important and should be a non-negotiable when it comes to church membership or even belief as a Christian.
5. Group coming over in merger	Very important, however church membership is not important in the first place.
6. Group coming over in merger	Not a matter of huge importance to the church. This person does not see church membership as important.
7. The host congregation	While this person does not believe in the Trinity, he did state it was an important matter for the church in terms of tradition and something that holds the people together.
8. New to HPWC	Was not sure how to answer the question. Stated she has a sibling who does not believe in the Trinity.
9. Person connected to HPWC but attends different church	Important for a church that doctrinally professes belief in the Trinity, and important for matters of worship, prayer and congregational identity.

These people are a representation of the greater congregation and quite involved in the church as teachers, leaders and worship leaders.

Highland Park is not only associated with, but is accountable to the greater Wesleyan denomination which maintains Trinitarian creedal standards which are non-negotiable in matters of church membership.

From these answers and this data there are a few immediate interpretations that can be drawn specifically related to the context of Highland Park Wesleyan Church.

1. These answers demonstrate some members are maintaining membership while violating the requirements for membership in HPWC.
2. There is an issue of identifying with the basic tenets of the church constitution and denomination's statement of fundamental and essential truths. Being *Wesleyan* is not really a part of their self identity.
3. Not a single person volunteered any answer to demonstrate having an awareness of the practical vitality that the Trinitarian doctrine holds for the church. This is not to say they are in disagreement or disbelief of this, but that it is not foremost in their Trinitarian thinking.

The remainder of this section includes both the main body of the project journey, and the final conclusions and results of the project. More focus was upon the Congregation due to the changes in the volunteer staff.

Moms' Bible Study Group

The purpose of this group was two-fold. First, the Mom's Bible Study provided another point of perspective for comparison. Secondly, The Mom's Bible Study was still linked to HPWC, as a member and leader of our congregation hosts the weekly event. A number of ladies in attendance were still from HPWC, and I witnessed how those from other churches were similar or different from those who attended HPWC.

Initially the expectation with this group was to find something similar to the general congregation of HPWC. However, this was not the case. This group of women was far more sensitive and deliberate in their understanding of the Trinity. Out of the entire group there was only one who admitted to taking issue with

whether the doctrine is important or even believable. I was impressed with the majority of the group's interest, shared experience and explanation of the importance of the doctrine. Additionally, there were those in the group who shared in the belief of the practicality of the Trinity in worship. This may be an indication that HPWC was in a more unique situation in the CAV journey. The majority of this group appeared to be more holistic in their own cognitive and emotive balance of being Trinitarian.

The group completed NCD's *Three Colors of Ministry* and at the end of the nine months a closing interview was conducted on February 1, 2012. The transcript of the interview is found in appendix B.

The tables below illustrate how the data collected from the interviews was organized according to the CAV scale used throughout this project.

Table II: Opening Interview with Moms Bible Study

1. Do you remember Sunnyside's mission statement? (Many of those participating were either from Sunnyside Wesleyan Church or came over in the merger from SWC. SWC has a Trinitarian mission statement and I wanted to see if it had made any kind of impact. Their mission statement is, *The mission of Sunnyside Wesleyan Church is to be a community of people who: Encounter the love of God the Father
Enter entirely into the character of Jesus Christ
Engage the world in the power of the Holy Spirit*).

Cognitive (Head)	No one remembered the mission statement; however one person did remember that it was Trinitarian in design.
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2. **When I say “Trinity” or “God is a Trinity” what comes to your mind?**

Cognitive (Head)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>This is who God is.</i> • <i>It only makes sense to me.</i> • <i>It is what I will always eventually come to when thinking about God.</i> • Only one person in the group stated she had a problem understanding whether there were one or three actual gods. This person did attend HPWC.
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3. **Does anyone here ever think about the Trinity?**

Cognitive (Head)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>When I was in College I used to ponder on it quite often.</i>
Affective (Heart)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Yes, in that I think about all three persons when I am worshipping.</i>

4. **If someone were to ask you to explain to them the concept of the Trinity, what would you say?**

Cognitive (Head)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Many of the interviewees used metaphors. No one, in this question made any connections to worship or practice. Again one person described the Trinity as three separate gods.
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5. **How important is the doctrine of the Trinity to you?**

Cognitive (Head)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Every person present, with the exception of one confessed that the doctrine was vital to their own belief.
Affective (Heart)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “If we are not worshipping the Trinity then who are we worshipping?”

6. **How important do you think it is to teach the doctrine of the Trinity within a church?**

Cognitive (Head)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Only three (of the ten) answered saying it was essential to teach.
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7. **Does the Trinity influence your worship in any way? How?**

Cognitive/Affective (Head/Heart)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• “I sometimes think about how God is as work when I am worshipping.” No other specific answers were given.
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8. **How vital is the doctrine for salvation?**

Cognitive/Affective/Volitional (Head/Heart/Hands)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• While not everyone answered, those who did stated it was necessary to believe in Christ’s deity, and that it was eventually necessary to come to some knowledge of Three Person’s divine work of Grace for salvation.
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9. **How can the Trinity be practical to your faith/Christianity?**

Affective/Volitional (Heart/Hands)	Answers were mostly related to worship. There was little indication to a working idea of a missional church emulating a missional God.
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NCD’s *Three Colors of Ministry* is different than *CYW* in that the *3 Color Gift Test* is geared to giving each individual personal results. In summary, these answers to these questions told me that the majority of those outside of HPWC appeared to be more comfortable talking about the Trinity. A couple of persons even seemed to convey the necessity of at least a cognitive and affective balance. That is, her deliberate thinking about the Godhead informed her worship. I did not see any evidence in this opening interview that the doctrine specifically informed their personal volitional Christian lives.

Study Group Representing HPWC Congregation

Initial data from this focus group came from the color test in NCD's Color Your World (Schwarz 2005, 72-79) for each individual person. At the end of the journey, the group would take the survey again in order to measure whether there was growth or movement in the congregation in Trinitarian balance. The results of the second survey will be discussed later.

One of the key components of this project was to find, research, and implement extant Trinitarian resources and decipher if these resources were valuable in helping to foster progress toward a practical Trinitarianism. The NCD resources were designed in such a way as to correspond almost exactly to what I was looking for in practical terms. As a result the material from NCD became a major focus in this project. While this is not a thesis on NCD's Trinitarian material, I did want to do two things:

1. Determine if it was useful in fostering a greater Trinitarian identity among those who participated.
2. Actually use the surveys and results provided by NCD as a helpful tool to determine the Trinitarian balance and health in HPWC.

A bi-product of such extensive use of NCD as a resource is committing a more extensive amount of writing about it in this thesis. The results of the Trinitarian Color Profile for the congregation are as follows:

Table 12: Trinitarian Color Profile for HPWC. Initial Results

Father (Green)	Focus on social justice	44
Son (Red)	Focus on Evangelism	38
Holy Spirit (Blue)	Focus on emotional health and spiritual power	36

The score numbers are referred to as “profile values” and are based by tens on a scale of 10 to 80. HPWC is a small congregation and there were ten people who participated in the inventory.

After taking the color profile and reading *CYW* group participants were called together for a focus group interview. Having obtained permission from each member to video tape the session, I was able to gather data that consisted of more than just their written answers. This also enabled me to pay closer attention to body language and modes of response to the focus group questions. It also allowed for multiple viewings.

The Trinity was still mostly a tacit matter among the group as they concentrated more on the metaphors of color rather than the persons of the Godhead. From this there is little evidence that this resource has been useful in moving a tacit Trinitarian understanding to a more cognitively deliberate consciousness of the Trinity. Interpretation was taken among the group as very subjective. One person may consider her church too “blue” and not enough

“green”, whereas another person at the same table will interpret the same church with opposite results (cf. Appendix C).

In the two groups participating in the NCD material (Mom’s Bible Study and the congregational group), both NCD’s *3 Colors of Ministry* and *Color Your World* did indicate some movement of practical Trinitarian awareness into both the head and the hearts of some individuals. There were a number of individuals who expressed a genuine desire to grow in the areas where they saw fewer results. For instance, one particular individual specifically asked for material in Spiritual Formation in order to help her develop in her “blue” (Spirituality) area.

Hidden Treasure Bible Study

By design, the expectation was that this part of the project was going to have the biggest transformational impact in generating cognitive and practical Trinitarianism among the people of HPWC. To reiterate, the very design of HTBS was to bring the group through the CAV shift. Material at the beginning was very focused on learning and study of the doctrine of the Trinity. Three months later, we moved into aspects and areas of worship. The final three months were to emulate our Trinitarian, missional design by practicing ministry.

In cognitive development there was no measurable indication that participants were moved to consider the Trinity more deliberately beyond their already tacitly held ideas. While I thought thoroughly on the practicality and necessity of the doctrine I admittedly had not set up an adequate system of measuring change.

In affective development there was no measureable indication that participants were moved to worship God any differently, other than one participating couple making a request to have the Doxology sung each week because of its Trinitarian content.

Finally, since the design of HTBS was to express our Trinitarianism in terms of mission (volitional) there was no way of measuring whether the members were doing ministry for the sake of outreach, or if they were doing it because of a new or renewed Trinitarian identity

There was an interview conducted on May 22, 2012 with a congregant who attended the HTBS meetings (cf. Appendix F). My goal with this interview was to determine how, and if, her tacit understanding of the Trinity was in any way influenced after participating in both the mid-week program, weekly services, and reading the *Color Your World* book.

After this interview I did not see anything that can be directly related to the project other than perhaps some movement in Trinitarian thinking and understanding. She did not mention the Trinity until I asked her about it directly. The greatest indicator that my teaching was having any impact was her unprompted use of the three colors to explain God.

Closing Interviews

The closing interviews were less generic and more customized to each particular interviewee. Below are the results from closing interviews conducted as a part of researching narratives for the project. The results were mixed as will be

shown. Some indicated no change, while others indicated renewed interest and understanding in their own Trinitarian identity and church mission.

Results of Interview (September 23, 2012)

This interview was with a layperson in our congregation who participated in every aspect of this thesis project, other than at the leadership level. This individual was a regular attendee of HTBS, part of the CYW focus group, and an active participant in the life at HPWC. Admittedly, I did not conduct an opening interview with this individual because he came to HPWC only after I started the project. However, this person openly demonstrated the most interest in the project which was more of a benefit in that it connected the dots for what was already there. What stood out the most in this interview was that this person's Trinitarian understanding was mostly attributed to the deliberate teaching of his pastor when growing up in a small church.

The next two interviews were conducted with constituents who represent those who attend Sunday morning services, but did not participate in the mid-week Hidden Treasure Bible Study. These are also people whom I interviewed at the beginning of the project. It should be noted that both of these individuals by the end of this project knew specifically what this project was about. With their permission I digitally recorded both interviews. Both of these persons have received formal theological training.

Results of Interview (April 20, 2012)

As stated this person was fully aware of the nature of this project and therefore already knew what was behind each of the interview questions. She was candid and did relate that her views regarding the role of the Trinity in the sacraments did not change as a result of this journey. This person also shared that her belief and understanding of the Trinity were established early through the teaching she received from her parents and in Sunday School.

What can be seen as a benefit from this project, once again, is that she indicated that this journey put into words what she already believed. In other words, this project was helpful in connecting the dots of one's Trinitarianism. She also indicated an awareness that raised the question in her mind of who should be addressed in prayer, or whether the Holy Spirit should be addressed in prayer. The answer to this question is perhaps not as important as the notion that this project had (according to her) influenced how she prayed and worshipped. Related to this was her final remarks regarding how she approaches God now in the three persons, considering what this means for her as a worshipper and follower of God's will.

Results of Interview (December 4, 2012)

This individual was also one of those who participated in an opening interview. There was no indication of any measurable CAV shift in this person's Trinitarian position. Other than an appreciation for the new mission statement this person showed no change in opinion. Upon further interview, this person did

disclose that he did not read the book after taking the NCD Color Compass survey, so whether change would have happened is inconclusive at best.

Admittedly, the difficulty here was to quantifiably measure if taking these actions had any kind of significant impact on the congregation. My primary instrument of data collection in this case was through personal interview, including those above, and through journaling any unsolicited comments that seemed related to this project in any way.

Unsolicited Stories

Other than in cases of generalities, permission was given by the said individuals to use and print this data in this project.

January 16, 2012

A member of the congregation approached me with a collection of small books she was buying from a religious agency she discovered on the internet that call themselves *The Church of God*, which is not to be confused with the current denomination *The Worldwide Church of God*. What caught her attention was a particular volume she received entitled, *The Trinity*. She asked me, as her pastor, to review it as her assumption was that this organization was in support of the doctrine. On the contrary, the title was a little misleading. The main purpose was to debunk the doctrine and the person of the Holy Spirit. She noted this would not have even occurred to her as an issue except that the Trinity has become a much more important matter to her. Whether this was an attempt to please me as her pastor cannot be determined. What is important is that a result of this project has

been useful in helping her better sift through and decide upon materials that perhaps sit outside of orthodoxy.

January 2012

As a result of the above incident, word spread to another congregant who was receiving the same material from the same organization. She informed me she too had since stopped subscribing to the same organization and notified me she rid herself of the material.

Spring 2012

I received an unsolicited request to begin singing the doxology each week as it was so connected to the doctrine of the Trinity. This person, along with her husband, both attended my mid-week *Hidden Treasure Bible Study*.

September 8, 2012

Noted more persons using the sign of the cross while at the altar on Sunday mornings as is worshipful and outward expression of the Trinity and our Trinitarian identity. Purposely ending prayers in the Triune name has provided a venue for congregants to make the sign of the cross. This has also fostered a zone of comfort for those who have wanted to do it in the past but were not sure if they could.

September 2012

Noted an increase in songs related to the Trinity more and more in our church. There is also a continued increase in positive remarks about the mission statement. These are not so much comments of opinion, but rather people are using the statement in terms of purpose and mission. The statement has arisen, unsolicited, several times during board meetings by members wishing to solve issues of “what to do.” It has also been used by the missions co-coordinator several times when planning out projects and promoting the Great Commission. More and more people are using it as a matter of fact statement when it comes to outlining the mission of our church. This is encouraging because attempts have been made with several mission statements in the past, and none of them have caught on until this one based entirely on the Triune Missio Dei.

A number of persons have given notice of doing their own research into Trinitarian studies. This is something they would not have done otherwise based on their reports.

There has been reaction from those who have trouble accepting the doctrine. One such person has requested continued dialogue on the matter. This has actually fostered a closer relationship between researcher/pastor and this person that may not have happened otherwise. Finally this project has gained the attention of other local pastors wishing to share our Trinitarian resources.

Measurable Results Outside of the Scope of HPWC

This section reports on data that came in as a result of this project that was outside of the scope or context of the project. These instances are important to record because the data shows the impact this project has had.

- Person outside of church, who has struggled with the doctrine, has begun correspondence in requesting sermon material to help her better understand the practical reason for such a belief.
- Two pastors in the denomination have requested help in explaining the importance of the Trinity to a parishioner who is denying the doctrine, and to another pastor who feels the doctrine must be set aside for the purposes of evangelism to Muslims. His suggestion was that the major component a Christian should focus on is how the Muslim has a different view of Jesus than the Christian, and therefore the Christian should put their energy into Christology. I agreed, but added and clarified that a major difference between Islam and Christianity is in how our one God is defined and revealed as a Trinity. In this context, Christological definition and identity makes far more sense when all members of the Godhead are included.

Findings

After comparing the closing interviews with the opening interviews, there was a clear effort on the part of some individuals to state that they feel no different at the end of the project than they did in the beginning. However, there is an increase in the language they used when answering questions that they did not use before. There was also a notable increase in terms such as *Common Unity*,

Godhead, and *Unity*. However, unless the Trinity was specifically mentioned, most people still operated in their faith with a tacit belief rather than with a deliberate intention.

Word of mouth regarding this thesis topic generated an interest from pastors, lay people, and other students who, over the course of this project initiated dialogue and correspondence about Practical Trinitarianism. This demonstrates that the matter of the Trinity, at the very least, is held with more than tacit interest among people outside of HPWC.

The NCD material did generate some interest in the Trinity, but at this point, did not appear to bring about an overwhelming transformation in those who participated in the focus groups. Nonetheless, there were a handful of individuals who were deliberate in pointing out that they were personally changed. However, these were individuals who participated in virtually every aspect of this project and already had strong teaching from their ecclesial experience in the past. There was an overwhelmingly positive response from virtually everyone regarding the new mission statement. However, almost no one was able to see the connection between the mission statement and the *Missio Dei* of the Triune God, even after an entire four-week sermon series on the mission statement.

End Results

I also had the group representing the congregation take the survey again from *Color Your World* to see if there was change or movement. Once again there was a measure of movement, growth, and change.

Table 13: Trinitarian Color Profile for HPWC. Final Results for Comparison.

NCD Color	Initial Score	Second Score
Green (Father) – Social Justice, Creation	44	49
Red (Son) – Soul Salvation, Cross	38	40
Blue (Holy Spirit) – Charismatic gifts, Pentecost	36	36

These numbers give indication of two things:

1. These numbers indicate both change and better balance in how the church can be more holistically Trinitarian and healthier by relating to each member of the Godhead, rather than only one.
2. This indicates that the project did have some effect on health and maturity of the congregation.

The next chapter will finalize this project with conclusions and with sharing the important things that can be learned from taking this journey.

CHAPTER SIX: CONCLUSIONS

There is a vast ocean of Trinitarian treasures for the church. Endeavoring in such a project is to hoist a sail and begin crossing this ocean. It involves searching for these treasures. It involves encountering other vessels and inviting them to share their wealth. It also involves keeping a detailed ship's log of course changes, new discoveries, and charting the course that was taken. The first steps of this journey were those of exploration. It began with finding resources that were both Trinitarian in nature, and could be applied to HPWC's unique situation. The goal was to see what could be used to foster a transformation among the people of HPWC into becoming more Trinitarian: cognitively, affectively and volitionally. There were hymns, prayers, devotionals, sermons, bible studies and church health curriculums, all created and designed with the Trinity as their primary focus but also as the catalyst. With these resources, there was an endeavor to answer the following questions. These are questions I developed along the way during Action Research:

- Does using Trinitarian Hymns make a church more Trinitarian?
- Does teaching the Trinity in a mid-week program make someone more Trinitarian?
- Does using Trinitarian resources makes a church more Trinitarian?

- Does implementing items of Trinitarian liturgy, or preaching, or praying in the Triune name make a congregation more Trinitarian?

As the researcher, I first sought personal transformation through deliberate study, devotional, journaling, and applying Trinitarian modes of praxis to my own life. I then moved into the leadership and congregation attempting to determine if such a journey can take place through study, teaching, focus groups, sermons, changes in church mission statements, sermon series, and church health resources. The purpose of this final chapter is to report on what I learned from this project and then offer suggestions of what I would have done differently in order to get better and measurable results.

What I Learned

The Trinity will never stop being a mystery. John Wesley said, “Bring me a worm that can comprehend a man, and then I will show a man who can comprehend the triune God” (Zuck 1997, 221). Nonetheless, the Trinity can still be experienced and an attempt, with this project, was to bring about a better understand why we are Trinitarian.

While Highland Park Wesleyan Church has “Wesleyan” in its name, virtually no one denies that the congregation is a mixed bag of people from various denominational backgrounds. The Trinity is a matter that is more than a belief. That is, to be Trinitarian exceeds creedal proclamation. Since the Trinity represents an economic unity, it was the hope that pursuing deliberate Trinitarianism would foster a common identity among the constituents. Our identity would be that we are Trinitarian Christians in a church that believes in the

Trinity, whose worship is knowingly caused by the Trinity, and whose ministry is inaugurated in the Trinitarian *Missio Dei*.

The initial idea was to generate a CAV shift in HPWC by moving the congregation to experience Trinitarianism, not just as a matter of creed, but as a matter for conscious knowledge, the heart, and ministry. Admittedly, in the end there was insufficient data to determine if there was measurable change. Shortly, I will discuss what I could have done differently in order to achieve measurable results. However, there were still some valuable insights discovered along the way as we employed various resources to meet the unique context of HPWC. Highland Park Wesleyan Church is a mixed bag of various church traditions and values. However, the various interests and theological perspectives among the constituents do indeed fall primarily into three areas: Social and eco-concerns; traditional Evangelical and Holiness values; and thirdly, charismatic worship with a hunger for deeper spirituality. The following is a report on what I learned from the methods I employed, and in each case I will report on what I would have done differently to achieve better measurable results.

Natural Church Development

The Trinitarian design of NCD's *3 Colors of Ministry* and *Color Your World* was an ideal match to a church like HPWC since the congregation had members who seemingly represented all three colors as described by NCD.. I wanted to see if using NCD's Trinitarian material was both practical, and also useful in transforming a congregation to be deliberately more Trinitarian. The practices Schwarz proposes are designed to bring church goes to be practically

Trinitarian. His suggestion is that balance is the key. This way of thinking coincides with Torrance's idea of avoiding Unitarianism when focusing too much on one specific Person of the Godhead.

One comment by an individual in a focus group interview leads one to wonder about how effective such a balance can be in reality. To have a Trinitarian balance may place a church in a position where there is not so much balance but rather a perpetual tension. This is why Evangelical, or *Red*, churches thrive by being Evangelical. Charismatic, or *Blue* churches, thrive by being Charismatic, because those attending are looking for a specific area to identify with. However, this leads back to the initial problem of being imbalanced in our approach to God who reveals himself holistically through the three persons.

After conducting two focus groups, one for each book, I can conclude that while the Trinity is paramount to Schwarz, virtually every one of the readers described the point of the book by way of one of the colors rather than one of the Godhead. Because of Schwarz' choice to use colors as his primary method of explanation, the reader seems to quickly forget it is about the Trinity. To reiterate, Schwarz himself writes, "it's a tragedy that the doctrine of the Trinity is regarded, by and large as a lifeless, irrelevant concept that, though theologically central, has nothing to do with our daily lives" (Schwarz 2005, 71). However, with the style used in both *The Three Colors of Ministry* and *CYW*, there is a tendency to move the doctrine back to being a tacit matter rather than a deliberate one. One wonders if Schwarz wants it to be tacit, however he also states that, "The truth only becomes manifest when people holistically experience who the Trinitarian God is,

with their heads, their hands, and their hearts” (Schwarz 2005, 71). With these words, Schwarz makes a strong plea for the importance of the centrality of the Trinity; on the other hand, he defends his own case to use colors rather than persons when speaking of God’s self revelation (Schwarz 2005, 69-71).

Perhaps the tension of keeping the three colors in balance on a large scale within a church would be released if the persons of the Trinity remained the focus rather than only the concepts which contribute to denominational distinction. For instance, it is much easier for a church was to say *We are more concerned with social justice and eco-responsibility because we see ourselves as green*, or a another church to say *we are a charismatic church* than for both these churches to say *We identify with the Father* or *We identify with the Holy Spirit*. This is because I find it harder to imagine people would deliberately “break up” the Trinity. I think if we remained focused on the Persons of the Trinity, then the concepts or activities related to each person would naturally fall into place. Further, by deliberately naming the persons of the Godhead, we then keep God at the centre as the author and perfecter of our faith. In other words, what we *do*, while vitally important, still must be secondary to who God is. As a resource, NCD’s materials strive for health through balance, but thus far, I am not convinced it was useful in fostering a unity consciously in emanation the Godhead.

On a more positive note, the material by NCD was a prudent resource for measuring change. In such a project one wonders if change is taking place. After comparing the initial results to the final results, it did show both movement and

maturity. The most dramatic shift was in the personal area as the researcher. However, while indicating change one is still left wondering or speculating as to why the changes happened in the first place.

What I Would Have Done Differently

NCD's resources are designed as diagnostic tools. If I could go back and do it differently, I would only have used *Color Your World* (CYW), and not *Three Colors of Ministry* (3CM). The reason for this is because 3CM is designed as a diagnostic for the individual, while CYW is designed as a diagnostic for both the individual and the congregation as a whole. CYW was far more suited to the context of HPWC as the congregation had a good representation of people from each color group. In hindsight, more energy could have been used in developing and promoting CYW to help the congregation understand (C), celebrate (A), and make use of (V) its Trinitarian identity.

Secondly, I would have had the congregation take the diagnostic tool in CYW before doing the opening interviews. After analyzing the data in the church's color profile I could then develop interview questions to assist in making sense of the data. This would then provide a platform to further develop the project and help draw a straight line between the data at the beginning of the project and the data at the end when I would have the congregation take the diagnostic color profile again.

Mission Statement

All of the feedback received, both solicited and unsolicited, regarding our missions statement was positive. The majority of it was unsolicited as people

were heard using it for their own means and to express their desire as to how they see HPWC functioning. While it is pleasing to see the missions statement has been well accepted, it is bothersome that the Trinitarian design of the mission statement has perhaps remained too tacit, or worse, was unrecognizable for some people. I used a sermon series to introduce the mission statement and even originally had lines of explanation with each point. Perhaps a return to using the explanations with each point is what is needed.

i.e. We exist to:

Connect to God (the Father)

Connect to One another (the Body of Christ)

Connect to the Community (in the power of the Spirit).

What I Would Have Done Differently

I personally developed the mission statement with a Trinitarian outline and then proceeded to “sell” it to the congregation. This would have been far more effective if I had have used the method of Appreciative Inquiry. “Appreciative Inquiry can get you much better results than seeking out and solving problems” (White 1996, 472) which accounts a lot for my approach to this project. I saw so much of this project as trying to find solutions to solve the problems I identified. T.W. White explains AI as something that “lets go of problem-based management and...vitally transforms strategic planning, survey methods...and measurement systems (White 1996, 474). Cooperrider and Whitney, in their book on AI compare the approach of *problem solving* with the methodology of AI. My approach was seeing HPWC as “a problem to be solved” (Cooperrider and

Whitney 2005, 13), whereas the “basic assumption” of AI would have been to see the church as “a mystery to be embraced” (Cooperrider and Whitney 2005, 13). I introduced the mission statement to help solve a problem; however I could have used AI to have the church develop the mission statement based on who they are. Highland Park already had all three colors (NCD) within its DNA. With Appreciative Inquiry the mystery of the Trinity could have been more fully embraced as the congregation was brought to recognise its already tacit Trinitarian elements. A way of employing AI could have been to use roundtable discussions. Here participating congregants would discuss questions related to tying HPWC’s Tacit Trinitarianism (based on the diagnostic results of NCD) to strengths and mission. Some examples of such questions are:

- What does it mean that we are a Wesleyan Church and how can we tie these into who we are and what we do?
- What do you see as three of the biggest issues facing HPWC?
- How might being Trinitarian address these issues?
- Why is being Trinitarian important to us?
- How can we tie our Trinitarian doctrine and our Wesleyan identity into what we do as a church?
- How can being Wesleyan and Trinitarian shape our values as a church?
- Out of these round table discussions the congregation’s end result could then have been to formulate a mission statement, thus having the church know ownership of their identity and mission.

Church Praxis and Weekly Services

Praxis is basically what we do to experience what we emulate and believe. It includes the liturgy, the content of our prayers, the sacraments, and methods of worship such as singing, responsive reading and a host of other practices. Adding Trinitarian elements to church praxis is not difficult. There is so much within Christendom that recognizes and celebrates the three Persons of the Godhead. Highland Park was a church saturated in Trinitarianism throughout this project during the weekly Sunday services. We sang Trinitarian hymns and songs. We prayed in the Triune name. We recognized the work of all three persons in both Eucharist and Baptism. We read Scripture together responsively and worshipfully, even at times as a sort of emulation of *perichoresis*, where the many become one. We heard about the Trinity, we learned about the Trinity. It is important to ask: *Will this last?* Is all this deliberate Trinitarianism based on a change within in the congregation, or really based on the pastor's leading; or perhaps a bit of both? Based on the feedback, there was not a dramatic shift nor was there a significant measurable change. Nonetheless, there were some noteworthy items among individuals. Some have shared personally that they are better able to understand the necessity and natural conclusion of the Trinity. Others have specifically requested we implement more Trinitarian content such as the *Doxology* each week. This is not something common to a church in our denomination. Even less common is the comfort certain individuals have in performing *the Sign of the Cross* at the mention of the Triune Name. Others made a point to tell me how the Trinity has been a prominent subject in their meditations. Others pointed out how

they recognized the Trinity in areas where I deliberately remained silent, so as not to overwhelm the congregation with a constant harping on the subject.

What I Would Have Done Differently

In hindsight, doing a better job in the opening and closing interviews would have helped a great deal. This would also have involved forming the interview questions more strategically, making sure those interviewed at the beginning were the same people observed and interviewed in the end. Notably there were a couple of interviewees in the end who did not have opening interviews, making it more difficult to gather comparative data. It might also have been better to tie the interview questions into NCD's material, once again, with the attempt to get feedback as to how our Trinitarianism (3 colors) could be reflected in our weekly services.

Hidden Treasure Bible Study

Small group studies can be more intensive and modeled on a design of mentoring and discipleship. It can allow for deeper interaction and provide a more solid platform to move through this CAV journey of Trinitarianism. One participant in HTBS was involved in every other aspect of the project. He was an interviewee, and participated in the NCD material. This one person came to me on several occasions (unsolicited) and would relay to me how he noticed my deliberate integration of NCD's three colors into the services. While I am unable to draw a specific conclusion that my project had a specific measurable effect on this person, I can draw some conclusions as to why he was already someone openly holistic in his CAV Trinitarianism. These conclusions are based on my

interviews with him, his efforts to share unsolicited information with me, and on his participating in the NCD material.

1. This particular person was one of the few persons in the church who was self-identified as a committed Wesleyan. He joined HPWC after the merger and was not part of either of the two previous mergers.
2. This person, during an interview, shared that his previous pastor and Sunday School teachers deliberately taught the importance of the Trinity.
3. This person already had an active interest in theology and church mission.

What I Would Have Done Differently

From the beginning it may have been better to have an opening interview with the group. However, HTBS was open to the entire congregation so there were no guarantees as to if it would be the same group at the end of the season. Perhaps then, it would have been better to organize a small group who were committed for the season.

Interviews

Interviews are an obvious and common means to collect data. As mentioned, the approach to this project was more deductive and inductive. The problem with this is that I named the problem first and then used the interviews to support my hypotheses.

What I would have done differently

The interviews conducted in the analysis of context prior to the actual project later doubled as opening interviews. The assumption was that I had

enough data in these opening interviews to support commencement of the project and provide a sufficient starting point for comparison. In hindsight it would have been better to conduct a new set of interviews at the beginning of the project. The data in these interviews could then have been better suited to draw conclusions for next steps rather than to support initial assumptions. Secondly, I would have interviewed more people and made sure of continuity between the initial interviewees at the beginning and the end of the project. Admittedly, interviews conducted with additional persons in the middle of the project (i.e. HTBS) offered data that could neither be really useful or measurable. Further, questions would have been more narrowed to relate to the NCD material. Examples of such questions are as follows and are not in a particular order:

- Who do you relate more to in the Trinity? (Why?) (3 Colors Question)
- When you think of what the church should be doing, what comes to your mind? (Here I would analyze the data and categorize the answers into one of the three colors.)
- When I say the following, what comes to your mind?
- The Father
- The Son
- The Holy Spirit
- (Answers to these would be compared to those given at the end)
- Tell me about how you see others in our congregation as being able to contribute differently than you would.

Closing interviews with the same people would involve similar questions, but I would also interview a group of different people as a ‘control’ group.

Personal Journal

Keeping a personal journal throughout the project allowed me to analyse the impact of this project on myself as the researcher. This method provided me with the most data; however there were still some things I could have done differently to make my journaling more effective when it came to gathering and analysing data. In the following section I will share what I’ve learned from journaling throughout this project and then offer a suggestion of how I would have done it differently.

Seeing the Trinity in Everything

Admittedly, throughout this project I had to fight inwardly not to eisegete the Trinity into every account of seeing the number three, which happens to appear a lot in Scripture and in life. It is so easy to interpret just about anything in Trinitarian terms. At the same time, I also learned from my experience in Celtic worship that it is not going too far to allow these things to remind one of the Trinity. Being reminded of God’s presence is never bad, and there are countless examples of three-in-oneness throughout life and creation.

Theology and Practice of Prayer and Conversation Will Change

One’s prayer life will change. One pastor asked me if Modalism could be a reasonable conclusion and perhaps not a heresy. I countered with how prayer and the Trinity both make sense of each other. Jesus told us to pray “Our Father”.

We do so with Christ as our high priest, and are invited and enabled by the Holy Spirit. This pastor then asked if it is appropriate to pray to the Holy Spirit. The answer given was that I personally do not, however, praying to the Spirit (or any member of the Godhead) should not be seen in and of itself as a heresy. This pastor then suggested I include this matter in the project.

When a Passion Becomes a Rant

It is counterproductive to harp too much on one's passion. I do not think this happened with this project as I became aware of it as a possible danger very early. Sometimes I see certain distinctives both define a denomination, but also segregate a body where this distinctive becomes the primary theological focus. However, this project confirmed for me that the reality of the Trinity is not a mere doctrinal distinctive but perhaps the unifying orthodoxy of who the God we serve and believe in really is. The Trinity does not define denomination. Rather the Trinity is where the orthodoxy, orthopraxy of Christianity must begin. This only serves to confirm how important this project was, even if it has acted as only a mere step in the right direction. The right direction is away from the present trends of a church to remain uninterested or at worst, dismissive of God in three Persons.

Problems with Confusion and Acceptance

If there is one thing this project has confirmed it is that issues of confusion, trivialization, and dismissiveness regarding the Trinity as an essential dimension of the church's faith and life are real and must be addressed. While the

doctrine remains important for many, there are still a growing number of people I have encountered who unashamedly profess, *does it really matter?* Subsequently, a large majority, while naming the doctrine as important to believe in, still betray a deficiency in understanding when it comes to experience or why the doctrine matters for the church beyond creedal confession.

As a pastor I have come to address this problem in two ways. First, I can try to lead the church where the Trinity remains a tacit belief. That is, I initiate and lead in such a way that structure, songs, prayers and preaching all include a Trinitarian framework, along with frequently and faithfully including all members of the Godhead in our services. The benefit of this can be found in the minds of those who only have a problem with the word “Trinity” because it is not specifically found in the Bible. However, is not this the kind of thing the church has been doing anyway? Indeed, people can be thoroughly Trinitarian without having to say so, however it must eventually lead there.

The second approach is in relation to what Schwarz provided by way of the Trinitarian material in NCD. That is, by keeping the Trinity tacit, I have discovered there is a tendency for the people to define themselves through their ethos and actions. I am now convinced that we must build our theology and ecclesiology from the top – down. That is, we must begin with who God is. God is Triune, and that fact will better shape our focus, which is Him, and our beliefs and actions, all correlated to the Trinity. While this is a tougher approach, in the end it will be a unifying factor for a church that has such blatant differences in identity and makeup among the people.

One Person at a Time vs. The Entire Congregation

It might be *easy* to make the congregation seemingly more Trinitarian all at once. This was done simply by increasing the amount of Trinitarian things we do as a body. Admittedly, if one is to believe the adage *when you hear something enough times, you will start to believe it*, then the end result is that people will begin to understand and accept the Trinity better by way of experience and praxis. However, I discovered two things in relation to this. First, interest, understanding, and acceptance are far more apt to happen when the pastor deliberately teaches the people. This was a common story among those who already had a deeper understanding of the doctrine. These people shared, in their stories, how previous pastors taught them the doctrine beyond tokens to the creed, and I noticed this. Taking the time to make Trinitarianism so deliberate with this project reopened the doctrine for many people. I think one of the most important outcomes was the impact this project made on newer Christians, or those still young in their theological journeys. It was this project that caused them to keep a sharper eye out and identify the many heretical challenges made available via the internet and door visitors. At the same time, this project provided material for the people to dialogue in a way that demonstrated why being Trinitarian is not only practical, but reasonable and necessary for a Christian to believe.

This project also opened my own eyes to something I initially had a hunch about, but now am able to confirm. This project gave me opportunity to discover many things about the people I personally interacted with. Indeed, I was surprised

more than a few times at the prevalence of rejection of the Trinity in my one-on-one encounters with individuals during my research.

Trinitarian Ecclesiology Begins from the Top Down

When it comes to keeping or creating a Trinitarian fidelity, one model will not fit all. However, there are some principles that can be passed on. First, the pastor must be passionate, have a full, CAV robust Trinitarian faith and teach the doctrine beyond creed. Secondly, I believe having the Trinity included in a simple mission statement is crucial and beneficial to helping people gain a practical understanding of the Trinity. Thirdly, there are resources and treasures available from every age of the church to the present day to employ. And finally, there are dots to connect. In so many ways people are already Trinitarian, even those who claim they do not believe in it still may find understanding when you find a way to connect the dots for them.

Views about the Pentecostal Church

Before coming to HPWC, I had the experience of pastoring for more than Twelve years in the Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada. Personal views about the PAOC's Trinitarianism were based on both experience and formal education. To use NCD's platform, my initial opinion was that Pentecostal churches were predominantly "Blue". In praxis and focus, the Pentecostal church does have a high focus on spirituality and, in some cases, charismatic manifestation. But if I were to take my own advice and do the PAOC's ecclesiology and theology from the top-down, I must confess that I see one of the most Trinitarian churches that

manage to be Trinitarian without always using the word *Trinity*. Indeed, if we were to only use the 3 colors as identifying marks, in most cases the fellowship would be seen as blue. However, the churches do indeed call on the name of the Father while seeking his will, have a very strong Christocentric core, and most definitely include the person of the Holy Spirit, not so much as an overemphasis, but with a recognition of his person and ongoing divine work.

All this is to say, that at the end of this project my personal views regarding the Pentecostal church has shifted from seeing it as only charismatic, to holistically Trinitarian. For the record I see within the Pentecostal church a growing tendency to address current social issues. I see no hint that the evangelical message of salvation of the soul is diminishing. And I continue to see a sensitivity to the work of the Holy Spirit. I believe this may be because their ecclesiology is done from the top down. That is, their work is in response to who God is as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

To clarify, I never had any negative views about the Pentecostal church. This project only brought me to ponder how this particular denominational family is more Trinitarian than I had given them credit for. I should also add that this change in opinion comes from interviewing a number of people at HPWC who have either come out of the Pentecostal movement themselves, or have had strong ties to the Charismatic movement.

Influence of Personal Passion

Throughout this project, I am coming to learn that deliberate Trinitarianism is mostly found from personal sharing. Simply taking twenty

minutes to share what my project was about seemed to do a lot of primary work in and of itself.

I was also to discover the unexpected impact my personal passion would have on fellow clergy. One wonders if a greater impact of this project is yet to come as I continue to share with colleagues in the ministry the vitality of *being* Trinitarian, and not only stating it.

Finally, my personal passions have changed and matured. I had a genuine desire to grow and work in areas of Christianity that I had not considered, and that also reflected a better connection to members of the Godhead. It was also confirmed for the congregation.

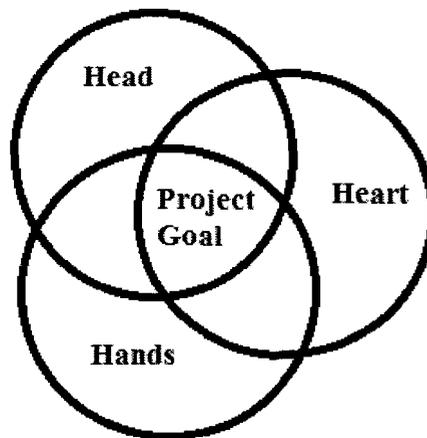
Conclusion

At the end of this journey, I still see many milestones behind and up ahead. I have come to realize that this is in no way to be a journey where we embark to find a new Trinitarianism by ourselves, but rather a journey in which accompanied by the Triune God all along. The journey begins and ends not so much with what we do, but who we do it with, and who we serve by doing it. Yes, the Trinity is a mystery that is impossible to contain or fully understand. At the same time, it is also a mystery that has been fully revealed, can be experienced; and while we may still have difficulty grasping at a God in three Persons, we can certainly find ourselves grasped by the loving hand of the Father, speaking to us through his living Word, and inviting our response with a power entirely His through the grace of his Spirit. What a God.

APPENDIX A:

Project Journey Illustration - CAV Shift

Head	Heart	Hands
Cognitive	Affective (Emotive)	Volitional
Belief	Worship	Practice/Ministry



APPENDIX B:

Mom's Bible Study Interview Questions

Opening Interview. September 14, 2011. Permission was unanimously given by the group, who willingly participated, to audio record the session.

Here is a copy of the letter given to the participant:

To the Mom's Bible Study

Greetings....,

As you may know, I have been working on a Doctor of Ministry Degree at Tyndale Seminary in Toronto, Ontario. In partial fulfillment of this degree I am required to do a research project and I am asking if you, as a group, would be willing to be participants in my research in two ways:

- 1) First, I would like to meet with you to do a group interview. This interview would be audio recorded with your permission and the results would be shared with you upon request.
- 2) Secondly, I am asking that the group work together through a church health resource by *Natural Church Development* called, *3 Colors of Ministry*. After which, I would meet with you again for a closing interview.

I deeply appreciate your willingness to be a part of this.
God bless you,

Rev. Paul Kern

The following preamble took place before recording began.

(After words of welcome) I want to go over a few important details before we start recording. First, I want you all to know that the risk level for participating in this research is minimal. The purpose of this interview is to get an idea of what you think about God, who he is, and also your views on the Trinity. Secondly, I will not use any of your names and you will be completely anonymous. It is also important for you to know that no one, but myself, will have any access to this data. If you have any questions please don't hesitate to contact me. Are there any questions? (Everyone gave indication that they understood)
May I begin recording this interview? (Everyone gave consent)

After Recording began:

Today is September 14th, 2011. We are at the Mom's Bible Study in Ottawa, Ontario Canada as a part of my research project for a Doctor of Ministry degree at Tyndale Seminary in Toronto Ontario.

Do I have everyone's permission to continue recording this session together?
(Everyone present gave unanimous consent).

The following is the transcript of interview questions and answers. An asterisk (*) is placed beside those answers given by members of HPWC.

1. Do you Remember Sunnyside's Mission Statement? Sunnyside Wesleyan Church is a sister church in the city and is also the church that sent a group of young families over to HPWC in their second merger. Several members of this group still attended SSWC. Sunnyside's mission statement is blatantly Trinitarian

No one seemed to remember the mission statement, however someone did remember that it was Trinitarian in nature.

2. When I say "Trinity" or "God is Trinity" what comes to your mind?

This is who God is.

It only makes sense to me.

It is what I will always eventually come to when thinking about God.

Only one person – a congregant of HPWC – stated she had a problem understanding whether there were one or three persons, leading her to suggest a belief in tri-theism.

3. Does anyone here ever think about the Trinity?

Yes, in that I think about all three persons when I am worshipping.

When I was in college I used to ponder on it quite often

4. If someone were to ask you to explain to them the concept of the Trinity, what would you say?

While some used metaphor, I was impressed with the group's theological understanding and maturity. However, a member from HPWC did explain the Trinity by way of three different gods.

5. How important is the doctrine of the Trinity to you

Every person with the exception of one (*) stated it was vital.

If we are not worshipping the Trinity then who are we worshipping?

6. How important do you think it is to teach the doctrine of the Trinity within the church?

Those who answered suggested it was a high priority. Not everyone answered.

7. Does the Trinity influence your worship in anyway, if at all?

I sometimes think about how God is at work when I am worshipping.

No other specific answers were given.

8. How vital is the doctrine for salvation?

**It is necessary to believe in Christ's deity.*

Eventually you have to come to some knowledge of the three Person's divine work of grace for salvation.

9. How can the Trinity be practical to your faith/Christianity?

Answers were related to worship. There was no indication of the volitional aspect of being Trinitarian.

(Closing Interview) - Mom's Bible Study - Feb 1, 2012

Today is February 1st, 2012. We are at the Mom's Bible Study in Ottawa, Ontario Canada as a part of my research project for a Doctor of Ministry degree at Tyndale Seminary in Toronto Ontario. Do I have everyone's permission to continue recording this session together? (Everyone present gave unanimous consent).

1. Share where you are on the Trinitarian Compass

I found the material to be rather subjective.

If you hadn't already shared the nature of your project with us, it wouldn't have made me more deliberately Trinitarian.

2. Did you find it accurate?

I found the Trinitarian Compass accurate, but it was really just an indication of my current season and not how Trinitarian I am all around.

3. If you have read the book *The Shack*, how would you compare it to NCD's material in how it helps you understand God as Triune?

Only those who were from outside of HPWC answered. As stated, they already appeared comfortable with Trinitarianism. As a result the book had little impact

on influencing their already held views of the Trinity or of being deliberately Trinitarian.

4. Did *3 Colors of Ministry* help in bringing you out of a more tacit sort of Trinitarianism into a more deliberate one?

NCD's material did generate an interest for each person as to their own Trinitarian balance. For instance, one person was compelled to develop her "blue" side more in the area of Spirituality, and requested resources from me to help her grow in this area. This demonstrates movement toward the affective area of her balance as a result of this resource.

APPENDIX C:

Congregational Focus Group - *Color Your World with NCD*

Letter of invitation given to the participants:

Hello Everyone,

You may remember getting that little book from me (NCD's *Colour Your World*). You all filled out a great little survey in it and sent me results which I so much appreciated. I am very close to finishing my thesis work and plan to defend my thesis on February 22, 2013. There is one last thing I am humbly asking you to help me with. On **Sunday, November 18th**, I would like to invite you to join me in a focus group session, specifically about the book. I will be paying close attention to the conversation that develops among you as a group in response to some questions I will ask you. I am planning to have this session video taped, but will be the only one actually viewing it when documenting the results. I will provide you with a feast of a lunch and deeply hope you can make it. The format will be like a round table discussion. The whole meeting will go no longer than 1.5 hours.

I deeply appreciate your willingness and help in this project and my prayer is that all of this will lead to enriching the health and ministry at HPWC.

Yours Sincerely,

Rev. Paul Kern

To Connect to God

To Connect to the Each Other

To Connect to the Community

HPWC - A great church to get connected!

The following is a manuscript of the Focus group session. Questions in bold were pre-prepared for the session. Questions in normal print were follow-up questions to the answers the focus group members were giving. The group gave unanimous consent to have the session videotaped and, from the above letter, was aware it would be videotaped before they agreed to come.

Preamble before videotaping began:

I am currently working on a Doctor of Ministry Degree at Tyndale Seminary in Toronto, Ontario. I want to make sure everyone is aware of a few things before our videographer begins taping our time together. First, I will not use any of your names in my research project and no-one will have access to this video or my research material, but myself after (our videographer) gives me the video. There is very minimal risk in participating in this focus group and I will make sure the video is destroyed after my research is completed. Do I have everyone's

permission to begin recording this session? (Videographer was also a participant in the focus group. The group gave unanimous permission to begin video recording the session.)

Today is Sunday, November 18th, and we are in the fireside room of Highland Park Wesleyan Church in Ottawa, Ontario to conduct a focus group to discuss the church resource, *Color Your World*, by Natural Church Development.

Do I have everyone's permission to continue recording this session?

(Everyone present gave approval to continue.)

1. What is your impression of *Color Your World*? The impression the book made on the individuals was important to this project for a couple of reasons. First, part of my scope and context involved my district which has a keen interest in NCD's material. Secondly, I wanted to get feedback as I was not only using this as a resource for myself, but intended to see if the focus group was moved out of a tacit Trinitarianism to a more deliberate and conscious Trinitarianism. I purposely asked questions, avoiding direct references to the Trinity to see if any of the group would begin speaking about it. Again, the results were that they discussed balance and colors more so than any of the specific members of the Godhead, or God as a Trinity for that matter.

I liked the point of it: balance. Yet, too analytical and far too many lists, charts, and quotes trying to be fit together. Too much information on one page at a time. In other words, the style was too busy, but I get the idea of it.

(What was the idea of it?)

Trying to bring balance will bring growth.

(Balance in what way?)

I liked the book, and I see balance as not necessarily having to fit under one specific denominational banner. However, I agree with the comment that there were too many layers of things coming at you.

There was obviously a lot of thought put into the book, and I did like the Trinitarian Compass for the church. (This came from a person who thought very little of the Trinity until I began my project).

Very Repetitive. Same things said over and over in many ways and with many metaphors

While many books are more emotionally driven, this book is more research oriented in order to foster practical decision making.

I couldn't get through it past the first 30 pages because I found the whole thing a consistent self patting on the back. Self promotional for NCD.

Again – far too busy.

A helpful tool, but painful to read in the style he presents.

Doing the compass a year later is a great idea.

(If the man on the moon were to come and ask you the main point of the book, what would you say?)

Every church is different. Where does your church fit, and where does your church now need to go?

To strive for natural balance. That is, not correct things, but remove barriers to help a church reach that balance naturally.

This book is a book that doesn't tell you how to get there, but it points to another resource (namely NCD material) as a way of getting there.

2. How did you feel when reading this book?

Thoughtful, but then patronized. Felt he was condescending (two people).

Frustrated. Too much theory but doesn't get to practice. Convinced the tool is useful, but left holding the tool because of the way it was shoved into my hand.

Curious. Where does our church fit on the compass?

Since I am newer to this church and do not have as close as a point of reference as the rest of you, I took it more personally and was encouraged to see how I could apply the principles to my own life and my own balance. I began to think of the church's local community of Westboro.

3. What do you think HPWC's results look like on the Trinitarian Compass Color Profile?

Here I noticed they began to talk and ask questions, attempting to relate each color to a person of the Godhead.

Interesting to note here: everyone associated a color with one of the two primary groups represented in the church. However, there was disagreement as to which person a specific group identified with. This may be an indication of the subjectivity in one's understanding of the Trinitarian Compass.

Red/Green (most agreed)

Red as to the Congregation, but Westboro as the surrounding community would be far more Green.

Blue/Red initially. I interpreted "Blue" to be more in the areas of liturgy.

Someone coming from the Pentecostal church would see little to no blue in this place.

According to the tradition I came from, this church is very "Blue" because we would not even raise our hands during worship.

I come from a very conservative church and so this church seems very different to me.

(Define conservative. That is, what color would you use to describe it?)

Less blue, and probably more red.

As a worship leader it did get me thinking about how I can put more "blue" into the services.

I think Worship is going to be the biggest thing to impact that (blue) part of it.

(How do you feel and what do you think about the actual results of the color profile for HPWC?)

Felt the results were notably subjective especially when it comes to demographics.

I'm trying to think of where our church would be super strong in?

I think it's Red.

I think it's Green

4. What did you like best about the book?

I liked the Trinity Compass and the theory behind it? Again this was said by a person who told me he hadn't thought much about the Trinity until this project began.

(What did you like best about the Trinity Compass?)

About it being reflecting and balanced. Every person has value in the church, which is what the Compass points out.

I like how it points out that it's okay to be a certain way that is not Wesleyan, especially in a Wesleyan church like HPWC.

It offered help and I appreciated how much research went into it.

It is difficult to achieve balance by being strong in everything. You are almost limited to being in a smaller circle.

Not sure about that because someone can be passionate and balanced in each area. (What I see happening in this disagreement is that one is thinking congregationally, and the other is thinking individually.)

Presentation of the book is high quality.

Stuck strong to the point of the three colors and balance.

5. How would you improve the book?

Get someone else to write for you.

More answers rather than theory

Too much of a textbook

Too much of an infomercial

Too rigidly set up that set him into his own trap to the point where it was unnatural. Far too methodical.

Too self-promotional. It takes far too long to get to the point.

6. What did I miss?

Didn't address the eight quality characteristics for our church.

Establishing leadership development and how can we move forward after doing all this?

Wary about doing NCD.

NCD suggests that church quantity is a natural product of health. But to use the analogy of David and Goliath, some of us don't envy the giant.

7. **Does anyone know what I am specifically looking for here?**
(There were no mentions of the Trinity.)

APPENDIX D: 3 Color Profile Survey

1 Read through the following 36 statements and place an "x" in the column that best describes you or your church. Answer as spontaneously as possible, and be honest with yourself. Note that questions 1-18 deal with your own life and questions 19-36, with the life of your church. You may wish to use a pencil to fill in the questionnaire so that you can repeat the test at a later date.

2 When you have answered all of the questions, follow the instructions on page 75. You will be able to calculate *your personal results* immediately.

3 In order to obtain *your church's results*, give page 75 to the person administering the survey. He or she will add your answers to that of the other members of your church and receive the results once all of the data has been collected and uploaded to the NCD web site.

*If you are the **pastor** or person responsible for administering this profile, please do the following:*

1 Be sure that you don't use the Color Profile just for entertainment, but try to integrate it into a structured developmental process. Make sure that each participant in this process has a copy of this book. Note that there are large discounts available for the use of the book as a whole church. For more information, contact the publisher (the contact address is provided on page 2).

2 To get results for your church, at least 30% of your regular worshipping congregation should have a copy of this book and fill out the questionnaire.

3 Please collect the completed page 75 from each participant and enter the data in the spreadsheet that can be found at www.ncd-international.org/community. Once you have uploaded the data, you will immediately get the results for your church. They will be calculated based on a statistical norm that has been developed for your country and language.

The evaluation through the internet is free of charge. It is an exclusive service for readers of *Color Your World with Natural Church Development*.

(Swartz 2005, 72) Permission granted from NCD to reproduce this image from the book.

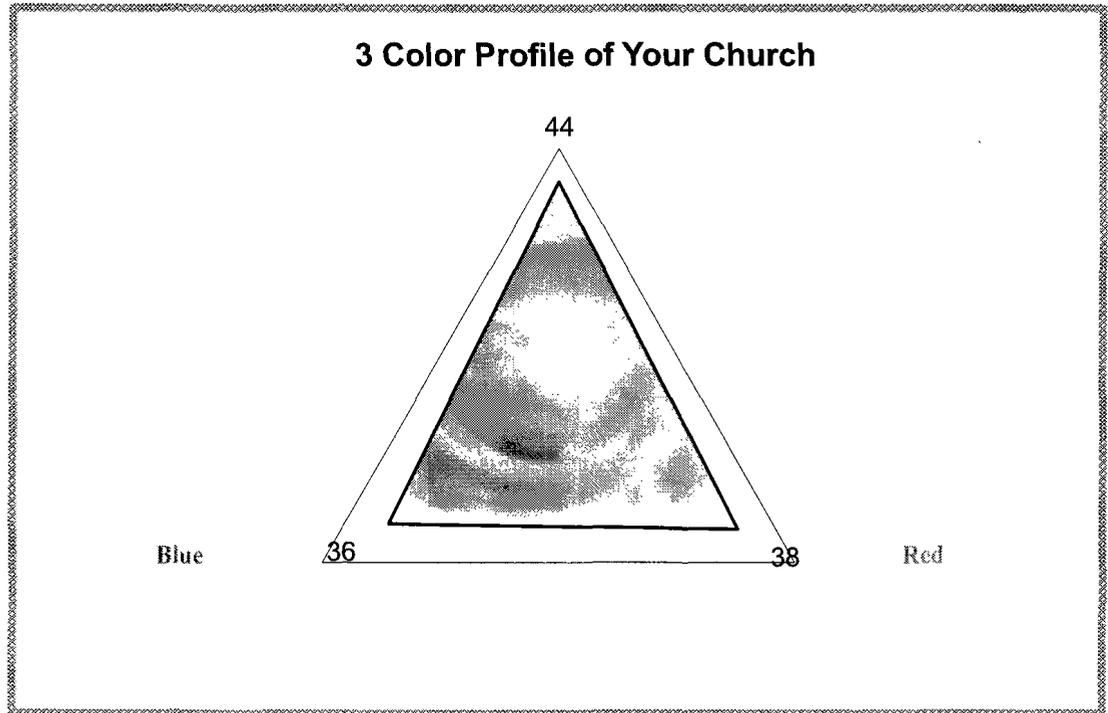
The following is a sample of the survey Questions and reprinted with the permission of NCD.

	<i>very much to a large extent</i>	<i>moderately slightly</i>	<i>not at all</i>	
2				If something needs to be done, I want to be involved.
4				I enjoy being around people whose lifestyle is different than mine.
26				Our church actively supports believers as they grow in their relationship to Christ.
28				Our church stresses the political implications of Christianity.

(Schwartz 2005, 73-74)

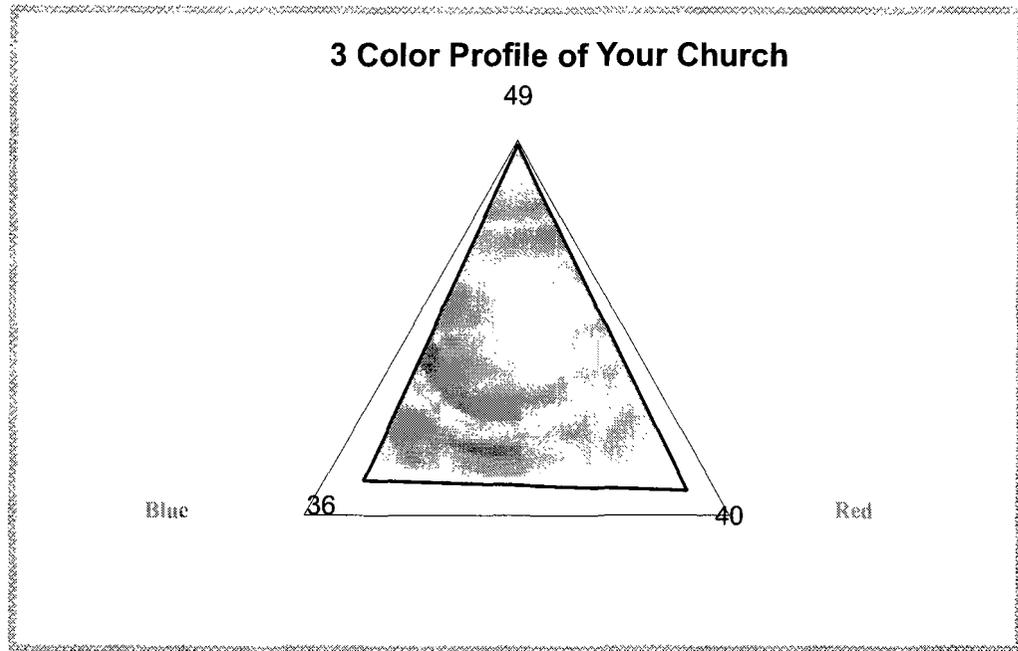
Natural Church Development - Trinitarian Compass/Profile results for HPWC

Results from first test at the beginning of the Project



The numbers on the graph above are based on a numerical scale from 10 to 80. These are not percentages or representations of the number of people taking the survey.

Results from the same survey taken again at the end of the project



65 High
50 Average
35 Low

APPENDIX E:

Closing Interviews

Preamble before Interviews began:

Thank you for participating in this interview. Please know there is minimal risk in participating and I will destroy the recording after my research is completed. I am conducting this interview as a part of my research in pursuit of a Doctor of Ministry Degree at Tyndale Seminary in Toronto, Ontario. I will not use your name in my research and all my data will be accessible only to me. Do I have your permission to begin recording?

Yes.

Closing Interview – A participator in HTBS (May 15, 2012)

1. Today is Tuesday, May 15th. We are in the fireside room of Highland Park Wesleyan Church in Ottawa Ontario. Do I have your permission to audio tape this interview and use it in my research for my project thesis, understanding that I will not use your name and that you will have access to the final product of the written thesis? (I asked this question before and after recording began)

Yes.

2. Have there been any developments or changes in how you view God over our time together?

Attributes and Characteristics stand out more to me now, specifically in what God does and in how he interacts.

(What made you choose to use the word “interaction” in this response?)

How he planned the world by way of purpose. A world to take care of us, and later, a plan to take care of our sin.

3. When I speak of God’s mission here on Earth, what sorts of things come to your mind?

To praise, honor and serve him, and love him.

(What about God himself, what do you think he is doing?)

I’m not sure what his mission was in the beginning, but now it’s salvation. To teach and to guide, lead.

(How do you think God is accomplishing his mission/salvation?)

He puts a desire from the Holy Ghost into the people for something better. He does this by using the church and Christians to reach people.

4. God has created you in his image. What does this mean to you?

Wish I knew this growing up.

5. How would you describe God from the way you have been taught?

I've always wondered if we will actually be able to see him someday in a physical sense.

6. What is going on when we worship in both the seen and unseen?

I believe the Holy Spirit is surrounding me. I feel both a hunger and satisfaction to learn more.

(Who is the Holy Spirit?)

Part of God, part of the Trinity. God is the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit – all one person. The Holy Spirit is that aspect of God that ministers to us.

7. What do you picture God doing while you are worshipping?

I picture God, looking down on me smiling, depending on whether I am saying or doing the right thing.

(Elaborate)

The Holy Spirit in those times is trying to teach me something different.

(When you worship, who do you worship when thinking about the Trinity?)

Lord Jesus”, “Father”, “God”.

We come to God through Jesus. I can't get to God except through him.

8. I haven't specifically referred to the Trinity up to now, but let me ask you: Why do you think the Trinity is important, if you do think it important, for a Christian to believe in?

I think it is. If you believe in the Trinity, but you don't understand what it is, it can be very confusing.

How has the teaching in HTBS been helpful?

I think I have a much better understanding of the Trinity. I think beforehand I always had an understanding based on a simple metaphor, but now I know there is far more to it than that. The Trinity is God and unless we believe that God...well, I used to wonder, if Jesus is God and God died on the cross, then who was it who raised him? Now this notion is making far more sense to me.

9. Is there a practical aspect to the Trinity?

For most Christians, I would think, the Trinity is something that makes sense of a God. Helps us to understand him.

10. Do you know the recent mission statement we adopted at HPWC

Yes.

11. How can we experience being Trinitarian if that is at all possible?

I still can't say I can really define God this way. I believe speaking in tongues is a way of experiencing the Trinity even though our church doesn't practice that. With certain hymns, specifically "My Jesus, I love Thee". By looking out at the world and seeing his handiwork.

(Noticed in this statement she covered all three colors. At this point she had no familiarity with NCD's *Three Colors of Ministry*).

(Do you realize you just mentioned all three members of the Trinity? Did you do that on purpose?)

I had not planned on it.

12. When I say God the Father, what comes to your mind?

Being cared for.

13. When I say God the Son, what Comes to your mind?

A big brother, very personal, looking out for me.

14. And when I say, the Holy Spirit?

What makes me tick, and feel comforted. What can make my life right. I come from a loving family who has always been there for me, and when I think of the Godhead I feel the same thing.

Closing Interview – Participator in HTBS (June 2012)

Letter/Email issued to interviewee regarding the interview:

Hello (name),

As you know, I am doing research for a thesis I am working on in order to complete a Doctor of Ministry degree at Tyndale in Toronto. I am wondering if we could meet for lunch after church on Sunday to do an interview primarily about your experience in the Hidden Treasure Bible Study over the past year. I will not reveal your name, and you will have access to the final results when they are printed in the thesis. I really appreciate this (name) and look forward to hearing your thoughts. God bless you.

Pastor Paul

To Connect to God
To Connect to the Each Other
To Connect to the Community
HPWC - A great church to get connected!

1. Tell me about your journey through HTBS and how it has affected your life at HPWC.

Even though you don't specifically mention the Trinity in your sermons all the time, I can certainly see the places you are most obviously speaking about it. The Trinity is no longer a tacit matter for me, as I have seen how you connect our mid-week programs with your preaching. I appreciated how we covered both theory and practice at HTBS.

2. Compare your view of the Trinity now to your views in the past.

I come from another small assembly where I was taught Trinitarianism in services, Sunday School and mid week programs. My pastor had a keen interest in teaching the Trinity. However, I will say that the concept of practical Trinitarianism is new to me as the bulk of my teaching has been very cerebral up to this point.

3. Further comments related to the project-thesis at HPWC

Essentiality of the Trinity is far more personal now. You changed my spiritual glasses. That is, my relationship with God defines my glasses, and not the other way around.

(Interviewee also commented on how the lines between church spirituality and personal spirituality disappeared for him as a result of this project and he related this to the nature of the Trinity.)

Closing Interview, April 20, 2012

1. Do I have your permission to audio record this interview, understanding that I will use your name and will openly share the results of my data? (Question was asked before and after recording began.)

Yes

2. When was the first time you recall having teaching on the Trinity?

I had been taught about it mostly through simple metaphor, which occasionally got me thinking about it. Primarily through Sunday School and parent.

3. What were your thoughts about the Trinity while growing up?

Confusion, and trying to make sense of it. In - worship my concentration would tend to go to one of the members of the Godhead individually. Struggled with whether or not I should be addressing the Holy Spirit in worship.

4. Has your approach to God in worship changed at all since the beginning of this project? (Note: Interviewee participated in reading both NCD resources.)

Yes, both in my awareness and in my desire to know aspects of God that I have not really personally placed as much emphasis upon. For instance, I recognize a need to recognize the Holy Spirit and be in touch with my spiritual and emotional side as I relate to God, and not only with my rationality. This project was something that made me think far more on things that I already knew (code – head to heart).

I feel like I have been breaking God up more lately, but not in a bad way. More in a way that makes me think of areas of worshipping him that I would not have thought of before.

5. Talk to me about how you view communion now.

For me it is mostly still about remembering Jesus' sacrifice, and a thanking. It is an acknowledgement. I see it as a sacrament if you are participating fully in it through God and through the people around you. I think it is more about Christ's sacrifice than the common unity of the people. (No indication of thinking of the Trinity here). I am still not in a place where I consciously tie communion and the Trinity together.

(Interviewee did share that the concept of the Trinity has helped her to understand marriage in a new way and has even helped solidify the idea of oneness among persons.)

6. How has being part of this project shaped you with regards to your personal Trinitarianism?

Growing up in the Pentecostal church, I've always understood the Trinity's work when it comes to my personal worship. I think it has made me more aware of the members of the Godhead, but I'm not sure if that will be a lasting thing. Making me think more about how the fact that God is Trinity has better defined various aspects of what I do as a Christian

7. In terms of God's mission, how do you understand the Trinity?

Your project has put into words, what I've always known. That it is primarily a mission of sending and being sent. The Trinity makes more sense of his mission and our mission.

8. Is there any Triune significance to your baptism?

In a lot of ways: This is who God is that I am following. That the Trinity was present at Christ's baptism has always been significant to me. That the Trinity was there when I was saved, that is it was more than just about my salvation, but about the fullness of God's presence. Knowing the Holy Spirit is present in my life affects what I do because I know it is not only by me alone.

9. Why are you Trinitarian?

Because God has revealed himself this way. I don't think you can worship fully if you don't know who you are worshipping

Closing Interview, December 4, 2012

1. Do I have your permission to audio record our interview, understanding that I will not use your name, and that you can have access to the data when I am finished with the thesis? (This question was asked before and after recording began).

Not a problem

2. How does your belief system influence what you do in your worship, your work, and your relationship with others?

My belief system is very results-oriented and practical. I try to live what I believe. It's not so much about touching God, but more important to me is the people I am with and the common unity about it.

I don't look for people's perception of me, but personal satisfaction from being an ethical and hard worker.

Within the church – a strong interrelation. Outside the church, I am not a proselytizer and don't really wear my belief system on my sleeve, but I'm happy to talk about it if someone brings it up.

3. What are your personal views on how we do sacraments and Sunday liturgies?

I'm fine with it. It is a symbolic measure, and I don't derive a huge spiritual connection to it as some do, for me it's a recognition of the God that I serve and an outward symbol of an inward sense. Not a deep spiritual event for me. I've never been overly liturgical myself. I think it offers a balance point and offers a grounding point for the people. I know some people put a lot of stock in the baptism, but it's not something that holds any reverence to me.

4. How do you relate to God?

It's not emotional as such. I guess I related to him more through what I've read about him. Prayer and devotion. But even in church, I do open prayer for the community and not so much as a personal event.

5. How does God relate to you?

I am a firm believer that God relates to us through the actions of others. In community.

6. Who is Jesus Christ?

The Son of God that lived for 30+ years, became an example of true compassion and love and tried to instill this in others. I believe in his advocacy, but I'm not sure what I mean by that.

7. Who is Jesus Christ today?

Role model, example, and leadership. In terms of the living Christ. Much more of an ethereal thing and not tangible, I just know that he is there.

8. Explain your views of the Holy Spirit.

In some respects I think the Holy Spirit and Jesus are one. A manifestation of God upon us. Jesus Christ was the example, and the Holy Spirit is the continuation of that experience and that philosophy.

9. Talk to me about the Trinity and how it relates to HPWC if you think it does.

That's a mixed bag. There are some who have a very strong sense about it, and others who have no understanding of it, but still accept it. For me, I don't understand it, but I see the three phases of God as manifestations as a single deity, but I don't know if that's common. I don't deny that he has revealed himself to others outside of Christianity in other ways.

10. Talk to me about our current/new mission statement.

Yes, I do know it. I didn't know it was Trinitarian, and even if it is, I don't personally relate it to the Trinity. I think it a good mission statement that is not vague and is good and obvious. That's what I like about it.

11. Has the importance and meaning of the Trinity changed for you in any way over the past year?

I don't see if it has actually moved the congregation in any sense, or changed anyone's views. It hasn't changed anything really for me personally. If it has, I haven't recognized it.

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