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Tyndale University College and Seminary

Empowering Ongoing Transformation in Two Churches
by Discerning and Participating in the Mission of God
through Looking Up, Around, Back, In and Forward

A Thesis
submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements
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by

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ABSTRACT

This project assesses the effectiveness of the discerning process of Looking Up, Around, Back, In and Forward as a means of empowering a church to experience ongoing transformation by discerning and participating in the mission of God. It applies the teaching of Romans 12:2 where the church is instructed to “not conform to the pattern of the world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind.” This thesis looks at ways that the church has embraced the patterns of the world and how the Looking process can move them toward Christ and his Kingdom values. Two Action Research churches went through the Looking process. In addition, three Case Study churches served as exemplars that shed additional light into the Looking process.

This project demonstrates that the Looking process is an effective way for a church to experience ongoing transformation through the discernment of and the participation in the mission of God.

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LISTS OF ABBREVIATIONS, ACRONYMS,

GLOSSARY

- AI: Appreciative Inquiry. This is a method of change management that emphasizes inquiry into strengths, rather than focusing exclusively on fixing weaknesses (Cooperrider and Whitney 2005).
- APEPT: Apostle, Prophet, Evangelist, Pastor and Teacher. This is the term used to define the five-fold offices given to us in Ephesians 4 (Hirsch 2006, 274).
- ARC: Action Research Church. ARC refers to the two churches that went through the Looking process. For the purposes of anonymity the actual church names will not be listed. Rather, the pseudonyms for the churches will be ARC One and ARC Two, or when they are referred to together they will be called ARCs.
- CBOQ: Canadian Baptists of Ontario and Quebec. This will be further explained under the Context heading in Chapter One.
- CSC: Case Study Church. CSC refers to the three case study churches that were used as models of churches that are experiencing ongoing transformation. These exemplar churches have a demonstrated capacity to discern and participate in the mission of God. For the purposes of anonymity the actual church names will not be listed. The pseudonyms for the churches will be CSC One, CSC Two and CSC Three, or when they are referred to together they will be called CSCs.
- GOCN: The Gospel and Our Culture Network. This network was strongly influenced by Lesslie Newbigin. The GOCN brings together Christian leaders from a wide array of churches and organizations who are working together on the frontier of the missionary encounter of the gospel with North American assumptions and perspectives, preferences and practices (Van Gelder 2007, 2-5).
- Looking Process: The Looking process encompasses the discerning and participating activities of Looking Up, Around, Back, In and Forward. This will be further developed throughout the thesis.
- Looking Perspectives: The Looking Perspectives are the three suggested paradigmatic approaches that guide the Looking Process. These perspectives are the foundation on which the Looking process is built; they function as values that shape how a church discerns and participates

in the mission of God. The three perspectives are Trinitarian, Missionary and Organic. This will be further developed throughout the thesis.

NCD: Natural Church Development. NCD offers an organic perspective on the church that includes the “Three Colors” Trinitarian view, Six Growth Forces, Eight Quality Characteristics and other perspectives. It includes a health survey to assess the health of the church relative to the eight areas (Schwarz 2006). These concepts will be further explained and developed throughout the thesis.

Unless otherwise noted, all passages of Scripture utilized in this thesis are taken from Today's New International Version (TNIV).

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

This thesis is about empowering a church to discern and participate in the mission of God, by journeying through a discernment process entitled “Looking process.” This involves Looking Up, Around, Back, In and Forward. The result is ongoing transformation in the life of the church. The core of the Looking process is a series of five interactive workshops that correlate to the five directions of looking. These workshops are designed to facilitate a church’s discerning and participating in the mission of God. All five Looking workshops and other related activities ask participants to reflect on and respond to the following question: “I wonder if God is saying that we could participate with him in...” The discerning and participating is enhanced as churches include Looking sermons, small groups and individual spiritual disciplines.

The discerning process begins by Looking Up. This focuses the attention of the church on who God is and orients their hearts and minds toward listening to God. Looking Around is designed to help churches see what God is doing in the North American culture and also to see God’s activity in their local community. Looking Back enables the church in seeing how God has worked through their story and how this can shape their future mission and ministry ministry (Bellous and Mix 2008, 55-61). Looking In moves the church toward being “internally

strong” (Rusaw and Swanson 2004, 12) to help it be more effective in being “externally focused” (Rusaw and Swanson 2004, 12). Looking Forward is set up to facilitate the church moving into participating in the mission of God. This workshop helps to clarify a church’s calling, values and next steps. (See Table 1, Chapter Four for a list of stages, foci, and timeline.) A summary of the material covered in the five foci of the Looking process is provided in Appendix A.

The Looking process also includes three perspectives that are the foundation on which the Looking process is built. Another way of thinking about these perspectives is that they are the paradigms intended to enable the Looking process to be effective in the discerning and participating process. These three Looking Perspectives are reviewed at each workshop. They are the:

1. Trinitarian Perspective
2. Missionary Perspective
3. Organic Perspective

A summary of the three Looking Perspectives is provided in Appendix B.

Chapter One provides an overview of the Looking process, the purpose of the thesis, challenges, opportunities, ministry contexts, limitations and delimitations and definition of key terms. Chapter Two considers the relationship between theology and mission, the theological rationale for the mission of God and the theological rationale for the Looking process. Chapter Three offers precedent material that explains the mission of God, gives insight into the Looking process and precedent material that highlights living cases. Chapter Four explains the Looking process and the research methodology and methods that were utilized in the two Action Research Churches (ARCs) and the three Case

Study Churches (CSCs). Chapter Five outlines the outcomes and findings from the ARCs that went through the Looking process. It also outlines the findings from the CSCs. Chapter Six offers next steps, thesis conclusions and personal reflections. The next section of the introduction provides an overview of the thesis project.

Overview

This thesis will demonstrate that Looking Up, Around, Back, In and Forward can empower a church to discern and participate in the mission of God resulting in ongoing transformation away from the patterns of the world toward Christ and his Kingdom values. The language of ongoing transformation comes out of Romans 12:2 where the church is instructed to “not conform to the pattern of the world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind.” Using the term ongoing transformation (instead of transformed) reminds us that a church never is fully or completely “transformed.” This chapter will give examples of how the North American church has embraced patterns of the world and what the ongoing transformation to Christ’s values looks like.

Two Action Research Churches (ARCs) journeyed through the Looking process. The research methodology used in these churches to assess the efficacy of the Looking process was Action Research. Action Research involved my direct involvement as trainer, facilitator and coach, and I also functioned as the researcher (Shani and Pasmore 1985). The methods utilized included group interviews, structured questions, coding, categorizing and verifying the findings

with the group interview participants. Both the research methodology and the research methods will be further developed in Chapter Four. The outcomes and findings from the ARCs will be explained in Chapter Five.

Three Case Study Churches (CSCs) served as an additional window into the Looking process. These exemplar churches were identified as ones that had a demonstrated capacity to discern and participate in the mission of God. The CSCs provided input into the type of leadership required for a church to be effectively Looking Forward or participating with the mission of God. The methods utilized to collect and analyze the data from the CSCs were interviews with senior pastoral leaders, coding, categorizing and verifying the findings with the interviewees. Both the research methodology and the research methods will be developed in Chapter Four. The outcomes and findings from the CSCs will be explained in Chapter Five.

Contexts

There are four contexts that can help in understanding this thesis: the context of the Canadian Baptists of Ontario and Quebec, the context of the two ARCs, the context of the three CSCs and the context of the researcher.

The first area of context is that of my role with the Canadian Baptists of Ontario and Quebec (CBOQ). The ministry position I served in throughout this thesis project was The Director of Congregational Health. The CBOQ's vision statement is: *In Christ, Transforming Leaders, Churches and Communities*. The Mission is to: *Resource and enable healthy, mission minded churches as we serve*

God together. The CBOQ has 360 churches in Ontario and (English) Quebec. CBOQ also has a sister convention in Quebec called l'Union d'Églises Baptistes Françaises au Canada which gives coordination to Canadian Baptist French speaking congregations. The Congregational Health Team serves the CBOQ churches in the areas of pastoral settlement, conflict resolution, and resourcing churches according to their ministry and mission needs. The major goal for the team is to facilitate the vision of *Transforming Churches*. The learning acquired through this project will have direct application to the CBOQ as the intention is to have as many churches as possible journey through the Looking process.

The third context that is helpful in understanding this project is that of the three Case Study Churches (CSCs). In consultation with CBOQ colleagues, three churches that exemplified effective discerning and participating with God in mission were selected and senior pastoral leaders from the church were interviewed. In Chapter Four these churches have their contexts more fully developed.

Challenges

The portion of Chapter One outlines the challenges that each ARC was facing and also includes the challenges that the North American church is facing.

ARC One was facing significant challenges. For reasons that will be further explained in Chapter Four the church experienced a dramatic loss of people, money, hope and direction. In a real sense there was the challenge of knowing whether or not they could continue. As will be demonstrated in this

chapter, ARC One is a reasonable representation of many North American churches that feel paralyzed and uncertain about their future – if they have one at all.

The challenges facing ARC Two were not pressing or urgent. The pastoral and lay leadership had the wisdom to know that it was the appropriate time to discern questions of core identity and how to move forward in light of this discernment. As is demonstrated in this chapter, ARC Two is a fair representation of a church that wants to know more of and better participate in the mission of God.

From the challenges of the ARCs we move toward challenges that the broader North American church is facing. A metaphor that is often alluded to in the Looking workshops comes from the classic movie *The Wizard of Oz*. Dorothy experiences a tornado and comes to the realization that she is “not in Kansas anymore.” This feeling is one that some churches today experience. In *Missional Map Making* Alan Roxburgh says:

Many of us feel like we’re suddenly in an unfamiliar land where our internal maps of how things should be no longer match what’s going on around us...that many of the maps we have internalized about what it means to be the church and how to shape churches in our culture no longer connect with or match the dramatically changing environments in which we are now living. (Roxburgh 2010, x-xii)

Tim Conder in *The Church in Transition* points out why the church feels like it has left “Kansas” when he states that “our culture is rapidly moving from a modern, rational, individualistic, Enlightenment society to a world increasingly described as postmodern, post-rational, and post-Christian” (Conder 2006, 12,

13). He goes on to say that the uncertainty of the future is reflected with the word “post.” In other words, it is easier to talk about the familiar past than the unknown future; the future is so uncertain it cannot even be classified. He argues that the only clear item is that, amidst these turbulent times, change is inevitable (Conder 2006, 12, 13). These changes leave many churches uncertain how to proceed.

Another challenge facing the church is diminishing attendance. In years gone by church attendance was seldom an issue. The church building was in the center of town, often on “Church Street.” All the church had to do was put out a sign that said “First Baptist Church,” and the people would come. Canadian sociologist Reginald Bibby’s research reveals that this is no longer the case:

According to (Gallup in 1945) no less than 65% of Canadians over the age of 21 indicated that they had attended a religious service in a three-week period after Easter.

During the five decades [1945-1995], national weekly-plus attendance declined from about 60% to 30%; the attendance drop-off was in the vicinity of 90% to 40% for Roman Catholics and 65% to 35% for Protestants. (Bibby 2008, 4-7)

A 2012 Statistics Canada report by Colin Lindsay says that Canadians attended weekly religious services less than they did 20 years ago:

The percentage of the Canadian population attending religious services on a regular basis has declined over the past 20 years. According to the General Social Survey (GSS), 21% of Canadians aged 15 and over reported they attended a religious service at least once a week in 2005, down from 30% in 1985. (Lindsay 2008)

George Barna argues that one of the reasons church attendance is down is that some are leaving the church for reasons of faith and spirituality. In *Revolution*, he says, “research has uncovered...a growing sub-nation of (American) people, already well over 20 million strong, who are what we call

Revolutionaries.” Barna explains that these Revolutionaries are born again people who have made their faith in God the highest priority in their life, who believe that their faith has greatly transformed their life, and who often express and experience their faith through alternative forms of the Church (Barna 2005, 13-17). Few would suggest that these revolutionaries are leaving the universal church. However, for the existing form of church and its leaders, the diminishing church attendance causes many Christian leaders to experience paralysis and confusion as to what to do and how to do it.

The challenge the existing church faces in declining attendance is most notable amongst the “twenty-somethings.” There are few churches that have reached this demographic. In *You Lost Me*, David Kinnaman tells the story of young adults as follows:

Young adults describe their individual faith journeys in startlingly similar language. Most of the stories include significant disengagement from the church – and sometimes Christianity altogether. But it’s not just dropping out that they have in common. Many young people who grew up in the church and have since dropped out do not hesitate to place blame. They point the finger, fairly or not, at the establishment: you lost me! (Kinnaman 2011, 9)

In *The Bridger Generation*, Thomas Rainer states that: “We are losing an entire generation” (Rainer 2006, 169). The contributors to *Hemorrhaging Faith* share:

...sobering new research on Canadian “raised Christian” 18 to 34 year-olds. For every five Catholic and Mainline Protestant kids who attended church at least weekly in the 1980s and ’90s only one still attends at least weekly now as an adult; for those raised in Evangelical traditions it is one in two. And that’s not all. Most who have quit attending altogether also have dropped their Christian affiliation. (Penner et al. 2012, 5)

Later on they write:

The decline (in church attendance among 18-34 year-olds) is particularly evident for Catholic and Mainline traditions. By young adulthood only 1 in 10 respondents raised in Catholic and Mainline traditions reported attending religious services at least weekly – compared to 4 in 10 raised in Evangelical traditions. (Penner et al. 2012, 22)

Clearly this generation has not engaged in the life of the church. This reality can be a source of confusion for churches today.

In the past some saw the answer to the confusion as simply planting new churches. However, in contemporary North American culture this usually created more of the same churches which often resulted in the same state of paralysis. Add to this that “few churches in America last past their second birthday” (Halter and Smay 2010, 16).

Another answer often postulated to the uncertainty that churches face is that all they need to do is to get the right pastor (Roxburgh and Romanuk 2006, 11). This is not an entirely wrong answer. The research from CSCs revealed that leadership plays an integral role in discerning and participating in the mission of God. However, the challenge in the CBOQ context is that often times the underlying assumption in getting the right pastor is that if the minister does excellent mission for us and caring ministry to us then people will come back to church. While this can and does happen, it does not empower a church to experience ongoing transformation by discerning and participating in the mission of God. Pastoral leadership that empowers the people of God for mission and ministry is essential for ongoing transformation. A further challenge is that this type of empowering pastoral leaders is not readily available. Most pastors were

trained for a world that no longer exists. Alan Roxburgh says that we have “clergy not trained to deal with the world now shaping the communities in which their parishes are located” (Roxburgh 2010, xii). The tension is stated as follows:

The classic skills of pastoral leadership in which most pastors were trained were not wrong, but the level of discontinuous change renders many of them insufficient and often unhelpful at this point. It is as if we are prepared to play baseball and suddenly discover everyone else is playing basketball. The game has changed and the rules are different. (Roxburgh and Romanuk 2006, 11)

When it comes to this critical dynamic of missional pastoral leadership, many churches and pastors still find themselves confused as to how to proceed.

In *Missional Church*, Darrell Guder sums up the pressing issues facing the church today when he says:

The crises are certainly many and complex: diminishing numbers, clergy burnout, the loss of youth, the end of denominational loyalty, biblical illiteracy, division in the ranks, the electronic church and its various corruptions, the irrelevance of traditional forms of worship, the loss of genuine spirituality and widespread confusion about both the purpose and the message of the church of Jesus Christ. . . .rectifying the situation is no longer a matter of more money, talent, time, and commitment. (Guder 1998, 2)

These factors and others like them result in so many churches feeling uncertain how to proceed.

Thankfully, some real hope appears to be emerging. Many credible voices are rightly proclaiming that the way forward is to participate with God in his redemptive mission; that the church should be “missional” (Van Gelder and Zscheile 2011, 1-14). Now the challenge that many churches face is making sense of what it means to be missional. In *The Missional Church in Perspective*, Alan Roxburgh informs us that there are different missional images presented in a

variety of books and seminars. Confusion exists around how the same word can be used in such different ways and yet mean so many different things. “No wonder people in our churches keep asking what the word means, and why they feel as if they have been propelled into a confusing world whose language sounds like a lot of ‘ba, ba, ba, ba, ba’” (Van Gelder and Zscheile 2011, xiv). It seems that even when the church has some idea of where it wants to go it still struggles with knowing how to get there.

For these reasons and others, churches find themselves in a place of confusion and uncertainty as to how to move forward with God in his mission. The next section will present three innovations that will address some of these challenges.

Innovations

This section will cover the three innovations of this project. The first two innovations are minor. The third is the major innovation. The first innovation is that the Looking process provides a workable means to answer the confusion and paralysis that many churches face today, empowering these churches to discern and participate in the mission of God. Secondly, the Looking process provides a method of discernment that is congregational. The third innovation is that the Looking process offers a way that churches can experience ongoing transformation away from the patterns of the world toward Christ’s values. The following three areas of transformation from the patterns of the world to Christ’s values will be explored:

- Mission and ministry focus: Movement from Consumerism to Cause
- Success indicators: Movement from Counting to Kingdom
- Planning process: Movement from Determining to Discernment

The first innovation is to test and see if the Looking Perspectives and process can empower a church that wants to participate with God, but for some of the aforementioned challenges, or others, they find themselves with a degree of paralysis and confusion. To be sure, for a church to discern and participate in the mission of God it takes more than the Looking process, it also requires the right pastoral and lay leaders. These leadership characteristics will be explored in Chapters Three, Five and Six.

The second innovation is that the Looking process is open to the entire congregation. Many other methods of discernment use pastors, or pastors and church elders/deacons or a board appointed ad hoc team that leads the process with minimal input from the whole church body. The Looking process involves the entire congregation. Those who want to actively participate do so through workshops, small groups and individual discerning activities. Those who are more passive participate minimally through listening to sermons provided by the Looking themes. This process empowers the church by getting the whole church on the same page, creating a “tipping point” (Gladwell 2000, 7) for congregational transformation.

The third and major innovation is that the Looking process empowers churches away from the patterns of the world and toward Christ’s values. A

premise in this project is that churches that effectively discern and participate in the mission of God will experience ongoing transformation. Ongoing transformation implies that the church experiences a metamorphosis from something to something else. A foundational passage utilized in the Looking process that calls the church to ongoing transformation is Romans 12:1, 2:

Therefore I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God’s mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God—this is true worship. Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God’s will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will.

This passage argues that the church is susceptible to buying into the patterns of our world. In *A Field Guide for the Missional Congregation*, Rick Rouse and Craig Van Gelder provide the following transformations that need to take place:

From:		To:
Maintenance	→	Mission
Membership	→	Discipleship
Pastor-Centered	→	Lay-Empowered
Chaplaincy (Self)	→	Hospitality (Others)
Focus On Ourselves	→	Focus On The World

(Rouse and Van Gelder 2008, 23)

The Looking process offers ways that the church has embraced the patterns of the world and Christ’s values that would be in contrast to them. Patterns of the world: consumerism, counting and determining versus Christ’s values: cause, Kingdom and discernment. The ongoing transformation that the Looking process facilitated in the ARCs was to move away from the patterns of the world and toward Christ and his values.

- Mission and ministry focus: Movement from Consumerism to Cause
- Success indicators: Movement from Counting to Kingdom

- Planning process: Movement from Determining to Discernment

Each of these contrasts will be further explored. Of note, however, is that on the “pattern of the world” side of the equation (consumerism, counting and determining), there are some positive or Christ-like values. Preachers rightly desire that their hearers receive (consume) from God when they preach. Scripture is clear that “God will meet all your needs according to the riches of his glory in Christ Jesus” (Philippians 4: 19). The book of Acts “counted” conversions and baptisms and one can surmise they also counted the offering at the different churches. There is also a positive side to determining or planning. In Luke 14:25 – in light of the cost of discipleship – Jesus uses the analogy of planning for construction or battle and “determining” if people should or should not do something.

This list does not imply that drastic black and white dichotomies exist in the landscape of North American churches; that churches are either “worldly” or “Christ-like.” Few, if any, churches would completely land on one side or the other. Certainly the ARCs would not be classified as strictly “patterns of the world churches” nor would any of the CSCs assess themselves as fully representing the “Christ’s values” side of the equation. The third innovation of this project is to see the Looking process facilitate the ARCs moving into greater alignment with Christ and his values. What follows is a discussion of the three ongoing transformation markers that were addressed with the ARCs in the Looking process. The first marker is the mission and ministry focus of the church moving from Consumerism to Cause.

Mission and Ministry Focus:
Movement from Consumerism to Cause

In *The Sky is Falling*, Alan Roxburgh argues that the church has subtly embraced the cultural values of consumerism and individualism and how it should transform from this to “cause” or a focusing on God and his mission:

Throughout Western societies, and most especially in North America, there has occurred a fundamental shift in the understanding and practice of the Christian story. It is no longer about God and what God is about in the world; it is about how God serves and meets human needs and desires. It is about how the individual self can find its own purposes and fulfillment. More specifically, our churches have become spiritual food courts for the personal, private, inner needs of expressive individuals. The result is a debased, compromised, derivative form of Christianity that is not the gospel of the Bible at all. The biblical narrative is about God’s mission in, through, and for the sake of the world and how God has called human beings to be a part of God’s reaching out to that world for God’s purpose of saving it in love. The focus of attention should be what God wants to accomplish and how we can be part of God’s mission (cause), not how God helps us accomplish his agenda. (Roxburgh 2005, 12, 13)

In *The Great Giveaway*, David Fitch asserts the same idea that much of the North American Church has to varying degrees bought into the patterns of the world and imbibed the cultural values of success, consumerism and individualism. He explains that many churches act as if Jesus and the church exist to serve and meet their personal needs rather than the belief and practice that the church exists to be agents of Christ’s redemptive work (Fitch 2005, 9-46). Alan Roxburgh and Fred Romanuk argue that “a congregation must become a place where members learn to function like cross-cultural missionaries rather than be a gathering place where people come to receive religious goods and services” (Roxburgh and Romanuk 2006, 13).

The Looking process develops the first marker of ongoing transformation. It helps churches experience movement from ministering to consumer-driven Christians to seeing churches invite all of God's children to join God in his cause, his mission: the redemption of all of creation (see Chapters Two and Three). The next marker of ongoing transformation is moving how the church views success from Counting to Kingdom.

Success Indicators:
Movement from Counting to Kingdom

In listening to what a business, sports team or educational institution measures as indicators of success it sounds almost identical to those that many churches would identify. Success is measured in terms of more money, people and facilities. How our culture defines success is how some churches define success. It is not that people, money, buildings or pastoral staff are wrong; on the contrary, they are often good and necessary for the church in its participation in the mission of God. However, the subtle buy-in to the pattern of the world is that these "counting" success indicators can become the mission of the church. Eddie Gibbs says that "a spate of books came in the 1970's-1990's from leaders of mega churches...(who) trumpeted a message of success, inviting other leaders to adopt their methods in order to achieve similar results" (Roxburgh and Romanuk 2006, xii).

In *Missional Renaissance*, Reggie McNeal argues that the church should create a new scorecard; one that moves from success based on counting internal

numbers to one that focuses on the values of Christ and his Kingdom (McNeal 2009, 111-177).

A challenge is that counting money and attendance are concrete and quantifiable; measuring fruitfulness by how our surrounding community is better reflecting Kingdom values is more abstract and requires more qualitative measurements. The subtitle to Reggie McNeal's book, *Missional Renaissance*, is *Changing the Scorecard for the Church*. Throughout this book McNeal offers ways that a church can measure its fruitfulness and Kingdom impact (McNeal 2009).

The Looking process develops this second marker of ongoing transformation, helping churches experience movement in how they view success shifting from the internal indicators of money, attendance, facilities and staff, to that of seeing fruitfulness measured by how effective the church is at having the community around it reflect the values of The Kingdom of God. The third marker in the innovation of how the Looking process facilitates ongoing transformation is how the church conducts its planning in moving from Determining to Discerning.

Planning Process:
From Determining to Discernment

The title of the fifth chapter of *Missional Map Making* is: "Why Strategic Planning Doesn't Work in this New Space and Doesn't Fit God's Purposes." In it, Alan Roxburgh argues that:

Strategic planning uses objectification to achieve its ends...there can never be a justification for turning any human being into an object of someone else's goals and vision in the social community formed by the Spirit of

God. Once this line is crossed, strategic planning is not a gift but a curse; it is not a means of achieving something for the Kingdom of God but a means of denying the Kingdom of God. (Roxburgh 2010, 73-85)

In this project, the word “determining” is used to describe how the church often plans or goes about strategic planning. Often times a church’s strategic planning team will offer up a perfunctory prayer, then ask people what they want (consumerism). And then they determine their plans. Planning in and of itself is not wrong; the way we plan often is. In *The Missional Leader*, Alan Roxburgh and Fred Romanuk say that “the familiar methods of strategic planning and alignment around vision and mission statements are not too helpful at the outset” (Roxburgh and Romanuk 2006, 80). They further state that birthing a missional church is like sailing a turbulent ocean:

- We can’t assume that we know the destination before getting there.
- Since the reality of our context is shifting, the direction and nature of engagement keep shifting.
- Leaders require a new set of skills and capacities to navigate these waters. (Roxburgh and Romanuk 2006, 81)

Most strategic planning encourages us to presuppose things that Scripture encourages us not to. In the book of James we are instructed that we “do not even know what will happen tomorrow. And so we should not say, Today or tomorrow we will go to this or that city, spend a year there, carry on business and make money” (James 4: 14). Current business literature would offer the same advice. We read in *20/20 Foresight*: “One thing is certain: Managers should abandon – or at least revise – their traditional strategic-planning and decision-making processes” (Courtney 2001, 136). Alan Roxburgh says that “Planning is

necessary.” However, he would also say that based on the underlying assumptions of strategic planning, it cannot be used in forming mission-shaped communities (Roxburgh 2010, 78, 79).

Determining or classic strategic planning assumes we know the destination and the clear path to get there. Discerning requires a different approach to planning. An underlying assumption in this project is that God is active in our local and global communities. Our role is not to plan in such a way that we think that we can bring about or determine God’s mission. Rather, our agenda needs to be discerning what God is already doing and further discerning how we can participate with God in his activity. In *Treasures in Clay Jars*, Lois Barrett places the emphasis on communal discernment vs. determining when she says that “The congregation is discovering together...it is seeking to discern God’s specific missional vocation for the entire community and for all its members.” She further suggests that congregations need “dependence on the Holy Spirit” and that they need to be “listening for God’s unique call” (Barrett 2004, ix- xii). When the future seemed more certain and predictable, churches could more easily determine their future through the development of a strategic plan “with the end in mind” (Covey 1989, 95-144). Rick Rouse and Craig Van Gelder in *A Field Guide for the Missional Congregation* encourage the church to move away from this type of determining toward discerning, to “embark on a quest...exploring creatively how to participate more fully in God’s mission in the world as the Spirit leads your congregation into those places yet to be discerned...” (Rouse and Van Gelder 2008, 13).

The Looking process develops this third marker of ongoing transformation by helping churches experience movement from determining their plans to discerning God's mission and participating with God in his mission.

The Looking process offers three innovations. A workable path for churches that are feeling paralysis, a discerning process that involves the whole congregation and finally the Looking process empowers a church away from the patterns of the world and toward Christ's values.

Opportunities

The opportunity that exists for the ARCs is that they will discern and more fully participate in the mission of God; that they will experience ongoing transformation from the patterns of the world (consumerism, counting and determining) toward Christ's values of cause, Kingdom and discerning. Both ARCs have done excellent work in cause, Kingdom and discerning. The opportunity that the Looking process afforded them was to see a greater realization of these characteristics in the life of their church.

Limitations and Delimitations

This project is limited to the impact that the Looking process had on the two ARC churches. It focused on ascertaining how the Looking process helped the churches to discern and participate in the mission of God. It also focused on how the Looking process empowered movement away from consumerism, counting and determining and how it empowered movement toward cause, Kingdom and discerning.

The Looking process is not intended to be the solution for any or all ills that a church may be facing.

This project is not a polemic for the missional church. It is based on the presupposition that, despite some questions and challenges, the fundamental tenets of the missional church are congruent with both Scripture and the historical witness of the Church of Christ.

This project is also not a polemic against the existing church as if it is somehow unredeemable. The desire is to offer practical means by which the existing church can more fully participate in God's redemptive mission.

Definition of Key Terms

It will be helpful to define and explain a number of key concepts in this project

Discerning and the Looking Process

The following definitions of discerning shaped this project. Oswald and Friedrich state that “the etymological basis of the term discernment comes from the Greek word that means ‘sift through’” (Oswald and Friedrich 1996, x). Ruth Haley Barton offers that “discernment...is the capacity to recognize and respond to the presence and the activity of God” (Haley Barton 2012, 10, 11). Craig Van Gelder says that “discerning is not just what God is up to but adds what does God want to do” (Rouse and Van Gelder 2008, 49). These multiple definitions show that discerning is assessing and arriving at an understanding of how God is active in our local and global communities.

The Looking process is in essence a discerning process. Looking Up is designed to discern the mission of God through the practicing of spiritual disciplines. Looking Around is designed to help churches discern the mission of God by getting churches to look outside of themselves and look for what God might be doing in the broader culture and the local community. Looking Back helps churches discern by considering how God has worked in the past in the life of the church and how that might point to God's mission for the present and future. Looking In is designed to help churches discern what God's mission is in the life of the church. The intent for Looking Forward is to move a church into actively participating with God in mission. There is, though, still a discerning element to Looking Forward. One way to discern God's mission is to pursue our God-given passions. The psalmist says: "Take delight in the LORD and he will give you the desires of your heart" (Psalm 37:4). Alan Roxburgh and Scott Boren argue that one of the best ways to discern and more effectively participate with God's mission is by beginning to experiment (participate with God) in missional ventures (Roxburgh and Boren 2009, 181-190).

For this project, discerning will mean that those who are involved in the Looking process are experiencing illumination as to what God is doing and how God wants them to participate in his redemptive activity. It answers the question "What is God doing that he is calling us to participate in?" Discernment is not about polling a congregation to see what they want in a consumerist manner, rather, discernment is discovering what God is already doing and what part the church will play with God in that activity.

As discerning is central to this project, the understanding and application of it will be further developed in Chapters Two and Three.

Participating

This word should be self-explanatory; it is included in this project because of the propensity of many churches to assess or discern, make plans and then not follow through with implementation. The essence of Looking Forward is that the church actually does do something; the church participates with God in mission.

Previous iterations of this project, including the research portion and the Looking material, used the word “engaging” instead of “participating.” With insightful input from thesis advisors, this term was changed. It was pointed out that “the verb ‘engage’ tends to imply human agency more the divine agency, while a verb like ‘participate’ shifts the focus more to God’s initiative and work in the world (Craig Van Gelder, email message to author, August 21, 2012).

Transforming (Ongoing Transformation)

The term “ongoing transformation” is used throughout this document. The often-used word “renewal” has not been used in this project. From a language perspective, the word “renewal” sounds like a church should simply do similar things better. Transforming, conversely, implies an ongoing metamorphosis. The word “transformation” is occasionally used by itself but it has been largely avoided to reinforce the idea that we don’t ever “arrive.” For this project, “ongoing transformation” will be used to discuss how the church is experiencing

movement away from the values of our culture and toward Christ and his *Kingdom values*.

Empowering

“Empowering” could be summed up by saying: illuminating, inspiring, equipping and encouraging churches through the Looking process to discern and participate in the mission of God, resulting in ongoing transformation. The Looking process is designed to facilitate all of these parts of empowerment.

Dwelling in the Word

“Dwelling in the Word” is a way to read Scripture in community. The process is to have a short passage of Scripture read aloud where people are encouraged to take note of where their imagination was caught in the text.

Participants then pair up and listen to each other by attending carefully to what the other person heard and thus allow them to speak freely. In the larger group sharing, people are invited to share not what they heard but what their partner heard (Van Gelder and Zscheile 2011, 151).

Lectio Divina

Lectio Divina is Latin for Diving Reading. “*Lectio Divina* is an ancient method of reading Scripture that was developed by the desert mothers and fathers to allow God to address them directly through the biblical text” (Haley Barton 2012, 247). This spiritual discipline is similar to Dwelling in the Word. For the Looking process *Lectio Divina* is given as individual homework to participants

after the Looking Up workshop, and Dwelling in the Word is conducted with the whole group at each Looking workshop.

Attractional Church

Alan Hirsch helps us understand this concept when he says:

Essentially, attractional church operates from the assumption that to bring people to Jesus we need to first bring them to church. It also describes the type of mode of engagement that was birthed during the Christendom period of history, when the church was perceived as a central institution of society and therefore expected people to “come and hear the gospel” rather than taking a “go-to-them” type of mentality. Not to be confused with being culturally attractive (Hirsch 2006, 275).

The significance of this concept to this project is that churches who participate in the mission of God effectively do so as they move from an emphasis on attracting people to being intentional about modeling the incarnation of Jesus.

Theology, Missiology, Ecclesiology

The Forge Canada Missional Training Network explains that:

There has been a lot of discussion over recent years about the relationship between Christology (Theology), Missiology and Ecclesiology. We agree that this is a very important conversation for the development of missional churches. In the past, we have given greater emphasis to the practice of doing church, than to the issue of mission. It seems as if our Christology led to our Ecclesiology, which may have led to Missiology. At times, our Ecclesiology has even been elevated above Christology. Instead, we need to understand that our Theology (including the nature of the people of God) leads to Missiology (the Good News in context) leads to Ecclesiology (the practices of being God’s people in that context). We need a two-part understanding of the church – the nature of God’s people and the practices of God’s people. (Brown 2009, 6)

In *Transforming Mission*, Bosch argues that “Ecclesiology does not precede Missiology...” and because God is a missionary God, that “missionary activity is

not so much the work of the church as simply the Church at work” (Bosch 2011, 381).

The order of the Looking process correlates to the order of these words. Looking Up relates to theology. This puts the focus on God, who God is, God’s character, nature and love for all creation. Looking Around relates to missiology. This helps the church to focus on how God engaged in mission (sending Jesus) and how the church should also be sent. Looking Back and In relate to ecclesiology. This should help the church to continually adapt to God and mission. It should also result in new indigenous expressions of the church being birthed.

Post-Christian Canada

One of the fundamental rationales for the church needing to discern and participate with God in mission is that the contemporary Western culture, including Canada, is no longer (if it ever was) Christian. In light of this we need to think and act like missionaries. In *Introducing the Missional Church*, Alan Roxburgh and Boren state that “until the early 1960’s, a broad-based Judeo-Christian culture informed our society” (Roxburgh and Boren 2009, 79, 80). In *Resident Aliens*, the authors assert that:

Sometime between 1960 and 1980, an old, inadequately conceived world ended, and a fresh new one began. We do not mean to be overly dramatic. Although there are many who have not yet heard the news, it is nevertheless true; a tired old world has ended... (In the past) Church, home and state formed a national consortium that worked together to instill “Christian Values.” ...A few years ago, the two awoke and realized that, whether our parents were justified in believing this about the world and the Christian faith, nobody believed it today...All sorts of Christians are

waking up and realizing that it is no longer “our world.” (Hauerwas and Willimon 1989, 15-17)

Summary

This Chapter provided an overview of the Looking process, the purpose of the thesis, challenges, opportunities, ministry contexts, limitations and delimitations and definition of key terms. Chapter Two considers the relationship between theology and mission, the theological rationale for the mission of God and the theological rationale for the Looking process.

CHAPTER TWO

THEOLOGICAL RATIONALE

Introduction

This project is about empowering a church, through the Looking process, to discern and participate in the mission of God, resulting in ongoing transformation. Chapter One gave the purpose and overview of this project including contexts, challenges and definition of terms. This chapter explores the intersection between theology and mission, gives multiple definitions for the mission of God and provides theological support for the Looking process.

Theology and Mission

In *Transforming Mission*, David Bosch highlights the relationship between theology and mission when he observes that “Theology is a reflective account of the faith...it is a part of the task of theology critically to consider mission as one of the expressions...of the Christian faith” (Bosch 2011, 2). He suggests that in the infancy of the church, theology flowed out of mission. “In the first century, theology was not a luxury of the world-conquering church but was generated by the emergency situation that the church found itself in. In this situation mission became the ‘Mother of Theology’” (Bosch 2011, 501). Bosch also notes that the

best way to understand the great theologian of the church, the Apostle Paul, is through the eyes of what he first and foremost was, a missionary:

Paul's theology and mission do not simply relate to each other as "theory" to "practice" in the sense that his mission flows from his theology but rather in the sense that his theology is a missionary theology and that mission is integrally related to his identity and thought as such.

Paul's understanding of mission is not an abstract concept dangling from a universal principle, but an analysis of reality triggered by an initial experience that gave him a new world view. (Bosch 2011, 126)

The Looking process seeks to highlight this relationship between theology and mission by the ordering of the Looking workshops. It begins with Looking Up (theology) and then transitions to Looking Around (mission). The significance of the interaction between theology and mission is echoed by Christopher Wright in *The Mission of God's People, a Biblical Theology of the Church's Mission*:

There should be no theology that does not relate to the mission of the church – either by being generated out of the church's mission or by inspiring and shaping it. And there should be no mission of the church carried on without deep theological roots in the soil of the Bible. No theology without missional impact; no mission without theological foundations. (Wright 2010, 20)

At each Looking workshop a portion of the time is dedicated to biblical and theological reflection. As these authors have stated, you cannot focus on God independent of his mission and you cannot focus on mission independent of God. The biblical and theological reflection on who God is points the church to the mission of God and its participation in it.

The Mission of God

The end result of the Looking process is that a church should be actively participating in the mission of God. These multiple definitions about the mission

of God describe what a church should look like; what a church should be and do. At every workshop, a different definition of the mission of God is explored. The definitions given in this section are the actual definitions that are utilized in the Looking workshops. It is my assumption that the different definitions covered in the various workshops provide a greater depth of understanding to a greater number of participants.

Howard Snyder argues that the mission of the church is derived from the mission of God; the mission of the church is the mission of God. So a missional Church is one that participates in the mission of God (Snyder 2010, 1). In light of this, the definitions provided under this heading will include both “The Mission of God” and “Missional Church.”

For the purposes of this project the following definition from Don Goertz will be utilized:

The Missional Church is a community gathered by the Spirit from all walks of life, socioeconomic backgrounds, ethnicities and ages, intentionally serving as a sign of the Kingdom by breaking down dividing walls. The Missional Church gathered in worship immerses itself in the values and rhythms of the Kingdom, celebrating life in the presence of Jesus Christ its King, Redeemer, Saviour and Lord, offering itself as a foretaste of this Kingdom. The Missional Church is a community sent out by the Father, in the power of the Holy Spirit to live in the world as Jesus did. The Missional Church is a listening community, together discerning where God’s redemptive reign is at work in the world and entering into this activity in order to serve as an instrument of the Kingdom of God, by the power of the Holy Spirit. (Goertz 2011, 1)

The reason for choosing this definition is that it is comprehensive in covering God’s redemptive work both in the church and in the world and in so doing

covers the foci of the Looking process. The definition also has an emphasis on communal discernment, which is congruent with the Looking process.

In *The Mission of God: Unlocking the Bible's Grand Narrative*, Christopher Wright defines the mission of God as: “Fundamentally, our mission, if it is biblically informed and validated...(the mission of God) means our committed participation as God’s people, at God’s invitation and command, in God’s own mission within the history of God’s world for the redemption of God’s creation” (Wright 2006, 22, 23). Howard Snyder gives this definition of the Mission of God:

God the Father sends the Son into the world in the power of the Holy Spirit to bring salvation in all its dimensions, including ultimately the reconciliation of all things, the kingdom of God in its fullness. The church’s mission derives from this action of the Triune God. It is to embody and proclaim the “good news of the kingdom”— of salvation through Jesus Christ. (Snyder 2010, 1)

Another excellent definition of the missional church is given by Lois Barrett in *Treasure in Clay Jars*:

A missional church is a church that is shaped by [or “The expression of the body of Christ that is truly missional is shaped by ...”] participating in God's mission, which is to set things right in a broken, sinful world, to redeem it, and to restore what God has always intended for the world. Missional churches see themselves not so much as sending, as being sent. A missional congregation lets God's mission permeate everything that the congregation does — from worship to witness to training members for discipleship. It bridges the gap between outreach and congregational life, since, in its life together, the church is to embody God's mission. (Barrett 2004, x)

In *Introducing Missional Church*, Alan Roxburgh and Scott Boren argue that people and churches wrongly assume that being missional is not that different from what they have been doing (Roxburgh & Boren 2010, 30). They further state

that sometimes the best way to understand something is by explaining what it isn't. *This is what Roxburgh and Boren do:*

1. Missional Church is not a label for churches that emphasize cross-cultural missions.
 2. Missional Church is not a label used to describe churches that are using outreach programs to be externally focused.
 3. Missional Church is not another label for church growth and church effectiveness.
 4. Missional Church is not a label for churches that are effective at evangelism.
 5. Missional Church is not a label to describe churches that have developed a clear mission statement with a vision and purpose for their existence.
 6. Missional Church is not a way of turning around ineffective and outdated church forms so they can display relevance to the wider culture.
 7. Missional Church is not a label that points to primitive or ancient ways of being the church.
 8. Missional Church is not a label describing new formats of church that reach people that have no interest in traditional churches.
- (Roxburgh & Boren 2010, 31-39)

Certainly the authors are not saying that a church is not missional if it engages in any of these activities. Rather, he is saying that in and of themselves these activities do not define or make a church missional.

Chapter One highlighted the three markers of transformation that the Looking process addressed in the two ARCs. The first was the ministry focus of the church experiencing movement from Consumerism to Cause. The second was the success (fruitfulness) indicators of the church moving from Counting to Kingdom. The third was the planning process of the church moving from Determining to Discerning. These definitions of the mission of God create another description of the ongoing transformation that the Looking process addresses. In

other words, churches whose beliefs and actions reflect these definitions are churches that are focusing on Christ's values of cause, Kingdom and discerning.

The Biblical and Theological Basis for the Looking Process

This section outlines doctrines and Scriptures that support a church's discerning and participating in the mission of God through the Looking process. Woven throughout the support for the Looking process will be the biblical and theological support for the three Looking Perspectives – Trinitarian, Missionary and Organic.

Looking Up

The doctrine of the Trinity shapes Looking Up.

The term [Trinity] designating one God in three persons is not itself a biblical term, "Trinity" has been found a convenient designation for the one God self-revealed in Scripture as Father, Son and Holy Spirit. It signifies that within the one essence of the Godhead we have to distinguish three "persons" who are neither three gods on the one side, nor three parts or modes of God on the other, but coequally and coeternally God. (Bromley 1986, 1112)

A key passage in understanding how the doctrine of the Trinity shapes different aspects of the Looking process, including Looking Up, is Jesus' prayer in John 17, particularly verses 18-23:

As you sent me into the world, I have sent them into the world. For them I sanctify myself, that they too may be truly sanctified. My prayer is not for them alone. I pray also for those who will believe in me through their message, 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. May they be brought to

complete unity to let the world know that you sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me.

The influence on Looking Up is seen in these verses when Jesus prayed that his followers would be in him, just as he is in the Father and through that the church “would also be in us.” The notion of life with God is taught in the Looking Up workshop. In essence, Jesus is inviting the (discerning) church into the “dance” of the Trinity. The early church leaders used the term *perichoresis* to describe the Trinity (*peri*-circle, *resis*-dance) (McLaren 2004, 62). In *The Great Dance*, Baxter Kruger writes:

What the doctrine of the Trinity is telling us is that God is fundamentally a relational being...there has never been a moment in all eternity when God was alone. God has always existed in relationship...Fellowship, camaraderie, togetherness, communion have always been at the center of the very being of God, and always will be...The Father, Son and Spirit live in conversation, in a fellowship of free-flowing togetherness and sharing and delight - a great dance of shared life that is full and rich and passionate, creative and good and beautiful. (Kruger 2000, 23, 24)

The purpose of Looking Up is to help individuals and churches enter into this Trinitarian dance. As participants enter more intimately into their relationship with the Father through the Son, they have an increased capacity to hear the Spirit’s voice resulting in greater discernment. Another window into discerning through Looking Up and dwelling in the Trinity comes from the 17th century French monk known as Brother Lawrence who writes:

All we have to do is to recognize God as being intimately present within us. Then we may speak directly to Him every time we need to ask for help, to know His will in moments of uncertainty, and to do whatever He wants us to do in a way that pleases Him...ask confidently for God's grace in everything we do, trusting the infinite merits of our Lord rather than our own thoughts...When we are in doubt God never fails to show us the right

way to go, as long as our only goal is to please Him and show our love for Him. (Lawrence 1982, 19)

Another major influence of Trinitarian theology on Looking Up comes from Christian Schwarz and his work with Natural Church Development. In *Color Your World with NCD*, Schwarz notes how most denominational families and churches tend to primarily focus on one of the persons of the Trinity (Schwarz 2005, 46-77). Churches from a charismatic tradition tend to focus more on God as Holy Spirit and use more listening or sensing in the discerning process. Churches from a mainline tradition tend to focus more on God as Father and rely heavily on rationalism or reason in their discerning process. Churches from an evangelical tradition tend to focus more on God as Son and utilize Scripture as their primary means of discernment. Schwarz asserts that discernment is enhanced when a church focuses on all three persons of the Trinity. For a local church experiencing ongoing transformation by discerning and participating in the mission of God, they will do so more effectively by using all the emphases that the three traditions focus on (Schwarz 2005, 46-77). This holistic practice of discerning and participating in the mission of God is the essence of the Looking Perspective – Trinitarian that is reviewed at each of the five Looking workshops. The summation or application of this Looking Perspective is that churches can more effectively discern the mission of God as they are led and empowered by the Holy Spirit, engage their minds and are true to Scripture.

The third person of the Trinity, the Holy Spirit, plays a significant role in the discerning process. Craig Van Gelder and Dwight Zscheile in *The Missional*

Church in Perspective argue for the role of the Holy Spirit in discerning when he says:

When God's people are lost in moments of disorganization and crisis the Spirit unifies and empowers them...Perhaps most pointedly for mission, it is through the pouring out of the Spirit that God brings about an explosive, multilingual, multicultural testimony to Godself...we need to be aware of the role of the Spirit as the key to understanding the active participation of the church in God's world. (Van Gelder & Zscheile 2011, 117-120)

The focus on the Trinity is a focus on God and our pursuit of God.

Throughout all of Scripture the people of God have been invited by God to be with him, hear his voice and follow his ways. In *Borderland Churches*, Gary Nelson uses the image of the church in exile today like the people of God who were in exile in the Old Testament. The prophet Jeremiah reminded the people of God that they would not be in exile, or on the borderland, forever, that God had a new plan for his people and that they would discern that plan (Nelson 2008, 11-41). Looking Up resonates with the words of the prophet Jeremiah when he said to the people in exile: "You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart. I will be found by you, declares the Lord, and will bring you back from captivity" (Jeremiah 29:13-14).

The discerning process begins with Looking Up, focusing the attention of the church on a Trinitarian God who desires to reveal himself and his mission to his people.

Looking Around

Scripture records Jesus' incarnation among humanity and his Looking Around that when "he saw the crowds, he had compassion on them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd" (Mark 6: 34).

Jesus' Looking Around is also an outflowing of the doctrine of the Trinity. The doctrine of the Trinity shapes Looking Up; it also influences Looking Around. In *Transforming Mission*, David Bosch gives an historical and theological perspective on the intersection between mission and Trinity. He notes that the word "mission" is commonly used for churches' missionary activity. However, Bosch points out that "until the 16th Century the term was used exclusively in reference to the doctrine of the Trinity, that is, of the sending of the Son by the Father and of the Holy Spirit by the Father and the Son" (Bosch 2011, 1). This insight from Bosch is further supported from the prayer of Jesus in John 17:18 when he prayed "As you sent me into the world, I have sent them into the world." Thus, to be Trinitarian in Looking Around means that followers of Jesus are to incarnate themselves or be sent into their local and global communities. In Lois Barrett's definition of the missional church, she stated that the church is to be both sending and sent (Barrett 2004, x). For many churches the concept of missions has had a dominant and sometimes exclusive focus on sending missionaries overseas. Jesus' prayer reminds the church that he was sent to us by the Father, implying that the church also needs to be sending out people. Jesus' prayer is clear that sending is not enough, that his followers must also be sent out to the world just as he was sent. *The church cannot stop at simply sending*

missionaries globally and locally. Jesus commissioned the church (individual believers) in the same manner that he was sent. So every Christian and every church needs to understand themselves as being sent into the world by God. This being sent out is the essence of discerning by Looking Around.

This idea of viewing our local and global community through the eyes of a missionary is also the Looking Perspective – Missionary that shapes the whole Looking process. Looking Around is not just about going out to discern, it is also about being in our communities and participating with God in mission. One of the ways this was modeled was when ARC One journeyed through the Looking Around workshop over a period of three nights at three different local establishments and on one of those nights interviewed a local proprietor.

Furthermore, Craig Van Gelder points out how the Western Orthodox view of the Trinity supports the notion that the church is to be sent out to participate in the mission of God:

...the Western church...tended to focus...on the sending work of God – God’s sending the Son into the world to accomplish redemption, and the Father and the Son’s sending the Spirit into the world to create the church and lead it into participation in God’s mission. (Van Gelder 2005, 32)

Imbedded in the doctrine of the Trinity and the notion of the church being sent in the manner that Jesus was sent is the doctrine of the Incarnation. R. L.

Reymend says:

In the context of Christian Theology (the incarnation) is the act whereby the eternal Son of God, the Second Person of the Holy Trinity, without ceasing to be what he is, God the Son, took into union with himself what he before did not possess, a human nature, and so he was and continues to be God and man in two distinct natures and one person forever. (Reymend 1986, 555)

In addition to John 17:18, John 1:14 gives biblical support for the doctrine of the Incarnations. In *The Message*, Eugene Peterson's renders this verse as "The Word became flesh and blood, and moved into the neighborhood" (Peterson 1993, 185). Just as Jesus incarnated himself among us, the church also needs to be incarnated or sent out among those whom they serve in the name of Jesus. Christ's followers do not go to others as "another." We ought to go as "one of" in the same way that Jesus came as one of us; as a human who moved into the neighborhood. Additionally, we don't serve others in a hit and run kind of fashion; rather we should live among others just as Jesus made his dwelling among us. The church is called to get out of the safety of their buildings and "be Jesus" where the people are. The doctrine of the Incarnation is imbedded in *Looking Around and in the Looking Perspective – Missionary*.

Looking Back

Looking Back encourages the church to reflect on its past as a means of discerning how it will participate with God in the present and the future. Throughout both the Old and New Testaments, the people of God are urged to "remember" and to "not forget." From the various Jewish festivals to the church celebrating the Lord's Supper "in remembrance of me" (1 Corinthians 11: 24, 25), Scripture consistently encourages believers to be Looking Back and see how a providential God has been working.

The doctrine of Providence influences the process of Looking Back. Paul Achtemeier says "that there is a benevolent and purposeful ordering of all events

of history. Nothing happens by chance; though not always predictable to human understanding there is a divine cosmic plan to the universe, a reason for everything” (Achte-meier 1985, 832). The doctrine of Providence reminds us what we are taught in Scripture “that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose” (Romans 8: 28). When a church considers its history, it is often a mixture of celebration and sorrow. Providence encourages the church that God is working through all of these events. The Looking Back workshop empowers a church in discerning how God may be calling them to participate with him in the present and future by remembering how God has worked in the past.

Looking In

Looking In assesses the internal strength and growth areas of the church so that it can be more effective in participating in the mission of God. Looking In helps a church to discern the mission of God in the internal life of the church.

The Apostle Paul reminded the church at Ephesus that “Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her to make her holy, cleansing her by the washing with water through the word, and to present her to himself as a radiant church, without stain or wrinkle or any other blemish, but holy and blameless” (Ephesians 5: 25-27). The goal of discerning the mission of God by Looking In is to move the church toward this image of a “holy and blameless” church that Paul paints in these verses.

The doctrine of Trinity shapes the Looking In part of the journey. In Jesus' prayer in John 17 he intercedes to the Father that the church would be one even as God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit are one. Jesus prayed that the interdependent relationship that exists among the members of the Godhead would be mirrored by interdependent relationships within the life of the church. When the internal life of the church is marked by this type of mutual submission, interdependence and unity, Jesus stated that this would have an immediate missiological effect in the church; he said that then "the world will know that you sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me" (John 17:23b). There is evidence that this was the reality of the early church in Jerusalem that lived this out:

They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. Everyone was filled with awe at the many wonders and signs performed by the apostles. All the believers were together and had everything in common. They sold property and possessions to give to anyone who had need. Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved. (Acts 2:42-47)

Don Goertz' definition of the missional church states that it should be "intentionally serving as a sign of the Kingdom" (Goertz 2011, 1). The Acts 2 church did serve as a sign of the Kingdom. The goal of Looking In is to move churches toward the type of internal health and strength that was realized in the early church.

Craig Van Gelder's reflection on the Trinity gives similar insight into how the doctrine of the Trinity should impact the Looking In portion of discerning. He

points out that the Eastern Orthodox view of the Trinity placed its emphasis on divine community. In speaking about the Eastern emphasis on *perichoresis*, Van Gelder notes:

The Eastern Church...placed an emphasis on relationality within the Godhead. In this approach, the social reality of the Godhead becomes the theological foundation for understanding the work of God in the world. Created humanity reflects this social reality of God through the *imago Dei*, the image of God. The church, through the redemptive work of Christ, is created by the Spirit as a social community that is missionary by nature, called and sent to participate in God's mission in the world. (Van Gelder 2005, 32, 33)

Howard Snyder in his theological reflection on the Trinity and the missional church makes a similar argument:

The key point here is that the church is, and is called to be, a *Trinitarian community*... The doctrine of the Trinity teaches us about ecclesiology and mission. Because the church is Trinitarian—based on what God the Father has done and will do through Christ by the power of the Spirit...(Snyder 2011, 7-9)

In *The Missional Church*, Darrell Guder makes this comment regarding the influence of the doctrine of the Trinity on the life of the church: “This Trinitarian point of entry into our theology of the church necessarily shifts all the accents in our ecclesiology as it leads us to see the church as the instrument of God’s mission” (Guder 1998, 5).

All of these insights on how the doctrine of the Trinity should shape the life of the church influence the Looking In process and help a church in assessing how they interact with each other, how they function as a sign of the Kingdom and how they organize themselves for what they are fundamentally called to be and do.

Another doctrine that shapes the Looking In process is Ecclesiology. In *The Missional Church in Perspective*, Craig Van Gelder and Dwight Zscheile give us this definition:

Ecclesiology (is) a theological discipline that seeks to understand and define the church...Conceptions of the church traditionally have come primarily from the historical creeds and confessions that were formulated during the past twenty centuries. Few of these conceptions, however, incorporate much explicit awareness of the church's responsibility for engaging in ministry in the larger world... (Van Gelder and Zscheile 2011, 22)

They further look at the interdependence between the doctrine of the Trinity and the doctrine of Ecclesiology:

...a Trinitarian view of God's mission and an understanding of the church being sent into the world contributed to the conception of the church as missionary by nature. This view of the church meant that ecclesiology should be understood as derived from missiology... This approach collapses the dichotomy of church and mission. (Van Gelder and Zscheile 2011, 32, 33)

These various ideas lay the ecclesiological foundation for Looking In; they remind the church that ecclesiology is fundamentally about participation in the mission of God.

The Looking Perspective – Organic applies to the whole Looking process. However, it is most applicable to Looking In. With this perspective the church is encouraged to view itself not as an organization; rather, it is to see itself as an organism, a living entity. This Looking Perspective – Organic is highly influenced by the work of Christian Schwarz in his book *Natural Church Development*. Schwarz argues that in order for a church to be healthy it needs strength in eight quality characteristics:

- Empowering Leadership
- Passionate Spirituality
- Gift-Oriented Ministry
- Need-Oriented Evangelism
- Effective Structures
- Loving Relationships
- Holistic Small Groups
- Inspiring Worship (Schwarz 2006, 24-39)

The idea is that the organism of the church, like any other organism, needs health in multiple areas in order for it to flourish. As a farmer may take a soil sample to look for a balance of the right nutrients or a doctor may check a patient for a balance of the body's minerals, so too can a church view itself organically and assess its internal health (Schwarz 2006, 24-39). Another influence from the organic thinking of NCD is the six biotic principles:

- Interdependence
- Multiplication
- Energy Transformation
- Symbiosis
- Fruitfulness
- Sustainability (Schwarz 2006, 65-84)

These principles and their application will be further explained in Chapter Three. A further insight into the Looking Perspective – Organic is that the metaphors that Scripture uses to explain the church are organic or alive. In Ephesians 5:23, the church is referred to as a Bride; in 1 Corinthians 12:27, the church is called a Body; in 1 Peter 2:5 the church is called a Building made of living stones. This Organic Looking perspective shapes how we discern and participate with the mission of God by viewing the church not as an organization or a machine that we

“fix.” Rather we view the church more in terms of a field where we prepare excellent soil so that its participation with God will flourish and yield much fruit.

Looking In is the process of discerning the work that God wants to do in the internal life of the church. This results in the church being “internally strong but externally focused” (Rusaw and Swanson 2004, 12).

Looking Forward

This project is about discerning and participating in the mission of God by Looking Up, Around, Back, In and Forward. The Looking Forward piece is primarily the “participating” part of the process.

One of the questions that the Looking process seeks to answer is how a church can move forward in such uncertain times. The book of James addresses this challenge when it reminds the church to be careful about long term plans, but also reminds the church that when they have discerned the mission of God, discerned the good things they should do, they should actively participate:

Now listen, you who say, “Today or tomorrow we will go to this or that city, spend a year there, carry on business and make money.” Why, you do not even know what will happen tomorrow. What is your life? You are a mist that appears for a little while and then vanishes. Instead, you ought to say, “If it is the Lord’s will, we will live and do this or that.” As it is, you boast in your arrogant schemes. All such boasting is evil. So then, if you know the good you ought to do and don’t do it, you sin. (James 4: 13-17)

This creative tension between uncertainty and action sets the stage incredibly well for how a church handles the milieu of paralysis that many churches find themselves in. In Chapter Five, ARC One demonstrated the how of responding to this tension when they discerned and began to participate in “Next Steps.”

The first doctrine that will be considered relative to Looking Forward is Soteriology. R. E. O. White writes that soteriology or “salvation is saving of man from the power and effects of sin (White 1986, 967). How a church views salvation shapes how they practice Looking Forward or how a person will participate with God in his redemptive mission. In *Transforming Mission*, David Bosch highlights the significance of soteriology and its relationship to mission when he states that “Since one’s theology of mission is always closely related to one’s theology of salvation, it would therefore be correct to say that the scope of salvation – however we define salvation – determines the scope of the missionary enterprise” (Bosch 2011, 403).

Some traditions have a truncated view of salvation, focusing their soteriology toward capturing disembodied souls for another place and time; a view of salvation that limits soteriology to “saving souls.” In what is likely the most well known passage relating to this, John 3:16, we read that God’s love is for the “world.” John uses the word *kósmos* (cosmos) not *ethnos* (people) (Strong 1994, PC Study Bible), making it clear that soteriology – God’s redemptive plan, God’s mission that we are to be participating in – goes beyond people to include places and things. This broader or more holistic understanding of salvation would be consistent with what David Bosch observes in other New Testament writings as in the Gospel of Luke, noting the use of salvation language in respect to a very wide spectrum of human circumstances such as the end of poverty, discrimination, illness and sin. He also suggests that Luke’s view of salvation is something that is realized in this life, today; a present salvation (Bosch 2011,

403). Luke's emphasis on present salvation stands in creative tension with the Apostle Paul's emphasis on salvation beginning in this life, a process that begins with reconciliation with God and awaits its full consummation (Bosch 2011, 403). Bosch summarizes how a more holistic view of soteriology is needed for the church as it practices Looking Forward and participating in the mission of God:

We cannot simply return to the classical (truncated) interpretation of salvation even if that position upholds and defends elements which remain indispensable for a Christian understanding of salvation. Its problem lies first in the fact that it dangerously narrows the meaning of salvation, as if it comprises only escape from the wrath of God and the redemption of the individual soul in the hereafter and, second, in that it tends to make an absolute distinction between creation and new creation, between well-being and salvation...redemption is never salvation out of this world but always salvation of this world. Salvation in Christ is salvation in the context of human society en route to a whole and healed world. (Bosch 2011, 408)

A second doctrine that shapes participating with the mission of God by Looking Forward is The Kingdom of God. G. E. Ladd argues that The Kingdom of God primarily means the rule of God. In the Old Testament, the concept is more abstract than concrete. In the New Testament, The Kingdom of God is the divine rule and authority given by the Father to the Son (Ladd 1986, 608).

Jesus taught his disciples to pray "...your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as it is in heaven" (Matthew 6: 10). It stands to reason, then, that a church that is Looking Forward, a church that has spent some time in discernment and is now beginning to participate in the mission of God, would be participating in Kingdom work. Craig Van Gelder gives further insights toward the theological significance of The Kingdom of God when he says:

The kingdom of God, the redemptive reign of God in Christ, gives birth to the missional church through the work of the Spirit. Its nature, ministry, and organization are formed by the reality, power, and intent of the kingdom of God. Understanding the redemptive purposes of God that are embedded within the kingdom of God provides an understanding of the church as missionary by nature. The church participates in God's mission in the world because it can do no other. It was created for this purpose. This purpose is encoded within the very nature of the church. (Van Gelder 2005, 23-33)

Daryl Guder offers the word "shalom" as imagery for The Kingdom of God.

Shalom is not simply the cessation of hostilities, but includes the prosperity of the people of God living under God's demanding care and compassionate rule (Guder 1998, 88, 89). In Luke 4, when Jesus quoted the prophet Isaiah in announcing the Good News, he was proclaiming the message of The Kingdom of God:

The Spirit of the Sovereign LORD is on me,
because the LORD has anointed me
to proclaim good news to the poor.
He has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted,
to proclaim freedom for the captives
and release from darkness for the prisoners,
to proclaim the year of the LORD's favor... (Isaiah 61:1, 2)

Looking Forward is participating in the mission of God. Intentionally or unintentionally, churches' mission and ministry activities are shaped by their theological presuppositions. If The Kingdom of God does give birth to the missional church and if this is marked by shalom and by the activities that Jesus claimed he was anointed to engage in, then the contextual application of this needs to shape how a church participates with God in mission. Part of discerning and participating in the mission of God is asking and answering what it would look like if The Kingdom of God came in their community, and then participate with God in those initiatives.

Summary

This chapter discussed the intersection between theology and mission. It also gave biblical and theological support for the mission of God and it explored the biblical and theological support for the Looking process. Chapter Three considers precedent literature for the mission of God and the Looking process. Chapter Three also includes living cases of churches that serve as examples for experiencing ongoing transformation by discerning and participating in the mission of God.

CHAPTER THREE

PRECEDENT LITERATURE AND CASES

This project is about empowering a church, through the Looking process, to discern and participate in the mission of God, resulting in the ongoing transformation of the church. Thus far, this thesis has described the purpose and overview of this project, defined the mission of God and has given biblical and theological support for the Looking process. This chapter reviews precedent literature and exemplar cases that provide material from three aspects. First, it considers material that lays the foundation for the mission of God. Second, literature that is influential to the Looking process will be reviewed. Finally, this chapter will point to exemplar churches or cases which serve as living examples of churches that are experiencing ongoing transformation by discerning and participating in the mission of God. The literature that was selected for this chapter was based on input from thesis advisors and the influence that the particular material had on the Looking process.

Foundational Literature

This project is about empowering churches to participate in the mission of God. The books reviewed in this section provide a biblical, theological, philosophical and historical understanding of the mission of God, thus providing

breadth and depth to the Looking process by presenting definitions, biblical and *theological reflections* and an increased understanding of the mission of God.

This section of foundational literature demonstrates that the church participating in the mission of God or the church being missional is based on Scripture, sound theology and the historical witness of the church. The authors and books listed below are core background texts for those who want to understand and take part in the conversation and application of the mission of God lived out through the local church.

Almost every writer on the missional church consulted for this project references Lesslie Newbigin. In *Introducing the Missional Church*, Alan Roxburgh and Scott Boren report that in 1974 Newbigin returned home to England after thirty years of missionary service in India. This gave him the unique opportunity to see his own country as an “outsider with insider eyes.” He was shocked by what he saw. Christian England was gone and the West was now itself a mission field; the once mission-sending nations of the West had become in need of radical re-missionizing. This new reality at home became the focus of his work and writing for the next twenty-five years. Newbigin’s work spawned *The Gospel and Our Culture Network* that sprang up all over the world focused on basic questions about the nature of a missionary encounter with the modern West (Roxburgh and Boren, 2009, 9).

The first work of Newbigin included in this section is *The Open Secret*. In this book Newbigin looks at “Christian mission in three ways – as proclaiming the Kingdom of the Father, as sharing the life of the Son, and as bearing the witness

of the Spirit” (Newbigin 1995, 29). From this Trinitarian construct he touches on some of the theological areas covered in Chapter Two including the Trinity (Newbigin 1995, 19-29, 65), The Kingdom of God (Newbigin 1995, 44-65) and soteriology (Newbigin 1995, 30-34, 68-90). This project is about empowering churches to discern and participate with God; Newbigin asserts that God is already active in our local and global community and that the role of the church is to discern and participate with God’s activity. A marker of ongoing transformation that was suggested in Chapter One of this thesis is that churches need to move from Consumerism to Cause. Newbigin reinforces the idea of “Cause” with the language of “mission” when he states that “A church that is not in mission (cause) is no church at all” (Newbigin 1995, 3). Chapter One noted some of the confusion that exists in understanding what the mission of God is. Newbigin brings further clarity to understanding the mission of God when he defines it as “the proclamation, the presence, and the prevenience of the reign of God” (Newbigin 1995, 91).

A second work of Newbigin that has been foundational to this project is *Foolishness to the Greeks: The Gospel and Western Culture*. In it he encourages the church to view its own culture through the lens of mission; as such it supports the Looking Perspective – Missionary. Given the date of its writing he addresses the post-enlightenment and modern culture rather than the emerging postmodern culture. What is foundational for this project is that Newbigin gives missiological principles that transcend a specific culture and principles for how the church can engage any culture it finds itself in. He encourages Christians to “listen to the

witness of Christians from other cultures” (Newbigin 1986, 22) as a way to better understand the application of the gospel to their own culture. In Chapter One of this thesis it was demonstrated that the church today has bought into the patterns of the world and that the church needs to experience ongoing transformation away from this toward Christ and his Kingdom values. Newbigin observed the same phenomena of the church embracing patterns of the world and warns against it when he insists that the church should avoid syncretism (Newbigin 1986, 124).

As with Newbigin, almost every writer on the missional church consulted for this project references David Bosch. For the purpose of this project, his book *Transforming Mission: Paradigm Shifts in Theology of Mission* served as the primary resource for gaining insight into questions that arose related to the mission of God. A good portion of the Looking Around workshop is given to helping the church frame its missionary response to the postmodern culture. Bosch gives insight on the influence of modernity on mission, but unlike Newbigin he moves beyond modernity to address how postmodern thought should influence the church’s participation in the mission of God (Bosch 2011, 268-370).

Another foundational book is *The Mission of God: Unlocking the Bible’s Grand Narrative*. In this book author Christopher Wright traces the mission of God through the narrative of Scripture. Wright’s premise is that the Bible’s central narrative and its interpretive framework is a missional one. Namely that God’s mission is to reclaim the world – including the created order – with God’s people having a designated role to play in that mission. This approach gives a new and fresh paradigm for reading the Bible. Rather than a collection of stories,

poems and didactic teaching to instruct the church in moral truisms – one of which is that it should be involved in mission – he demonstrates from Scripture that the way to understand the Bible is through the lens of a missional hermeneutic (Wright 2006, 22).

The next book covered in this section is *The Missional Church: A Vision for the Sending of the Church in North America*. Author Darrell Guder discusses the mission of God and missional church with a direct focus on the North American Church. The book comes out of the collaborative study and research process that was initiated by The Gospel and Our Culture Network in North America (Guder, 1998, 3, 4). Guder argues that a missional ecclesiology is biblical, historical, contextual, eschatological, and that it can be practiced. As the title would suggest, it has a strong emphasis on the church being sent out to participate in the mission of God (Guder, 1998, 11, 12). A helpful dynamic is that the book goes beyond referring to the North American church to address the nuances between the United States and Canada. This focus of the book is congruent with the Canadian research context of this project (Guder 1998). Particularly helpful was Guder’s observation of the influence of postmodernism on the Canadian culture and how this has “contributed to the reemergence of spirituality as a necessary and visible part of the human struggle for meaning today” (Guder 1998, 44).

In *The Missional Church in Perspective: Mapping Trends and Shaping the Conversation*, Craig Van Gelder and Dwight Zscheile offer an example of what a local church should do in their own missional journey: stop, reflect and

implement midcourse corrections. They reflect on where the missional church conversation has been and where it is going and suggest where it could go. The contribution of this work in laying the foundation for the church's discerning and participating in the mission of God is that it gives a thorough yet concise overview of the missional conversation. The contribution to the Looking process is that this is the book that is provided to CBOQ personnel who are being trained to coach churches utilizing the Looking process (Chapter Six). The rationale for this book over others is that it enables "Looking" coaches to be current with the missional Church conversation without doing an excessive amount of reading (Van Gelder and Zscheile 2011).

In *The Forgotten Ways: Reactivating the Missional Church*, Alan Hirsch gives an historical reflection on why the early church experienced such explosive and exponential growth. One of his major tenets is that church today needs to do what the early church did and release the "APEPT's," the five-fold offices from Ephesians 4:11, 12: Apostles, Prophets, Evangelists, Pastors and Teachers (Hirsch 2006, 274). In addition to giving the history of how this release of all the offices happened in the early church, the book demonstrates how their utilization has empowered the exponential growth of the underground church in China, and looks at how the North American church could replicate this today. This emphasis on the five-fold offices from Ephesians 4 was articulated with two of the CSCs. This is one of the major books that has shaped the missional church conversation around the world and should be read and understood by those who desire to discern and participate in the mission of God (Hirsch, 2006).

The goal of this project is to see churches discern and participate in the mission of God. This section of foundational literature explored the mission of God from a biblical, theological, historical and philosophical perspective. The books covered in this section provided the theological foundation for a deeper understanding of the mission of God.

Literature that Shapes the Looking Process

Building on the foundational literature of the previous section, this section considers the precedent literature that influences the way the entire Looking process was conducted and precedent literature that informs each stage of the Looking process.

This section covers the material that influenced the entire Looking process. This includes Appreciative Inquiry, Action Research and Natural Church Development.

Appreciative Inquiry

The Looking process relies heavily on Appreciative Inquiry (AI). In the book *Appreciative Inquiry*, Cooperrider and Whitney argue that focusing on strengths and asking the right questions to address concerns stimulates creative ideas and momentum (Cooperrider and Whitney 2005, 7-12). The application of the principles of AI and AI-shaped questions is one of the primary reasons that positive results were realized in the ARCs. The outcomes and findings covered in Chapter Five demonstrate that the application of AI principles was catalytic in building engagement, hope, anticipation and excitement in the ARCs.

Appreciative Inquiry was utilized in the Looking Back portion of the discerning process when a simple AI question was asked during the workshop: “What did you value most about the church when you joined?” This did, as the literature would suggest, put people into a positive and creative frame of mind (Cooperrider and Whitney 2005, 7-12). AI was also applied to the Looking In stage. One of the misconceptions and thus criticisms of Natural Church Development (NCD) is that it focuses on the negatives. The question given to the ARCs coming out of their NCD survey’s lowest quality characteristic area was “What do you value most about this (low) quality characteristic?” (See the Looking In section of this chapter for a description of the quality characteristics). This question was followed by the question: “What do we need more of?” The final AI shaped question was: “What resources do we need to get there?”

Action Research

A second resource that influences the entire Looking process and was utilized as the research methodology for this project is Action Research. Action Research will be defined in Chapter Four. Before I had an understanding of the Action Research methodology, a form of it was already being practiced with previous iterations of the Looking process. This was happening through a process of getting feedback from Looking workshop participants, along with my own assessment, to make ongoing changes to the content and delivery of the Looking material.

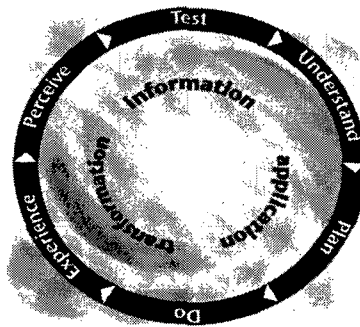
Christian Schwarz and Natural Church Development

This earlier thinking that was similar to Action Research was highly influenced by the work of Christian Schwarz and Natural Church Development. Providing a concept similar to Action Research, Schwarz urges churches to work through the NCD Growth Spiral, sometimes called the NCD Quality Growth Cycle. The cycle has six non-linear phases:

1. Test
2. Understand
3. Plan
4. Do
5. Experience
6. Perceive (Schwarz 2006, 107-124)

The NCD Growth Cycle is usually taught to churches during the Looking In phase. However, it has influenced me to be continually assessing and adjusting the Looking process.

Figure 1: Natural Church Development Growth Spiral



Source: Christian Schwarz. 2006. *Natural Church Development: A guide to Eight Essential Qualities of Healthy Churches 7th Edition*. (St Charles, IL: ChurchSmart Resources), 111. Used with permission of copyright owner, Adam Johnston, NCD International.

The NCD Growth Cycle and Action Research have influenced the entire Looking process by encouraging ongoing assessment and adjustment to the Looking process.

From precedent material for the entire Looking process, this section will move on to cover precedent literature that has shaped each stage of the Looking process. The Looking process has five stages:

1. Looking Up
2. Looking Around
3. Looking Back
4. Looking In
5. Looking Forward

The literature covered in this section either corroborates previously existing material in the Looking process or is material that has shaped the current iteration of the Looking process.

Looking Up

The Looking process begins with Looking Up. This stage of the discernment process focuses the church on the nature, character and activity of God. The goal is also to help participants grow in their capacity to discern the mission of God by learning to listen and respond to the voice of God as the Holy Spirit speaks through the people of God. In *Discerning your Congregation's Future*, Roy Oswald and Robert Friedrich offer encouragement to churches who are in a posture of discernment by saying that “all of us are in a relationship with a God who is ever more ready to communicate with us than we are to listen, a God (who)...is also willing to offer us direction and perspective if and when we

are ready to surrender our willfulness and be open to receiving such direction”

(Oswald and Friedrich, 1996, ix). In *Introducing the Missional Church*, Alan

Roxburgh and Scott Boren state:

(that their) rock bottom conviction is that the Spirit of God is among the people of God (and that)...a missional church is formed by the Spirit of God at work in the ordinary people of God in a local context. A practical implication is that this imagination changes the focus of leadership (to) ...how they can call forth what the Spirit is doing among the people. When this happens, the potential for discovering the wind of the Spirit is exciting. (Roxburgh and Boren 2009, 122)

The Looking process shares this conviction that the Spirit of God is among ordinary congregants. An underlying premise of Looking Up is that through the people of God real discernment of the mission of God takes place.

The primary activity utilized in the Looking process to hear the voice of God through the people of God is the spiritual discipline of Dwelling in the Word.

In *The Missional Church in Perspective*, Van Gelder and Zscheile say that the spiritual exercise of Dwelling in the Word is a “fruitful practice for shaping the imagination of a congregation in mission” (Van Gelder and Zscheile 2011, 151).

They go on to instruct that this exercise accomplishes a number of things:

First, it avoids the expert driven approach to Scripture that exists in many congregations...Second, it focuses on the imagination, recognizing the power of the Word to inform, enliven and renew our vision for God’s activity in the biblical narrative and in our world...Third, it develops the capacity of congregations to listen to one another attentively while listening to the Word... (Van Gelder and Zscheile 2011, 151)

The first agenda item at the Looking Up workshop is Dwelling in the Word, utilizing Luke 10:1-12. In order to keep a constant attitude of Looking Up

throughout the different Looking foci, the Looking Up practice of Dwelling in the Word is conducted at each of the Looking workshops.

This emphasis on discerning the mission of God by Looking Up was observed by Lois Barrett in *Treasure in Clay Jars*. In her analysis of churches that were effectively participating with God, she said that “we discovered that these congregations corporately spent much time in prayer.” She stated that “dependence on the Holy Spirit and listening for God’s unique call to a particular congregation are not patterns that can always be perceived through the five senses or discerned through reason alone” (Barrett 2004, xi). In the Looking Up workshop there are specific times given to prayer. One of the formats has people praying in different locations. These locations symbolize the local, global and internal areas of God’s activity that are trying to be discerned. Another application of prayer in the Looking Up workshop is having people pray that they would discern the mission of God.

At the end of the Looking Up workshop, participants are given *Lectio Divina* as their homework. In *Pursuing God’s Will Together*, Ruth Haley Barton encourages church leadership teams that are in a discerning posture to practice this spiritual discipline by taking a short passage of Scripture and, after a period of silence, reading the passage over slowly five times listening for a word, how that word speaks to you, God’s invitation from that word, resting in God with that word and finally resolving to live out that invitation (Haley Barton 2012, 246-248).

The Looking process begins by Looking Up and focusing attention on God through spiritual exercises during the workshop and spiritual disciplines that carry on after the workshop.

Looking Around

From focusing on the nature and character of God (Looking Up), a church that is discerning moves to focusing their attention on what God is doing in the community around it (Looking Around). Craig Van Gelder and Rick Rouse remind us:

The World belongs to God. It is God's creation. The church must seek to discern what the Spirit of God is doing in relation to the dynamic changes that are taking place within a particular context. ...It is necessary to note that God is at work in the world beyond the church. Discerning this work of God is foundational for effective ministry because the church is called and sent to participate in God's mission in the world. The responsibility of the church is to discern where and how this mission is unfolding. (Rouse and Van Gelder 2008, 49)

The purpose of the Looking Around workshop is to discern where God is working in the culture and in the local community.

Van Gelder and Rouse say that there are "dynamic changes that are taking place" in the North American culture (Rouse and Van Gelder 2008, 49). One of the major changes that culture and thus the church is facing is the shift from modernism to postmodernism. In *Emerging Hope*, Jimmy Long says that "the postmodern culture is with us for many years to come and that we need to develop new strategies to minister in this cultural context" (Long 2004, 158). Three areas from *Emerging Hope* are integrated into the Looking Around workshop. The first is encouraging churches to practice greater levels of authenticity where "leaders

(show) themselves to be real people who have real hurts” (Long 2004, 158). The second is helping churches develop deeper community, which is more pressing in the emerging generation “partly (as) a result of (the author’s) generation’s failure to provide a safe, stable family unit for the nurture of our children” (Long 2004, 52). The third area from Long’s material that is used in Looking Around is encouraging churches to move from inviting the emerging generation to join them at church, and move to inviting the emerging generation to join them in cause or mission. Long argues that “We can primarily win emerging-culture people over by being missional” (Long 2004, 36). Jimmy Long created a training curriculum entitled *Emerging Culture: An Interactive Curriculum* (Long 2004). This curriculum contains video clips and PowerPoint slides used in the Looking Around workshop to help churches understand the cultural shifts that are taking place. David Fitch in *The Great Giveaway* gives insight into how the church has embraced modernity, and accuses the church of being intrinsically more modern than it is Christian (Fitch 2005, 13-26). The Looking Around workshop uses Fitch’s material to show how evangelicals have embraced a modern view of success, evangelism, leadership, worship and preaching. Fitch also provides Christian responses to these areas that resonate with the postmodern or emerging culture and are faithful to Scripture (Fitch 2005, 27-228). These responses are given in the Looking Around workshop.

In Chapter One of this thesis, consideration was given to how the church struggles in embracing the emerging culture in the life of the church. In *Youth Ministry Now & Not Yet*, Matt Wilkinson argues that ministry to the emerging

culture “must be founded upon the entire church family embracing the culture of mentoring” (Wilkinson 2012, 111). The Looking Around workshop suggests to participants the idea proposed by Wilkinson that mutual mentoring – that is mentoring where more seasoned saints impart wisdom and spiritual maturity to young people and where young people mentor older saints about the emerging culture they are trying to reach – become a part of the life of a church that is desiring to participate with God in reaching the emerging culture demographic that the church has struggled to reach.

The Looking Around workshop takes participants from a macro cultural view down to a local or neighborhood view. In *The Shaping of Things to Come*, Alan Hirsch and Michael Frost tie in the doctrine of the Incarnation with helping a church focus on their neighborhood:

Incarnational mission implies a real and abiding incarnational presence among a group of people. ...the idea of incarnational presence corresponds to the idea of locality...Jesus moved into the neighborhood; he experienced its life, its rhythms and its people from the inside and not as an outsider. ...for thirty years Jesus practiced this presence (in Nazareth) before he actually started his ministry. If this was so for Jesus, then, we believe, we too, need to practice the missional discipline of presence and identification. (Frost and Hirsch 2003, 39)

Not only did Jesus model living in the neighborhood, he urged others to also have a neighborhood perspective when he reminded the religious scholars that a part of the greatest commandment was to “Love your neighbor as yourself.” He proceeded to take this further by answering the question “Who is my neighbor?” (Luke 10:27-36). The Looking Around workshop addresses the idea of neighborhood and the question of who their neighbor is in two ways. First, the

workshop has participants work through a demographic report prepared by a Christian research and resource organization called Outreach Canada (www.outreach.ca). This report answers crucial neighborhood questions concerning language, education, vocation, religion, income and other markers that can shape how a church participates in the mission of God in their local community. The second way that churches answer the question of “Who is my neighbor?” is by utilizing three different community research tools (see Chapter Four). These resources further enable participants to discern the mission of God.

The Looking Around workshop concludes with participants being given the homework of practicing hospitality. In *Missional Map Making*, Alan Roxburgh argues that “Creating new maps in our new space involves the recovery of hospitality, an ancient practice of the church whose purpose has been largely forgotten. Hospitality is not an evangelism strategy but a genuine welcoming of the stranger as part of the family...” (Roxburgh 2010, 154).

Looking Around helps a church to discern what God is doing in their culture and community empowering them to discern in what mission they could join God. From discerning by Looking Up and Around, the Looking process moves to discerning the mission of God by Looking Back.

Looking Back

Churches that are seeking to discern and participate in the mission of God move their focus from Looking Around to Looking Back at the history of their church. The historical look at how God has worked in the past enables the church

to see how God is working in the present and future. It also allows the church to begin to surface their values. Van Gelder instructs Spirit led congregations that are in a discerning process to “explore their own identity as a Christian congregation to discern how God has been at work in their midst in the past in leading them into mission and ministry” (Van Gelder 2007, 107). In *Discerning Your Congregation’s Future*, Oswald and Friedrich argue that “The axiom, ‘those who don’t learn from the mistakes of the past are doomed to repeat them,’ holds true for the congregational family” (Oswald and Friedrich 1996, 65). The purpose of the Looking Back workshop is to celebrate, mourn (as necessary) and learn from the past.

In *Transforming Communities: Leading Congregational Change*, Joyce Bellous gives guidelines for church to prepare the historical survey that is used in the Looking Back Workshop. She encourages churches to consider the following:

Historical Survey—Find out where you came from. Some questions to ask yourself:

- How did the church get started?
- What is the story?
- How is it told?
- What information is emphasized?
- What information has been overshadowed?
- What are the patterns in the story?
 - Growth of membership
 - Giving
 - Missionary Endeavours
 - Discipleship Training
 - Worship
 - Evangelism
 - Core Family Involvement
 - Other patterns that show up
- Assessment of the Church’s Personality, spiritual tone, contributions, core values (Bellous and Mix 2008, 57)

In *Preferred Futuring*, Lawrence Lippitt says that the process of considering the history of a church "...has two phases: gathering data about our history, and drawing lessons and consequences from that historical data (Lippitt 1998, 34). He goes on to give instructions for facilitating these two phases by placing a three-foot high newsprint scroll on the wall. When people come into the gathering they are instructed to write down their name and when they joined the church, and to jot down significant events in the history of the church that contributed to it being where it is today. Suggested categories of information include "memories about economic or financial facts, names of leaders, significant decisions, achievements or failures, and values or ethics that guided (the church) in the past" (Lippitt 1998, 35). The way the Looking Back workshop has adapted this input is by using the timeline and having the participants add their name and when they joined the church, having them write down what they valued most about the church when they joined and include significant events. At the bottom of the timeline, under the significant events, three categories have been added. The first category is what lessons were learned through that event. The second is what this event tells the church about its DNA. The third category is what this event tells the church about its values. This process fulfills the two purposes of the Looking Back portion of discerning. First, it reminds the church of God's providential hand in their history, which encourages them that God will continue to be faithful in the future. A second purpose of the Looking Back workshop is to begin to surface the values of the church that can shape their future mission and ministry.

Churches that are in the discerning process practice Looking Up, Around, Back and then move to Looking In.

Looking In

From Looking Back at how the historical narrative of the church has prepared it for its present and future mission with God, the Looking process transitions to Looking In. The focus for Looking In is to discern God's mission in the internal life of the church. A second focus is to assess and work on the current health of the church to enable it to more effectively participate with God in his mission in the local and global community. In *The Externally Focused Church*, Rick Rusaw and Eric Swanson articulate that a church should be "internally strong but outwardly focused" (Rusaw and Swanson 2004, 12). This concept was used in the Looking In workshops and both ARCs embraced the idea. In *A Field Guide for the Missional Congregation*, Craig Van Gelder and Rick Rouse maintain that "churches should ask the more fundamental questions about the identity and purpose of local congregations and then they can effectively utilize a resource like NCD to achieve health" (Rouse and Van Gelder 2008, 25, 26). The authors put so much value on the idea of a church's assessing their internal health that they have an entire chapter of their book entitled "Cultivate a Healthy Climate" (Rouse and Van Gelder 2008, 68-79). Carson Pue echoes the notion of the necessity of analyzing the health of the church when he advises that "the set of measurements from Natural Church Development allows a church ministry to get

a read on how they are doing and areas where they will need attention if they are to grow in impact” (Pue 2005, 192).

There are various paradigmatic approaches to view and assess the internal health of the church. The Looking In workshop utilizes NCD. Time is given to teach about and apply the eight quality characteristics of church health that are given by NCD. In *Natural Church Development, A Guide to Eight Essential Qualities of Healthy Churches*, Christian Schwarz highlights these eight self-defining characteristics:

- Empowering Leadership
- Gift Based Ministry
- Passionate Spirituality
- Effective Structures
- Inspiring Worship Service
- Holistic Small Groups
- Need Oriented Evangelism
- Loving Relationships (Schwarz 2006, 22-41)

The workshop also debriefs the church’s NCD church health survey that was previously taken. This survey is a tool offered by NCD based on global and national norms that gives an accurate assessment of its internal health relative to the eight quality characteristics (Schwarz 2006, 52-61). The NCD survey is the primary means of discerning the mission of God in the internal life of the church. It also gives the church the wisdom to know which areas the church needs to focus their energies to achieve “internal strength” (Rusaw and Swanson 2004, 12).

Chapter Two highlighted the influence of Christian Schwarz’s work in *Color Your World with Natural Church Development* on the Looking Perspective

– Trinitarian (Schwarz 2005, 46-77). Another significant contribution from the work of Christian Schwarz to this project is his influence on the Looking Perspective – Organic. The essence behind the word “natural” in Natural Church Development is that the church is an organism. This perspective is seen throughout all of Schwarz’s writing, and is most clearly demonstrated through what Schwarz calls “Growth Forces.” Formerly these were called “Biotic Principles.” These six organic principles shape how a church discerns and participates in the mission of God. The six growth forces are:

- Interdependence
- Multiplication
- Energy Transformation
- Sustainability
- Symbiosis
- Functionality (Schwarz 2006, 65-84)

Schwarz gives the following insights to illuminate these six growth forces that are intrinsic to the Looking Perspective – Organic.

Interdependence

“While the term ‘interdependence’ does not appear in Scripture...it is closely related to what is called ‘wisdom’ in Scripture. To view a phenomenon in the context of its manifold relationships rather than in isolation” (Schwarz 2006, 70, 71). Interdependence helps a church to discern and participate in the mission of God by answering the question how any potential action will impact the rest of the organism of the church.

Multiplication

“While the term ‘multiplication’ is not found in the Bible we can find many illustrations of how God uses this principle. The best example is found in Jesus’ ministry. He invested himself primarily in his twelve disciples who in turn were commissioned to make disciples who would also make disciples” (Schwarz 2006, 72, 73). Multiplication helps a church experience exponential Kingdom impact. An example of this is seen in the book *The Shaping of Things to Come*, where Michael Frost and Alan Hirsch reiterate the organic perspective of multiplication when they say that “for too long we have been committed to the growth of the church through the addition of new church members to a local church rather than through multiplication by church planting and other means” (Frost and Hirsch 2003, 213).

Energy Transformation

“We frequently encounter the principle of energy transformation in Scripture. One of the most famous examples is the way Paul, on the Areopagus, referred to the ‘unknown god’ and made it the point for his departure for his evangelistic sermon in Athens (Acts 17)” (Schwarz 2006, 74, 75). Energy Transformation is a principle that encourages churches to harness both positive and negative momentum and direct it toward Kingdom purposes.

Sustainability

“The essential of sustainability is well illustrated by the principle of co-leadership” (Schwarz 2006, 76, 77). Leaders do not only lead their programs but

in the process they train new leaders. The practice of this principle can empower a church in sustaining their missional participation.

Symbiosis

“Current secular management literature refers to this principle as ‘win-win relationships.’ ...it is not unlike the ‘Golden Rule’ which Jesus taught as...‘loving your neighbor as yourself’” (Schwarz 2006, 78, 79). The research conducted (Chapter Four) revealed that mutually beneficial partnerships were practiced by the two ARCs and the three CSCs.

Functionality

“All living beings in God’s creation are characterized by their ability to bear fruit. ...Where there is no fruit life is condemned to death” (Schwarz 2006, 78, 79). Functionality encourages a church to evaluate mission and ministry for their ability to produce fruit.

These six principles along with the eight quality characteristics lay the foundation for the Looking Perspective – Organic.

The notion of Looking In at the church and discerning and participating with the Looking Perspective – Organic is reiterated by Neil Cole in *Organic Church* when he writes:

Most of the metaphors and explanations of the Kingdom of God and the church in the New Testament use natural concepts for identification and description: the body, the bride, the branches, the field of wheat, the mustard seed, the family, leaven, salt, and light. When the New Testament uses a building as a metaphor of the church it is quick to add that it is made up of living stones (1 Peter 2:5). (Cole 2005, 35)

This is taught at every Looking workshop when the Looking Perspective – Organic is reviewed.

The time a church spends Looking In empowers them to discern God's mission in the life of the church, which strengthens the church to more effectively participate with God in his mission in the local and global community. Churches that have been in a posture of discerning by Looking Up, Around, Back and In, move to a participating posture by Looking Forward.

Looking Forward

From the discerning posture of Looking Up, Around, Back and In, the church transitions to the participating posture of Looking Forward. The essence of the Looking Forward workshop is to help a church clarify its calling, values and next steps.

This Looking Forward section will contain two different areas of literature review. The first will focus on how a church can move from the discernment to the participation in the mission of God by providing examples of action plans used by churches. Also, it will highlight a resource that is used in the teaching portion of Looking Forward. The second area of literature review will focus on the type of leadership that empowers a church to be effectively Looking Forward in participating in the mission of God.

Examples of Moving from Discernment to Action

This next portion of the Looking Forward section gives three examples for how a church can effectively participate with God in mission.

The first example comes from the book *The Ministry of the Missional Church: A Community Led by the Spirit*. In this book author Craig Van Gelder provides a format similar to the Looking process with the construct of “Assessing, Attending, Asserting, Agreeing and Acting” (Van Gelder 2007, 116-119). When it comes to “Acting” (Looking Forward), he argues that the church should move away from “closed system thinking” (Van Gelder 2007, 125-134). This type of thinking is what Chapter One of this thesis called a “determining” mindset. From this, Van Gelder calls for a move toward an “open systems perspective” that focuses on “purpose, core missional practices and vision” and that the church remain open to being “led by the Spirit (experiencing) as much change from interruption, disruption and surprise as through planning” (Van Gelder 2007, 134-152). The “open systems perspective” is what Chapter One of this thesis called a “discerning” mindset. Van Gelder’s approach is philosophically congruent with how Looking Forward guides a church in discerning their calling, values and their next steps. Like Van Gelder does, the Looking Forward teaching encourages the church to maintain ongoing openness to the movement of the Spirit.

A second example of how a church can be Looking Forward is provided by Alan Roxburgh in *Introducing Missional Church*. Roxburgh advocates what he calls “The Missional Change Model.” While it is written in a linear way, he would argue that it is not to be applied in a linear or static way. The stages of the model are Awareness, Understanding, Evaluate, Experiment and Commitment (Roxburgh 2009, 133-170). The Looking process covers the same material in a

different order. The Experimentation stage is the essence of the next steps phase in Looking Forward.

A third example of Looking Forward is prescribed by Rick Rouse and Craig Van Gelder In *A Field Guide for the Missional Congregation*, where they advocate “Seven Transformational Keys:”

- Develop a Vision for God’s Mission
- Focus on God’s Mission and Discipleship
- Cultivate a Healthy Climate
- Build a Supportive Team of Staff and Lay Leadership
- Stay the Course when Facing Conflict
- Practice Stewardship to Build Financial Viability
- Celebrate Success and the Contributions of All (Rouse and Van Gelder 2008, 43-132)

At the end of this process, and as an Appendix in the book, Rouse and Van Gelder offer a sample of what a strategic plan could look like. The plan includes:

- Our History
- Our Values
- Our Purpose
- Our Vision
- Our Short Term Strategic Goals (1-2 Years)
- Our Long Term Strategic Goals (3-5 Years) (Rouse and Van Gelder 2008, 136-139)

This is a helpful and practical example. The nuance that the Looking Forward workshop would articulate is that three to five years is too long a time for which to plan. This is why the Looking Forward workshop utilizes the language of “next steps.” This premise is based on the high rate of discontinuous change and a desire to remain open to the Spirit. In light of Van Gelder’s previously noted material, it would be fair to assert that he would encourage a church to hold their long term (three to five year) plans loosely and remain open

to the movement of the Spirit of God. A second variation between this example and what is advised in the *Looking Forward* workshop would be intentionally avoiding the descriptor of “Strategic Plan” (Rouse and Van Gelder 2008, 136). The rationale for avoiding this was language was provided in Chapter One. These three examples have shaped the *Looking Forward* workshop.

Another book that has influenced the *Looking Forward* content is *20/20 Foresight*. In this book author Hugh Courtney argues that there are four levels of residual uncertainty that inform how planning is conducted in times of uncertainty. The four levels are:

1. A clear enough future
2. Alternate futures
3. A range of futures
4. True ambiguity (Courtney 2001, 1-38)

He encourages creating an ecosystem or culture with values and short term and flexible planning (Courtney 2001, 135-158). This resonates well with the structure provided in *Looking Forward* that uses a construct of, calling, values and next steps.

This portion of the *Looking Forward* section considered examples of plans that can empower a church in effectively participating with God in his redemptive mission. The next portion of this section transitions to what type of leadership is necessary for a church to experience fruitfulness in *Looking Forward*.

Appropriate leadership is needed throughout the discerning process, even more so in the *Looking Forward* portion of the *Looking* process.

The Kind of Leadership Needed for Looking Forward

An essential factor in a church effectively Looking Forward — fruitfully participating in the mission of God — is who their pastoral and lay leaders are. The primary purpose of this project is assessing how the Looking process can empower a church to experience ongoing transformation by discerning and participating in the mission of God. The primary focus is not on what kind of leadership is needed to make this a reality. However, because participation in the mission of God (Looking Forward) is highly unlikely without the right kind of leadership, this minor focus on leadership is included in the Looking Forward part of the process. The material covered here is focused on supporting the leadership findings from the three CSCs (Chapter Five).

In *The Missional Leader*, Alan Roxburgh and Fred Romanuk declare that when it comes to a church experiencing ongoing transformation through discerning and participating in the mission of God, that “Missional Leadership is the key” (Roxburgh and Romanuk 2006, 3). In *Transforming Leadership*, Norma Cook and Craig Nesson suggest that leaders in the church are called to a ministry of leading their church in ongoing transformation:

(guiding) the people of God, helping them fulfill their calling and purpose. Leaders help to organize the church so that maximum use is made of all its resources, motivating people to work for the renewal of church and world. Leadership – grounded in trust in God, liberated by the love of Christ, and empowered by the Spirit – gathers, nurtures, teaches, and inspires the church to be the gifted people of God in mission. (Cook and Nesson 2008, 40)

This section recognizes the essential nature of leadership and provides precedent literature support for the leadership characteristics revealed from the three CSCs.

These characteristics are:

- Leaders who possess godly character
- Leaders who are self-aware
- Leaders who empower others
- Leaders who empower all the roles from Ephesians 4:11, 12 (including the role(s) they bring):
 - Apostle
 - Prophet
 - Evangelist
 - Pastor and Teacher
- Leaders who are competent communicators of Scripture
- Leaders who effectively persevere through conflict
- Leaders who partner with others in mission
- Leaders who develop and serve with godly leadership teams

Godly character is an essential attribute for leaders needed to empower a church in participating with the mission of God. The disastrous effects of ungodly character are far too often evident. In *The Missional Leader*, Roxburgh and Romanuk designate a whole chapter to “The Character of a Missional Leader.” In that chapter they define character issues as: authenticity, self-awareness, courage and trustworthiness (Roxburgh and Romanuk 2006, 125-141).

Another essential leadership characteristic is that of being self-aware. One of the CSC interviewees was influenced by the book *Strengths Based Leadership* (Rath and Conchie 2008) and talked about how his “main strength is WOO...winning others over” (Rath and Conchie 2008, 233-235). In *Practicing Greatness*, Reggie McNeal has a chapter entitled “The Discipline of Self Awareness” (McNeal 2006, 9-34). In that chapter McNeal says that “The single

most important piece of information a leader possesses is self-awareness” (McNeal 2006, 10). In *The Missional Leader*, Roxburgh and Romanuk submit: “If awareness is the first important stage in the journey towards forming a missional imagination among people, then the leader’s self-awareness is critical to the process” (Roxburgh and Romanuk 2006, 132). Self-aware leaders know how they are and are not gifted. This, combined with godly character, helps them to empower others in Looking Forward, effectively participating in the mission of God.

If the objective is to empower ongoing transformation in the life of the church, then this requires an empowering leader. Christian Schwarz says:

Empowering leaders do not use lay workers as “helpers” in attaining their own goals and fulfilling their own visions. Rather, they invert the pyramid of authority so that the leader assists the Christians to attain the spiritual potential God has for them. These leaders equip, support, motivate and mentor individuals enabling them to become all that God wants them to be...Rather than handling the bulk of church responsibilities on their own, they invest the majority of their time in discipleship, delegation and multiplication. (Schwarz 2006, 23, 24)

If leaders control mission and ministry, it will limit the participation of a church with God. As leaders see their role as empowering others in mission and ministry, then churches will experience fruitfulness in Looking Forward.

Two of the three CSCs emphasized that churches need APEPT’s – Apostles, Prophets, Evangelists, Pastors and Teachers. This is also called the five-fold offices from Ephesians 4:11, 12. In *The Shaping of Things to Come*, Michael Frost and Alan Hirsch write about how the North American church has

primarily utilized PT's or Pastors and Teachers. They also point out that the North American church has minimally incorporated APE's or Apostles, Prophets and Evangelists (Frost and Hirsch 2003, 165-182). In *The Sky is Falling*, Alan Roxburgh advocates that the church needs to move away from the "pastor only" model to embracing all the different offices of Ephesians 4:11, 12 (Roxburgh 2005, 158-189).

Another leadership characteristic that was noted was the pastor's ability to communicate Scripture. The danger of focusing on this attribute is that preaching can be one of the "products" that North American Christians "consume." Nonetheless, for leaders who desire fruitfulness in participating in the mission of God they will give attention to faithfully communicating God's story. In *Deep Preaching*, Kent Edwards states that "if you want to make a substantive change in the lives of your people and the world at large, I can think of no better way than to preach the words of God" (Edwards 2009, 23). Effective preaching communicates to the church their calling and values as the rationale for the next steps they are taking. Preaching reminds the church of how their story is ultimately a part of the story of God and God's redemptive mission.

It was observed in the three CSCs that participation in the mission of God requires perseverance through conflict. When leaders endeavor to move their church from Consumerism to Cause or from serving the wants of Christians to navigating the change required to transform these Christian consumers to actively participate in the mission of God, conflict may be inevitable. In *A Field Guide for the Missional Congregation*, Rick Rouse and Craig Van Gelder apportion an

entire chapter to the issue of conflict entitled “Stay the Course When Facing Conflict” (Rouse and Van Gelder 2008, 95-108). In *The Missional Leader*, Alan Roxburgh and Fred Romanuk say that “Missional transformation puts a leader in a high conflict zone...Missional leaders need the capacity to put conflict into the context of change in three ways: Conflict is normal in change...No conflict no movement...Practice makes a difference” (Roxburgh and Romanuk 2006, 134-137). Effective Looking Forward requires pastoral and lay leaders to graciously persevere through conflict while remaining firm in their commitment to discern and participate in the mission of God.

Another leadership characteristic that was discovered in the three CSCs is that they all had the ability to develop partnerships with other individuals and groups. The Looking Perspective – Organic is supported by the NCD growth force “symbiosis.” Partnerships in win-win relationships were demonstrated by all three CSC leaders. This notion of partnership with others is reinforced in the book, *The Shaping of Things to Come*, where authors Michael Frost and Alan Hirsch give a missional example of symbiosis when they write that “...an incarnational approach to ministry would see the Christian community partnering with local groups to assist in their work with families, the poor, youth and single mothers” (Frost and Hirsch 2003, 73).

The final characteristic that the three CSCs revealed is that churches need godly leadership teams and pastors who have the ability to develop both leaders and teams. While this is a partial restatement of the overall idea, it is worth nuancing again because of its significance to the process of ongoing

transformation. In *Introducing the Missional Church*, Roxburgh and Boren designate a whole chapter to leadership teams and how they can empower the discerning and participation process of a congregation (Roxburgh and Boren 2009, 171-180). In *A Field Guide for the Missional Congregation*, Craig Van Gelder and Rick Rouse also designate a whole chapter to this issue entitled: “Build a Supportive Team of Staff and Lay Leadership” (Rouse and Van Gelder 2008, 81-94). Regardless of the governance polity of a church, a leadership team that is not supportive of a church experiencing ongoing transformation by discerning and participating in the mission of God can derail the entire process.

For a church to effectively discern and participate in the mission of God they need leadership that embodies the characteristics that were given in this section. The next section of this chapter will highlight cases of churches that serve as living examples of effectiveness in discerning and participating in the mission of God.

Living Cases

Through books that highlight exemplar churches and one book that tells the story of one particular church, this section gives living cases of churches that are demonstrating ongoing transformation by discerning and participating in the mission of God. In the introduction to *Treasures in Clay Jars*, Lois Barrett said:

...many people urged (her) to give some real-life examples of congregations in the United States and Canada that were indeed missional...(many) doubted that such congregations actually existed. Others just wanted to know more about what missional congregations were like. How would you know a missional church if you saw one? (Barrett 2004, ix)

The churches highlighted in the books in this section would not claim to have arrived but to be on the journey of shaping the life of their church around participation in the mission of God.

In *Treasure in Clay Jars: Patterns in Missional Faithfulness*, Lois Barrett and the other authors present nine congregations, and how they live out eight different patterns of missional faithfulness, as living cases. The book comes out of The Gospel and Our Culture Network and integrates biblical and theological reflection around the mission of God. Specifically helpful for the CBOQ context of this project is that Spring Garden (CBOQ) Church, Toronto is included as one of the exemplar churches (Barrett 2004).

In *The Tangible Kingdom: Creating Incarnational Community: The Posture and Practices of Ancient Church Now*, Hugh Halter and Matt Smay share the story of moving from being disillusioned with the existing church to simply trying to participate in the mission of God by living in incarnational community outside of the existing church construct. While they did not set out to be a church, and in many ways did not want to be a church, this approach of mission and incarnational community led to the birth of a new church. Beyond telling the story of their journey, they give an honest account of their successes and mistakes and how this could help other churches on the journey of discerning and participating in the mission of God. There is a video that goes with the book about followers of Jesus living incarnationally. This video was used in preaching in ARC One to illuminate the point of the church being on mission with God. It could also be

used in the Looking Around workshop as a part of the theological reflection on the doctrine of the incarnation.

In *Going Missional: Conversations with Thirteen Churches who have Embraced Missional Life*, Karen Stiller gives a journalistic window into Canadian churches that are discerning and participating in the mission of God. The book covers all the regions of Canada, represents a spectrum of denominations and has both large and small churches listed as examples. This diversity welcomes any and all churches to participate with God in his redemptive mission on a similar journey that these churches went through. Though this book does not have the theological and biblical depth of Barrett's work, it does, in contrast, offer the strength of having a literary style that invites a broader spectrum of readers.

Another book that offers a uniquely Canadian perspective is *Fresh and Refresh: Church Planting and Urban Mission in Canada Post-Christendom*. Authors Leonard Hjalmarson and Brent Toderash lay a philosophical foundation of mission-shaping ecclesiology that is realized in a "Fresh Expression" of the church. A further positive aspect of this book is that it does not simply write off the existing church as outdated and lacking the capacity to navigate the ongoing journey of transformation. Rather, it includes wonderful stories of churches that are "Re-Freshing" (Hjalmarson and Toderash 2009). These examples of older, established churches experiencing ongoing transformation or "re-freshing" is applicable to the CBOQ context with the many older, established churches that make up the CBOQ.

Chapter One related the challenge that some churches have in understanding and living out the Mission of God. These living examples give a model of what it could look like for a church to effectively discern and participate in the mission of God.

Summary

This chapter covered the precedent literature that lays a foundation for understanding the mission of God. A second consideration was in how this material shaped the Looking process. This chapter also included living cases — books that share the stories of churches that are exemplars in discerning and participating in the mission of God. Chapter Four gives an overview of the Looking process workshops, what material was covered and how it was taught. It also explains the research methodology and methods that were utilized to assess the effectiveness of the Looking process in the two ARCs. Chapter Four also considers the research methodology and methods utilized with the three CSCs.

CHAPTER FOUR

METHODOLOGY AND PROJECT

This project is about empowering a church, through the Looking process, to discern and participate in the mission of God, resulting in ongoing transformation. This chapter moves beyond the theological rationale and the precedent material to explain the content and delivery of the Looking process. It gives the research methodology and methods that were utilized to assess the efficacy of the Looking process in the two Action Research Churches (ARCs). Chapter Four also explains the research methodology and methods that were used with the three exemplar Case Study Churches (CSCs) to see how their discernment processes resonate with the Looking process. Additionally, this chapter highlights the leadership characteristics that were discovered from interviews with the CSCs. These characteristics empower a church in discerning and participating in the mission of God. The leadership traits will be included in the Looking Forward section.

The chapter begins with a summary of the material taught during the Looking process.

Summary of the Material Covered in the Looking Process

This section gives an overview of the Looking process. The core of the Looking process is a series of five interactive workshops that correlate to the five directions of looking.

Table 1: Looking Process

Stage	Focus	Timeline
Looking Up	God, his character and mission	4-6 weeks
Looking Around	God's activity in the culture and local community	4-6 weeks
Looking Back	God's activity in the history of the church	2-4 weeks
Looking In	God's mission in the internal life of the church	4-8 weeks
Looking Forward	Calling, Values, Next Steps	4-6 weeks
Discerning Team	Synthesis of congregational input resulting in a Next Steps plan	4-6 weeks

These workshops are designed to facilitate a church's discerning and participating in the mission of God. The discerning and participating is enhanced as churches include Looking sermons, small groups and individual spiritual disciplines.

Theological support for the Looking process was given in Chapter Two.

Precedent literature that informed this project was covered in Chapter Three.

The discerning process begins by Looking Up. Looking Up focuses the attention of the church on who God is and orients their hearts and minds toward listening to God. Looking Around is designed to help churches see what God is

doing in the North American culture and also to see God's activity in their local community. Looking Back facilitates the church in seeing how God has worked through their story and how this can shape their future mission and ministry (Bellous and Mix 2008, 55-61). Looking In moves the church toward being "internally strong" (Rusaw and Swanson 2004, 12) to help it be more effective in being "externally focused" (Rusaw and Swanson 2004, 12). Looking Forward is set up to facilitate the church's moving into participating in the mission of God. This workshop helps to clarify a church's calling, values and next steps. A more complete summary of the material covered in the five Looking workshops is provided in Appendix A.

Throughout the Looking process participants respond to the question "I wonder if God is saying that we could participate with him by..." by putting their thoughts on Post It notes. At the conclusion of all five Looking workshops, a discernment team assimilates and synthesizes the Post It notes and other discerning materials. The outcomes of the work of the discernment teams from the two ARCs are given in Chapter Five.

The Looking process also includes three perspectives that are the foundation on which the Looking process is built. Another way of thinking about these perspectives is that they are the paradigms intended to enable the Looking Process to be effective in the discerning and participating process. The three Looking Perspectives reviewed at each workshop are:

1. Trinitarian Perspective
2. Missionary Perspective
3. Organic Perspective

The Looking Perspectives – Trinitarian, Missionary and Organic were developed in Chapters Two and Three. A more complete summary of the three Looking perspectives is provided in Appendix B.

Summary of the Presentation Process

This section explains the way that the Looking material was taught in the ARCs. In both ARCs, the teaching process that was utilized facilitated group interaction and discernment. Round tables were mandatory and there was a lot of time given to group interaction around these tables. Most often there was a large group debrief from the individual table discussions. The participants interacted freely with each other and with me as the facilitator. The reason for this type of interactive process is that it empowered the people of God to hear the voice of the Spirit from their community of faith. As demonstrated in Chapter Five, the high level of interaction enabled participants to move beyond simply knowing what people thought to discovering why fellow participants thought the way they did.

In order to facilitate discerning and participating in the mission of God, one of the tools used was posters that were put up for every workshop or session, each having the appropriate Looking (Up, Around, Back, In or Forward) name on it followed by the statement: “I wonder if God is saying that we could join him in...” To answer the questions, the participants were all given Post It notes where, at specific times, they were asked to write down their responses. Additionally, people had freedom and encouragement to write and post anytime they felt like God might be prompting them. At ARC One, all five Looking posters stayed up

over the entire discerning process. With ARC Two, the relevant posters were used only during the specific Looking workshop.

At the end of the Looking Forward workshop all of the ideas from the Post It notes were gathered and given to a discerning team who were tasked to prayerfully synthesize and assimilate these ideas in order to have them presented back to the congregation.

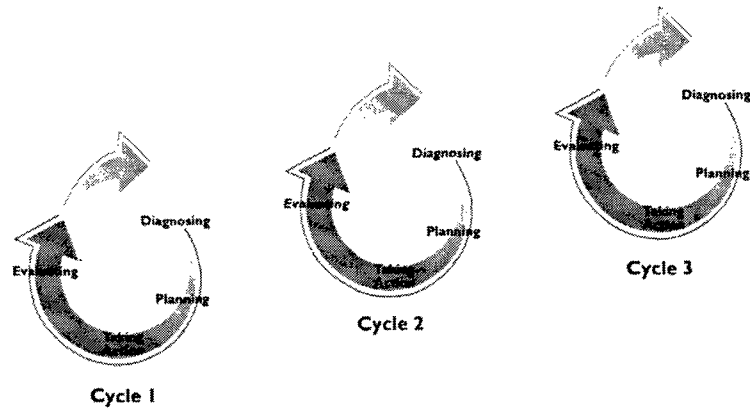
Major Research Methodology: Action Research

Action Research methodology that was utilized in the two ARCs to assess the efficacy of the Looking process in empowering them in discerning and participating in the mission of God. Authors Shani and Pasmore give this definition:

Action Research may be defined as an emergent inquiry process in which applied behavioral science knowledge is integrated with existing organizational knowledge and applied to solve real organizational problems. It is simultaneously concerned with bringing about change in organizations, in developing self-help competencies in organizational members and adding to scientific knowledge. Finally, it is an evolving process that is undertaken in a spirit of collaboration and co-inquiry. (Shani and Pasmore 1985, 439)

In *Doing Action Research in Your Own Organization*, Coghlan and Brannick provide a summary of the Action Research process: “Action research works through a cyclical four-step process of consciously and deliberately (1) planning, (2) taking action and (3) evaluating the action, (4) leading to further planning and so on” (Coghlan and Brannick 2010, 5). They diagram it this way:

Figure 2: Action Research Cycle:



Source: David Coghlan and Teresa Brannick. 2010. *Doing Action Research in Your Own Organization* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications), Figure 1.3, p. 10 as adapted by Carol Gouveia. Used with permission of Carol Gouveia.

Action Research was applied to this project by having the two ARCs led through the Looking process and then assessing how the Looking process empowered them to discern and participate in the mission of God. The ARCs also gave assessment of the Looking process that has altered content and delivery of subsequent iterations of the Looking process.

Action Research Church One (ARC One)

This section describes the context or field of ARC One and covers the scope of work that was conducted with them.

ARC One Field

This section gives a description of ARC One prior to their engagement in the Looking process. Before they began the Looking process, ARC One was in a state of paralysis, confusion and lacking hope. They had gone through significant

conflict and staff turnover, resulting in diminished numbers and no longer being in a position to support the salary of a pastor. After meeting with their leadership team I suggested that the Looking process could empower them to move forward. They accepted the offer to journey through the Looking process. They understood that this was a part of a doctoral program and that the process would be assessed following its completion. So that there is an understanding of the context that goes beyond my assessment, two members of the leadership team agreed to give their perspective on where the church was at prior to their beginning the Looking process. This written email correspondence is attached as Appendix C.

ARC One Scope

This section describes the actual work that was done with ARC One. With ARC One I entered into a ten-month Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the church that they would be facilitated/coached through the Looking process. The MOU outlining the full scope of responsibilities is attached as Appendix D. ARC One journeyed through the Looking process from September 2011 to June 2012. The scope of work involved conducting the five Looking workshops, meeting regularly with the leadership team, having small group sessions and preaching using the Looking foci as the themes.

- Looking Up, September 11 - October 23
- Looking Around, October 23 - December 4
- Looking Back, January 8 - January 22
- Looking In, January 22 - March 4
- Looking Forward, March 4 - Annual Meeting, June 10, 2012

My involvement included approximately half of the preaching and the facilitation of all the workshops and small groups. When the sessions were complete I met with the discernment team to assimilate and synthesize the congregation's input. In addition to the weeks set aside for Looking Up, there were other prayer gatherings that were led by congregants.

Action Research Church Two (ARC Two)

The section describes the context or field of ARC Two and covers the scope of work that was conducted with them.

ARC Two Field

This section gives a description of ARC Two prior to their involvement in the Looking process. Before they entered the Looking process, ARC Two was a thriving suburban congregation. They had a new and gifted pastoral leader who, along with the leadership team, discerned that it was time to ask questions of core identity, purpose and values. In addition, they had recently purchased an adjacent facility and wanted to use it for Kingdom purposes. The pastor had previous exposure to the Looking Around workshop and inquired if his church could go through the entire Looking process to answer these questions. It was agreed upon, with the understanding that the Looking process would be assessed as part of the doctoral program. So that there is an understanding of the context that goes beyond my assessment, the pastor of the church was asked to give a perspective on where the church was at prior to their beginning the Looking process. This written email correspondence is attached as Appendix E.

The thesis moves from the field of ARC Two to the scope of work done with them.

ARC Two Scope

This portion of the chapter describes the scope of work that was conducted with ARC Two. The church participated in the five Looking workshops over five Saturdays (9:30 AM – 2:00 PM) from January to May 2012:

- Looking Up, January 14
- Looking Around, March 3
- Looking Back, March 31
- Looking In, April 14
- Looking Forward, May 5

During this period I maintained communication with their Senior Pastor. Unlike ARC One, this church did not preach throughout the process or work on the topics in their small groups.

The material covered in this area described the ARCs and the work conducted with them. The thesis transitions to explain the methods that were used to assess the impact of the Looking process in the ARCs.

ARC Assessment Methods

The following assessment methods were utilized to assess the efficacy of the Looking process in empowering the ARCs to discern and participate in the mission of God. These methods also assessed the impact of the Looking process in helping the ARCs experience ongoing transformation.

Group interviews were conducted with structured questions and a size of five to eight participants. The participants were those who had been part of the

five stages of the Looking process. Care was given to ensure that people could answer without the influence of others. After individual answers, the groups dialogued openly around the questions. Answers were carefully written, projected and corroborated. The data was then processed with codes, categories and summary statements of the categories that were further verified by the group interview participants. This material is the basis for the outcomes and findings that are given in Chapter Five. This next section describes what methods were utilized to assess the Looking process and why these methods were chosen.

Group Interviews

After careful consideration and consultation with program advisors, group interviews were selected as the best means to assess the efficacy of the Looking process that the ARCs went through. In *Handbook of Research Design and Social Measurement*, Miller explains the advantages of using interviews:

- The information received can be more accurate than other means because you can clear up any questions.
- The researcher can collect supplementary information about the informants that can be valuable in interpreting results.
- The interviewer can catch the informant off guard and thus secure a more spontaneous reaction than would be the case in a mailed out form.
- The interviewer can control the process far more than when people take surveys home and confer with several others before filling them out.
- Group discussions can be used for the personal interview if desired.
(Miller 1971, 86, 87)

The process deemed most appropriate to conduct the group interviews and to accurately assess the Looking process was to utilize what Denzion and Lincoln define as “structured interviewing.” In this method the interviewer asks all the respondents the same series of pre-established questions. The interviewer controls

the pace of the interview. All the respondents receive the same set of questions, asked in the same order or sequence by the interviewer (Denzion and Lincoln 2008, 124). Denzion and Lincoln shaped the implementation of the interviews through their advice to:

- Never deviate from the study introduction, sequence of questions, or question wording.
- Never let another person interrupt the interview; do not let another person answer for the respondent or offer his or her opinion on the question.
- Never suggest an answer or agree or disagree with an answer. Do not give the respondent any idea of your personal views on the topic of the question or survey.
- Never interpret the meaning of a question; just repeat the question and give instructions of clarifications that are provided in training or by the supervisor.
- Never improvise such as by adding answer categories or making wording changes. (Denzion and Lincoln 2008, 124)

Intrinsic to the Looking process is the belief in and practice of group discernment. As such, it was appropriate and congruent with the method in which the Looking material was taught to utilize *group interviewing during the assessment phase*. Denzion and Lincoln say that “The group interview is essentially a qualitative data-gathering technique that relies on the systematic questioning of several individuals simultaneously in a formal or informal setting” (Denzion and Lincoln 2008, 126). Further to this they note that:

...groups often produce data that are seldom produced through individual interviewing and observation and that result in especially powerful interpretive insights. In particular, the synergy and dynamism generated within homogenous collectives often reveal unarticulated norms and normative assumptions. They also take the interpretive process beyond the bounds of individual memory and expression to mine the historically sedimented collective memories and desires. (Denzion and Lincoln 2008, 397)

While there are benefits to the group interview, there are “some problems not found in the individual interview” (Denzion and Lincoln 2008, 128). In *Collecting and Interpreting Qualitative Research Material*, the authors warn that there are three specific problems to watch out for:

- The interviewer must keep one person or small coalition of persons from dominating the group.
- The interviewer must encourage recalcitrant respondents to participate.
- The interviewer must obtain responses from the entire group to ensure the fullest coverage of the topic. (Denzion and Lincoln 2008, 128)

The four questions used during the interview process were:

1. How has the process of Looking Up, Around, Back, In and Forward changed your church?
2. How has the process of Looking Up, Around, Back, In and Forward helped you understand what the mission of God is for all the world?
3. How has the process of Looking Up, Around, Back, In and Forward helped you understand what the mission of God is for your Church? Can you give me two or three examples of this?
4. How has the process of Looking Up, Around, Back, In and Forward helped your church to participate with God in mission? Can you give me a couple examples of this?

The research methods used to address the warnings provided about group interviews are provided in the next two sections.

ARC Group Interview Process

In light of the above guidelines and warnings, the group interviews employed to gather research data were conducted as follows:

Group Interview Size

In keeping with the Looking process format of round tables where there were several people at each table, the number of group interview participants that

was sought after was six to ten. This is consistent with the input from *Qualitative Research, a Guide to Design and Implementation* (Merriam 2009, 94). The actual numbers of the groups were eight participants for ARC One and five group interview participants for ARC Two. ARC One had one other participant who engaged in the “Group Input Portion,” explained below. This participant did not engage in the Looking Up and Looking Around portions, as such, he did not fit the criteria to give individual answers to the questions.

Group Interview Participants

Participation was open to all who had been actively involved in the various components of the Looking process. Both ARCs coordinated securing appropriate individuals, ensuring that there were enough participants to conduct the interview. The participants signed a release of information form indicating that they knew their names would not be mentioned. A copy of the Release of Information Form is attached as Appendix F.

Guarding Against Individual Domination in the Group Interview

While neither interview group appeared to have a “dominant” or controlling voice (Denzion and Lincoln 2008, 128), this concern was still proactively addressed by having the group participants independently and individually write down their own answers. This was done at the beginning of our time together. The next step was to randomly assign an order for participants to share their answers, based on a simple draw. This was done so that a strong voice

would not answer the questions first, pressuring others to answer similarly. After everyone answered the first question the order changed so that the person who answered second was now first and the first went to last and so on. Participants were instructed to simply read their answer to the question with no additional commentary. In most cases, they did.

Facilitating Synergistic Group Interview Input

As individuals read their responses to the four questions, their answers were typewritten and simultaneously LCD projected so that all the participants could both hear and see the responses of their fellow participants. Following each round of responses, the format changed to a group discussion focused on that particular question. People were invited to randomly agree with, disagree with or add to what was projected. Each of these group comments were also written and projected. Participants were consistently invited to corroborate that what was written reflected the intent of what they were communicating.

Ensuring Accuracy of Recorded Information

In addition to the electronically recorded, typed responses to the questions, both group interviews were audio recorded. In *Qualitative Research, a Guide to Design and Implementation*, Merriam writes that this is the most common approach. It allows the researcher to have an accurate record and to be freer to record non-verbal reactions (Merriam 2009, 109). Recording was done so that the information could be clarified and/or verified in the future.

This section described how the data was gathered. The next section describes how the material was processed.

Processing Group Interview Research Material

The following section records how the data gathered from the two group interviews described above were processed. It then summarizes the way the material was coded, categorized, summarized and afterward verified by the group interview participants.

Group Processing

The idea of having the group interview participant's process their own data is provided by Stringer in *Action Research* where he advises that the group interview participants could help with analyzing and categorizing the data (Stringer 2007, 72-75).

With ARC One, there was time to ask the group what themes they saw emerging from each question and from an overall view of the material. These themes were typed and simultaneously projected in the same manner as the previously recorded material. As can be corroborated by the audio file, there was a consensus within the group regarding the themes coming out of each question and the overall themes that emerged.

With ARC Two, time did not permit going back to each individual question. Alternatively, they identified themes that they saw emerging from all of the material covered. As can be corroborated by the audio file, there was a

consensus within the group regarding the overall themes that emerged from the data.

Processing the Data

The audio recordings of the group interviews from the ARCs were listened to three times each. The first two times it was to get an overall sense of the feedback given during the group interviews. The last time the audio files were listened to, minor adjustments were made to the written notes from the group interviews. The manuscripts from the two group interviews were read over several times each.

Coding the Research Data

The last two times that the material gathered from the group interviews was read over, it went through a coding process. For the purpose of clarity and legibility the coding process was repeated by typing the codes into a word document. Next the manuscript was sorted by placing the pertinent written statements from the group interviews under their corresponding codes.

In *Qualitative Data Analysis*, Miles and Huberman define codes as “tags or labels for assigning units of meaning to the descriptive or inferential information compiled during a study.” They also define coding as “...analysis. To review a set of field notes, transcribed or synthesized, and to dissect them meaningfully while keeping the relations between the parts intact is the stuff of analysis” (Miles and Huberman 1994, 56).

Mark Chapman gave the following input regarding effective coding:

- Frequency. More frequent does not necessarily mean more important
- Credibility of the audience
- Uniqueness
- Comprehensiveness
 - Did you incorporate all the appropriate data?
 - Did you throw away anything that you don't like or doesn't fit?
 - Go back again until the categories fit your data. (Chapman, 2012)

Chapman stated that when it comes to coding, "It's fair to go into your data looking for specific things; it's also okay to go and see what you find" (Chapman, 2012). The approach taken in processing this data was both to actively look for specific (deductive) markers and to make new (inductive) discoveries.

This thesis is about transforming a church through discerning and participating in the mission of God resulting in ongoing transformation. Therefore, the data was probed to see if the Looking process empowered discerning, participating and ongoing transformation. Codes were created for:

- Experiencing ongoing transformation by movement from:
 - Consumerism to Cause
 - Success to Kingdom
 - Determining to Discerning
- Discerning (because of the Looking process)
- Engaging (Participating)

In keeping with the approach of coding research manuscripts suggested by Chapman, a second, inductive approach to coding was applied to the manuscripts that came from the two ARC group interviews. In this approach the codes were created as the material was processed.

Every comment recorded from the two group interviews was coded; there were none that did not receive a code. All of the codes (both the ones looked for and the ones discovered) were then placed in categories.

Categories

Categories are simply the grouping together of similar codes. This categorization of material is what Miles and Huberman suggest in *Qualitative Data Analysis* where they encourage the researcher to have a visual format that presents the information in a more systematic manner so that the user can draw valid conclusions (Miles and Huberman 1994, 91). The material from the two ARCs was processed separately. The research codes and their supporting statements from the interview manuscripts were placed into categories. Each category was then given a title. The category title became a “finding.” Each finding was given a summary statement explaining it. These findings and their summary statements are further developed in Chapter Five.

Verifying the Findings

With both ARCs, the findings were further authenticated by feeding the manuscript of the interview, codes, categories, findings and their summary statements back to the group interview participants. It was requested that they verify that this material resonated with their understanding of what they experienced in the group interview and in the Looking process. These verified findings are further developed in Chapter Five.

This portion of Chapter Four looked at the research methods used with the two ARCs. The next section moves on to the research methodology and methods that were used with the three CSCs.

Supplementary Research Methodology: Case Studies

This project is about churches journeying through the Looking process as a means of discerning and participating in the mission of God resulting in ongoing transformation in the life a church. The first research methodology utilized in this project was Action Research, facilitating two churches to journey through the Looking process. The feedback gathered from these churches demonstrates the influence the Looking process had on them. To give another window into the Looking process, a supplementary research methodology was used. Three exemplar churches – churches that had a demonstrated capacity to discern and participate in the mission of God – were treated as case studies. The insight that was gathered from these CSCs is that if they are, to a recognizable degree, effectively discerning and participating in God’s mission, then it would be legitimate to compare their discerning processes to the Looking process to give further credibility and insight to it. This is consistent with input from Miles and Huberman in *Qualitative Data Analysis* where they state that multiple case sampling adds confidence to findings and helps to better understand a single case study (Miles and Huberman 1994, 29).

Another benefit to utilizing the CSCs is that the leadership traits demonstrated from the pastors of these exemplar churches establishes what kind

of leadership characteristics are catalytic in a church Looking Forward or participating in the mission of God. *Additional rationale for these CSCs providing leadership characteristics that help a church to be Looking Forward effectively is that it reminds a church that it takes more than five workshops for ongoing transformation to take place. It takes the right kind of lay and pastoral leaders.*

To determine which churches would qualify as being exemplars, input from the CBOQ senior staff team was solicited. They were asked for the best examples of churches that are effectively discerning and participating in the *mission of God locally, globally and in their own congregations.* These exemplar churches would be recognized as experiencing ongoing transformation toward Christ and his Kingdom values.

The description of the “field” for each of these churches was provided by the church itself. They were requested to provide a brief synopsis of their history, current context and an explanation of how they have been discerning and participating with the mission of God locally, globally and in their congregation. For the sake of brevity, these descriptions are included as follows:

- Appendix G: Case Study Church One (CSC One), Field
- Appendix H: Case Study Church Two (CSC Two), Field
- Appendix I: Case Study Church Three (CSC Three), Field

All the interviewees gave verbal permission for the interviews. In addition, all of them sent in a prepared Release of Information Form, which is attached as Appendix J.

This part of the chapter described the three CSCs. The next portion describes the method used to research these churches.

CSC Interview Method

The guiding method that was utilized in the interviews with the CSCs is what Miller describes as a “Free Story Interview” (Miller 1971, 85). The ebb and flow of the free story interview was guided by using “Semi-Structured Questions.” In *Qualitative Research, a Guide to Design and Implementation*, Merriam gives the following guidelines for these types of questions:

- The interview guide includes a mix of more and less structured interview questions
- All questions use flexibility
- There is usually specific data required from all respondents
- There is no predetermined wording or order (Merriam 2009, 87-91)

The interview with CSC One was with the former senior pastor, who is now the senior associate pastor. The interview with CSC Two was with the senior pastor and spouse who both serve on the pastoral staff. The interview with CSC Three was with the senior pastor.

The interviews took about 90-120 minutes, during which time the interviewees were probed about how they were participating with God in mission locally, globally and in their own congregation. This was done to ensure that they fit the criteria of exemplar churches that are experiencing ongoing transformation. The Looking process was not immediately shared with them. Rather, some time was given to see if they would articulate processes similar to the Looking process. Eventually, after a brief explanation of the Looking process, they were queried as

to what similar discerning activities (other than the ones they had previously divulged) they did that would resonate well with the foci of the Looking process.

Another area of questioning was the role they played in facilitating the ongoing transformation of the church. The learning from these interviewees was the understanding of what their actions were and what their character was that proved to be catalytic in the discerning and participating process. This learning can help other leaders and churches in their participating in the mission of God.

This section described how the interviews were conducted. The next part explains how the manuscripts were created and how this research material was processed.

Processing of CSC Interview Research Material

This portion of the chapter describes how the research material was gathered and processed. For CSC One and Two, notes were taken from each interview. For CSC Three, the physical setting of the meeting made it too difficult to take notes so the conversation was recorded. For CSC Three, the audio of the interview was listened to four times and on the fourth, thorough notes were taken for the purpose of extrapolating codes, categories and themes. CSC Two also had the interview videotaped. This was done for the purpose of using their story in the Looking workshops; however, it also provided an accurate record of the conversation. The video was watched and additional notes were added to the interview manuscript. The interview with CSC One was the first one to be conducted and it was not recorded. However, the notes from the interview were

given back to the interviewees who corroborated that they accurately reflected the conversation.

For the purposes of identifying themes and for the purpose of being able to validate findings, the interview manuscripts were processed in the identical way that the manuscripts were processed with the ARCs, coding, categorizing, creating a category title and writing a summarizing statement for each category of codes. These category titles became the “findings.” As was done with the group interview participants from the ARCs, the interview manuscripts, coding, categories and finding summary statements were given back to the CSCs to have them verify all of the information. Opportunity was given to agree, disagree, nuance or add to the finding summaries. These findings are further developed in Chapter Five.

Codes

The purpose of interviewing the CSCs was to probe how these exemplar churches discerned and participated in the mission of God and how their processes corresponded to the Looking process. I therefore looked for the following ideas and created codes for them:

- Overall trying to discern the mission of God
- Discerning the mission of God by Looking Up
- Discerning the mission of God by Looking Around
- Discerning the mission of God by Looking Back
- Discerning the mission of God by Looking In
- Discerning the mission of God by Looking Forward

As was the case with the ARCs, an inductive approach was also taken with the manuscripts to see what leadership characteristics and other findings would

emerge. These inductive codes were then added to the deductive codes that were looked for and they were all placed in the appropriate categories.

Categories

As was done with the data gathered from the Action Research material, these codes were placed into broader categories. The categories were given titles, which then became the findings from the CSCs. The categories were also given a summary statement to explain the finding. The findings are developed in Chapter Five.

This section covered what research took place with the CSCs. The next section will include ethical considerations for this project.

Ethical Considerations

This section highlights the ethical considerations of this report, including informed consent, level of risk, respect for persons, concern for the welfare of persons, privacy and disclosure of information, protection of information, legal obligations and the corroboration of information.

The research involved pastors and lay leaders within the two ARCs and the three CSCs. All the ARC group interviewees were fully informed about the purpose of the group interviews and of the overall project. Every group interviewee signed a copy of the Release of Information Form, which offered their informed consent. This form is attached as Appendix F. The three CSC interviewees were also fully aware of the purpose of the interviews and gave informed consent both verbally and written. The written consent is attached as

Appendix J. In addition to the informed consent the group and individual participants were emailed the contact information of Tyndale personnel should they have questions or concerns regarding the science, results or ethics of the research conducted for this thesis. This information is contained in Appendices F and J. Through email all the participants acknowledged receipt of this information.

Through email, all of the ARC and CSC interviewees gave their permission for me to use the research in any future seminars, teaching or publications. This information is contained in Appendices F and J. The people were promised that the same level of confidentiality that was given throughout this thesis would be maintained in any future use.

Through email, permission was received to use all quoted material in this thesis that was given apart from the ARC and CSC research interviews. This includes input from thesis advisors.

The level of risk that people interviewed for this project were exposed to would be classified as “minimal.” In *The Tri-Council Policy Statement: Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans*, “‘Minimal’ Risk research is defined as research in which the probability and magnitude of possible harms implied by participation in the research is no greater than those encountered by participants in those aspects of their everyday life that relate to the research” (TCPS 2010, 23). The ARC group interviewees participated based on an open invitation and there was no obligation for them to come to or stay at the interview. Their involvement in the Looking process and their involvement in assessing the process would be a

normal part of the life of the church. The three CSC interviewees are all credible leaders who willingly participated, at my request, without any form of coercion. These pastoral leaders giving input into the mission of other churches would be a regular request that they receive and respond to. All of the people interviewed from the ARCs and the CSCs had the opportunity to review and approve all of their research material before it was submitted.

Throughout the process respect for the participants along with the welfare of the participants was guarded. ARC One did not have any pastoral staff that I could influence from my denominational role. The ARC Two pastor approached me about working through the Looking process. This would be a typical request that would come to me. In light of this request, I asked if the church would agree to assist me in this project by assessing the Looking process after they went through it. In the CBOQ polity the autonomy of the local church means that there is no direct authority from the denominational office, or my role within the denomination, over any church or pastor. The three CSC interviewees are all well-known and highly credible leaders who willingly participated out of a desire to help the project.

There were no responses given from any participants that would require a legal response on my part as the researcher.

My work with the ARCs would be a regular job function. The correspondence that outlined the scope of my involvement with the ARCs did not in any way preclude them taking legal action against me should they deem that necessary.

The privacy of the individuals and the churches has been guarded by creating pseudonyms for the churches and ensuring that no names of participants are used in this thesis. Also, identifying material submitted by the ARCs and the CSCs has been changed to protect their identity and privacy.

All of the electronic research data, including PDF copies of signed waivers and audio/video files are stored only on a password protected computer, a password protected backup system and the CBOQ secure server. Hard copies of waivers and handwritten coding of material is stored in a locked file cabinet in the CBOQ offices. The hard copies will be kept for seven years.

All of the information that is referenced in this thesis: waivers, written transcripts from the ARC and CSC interviews, coded and categorized transcripts of the ARC and CSC interviews and the audio/video files are available to individuals that wish to corroborate statements made in this thesis.

Summary

This chapter explained the research methodologies and methods that were utilized in this project. It also gave an explanation of the material covered in the Looking process. Chapter Five outlines the outcomes and findings from both the ARCs and the CSCs that went through the Looking process.

CHAPTER FIVE

OUTCOMES AND FINDINGS

This project is about empowering a church, through the Looking process, to discern and participate in the mission of God, resulting in ongoing transformation. Building on the foundation of theology and precedent literature, Chapter Four gave an overview of the Looking process and the research methodologies and methods used with the two Action Research Churches (ARCs) and three Case Study Churches (CSCs). This chapter describes the outcomes and findings from the research explained in Chapter Four. These outcomes and findings demonstrate the efficacy of the Looking process in the ARCs. It also presents the findings from the three CSCs that illustrate how they used similar processes to the Looking process, strengthening the credibility of the Looking process. The CSCs also provide insight into the type of leadership characteristics needed to empower a church in Looking Forward and participating in the mission of God.

The assessment of the Looking process conducted with the ARCs reveals five church outcomes from ARC One and two church outcomes from ARC Two. In addition to the outcomes this chapter will report nine findings derived from the research conducted with ARCs One and Two. This chapter also shows how all three CSCs used processes very similar to the Looking process. The research from

the CSCs also revealed eight leadership characteristics that can empower a church in participating in the mission of God or Looking Forward.

Outcomes from Action Research Church One

To get to the point of determining outcomes of the ARCs the following process was followed:

- Conduct Looking Process with ARCs
- Conduct Group Interviews with ARCs
- Assist Discernment Team with Calling, Values and Next Steps
- Report Next Steps as Outcomes
- Report Other Outcomes

This section describes the five outcomes from ARC One journeying through the Looking process, which are:

1. Completion of Guiding Documents
2. Ongoing Participation in the Next Steps
3. Mission Comes to ARC One
4. Funding for Church
5. Cultural Change

At the end of the Looking process, ARC One put together a “discerning team,” of which I was the facilitator. This team assimilated the ideas from all of the Post It notes that were placed on the five Looking posters. The team also gave consideration to the historical timeline from Looking Back and the Natural Church Development survey results from Looking In. The result of this work is demonstrated in these five outcomes as follows.

ARC One Outcome One:
Completion of Guiding Documents

The first outcome for ARC One was the completion of their guiding documents. The discernment team drafted a copy of the church's Calling, Values, *Discerned Drivers* and *Next Steps*. These documents were taken to a church "town hall" meeting where further refinement was given. Subsequently, these documents were unanimously passed at the Church's Annual General Meeting (AGM) on June 10, 2012. In keeping with the teaching from *Looking Forward* and how to plan in uncertain times, it was only the Calling and Values that were passed at the AGM. The *Discerned Drivers* and *Next Steps* were "embraced." These final statements are attached as Appendix K. The completion of these guiding documents showed how the Looking process coupled with coaching – or as we will see from ARC Two, ongoing competent pastoral leadership – can empower a church to discern and participate in the mission of God.

ARC One Outcome Two:
Ongoing Participation in the Next Steps

The second outcome in ARC One was their ongoing participation in their *Next Steps*. This project is about empowering churches, through the Looking process, to discern and participate in the mission of God. An encouraging outcome was that participation immediately happened with ARC One. Many churches make strategic plans and then don't follow through with them. This was not the case with ARC One. Following the approval of the Calling and Values and the completion of the *Next Steps* phase of discerning (June 2012), it was my

anticipation that the church would take the summer off and begin to participate with their next step action items in September 2012. The reality was very different. All of the next steps were started and were either completed or are continuing. Appendix L reiterates the Next Steps and the actions that were taken in each area. These actual activities in the discerned next steps serve as a tangible indicator that the Looking process empowered ARC One to begin to participate in the mission of God in the church and in the community. They also serve as a demonstration of the outcomes of the Looking process.

ARC One Outcome Three:
Mission Comes to ARC One

The third outcome in ARC One was that their discerned area of mission came to the church. The first two outcomes in this section were planned for. Outcome three could not have been anticipated. One of the discerned drivers for the church was ministry to children. Just as the discerning process was wrapping up, three children's groups approached the church about utilizing the facilities. One of these groups has a focus on music and the arts and has agreed to participate in worship gatherings. One of the inductive codes that was used to sort the ARC One group interview transcript was "God Delivering." The church discerned that one of the ways they should participate with God in mission was by focusing on children's ministries. Before they had a chance to act on this, God was already at work.

ARC One Outcome Four: Funding for Church

The fourth outcome for ARC One was the provision of funding for the church. Another strong indicator of discernment and participation effectively taking place has been realized with the provision of funding. The church leadership felt strongly that they were working with God and decided to seek fiscal enablement from their regional denominational office. A PowerPoint summary of the Looking process along with ARC One's Calling, Values, Discerned Drivers and Next Steps was prepared and presented to their denominational office and the church secured a significant commitment for funding. The ninety-minute meeting went on for four hours and the regional leader has requested that the ARC One leadership team help other churches through the same process.

ARC One Outcome Five: Cultural Change

The fifth outcome for ARC One was a change in church culture. An overall picture of the outcomes of the Looking process is articulated by the following unsolicited email that was submitted from the board chairperson who has given permission to have this communiqué included here. It gives a lay leader's perspective on the outcome of the Looking process.

Dear Clint

As I look back over the past seven and a half months at (ARC One) we have come a long way, thanks to your leading us through our looking back and looking forward study.

As we began to look back at the past we became aware of the good things that brought us together. Our strengths and weakness which helped

us as we started the looking ahead process, it pointed out the changes we needed to make to begin to return to our purpose and reason for planting the church in the first place. The feeling of failure and uncertainty which existed began to change and instead of pursuing veering ideas, we began to come together through openly sharing our thoughts, developing a new statement of faith, and purpose, planning to now go ahead as one. The last session was just amazing when all the answers which had been written down privately were shared and every one had the same thoughts and agreed on every answer.

We truly are now as one. And I should add that from the beginning until now and as we go forward Prayer was and is very much a part of the process, as we go forward...*(sic)* (Board Chair, email message to author, July 6, 2012).

This email is an indicator that the Looking process went beyond discerning and planning next steps to bring about real cultural change in the life of ARC One.

From the five outcomes in ARC One, we move on to the two outcomes of ARC Two.

Outcomes from Action Research Church Two

This section describes the two outcomes from ARC Two journeying through the Looking process:

1. Ongoing Discernment
2. Equipping for Mission

As noted in Chapter Four, the scope of work with ARC Two was less than with ARC One. Accordingly, there is currently less in terms of actual outcomes. ARC Two took all of their discerning information and gave it to a team that continued to develop the material, just as ARC One did. Unlike ARC One, I did not facilitate this team. Following the group interview with ARC Two, they had the opportunity to view the ARC One format of Calling, Values and Next Steps as

a model they could follow. There were also subsequent meetings that I had with the senior pastor of ARC Two to go further in depth with the NCD survey.

ARC Two Outcome One: Ongoing Discernment

The first outcome from ARC Two is that after the Looking process they continued in a posture of discerning. Later in the fall of 2012, an update was received that reflects the outcomes that are being realized at ARC Two:

We have a team of 4 people that is working through the NCD 8 Quality Characteristics charts. Our goal is to create concrete steps and specific congregational opportunities to improve our ministry related to the lower scoring areas. We want to make sure we give the “why we’re doing this” prefix to our ministry initiatives here on in – continually trying to connect the dots for the congregation.

We continue to feed our ministry groups and committees “cycle starter” questions that they are working through in their monthly gatherings, opening dialogue in particular areas mentioned in the NCD survey, as well as the themes you had us focus on “looking up, out, in and forward”, giving us some more context to our thoughts and responses. One of the habits we’re working on breaking is the “yes or no” reaction to doing something, and growing an intentional spirit of openness toward engaging the “why” question – how would this particular event or activity fulfill our mission as (ARC Two); and “What might God do with this ministry opportunity?”

It will be a long journey! (Pastor, email message to author, October 24, 2012)

For ARC One I did additional work with their discerning team. ARC Two synthesized the Post It notes, NCD Survey and historical timeline on their own subsequent to the Looking process. The first outcome, then, was that the church carried on with the discernment process.

ARC Two Outcome Two: Equipping for Mission

The second outcome for ARC Two was that they began equipping congregants for mission. A part of the email update from the pastor included a tangible outcome that has been and is being taken to empower the church to more effectively participate in the mission of God. This step is an outcome from the Looking process.

One step has been the “Just Walk Across the Room” sermon series and small group study, which we have over 45 members involved in currently (week 3 starting this Sunday). With it we remind the congregation: “one of the ministry areas our church has expressed a desire to grow in is the area of evangelism, sharing our faith with others...” (Pastor, email message to author, October 24, 2012)

One of the areas of discernment was that the church had been doing many good things in the community, but struggled to translate that into inviting people into a relationship with Jesus. This theme was heard and responded to by the leadership of the church by implementing a Willow Creek video training resource called “Just Walk Across the Room.”

The Looking process resulted in specific outcomes with the ARCs. The research that was conducted with the ARCs also revealed nine findings about the Looking process.

Verified Findings from the ARCs

The findings from the ARCs were arrived at based on the following assessment process. The process is fully explained in Chapter Four.

- Conduct Looking Process with ARCs
- Conduct Group Interviews with ARCs

- Code Comments from Interview Manuscripts
- Categorize Codes and Comments from the Interview Manuscripts (Appendix M for ARC One and Appendix N for ARC Two) (Comments from the Interview Manuscripts not included)
- Give Titles to Categories
- Category Titles = Findings
- Write a Summary Statement for each of the Findings (Category Titles) (Appendix O for ARC One and Appendix P for ARC Two)
- Verify Findings and Summary Statements with Group Interview Participants

As was noted in Chapter Four, the group interview manuscripts from the ARCs were read over several times and the audio recordings were listened to three times each. The manuscripts then went through a process of coding and categorizing. The categories and the codes from the ARCs are attached as Appendix M for ARC One and Appendix N for ARC Two. The category titles became the findings from this project. Following the coding and categorization a summarizing statement for each finding (category) was created. These category summarizing statements effectively demonstrate what the findings were from the Looking process with the ARCs. To offer a higher level of accuracy and validation, this material was sent back to the group interview participants so that they could confirm whether or not they accurately reflect both what the group said and their own experience of the Looking process. These findings and their summary statements are attached as Appendix O for ARC One and Appendix P for ARC Two.

Based on the similarity of the findings from both ARCs, the material was amalgamated and one list of findings was arrived at based on the group interview manuscripts, codes, categories, findings and summary statements. These findings

demonstrate the impact that the Looking process had on the two ARCs, including both the information that was looked for out of the *group interview manuscripts* and the information that was discovered. All of the references made to support the findings are taken directly from the group interview manuscripts from the ARCs.

The nine findings are:

1. Ongoing Transformation Took and is Taking Place
2. Ministry and Mission Focus: Movement from Consumerism to Cause
3. Success Indicators: Movement from Counting to Kingdom
4. Planning Process: Movement from Determining to Discerning
5. Movement from Individualism to Community
6. Understanding that the Context has Radically Changed
7. New Ways of Thinking
8. We Found What (We may have Forgotten) We were Looking for...God
9. Hope Happened

Finding One:
Ongoing Transformation “Took” and is Taking
Place

The first finding from the ARCs is that ongoing transformation “took” and is still taking place. The goal of this project was to empower ongoing transformation in the life of the church through the Looking process. The feedback that came from the interview participants’ comments makes it clear that the process of ongoing transformation is taking place. A participant said that “It’s a start...starting to break down some of the past paradigms of how we think.” Over the period of time spent with the ARCs it was interesting to hear language and thinking begin to reflect a shift in what the previous ways of thinking were. One participant articulated that “we started to share a common language and understanding of terms ‘missional’ and ‘church.’ This helps to define the mission

field and what we define it as.” The following findings show some of the significant transformation that has begun to take place.

Finding Two:
Ministry and Mission Focus:
Movement from Consumerism to Cause

The second finding from the ARCs is that they experienced movement from Consumerism to Cause. This is the area of ongoing transformation that was addressed more than any other throughout the Looking process. I have no memory of any dialogue as to how people’s (perceived) needs would be met; rather, the conversation continually focused on what the needs in the community were and how the churches could begin to meet them. One interviewee talked about how this process “made us look outside of ourselves.” This shift can be further seen with comments like: “...we need to look at our community and see what can be done to present God to our neighbours,” and that the church is now “community focused, joined (with) God in what he is already doing.” One person noted that the shift in their motivation for gathering moved to “meeting specific needs as the motivation for coming together.” The intent of the Looking process was to empower transformation away from consumerism to become churches that see their reason for existence as participating with God in mission. These comments show that movement has taken place in the ongoing transformation from Consumerism to Cause.

Finding Three:
Success Indicators:
Movement from Counting to Kingdom

The third finding from the ARCs is that they experienced movement from Counting to Kingdom. A most insightful dynamic happened at both Action Research churches which caught me off guard in the group interviews. It had to do with the church building. ARC One had conversations about selling the building; ARC Two recently purchased an adjacent property. It emerged in both group interviews that people had come to the sessions with the hope of talking about building and property issues. During the ARC One group interview the comment was made that it was “interesting to see that the church facility is never mentioned...focus is on people and the community around us.” At the ARC Two group interview it was noted that “the recently purchased property never came up...some came to the meetings with property on their mind, we are now in a stronger place to define and discern our purpose in mission and our purpose and mission with the property next door.” Another piece of feedback was, “Money has never been an issue; it has been God/people-oriented.” Indicating a broader Kingdom perspective, one group interview participant was quoted as saying, in response to one of the sessions of biblical reflection, that “God so loved the cosmos...all of creation, God’s redemption is for the cosmos.” In terms of wanting to see the success indicator move away from attendance or getting people to come to the building and having it move toward Kingdom work, the comment was, “we are lined up with God versus lining people up to come in the building.” These comments along with others are evidence that the two churches experienced

movement from success being measured by buildings, attendance and budget to a focus on God's Kingdom.

Finding Four:
Planning Process:
Movement from Determining to Discerning

The fourth finding from the ARCs is that they experienced movement from Determining to Discerning. One of the ways that movement in this area was evidenced was by ARC One articulating Discerned Drivers and Next Steps (Appendix I), rather than developing a more traditional strategic plan that would presuppose that they would know the "ends."

The feedback that came from the group interview participants made it clear that movement took place from Determining to Discerning. One of the group interview respondents noted how this shift began to take place when they said "A new to some, or many, concept has been introduced, that we are in partnership with God; participating with God in this common purpose of mission, we are not sent off without God. This is an important concept to carry us forward." A similar comment was made, saying, "we are participating with God versus doing our own thing and hoping that God shows up...we are joining him." Further evidence that this shift is taking place is seen by comments like, "we are now more open to God's leading," and "waiting on God to provide the opportunities is different than making them happen." Further to that, one person noted that "discovering and articulating values was a significant exercise in the life of the church...this is our mission that we are presenting to the world, (they

are) the drivers, if we don't know what our values are we may not be reflecting God's character." Recognizing the time limitations and hopefully being cognizant that discerning is an ongoing process, another participant said, "we haven't arrived (at full discernment) yet, it did create paradigmatic shifts to help get there. The necessary theory was there, maybe more time needed to get down to more concrete." Yet another respondent noted that "by reviewing and viewing carefully our past, present and future and looking at our place with God today it has helped to equip us with a better understanding of our mission and where and how we can better understand and be a part of God's community and plans."

Finding Five:
Movement from Individualism to Community

The fifth finding from the ARCs is that they experienced movement from Individualism to Community. In the reflection on Romans 12:2 and how the North American church has bought into the patterns of the world, sometimes the concept of the cultural value of individualism (versus community) came up. In *The Sky is Falling*, Alan Roxburgh notes this when he says:

...the Christian story...is no longer about God and what God is about in the world; it is about how God serves and meets human needs and desires. It is about how the individual self can find its own purposes and fulfillment. More specifically, our churches have become spiritual food courts for the personal, private, inner needs of expressive individuals. (Roxburgh 2005, 12, 13)

There are three reasons I am hesitant to explore the concept of individualism in the workshops. First, there are times when being an individual standing against the flow of culture or a community is indeed the right thing to do. Second, for

those who don't see the roots of individualism from the influence of Descartes and the Enlightenment it takes a lot of valuable workshop time to communicate. The third reason is that I deeply shook a senior saint when I suggested that the language of Jesus as "my personal" Savior is not found in scripture. I perceived him to hear me question the necessity of Jesus and his redemptive work and have thus not wanted to risk being heard saying that. In light of this, individualism versus community was not highlighted as a desired outcome of ongoing transformation as a result of the Looking process.

Even though the concept of individualism versus community was not discussed in the workshops, the interview participants from the ARCs articulated that the Looking process brought a deep level of unity in their churches, which implies the value of community. The coding process highlighted a number of comments made around the concepts of unity, communication and the deepening of relationships. One respondent noted how the Looking process "brought us closer as a church family, united in direction and focus." Another observed how the process helped them "come together in unity to study and reflect on our past 17 years and look forward." Even though community building wasn't the agenda, it did happen as a very significant by-product. One person even went so far as to say that the "biggest theme by far is communication...we met with different people around tables for five days, extremely open, all ideas accepted, felt we were building a bond with each other versus tearing down or being negative." They further suggested that "the process welcomed opportunity for this versus a typical church business meeting." To highlight the effectiveness of the Looking

process in community building they also asked, “How often do we actually talk about our values and beliefs? This experience provided those opportunities which may be one of the reasons it was so well received.” Another person made similar comments noting how the process “has been encouraging for the body life of the whole church...no one afraid to speak up, voices that have not always been heard have spoke, and ideas were wrestled with fairly.” One of the most encouraging comments from a group interview participant tied together our theological reflection on the Trinity and how our unity impacts mission, also bringing in the major ongoing transformation piece of moving from Consumerism to Cause saying, “unity came because we were focusing on God’s mission versus our agenda.”

Finding Six:
Understanding that the
Context has Radically Changed

The sixth finding from the ARCs is that they understood their mission and ministry context to have radically changed. One of the statements made during the review of the Looking Perspective – Missionary was that “the church sends missionaries overseas to places that are far more Christian than here in Canada. Overseas is missions; here is Church.” It was communicated that we often “don’t know that we don’t know;” because we live in this culture and speak the dominant language we forget that we don’t fully understand the culture we live in and thus we should, like a missionary, study the culture.

The following comments reflect an understanding that the Looking process helped the participants in understanding that the context has significantly changed, which calls for a new way of being the church. Picking up on the imagery used in the Looking process a group interviewee said that “...there is no longer a yellow brick road; we are not in Kansas.” Another person demonstrated a shift in their thinking by saying that they had a “stronger sense that the world is right here in (their community)...and what we do to reach other people groups in our neighbourhood will have a global impact...we have the most culturally diverse city in the world.”

Finding Seven:
New ways of Thinking

The seventh finding from the ARCs is that they experienced new ways of thinking. In light of the church not being in “Christian Canada” any longer, it needs to think in different ways. This would be consistent with Romans 12:2, which states that transforming happens when the church renews how it thinks. One person suggested that “boundaries are self created...we often have a model in mind what mission is, shoe boxes etc., mission is everywhere...it is going out, it is exactly what we make of it.” Another good example of new thinking is the shift from a focus on attractional church (expecting that people will just come to the church) to being a sent people. This was articulated with the comment, “what has become clear is that we can no longer expect people to come to us; we now know that we need to go out to our community/world.”

This project suggests a renewed theological understanding of the church. An encouraging comment came from a group interview member who recognized that “as much as the ways we attempt or look at mission as a church needed to and must change, what was really exciting was to see the continuity of God’s story remaining the same.”

Finding Eight:
We Found What (We May Have Forgotten) We
Were Looking For...God

The eighth finding from the ARCs is that they found what I (we) forgot we should be looking for. With a degree of embarrassment I admit that I was so busy analyzing the teaching and the process that I lost sight of the fact that what the ARCs were really looking for is not just activity that God is doing but God himself. The impact of the Looking process helped the churches to get closer to the ultimate goal: God. One person observed that the process “made us realize that God is in control; it’s about God not us.” Simply stated by another: “God has become the focus.”

It seems that God decided to reciprocate. Another significant finding was that the Looking process resulted in God’s provision back to the churches that were proactively seeking God and participating with him in his redemptive mission. Some of this has already been noted in the earlier outcomes mentioned in this chapter. Further to this, one person noted that “God is delivering on what we discerned.” Another said that “we have been watching and waiting for God’s direction in what we should do and he has brought to us kids’ care, art camp,

moms and tots group, which has shown us clearly that God is working in these areas.”

It was observed that one of the reasons the focus moved to God was that “prayer has been elevated” and that the process “facilitated us spending time in prayer and thinking through the questions.”

In Chapter Two’s theological reflection on the Trinity flowing from John 17, it was noted that a passion for God should result in community with our sisters and brothers in Christ. One group interview member drew this correlation in saying that the “key word is partnership...with God and each other.”

Finding Nine: Hope Happened

The final finding (and another unexpected result) from the ARCs is that they experienced hope. The need for hope was certainly more pronounced in ARC One than in ARC Two. Nonetheless, the Looking process was catalytic for bringing hope and anticipation for the future of both churches. One participant simply stated that “God gave us hope.” Another added, “The process has taken us from a depressing period where we lacked hope and transformed (our) beliefs and attitudes...(we are) a lot more positive even if numbers have stayed the same.” In faith another added that “it’s God leading us and so God will provide.”

Moving beyond hope to how the Looking process brought about excitement and anticipation, someone else added that our time together “helped to energize and encourage those that participated to continue to seek out and define God’s mission for the church...we were in a bit of a lull and burnt out but this

energized us to carry on.” With similar thoughts a different contributor stated that “there is excitement about what is next and how this carries us forward and the foundation that this provides us to build on.”

These nine findings and the outcomes demonstrate the effect of the Looking process on the two ARCs. What follows are three areas that stood out to me as warranting further analysis in order to better understand and further strengthen the Looking process. This analysis is based on my own assessment and the feedback from the two ARC group interviews.

Further Analysis on the Looking Process in the ARCs

As the data and the outcomes and findings were processed, there were three items that stood out for further analysis.

1. The Interdependence Between the Stages of the Looking Process
2. Significance of the Teaching Methods in Openness to Change
3. Additional Involvement with ARC One vs. ARC Two

The Interdependence Between the Stages of the Looking Process

The first item that calls for further analysis is the interdependence between the stages of the Looking process. The opportunity to journey with two churches through the Looking construct over a period of several months allowed for a perspective on both the whole and the parts of the Looking process. One of the items that surprised me was how much impact the Looking Back session had with both ARCs. In addition, the openness to change that some of the senior saints had

during the Looking Back session was interesting. Upon further reflection it seems that the focus on God in Looking Up reminded people of God's love for humanity. Looking Around further set the stage for openness to change by teaching about the radical cultural shifts that have and are happening. The Looking Around teaching included a video that shared the history of humankind, noting seismic cultural shifts, and how God has worked through these times. During Looking Back the history and hard work of the senior saints was honored as the right thing to do in that day. An ARC One group interviewee noted that Looking Back has "shown us what we need to do from the past and clarified the method going forward." The interplay among the Looking foci, along with the communal discerning style, resulted in participants who may not have otherwise embraced change supporting the ongoing transformation in the life of the church by participating in the mission of God. This was not an anticipated outcome of the Looking process, but it was a very welcome surprise.

Significance of the Teaching Methods in Openness to Change

The second item that calls for further analysis is how the teaching style and system that was utilized in the Looking process empowered an openness to change. The combination of Dwelling in the Word (the work of the Holy Spirit and Scripture), biblical and theological reflection, teaching, multi-media, self and group discovery in an interactive format and the use of the Post It notes where no one had a definitive answer (rather all people, regardless of their position in the church, simply responded to the statement: "I wonder if God is saying that we

should join him in...”), resulted in active participation and a real openness to change by all participants. A group interview member said that “people didn’t come as deacons or representing their committee or an advocate for a particular view, they simply came as themselves and shared honestly; people didn’t have roles/power/position.” During the group interview with ARC Two, I realized that, other than the pastor, I didn’t know who held what position in the church; all were there as equals. Another participant noted that “unity came because we were focusing on God’s mission versus our agenda.” It was further observed by a group interviewee:

We met with different people around tables for five days, extremely open, all ideas accepted; felt we were building a bond with each other vs. tearing down or being negative. The process welcomed opportunity for this vs. a typical church business meeting. How often do we actually talk about our values and beliefs? This experience provided those opportunities which may be one of the reasons it was so well received. The process also facilitated a better appreciation of each other as individuals and a depth of understanding of each other.

It is my assessment that how the teaching took place was essential to the churches’ achieving discernment and participation resulting in ongoing transformation.

Additional Involvement with ARC One vs. ARC Two

The third item that calls for further analysis is the greater involvement with ARC One versus ARC Two. As was noted in Chapter Four, the input into ARC One included sermons, small groups, leadership meetings and discerning team facilitation; this input was not given to ARC Two. As was just

demonstrated, both churches experienced transformation through discerning and participating in the mission of God. The additional reinforcements at ARC One of preaching and small groups being utilized in the discerning process seemed to deepen the experience. An ARC One group interviewee said that “the preaching helped the process, filled in blanks, brought things to life.” It would be fair (and maybe an obvious reality) that the process of discerning and participating in the mission of God is greater if it is also preached and worked through in small groups and individual activity.

This section revealed the outcomes and findings from the ARCs. It also gave an analysis of the Looking process. Chapter Five moves on to describe the findings from the three CSCs.

Findings from Three Case Study Churches (CSCs)

This section provides the findings from the three CSCs. The stated purpose of interviewing these three exemplar churches was to illuminate the Looking process; to create another window into the process of discerning and participating in the mission of God. In other words, if these exemplar churches are, to a recognizable degree, experiencing ongoing transformation by effectively discerning and participating in the mission of God, then you could compare their processes to those of the Looking process to establish further credibility of it as an effective means to discern and participate in the mission of God.

A second purpose of the interviews with the CSC leaders was to consider *insights into leadership characteristics that empower a church to be effectively Looking Forward or participating in the mission of God.*

To extrapolate this information from the CSCs the following assessment process was utilized. This process is fully explained in Chapter Four.

- Conduct Interviews with CSC Leaders
- Code Comments from Interview Manuscripts
- Categorize Codes and Comments from the Interview Manuscripts (Appendix Q Combines CSC One, Two and Three)
- Give Titles to Categories
- Category Titles = Findings
- Write a Summary Statement for each of the Findings (Category Titles) (Appendix R for CSC One, Appendix S for CSC Two and Appendix T for CSC Three)
- Verify Findings and Summary Statements with CSC Interviewees

For the purposes of identifying findings and for the purpose of being able to validate findings, the interview manuscripts were processed in the identical way that the manuscripts were processed with the ARCs: coding, categorizing and making the category titles the findings. Summary statements were written for each finding (category of codes). The finding summary statements that were verified by the CSC interviewees are attached as:

- Appendix R: Case Study Church One, Findings
- Appendix S: Case Study Church Two, Findings
- Appendix T: Case Study Church Three, Findings

This section outlines the resonance of the Looking process with the processes that the CSC churches went through. The subsection on Looking

Forward includes insights into leadership characteristics that were revealed from the CSCs.

The following comments from the various CSCs give strong support for a process like the Looking process. While it is clear that these exemplar churches did not do the identical activities, they did practice the essence of the Looking process.

All of the quotations utilized in this section come directly from the CSC interview manuscripts.

Looking Up

All three CSCs practiced different forms of Looking Up. This was most clearly identified in CSC One that had one of their pastors walk with the leadership team, with invitation to the whole church to join in, through a discerning process with the “principle of seeking the will of God through *Lectio Divina*...over a period of weeks, journaling, sharing what (they) heard.” This form of Looking Up was their starting point. It offered them next steps whereby they could begin to walk toward further discernment and subsequent participation in the mission of God. CSC Two has always had a “strong prayer ministry...lay led...she is a pastor to the staff.” CSC Three put a high value on the practice of “spiritual formation.”

Looking Around

It was abundantly clear that Looking Around was an intentional practice on the part of all three CSCs. Of note was CSC One whose pastor implemented

some of the teaching from the Looking Around workshop and proactively went to all the “P’s” (police, politicians, principals, proprietors) to ask “what are the real needs of this community that we could partner with you in meeting.” The pastor would also ask: “What is ‘good news’ to our community?” Also of note was the pastor from CSC Three who actively taught the church leadership about postmodernity and its influence on the church. This same pastor taught Alpha in a local pub.

Looking Back

Using the past to discern the mission of God for the future was done intentionally by two of the three CSCs. CSC Two was navigating their way to planting a new church, and took the wise approach of calming peoples’ uncertainty about the future by Looking Back. They said that “during the anniversary celebration of the church we did a historical reflection on the church and came up with the picture of a big oak tree in the middle of nowhere dropping little oaks symbolizing the five congregations/churches that were previously planted in its history.” CSC One utilized the input from *Preferred Futuring* that was highlighted in Chapter Two (Lippitt 1998, 33-44). This gave them excellent insight as to how to walk their church through a celebration of the past as a means of discerning God’s mission for their future.

Looking In

All three CSCs practiced different forms of Looking In. CSC One utilized both NCD and Reveal on a regular basis. The CSC Two pastor took the eight

quality characteristics of NCD and anecdotally assessed the health of the congregation with their leadership team. CSC Three based its internal assessment on its own discipleship grid.

Looking Forward

All three CSCs were identified as exemplar churches because of their active participation in the mission of God. The purpose of the research was not to identify what they were doing but how they discerned what to do. Therefore, what they were doing was not researched; however, in addition to looking for the discerning processes that the CSCs used, what was also looked for were leadership characteristics these leaders exemplified that were helpful to their churches in empowering them to effectively discern and participate in the mission of God.

What follows is not intended to be an exhaustive list of what kind of leader empowers participation in the mission of God; rather, this list will surface the information that the CSC interviews revealed. For this section, references to leadership are meant to be inclusive of both pastoral and lay leaders. There are aspects of leadership that are usually unique to the clergy role or the lay role. These tend to be self-evident. As previously noted, these characteristics were discovered from processing the interview manuscripts. Eight leadership characteristics were discovered from the CSCs.

1. Leaders Need Godly Character
2. Leaders Need to be Self-Aware
3. Leaders Need to be Empowering
4. Leaders Need to Persevere through Conflict

5. The Church Needs all the Leadership Roles
6. Leaders Need to be Competent Communicators
7. Leaders look for Partners in Mission
8. Churches need Godly Leadership Teams

**Leadership Characteristic One:
Leaders Need Godly Character**

None of the interviewees ever said “I have character,” yet all of them told accounts of difficult scenarios where they had to make difficult choices while remaining true to God and his mission. All the pastoral leaders interviewed have a reputation of godly character. Scripture, precedent literature and experience would suggest that godly character in the life of the leaders is essential if a church is to navigate the challenges of ongoing transformation. The one character item event that stood out to me was when the wife of one of the senior pastors was asked to speak at a different church but chose not to because the home church board wasn’t sure that it was appropriate, based on gender. Rather than simply go, or argue about it, she was willing to submit. Ironically, many years later, she was the one who led the male leadership team through the discerning process and now speaks at the new church plant. Another character item of note is that all three CSC pastors related how they were actively engaged in mission in their own lives. In other words, they all led by example. This included one of the pastors who “started teaching Alpha in the pub.” It was interesting to observe that all of the interviewees were quick to point out their failings and mistakes. They did not have to be right and acknowledged quickly when they were wrong. One pastor stated this succinctly when he said, “It is blatantly apparent about my weaknesses and how I need people around me.”

**Leadership Characteristic Two:
Leaders Need to be Self-Aware**

All the interviewees included what their spiritual gifts and strengths are and are not. CSC One's pastor had been influenced by the book *Strengths Based Leadership* (Rath and Conchie 2008), and talked about how his "main strength is WOO...winning others over." He also talked about how he looks for strengths in others.

**Leadership Characteristic Three:
Leaders Need to be Empowering**

Another characteristic of these leaders is that they focused on empowering others. CSC Two's pastor stated this explicitly when he said that the church "operated on a model of empowering the passions of others..." A significant aspect of empowerment that was observed was that these leaders developed other leaders. This was a theme in all three CSCs. The CSC One pastor said that the "best thing (they did) is the 'Growing Leaders' course with forty leaders and thirty mentors, very labor intensive on the part of the staff." CSC Three noted how they "have done a lot of work with internship, there is a lot of 'unteaching' that has to take place."

**Leadership Characteristic Four:
Leaders Need to Persevere through Conflict**

The theme of conflict was pronounced with the CSCs. At best, all three of them practiced patience and persistence. CSCs One and Three used the actual language of "attacks from Christendom." CSC Three noted that there were "hard

fought battles that saw the attrition of those that thought the focus should be more strictly *evangelical or charismatic...*” Another interesting theme came up that was also noted by CSCs One and Three; it was significant enough that a code was developed for it. The experience was that “mission messes with worship.” This is a part of the clash with Christendom. It seems clear that if we effectively participate with God in mission, then it affects our worship gathering, as those to whom we are ministering desire to join in the worship of God. The pastor of CSC Three noted that “When it came to helping less affluent people this was fine, when it came to having some of those being helped becoming a part of the church (I was told) ‘those kids’ were not welcome...”

**Leadership Characteristic Five:
The Church Needs all the Leadership Roles**

An item that was noted in CSCs One and Three was the need to look for some of the lesser used offices from Ephesians 4:11, 12. Most churches hire a Pastor/Teacher but there is far less space in the church for Apostles, Prophets and Evangelists. CSC One’s pastor stated: “we can’t do missional stuff unless people are shepherded and cared for...at some level the fivefold work of Ephesians 4 needs to be active and implemented.” Recognizing his own gifting relative to this he said that he has “embraced the Apostle role from Ephesians 4.”

**Leadership Characteristic Six:
Leaders Need to be Competent Communicators**

The danger inherent in elevating preaching is that it can become one of the “products” that religious people “consume.” That said, the subject of

preaching emerged in the interviews with the leaders from all three CSCs. Not once did any interviewee claim to be a gifted preacher. CSC One said their “recent preaching hire is the key to what is (currently) happening here,” and how “the hallmark of church has been and is the preaching.” Demonstrating the influence of preaching in transformation, this church noted how “In the early 90s (when he) was in the GOCN, that material started showing up in sermons.” In CSC Three the interviewee stated that preaching is one of the “keys to making the transition...(the) preaching ministry has to be drastically different than in the 70’s. (This) has to do with the Post Modern context.”

**Leadership Characteristic Seven:
Leaders Look for Partners in Mission**

An observation from the three CSCs and the two ARCs is that they all partnered with other groups in symbiotic relationships. These groups included para-church youth missions, global missions, local social services and other local groups. Another way that all five churches had others journey with them is that they each had outside input into their discerning and participating journey.

**Leadership Characteristic Eight:
Churches need Godly Leadership Teams**

While this is a partial restatement of the overall conclusion, it is worth nuancing here because of its significance to the process of ongoing transformation. What was obvious from the three CSCs is that transformation requires a godly leadership team that wants to embark on the journey of discerning and participating in the mission of God. Without the support of the

leadership and key influencers it would be almost impossible for the church to experience ongoing transformation. The pastor from CSC One noted that their “Elders (are the) key to everything.” They “are a spiritual advisory group to the church...worship, body life, strengthening...handpicked and affirmed by the congregation...based on trust and integrity.” A CSC Three interviewee added that “key as well at church is the selection of godly leaders...” and that there is “vehemence around picking leadership...lay and pastoral staff.” A CSC Three interviewee said they have made a “commitment to Godly leadership,” which has resulted in “very strong deacons who are willing to submit to God and each other.”

The effectiveness of the three CSCs’ participation in the mission of God gives credence to offering these eight areas as essential leadership characteristics for pastoral and lay leaders to embody if the church is to be effective in Looking Forward or participating in the mission of God.

Summary

Two ARCs journeyed through the Looking process. This experience was assessed and five outcomes were realized in ARC One and two outcomes were realized in ARC Two. Together the ARCs revealed nine findings about their experience with the Looking process.

Pastoral leaders from three CSCs were interviewed. The data from this revealed that they utilized processes that support the essence of the Looking process. These interviews also provided eight leadership characteristics that serve

as a (not exhaustive) list of the leadership characteristics needed to empower a church in effectively discerning the mission of God and Looking Forward or participating in the mission of God.

The outcomes from the ARCs and the findings from the ARCs and the CSCs show how the Looking process can effectively empower a church to discern and participate in the mission of God resulting in ongoing transformation in the life of the church. These outcomes and findings, supported by the theological review of Chapter Two and the precedent literature review of Chapter three are distilled down to *four thesis conclusions in Chapter Six*. The next chapter also offers next steps in the Looking process and some personal reflections.

CHAPTER SIX

CONCLUSIONS

This project is about empowering a church, through the Looking process, to discern and participate in the mission of God, resulting in ongoing transformation. The core of the Looking process was a series of five workshops with the following foci: Looking Up at God, his character and mission, Looking Around at God's activity in the culture and local community, Looking Back at God's activity in the history of the church, Looking In at God's mission in the internal life of the church and Looking Forward at the calling, values, and next steps (see Table 1, Chapter Four)

Two Action Research Churches (ARCs) went through the Looking process and the three Case Study Churches (CSCs) served as exemplars to reinforce the Looking process and give leadership characteristics that can empower a church to effectively discern and participate in the mission of God.

This final chapter has three components. First, it describes four thesis conclusions based on the theological rationale, precedent literature and outcomes and findings. Second, this chapter highlights seven improvements designed to further develop the quality and influence of the Looking process in the future, including three items that call for further reflection. The chapter ends with personal reflections.

Conclusions from the Research

These four thesis conclusions are supported by the theological rationale given in Chapter Two, the precedent literature covered in Chapter Three and representative quotes from the five data sources (the two ARCs and the three CSCs) provided in Chapter Five. The four conclusions of this thesis are:

1. The Looking process can empower a church to discern and participate in the mission of God
2. Ongoing participation in the mission of God requires the right kind of leadership
3. The Looking process encourages fresh encounters with God
4. The Looking process has the potential to empower ongoing transformation in participating churches

Conclusion One:

The Looking Process can Empower a Church to Discern and Participate in the Mission of God

The first conclusion is that the Looking process can empower a church to discern and participate in the mission of God. The Looking workshops all began with the spiritual exercise of “Dwelling in the Word” using the passage of Luke 10:1-12. The portion of that Scripture that the Spirit most often prompted me toward was from verse four that says “don’t take purse, or bag, or sandals.” The Spirit spoke to me through the Word by reminding me that the church doesn’t have all the resources and answers and should not wait until they have it all figured out before they begin to participate with God in mission. Chapter One showed how many churches feel confusion and paralysis today, and that some of this is based on ambiguity in understanding what the mission of God is and how a church can participate in it. The Looking process has proven to be an effective

means of empowering a church to discern the activity of God and begin to participate in it. The Looking process does not provide a church with all the answers or a long-range plan; instead, it invites the church to start participating with God in mission without “purse, bag or sandals.”

The process of Looking Up, Around, Back, In and Forward is built on the paradigmatic foundation of the three Looking Perspectives – Trinitarian, Missionary and Organic. The research indicates that each stage of the Looking process is integral to the discerning of and subsequent ongoing participation in the mission of God.

Looking Up. The Looking process, beginning with Looking Up, was a very spiritual journey. Many of the components in other stages of the Looking process such as demographic reports, NCD reports and learning about post modernity are more cerebral exercises. The Looking Up piece, which was practiced throughout the process, set the tone by focusing on God and his mission. When the ARCs collectively sought God, he revealed himself and his mission to them in palpable ways. An ARC One group interview participant said that the process “Made us realize that God is in control - it’s about God, not us.” Looking Up moved the entire Looking process from a technocratic checklist of making sure you “Look” all the right directions, to having the whole Looking process become an adventurous spiritual journey with God.

Looking Around. Churches that want to discern and participate in the mission of God need to practice Looking Around. Looking Around is consistent with the incarnation, with God the Father sending Jesus to live as a human. If the

church is effective in Looking Up (connecting with Jesus) then they should imitate the practice of Jesus and be Looking Around. This was the experience of the ARCs who gained “community eyes and ears.” Looking Around left the workshop participants with the simple reminder that the mission of God is all around us. Calling, values and next steps matter. Looking Around took these concepts from theory to reality.

Looking Back. A positive look back at the life of a church can empower it to discern and participate in the mission of God in the present and future. The impact of Looking Back was pronounced with the senior saints. As they were honoured for all they have done in the past it created an excitement in them and the rest of the congregation about doing new things in a new day and age.

Looking In. As aptly stated by a group interviewee, “the Looking In portion helped us to pause and reflect on what God wants and not push our own agendas.” The focus of Looking Up, Around and Back helped the church become “outwardly focused” (Rusaw and Swanson 2004, 12). The Looking In section helped the ARCs to move toward being “internally strong” (Rusaw and Swanson 2004, 12) to empower that outward focus.

Looking Forward. In essence, the Looking Forward piece is really the “participating” with the mission of God part of the transforming process. Both ARCs responded to their discerning with action that was congruent with their discernment of the mission of God. Looking Forward or ongoing participation in the mission of God requires the right kind of leadership. This will be explored in Conclusion Two.

This thesis has demonstrated that the Looking process is an effective way to empower a church to discern and participate in the mission of God.

Conclusion Two:
Ongoing Participation in the Mission of God
Requires the Right Kind of Leadership

The second conclusion is that ongoing participation in the mission of God requires the right kind of leadership. The precedent literature and the research from the three CSCs demonstrated that ongoing participation in the mission of God requires leadership possessing certain characteristics. Eight needed traits became evident from the three CSCs.

This thesis is not intrinsically about leadership. However, for a church to be effective in its participation in the mission of God or for a church to be effective in its Looking Forward, certain leadership characteristics are needed. The work to quantify this kind of leadership is beyond the scope of this project. However, because of the necessity of the right kind of leadership, this conclusion includes a summary of the leadership characteristics that the research found in analyzing the data from the three CSCs. These are the eight traits that were then covered in Chapter Five and which the precedent literature addressed in Chapter Three. This list of the type of leader(s) that a church needs is not meant to be exhaustive; however, based on the reality of the three CSCs capacity to participate in the mission of God, it does provide a framework for the type of leadership characteristics needed.

For a church to be effectively Looking Forward and experience ongoing participation in the mission of God, eight needed leadership characteristics are:

1. Leaders who possess godly character
2. Leaders who are self-aware
3. Leaders who empower others
4. Leaders who effectively persevere through conflict
5. Leaders who integrate all the roles from Ephesians 4:11, 12
 - a. Apostle
 - b. Prophet
 - c. Evangelist
 - d. Pastor and Teacher
6. Leaders who are competent communicators
7. Leaders who partner with others in mission
8. Leaders who develop and serve with godly leadership teams

This conclusion about leadership traits was based on the coding, categorization and findings from the interviews with the three CSCs. The next conclusion will move back to what was discovered from the assessment of the ARCs.

Conclusion Three:
The Looking Process Encourages Fresh Encounters
with God

The third conclusion is that the Looking encourages fresh encounters with God. In “The Great Commission” Jesus told his disciples that when they carried out his mission of making “disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. (That) ...surely (he would be with them) always, to the very end of the age” (Matthew 28: 18-20). When ministry is internal and safe, the need for God is far less than when our mission is external

and unpredictable. Just as Jesus promised his presence with the disciples on mission, he offers the same to his church today.

The Looking process was initiated as a means of discerning and participating in the mission of God. The end of the journey was for a church to define its calling, values and next steps. Having a deep, meaningful and fresh encounter with God was not the stated objective, but it happened. As was simply stated by one of the group interview participants, “God has become the focus.” Some of the outcomes, like the three kids groups that approached ARC One and the provision of funding that ARC One experienced, appeared to be *miraculous*.

Unlike the other three conclusions in this chapter, this conclusion was not looked for; rather, it simply emerged as a wonderful gift. Conclusion four is one that the Looking process set out to accomplish.

Conclusion Four:
The Looking Process has the Potential to Empower
Ongoing Transformation in Your Church

The fourth and final conclusion is that the Looking process can empower ongoing transformation in the life of the church by discerning and participating in the mission of God. The result of participating with God in mission should be ongoing transformation where a church experiences movement away from the values of our culture and movement toward Christ and his values. Foundational to this thesis is Romans 12:1, 2 which reads:

Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God’s mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God—this is true worship. Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be

transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will.

In Mark 8:34, 35, Jesus “called the crowd to him along with his disciples and said: ‘Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me. For whoever wants to save their life will lose it, but whoever loses their life for me and for the gospel will save it.’” Jesus’ admonition to the crowd then, rings true for the church today. Whoever is willing to lose their life for the gospel; whoever is willing to transform from Consumerism to Cause, from Counting to Kingdom, from Determining to Discerning, from Individualism to Community, then they will save their church and experience ongoing transformation.

While the ARCs did not “fully arrive,” that is, were not fully “transformed,” it is clear from the outcomes and findings revealed in Chapter Five that they experienced significant movement toward Christ and his Kingdom values. As demonstrated by the two ARCs and the three CSCs, it is probable that other churches who journey through the Looking process would experience similar results.

In addition to the ongoing transformation markers that were looked for (Consumerism to Cause, Counting to Kingdom, Determining to Discerning) the experience of the ARCs would suggest that other indicators of transformation in the life of the church could be realized. As shown in Chapter Five, ARC One experienced a change in culture, unity, empowerment and God given hope. ARC Two experienced deep communication, unity, renewed energy, new ways of

thinking and anticipation for the future. These outcomes and findings are clear indicators that a church can experience ongoing transformation through the Looking process.

The four conclusions of this thesis demonstrate that the Looking process and the assessment of the ARCs and the CSCs accomplished what was looked for, and more. The conclusions arrived at in this thesis are:

1. The Looking process can empower a church to discern and participate in the mission of God
2. Ongoing participation in the mission of God requires the right kind of leadership
3. The Looking process encourages fresh encounters with God
4. The Looking process has the potential to empower ongoing transformation in participating churches

The next part of this chapter transitions to ways that the Looking process can be improved through further developments.

Action Research Continued: Further Developments in the Looking Process

Perhaps the greatest hockey player ever, Wayne Gretzky, is reported to have said: “you miss 100% of the shots you don’t take.” I am glad that I had the privilege of journeying with ARC One and Two through the Looking process. I am equally grateful that this thesis empowered me to take the time to give a comprehensive assessment of the efficacy of the Looking process. This section of Chapter Six will include two subsections. The first is the identification of seven ways that the existing Looking process can be improved; the second subsection covers three areas of the Looking process that require further reflection. All of the items covered in this section are based on feedback from the group interview

participants, my own analysis and the input provided by thesis advisors and other people who have fed into this project.

Seven areas with potential to improve the Looking process are:

1. Define Mission Early and Often
2. Run the Looking In Assessment during Looking Back.
3. Go out to Conduct Looking Around
4. Add Images and Quality to the Looking Posters
5. Keep Accurate Record of Ideas
6. Further Develop the Looking Sermons
7. Train Coaches for the Looking Process

Three areas that require further reflection are:

1. Theological Reflection on Eschatology
2. Additional Spiritual Disciplines for Looking Up
3. Discerning the Mission of God Globally through Looking Around

This section describes the seven ways that the Looking process can be improved.

Looking Process Improvement One: Define Mission Early and Often

The first area for improvement to the Looking process is that “the mission of God” should be defined early and often in the workshops. This project was about empowering churches to participate in the mission of God. During the journey with both ARCs, somewhere between the Looking Back and Looking In stages, I realized that the mission of God was talked about often but it was never defined or explored in the workshops. The correction to this was that in every subsequent workshop one of the definitions of the mission of God that was covered in Chapter Two was explored. What has also been done since then is to

have these multiple definitions put on small posters with the Looking branding and placed on the wall beside the posters where Looking workshop participants place their Post It notes. The feedback from group interview participants indicates that the time spent in defining the mission of God resulted in a better understanding and awareness of it. One participant noted that the church is now “Community focused, joined (with) God in what he is already doing.” Another said that the “Looking process helped us to participate with God, versus hoping God is participating with us.”

Looking Process Improvement Two:
Run the Looking In Assessment during Looking
Back.

The second improvement to the process is a very practical one. It is to have the workshop participants fill out the NCD questionnaire (or other internal assessment tool) during the Looking Back workshop so that the survey results can be made available in time for the Looking In workshop. This was not done with ARC Two, and it meant that we could not debrief them on their survey results during the Looking In workshop and instead had to do it during the Looking Forward workshop.

The sequence of the Looking workshops is: Up, Around, Back, In and Forward. As noted in Chapter Four, an agenda item in the Looking In workshop is to debrief the church on its NCD survey results (or whichever assessment was used). To make certain that these results are processed in time for the Looking In

workshop, it is necessary to give enough time to generate the survey results.

Completing the internal health assessment during the Looking Back workshop has been added to the teaching outline.

Looking Process Improvement Three: Go Out to Conduct Looking Around

The third improvement to the Looking process is to make sure that the Looking Around workshop is conducted outside of the church facility. An ARC One group interviewee noted how significant it was that for the Looking Around workshop the church “gathered in local restaurants and prayed openly/watched videos etc. and people watched, (and that they) invited input from a non-churched member of the community.” When I shared with the ARC Two pastor how this workshop was conducted with ARC One, the pastor stated that they missed out by not doing it in the way that ARC One had.

My assessment is that going out into the community for this workshop models being “sent” and being “incarnational.” It is worth the extra effort to get out of the church building to conduct the Looking Around workshop.

Looking Process Improvement Four: Add Images and Quality to the Looking Posters

The fourth improvement to the Looking process is to add images and quality to the Looking posters. When answering questions about the teaching methods utilized in the Looking process, an ARC Two group interview participant suggested that it would be helpful to “Have (all the Post It notes) up on Bristol board.” This input, along with the video teaching from the Looking Around

workshop that suggests the use of image when communicating in a postmodern context (Chapter Four), was the impetus for having large, quality posters created for each of the Looking workshops. Additionally, a “Parking Lot” poster was produced for making sure ideas that don’t clearly fit somewhere are also recorded. These posters use Looking branding and have squares outlined that are the size of the Post It notes used in the workshop.

Another way these posters would be more helpful is if a church were able to designate an area to keep them and the corresponding Post It notes up throughout the discerning process. This is especially helpful if you need to move the Looking Around poster out of the church facility for the workshop and back in to the facility for others to see the Post It notes. At ARC One the Post It notes stayed up the whole time. At ARC Two the Post It notes came down after each workshop.

Looking Process Improvement Five: Keep Accurate Record of Ideas

A fifth way the Looking process can be improved is to make certain that the church keeps an accurate record of the ideas given on the Post It notes. A group interview participant suggested that it would be wise to utilize a “picture or video journal to capture the sticky (Post It) notes.” This is obviously helpful for sharing information with those not present and for collecting it for the discerning team who will be working with this information. A similar idea would be to have someone record the ideas in a document. It is also possible that this could be done

in some type of online format that could take advantage of Facebook, Twitter or other similar tools.

From improvements to the existing Looking process, what follows are next steps to add to the Looking process.

Looking Process Improvement Six:
Further Develop the Looking Sermons

The sixth way the Looking process could be improved is to further develop the Looking sermons. With ARC One Looking sermons were preached throughout the process. A group interview participant from ARC One said that “the preaching (Looking sermons) helped the process, filled in blanks, brought things to life.” The improvement is to provide churches that are journeying through the Looking process with sermons that correspond to the five Looking foci. The sermons used in ARC One are a starting point for accomplishing this goal.

To take this further in helping other churches, a group of gifted CBOQ preachers were brought together and are working on sermon outlines to correspond with the Looking process. The outlines will include a small group discussion guide. These resources will be made available to churches that are in the discerning process.

Looking Process Improvement Seven: Train Coaches for the Looking Process

The final way for the Looking process to be improved is by training “Looking” coaches to journey with churches in their discernment of the mission of God.

The CBOQ has articulated operational values of empowerment and multiplication. Training coaches for the exponential growth of churches experiencing ongoing transformation through the Looking process is congruent with the values of the denomination. CBOQ has begun a ministry initiative called T3-3D, which stands for *Transforming Leaders, Church and Communities by Discovering, Developing and Deploying the gifts of God’s people*. To date, four regional and one central T3-3D events have taken place. Currently there are a few coaches who have begun to work with CBOQ churches in different aspects of the Looking process.

These are seven ways that the Looking process is being improved. In keeping with the thinking of Action Research, these changes will be assessed and other improvements added.

Looking Process for Further Reflection

In the spirit and practice of Action Research, some needed changes that are rather straightforward are being or have been made to improve the Looking process. Other items that surfaced during the project, however, require further reflection before an appropriate response can be given. The first one is a theological reflection on eschatology.

Looking Process for Further Reflection One: Theological Reflection on Eschatology

The first area of the Looking process that requires further reflection is the doctrine of eschatology. In *Surprised by Hope: Rethinking Heaven, the Resurrection, and the Mission of the Church*, N.T. Wright argues that what we believe about life after death directly affects what we believe about how we live our life before death (Wright 2008, 13-30). He demonstrates from the Bible that God intends to renew the whole of his creation and that God has already begun that renewal through the resurrection of Jesus. This being the case, the church cannot stop at “saving souls” but must anticipate the eventual (consummated) renewal of all things by joining God in his mission of bringing healing and hope in the present life (Wright 2008, 13-30). Some of these ideas significantly challenge certain beliefs that were a part of my evangelical upbringing that had a definitive view of end times. Eschatology does influence our view of soteriology, The Kingdom of God and the mission of God. The Looking process leads the church into participating in God’s mission, which is strongly influenced by his ultimate plan for the cosmos. The “what and when” of God’s future plan changes how the church participates with God today. This shapes how the Looking process encourages a church to discern and participate in the mission of God. Further biblical and theological reflection is needed in this area.

Looking Process for Further Reflection Two: Additional Spiritual Disciplines for Looking Up

The second area of the Looking process that requires further reflection is in understanding what additional or alternate spiritual disciplines could be added to the Looking Up workshop. The current Looking Up workshop offers a limited number of spiritual disciplines. Three influences led me to the realization that reflection is required in this area. First of all, the reading conducted through this educational journey exposed me to other spiritual disciplines that resonated well with the stated outcomes of Looking Up. Second, CSC Two excelled in this area and their pastoral leaders have provided me with further input and ideas for this. Finally, in meeting with a spiritual director, he has given other ideas how a church could practice Looking Up. Further reflection is needed to assess which of these considerations would be most beneficial in the Looking Up workshop.

Looking Process for Further Reflection Three: Discerning the Mission of God Globally through Looking Around

The third area of the Looking process that requires further reflection concerns how to empower the church to discern the mission of God globally through the Looking Around workshop. One of the criteria for the three CSCs was that they participated in the mission of God globally. Matthew 28:18-20 and Acts 1:8 remind the church that they should participate with God both locally and globally. This global aspect of mission was not explored in the Looking Around workshop. Further reflection is needed to see how or when this could be introduced to churches that are journeying through the Looking process.

These are three areas of the Looking process that call for further reflection before any response can be given. The last section of Chapter Six is a personal reflection on the journey.

Personal Reflections

This section includes my reflections on the journey of walking through the Looking process with the ARCs, the input garnered from the CSCs and the writing of this thesis. This will involve three different areas of reflection.

The first reflection relates to my life calling. Several years ago I was able to articulate my life calling as “Inspiring and facilitating the existing and emerging church to reach its Kingdom potential.” About fifteen years ago when I started coaching churches, I remember several times driving away from a church meeting with the distinct and unsettling sense that I had just helped the church become better at being whom they shouldn’t. While I would not have been able to articulate it then, my sense now is that I helped churches become better at serving Christians (consumerism) rather than empowering congregants to be actively participating in the mission of God. The study and research that has undergirded this project, coupled with the outcomes and findings from the ARCs, has reinvigorated me for the calling that God has placed on my life to work with pastors and lay leaders in empowering them to see their churches reach their Kingdom potential by discerning and participating in the mission of God.

A second personal reflection relates to my work with ARC One. Having some prior knowledge of the church, it was difficult to see it struggle and

contemplate closing. Being an active part of seeing it experience hope and a future was both humbling and exhilarating. I have grown to appreciate deeply the quality of people that make up that local expression of the body of Christ. My ongoing hope and prayer is that they continue on their current trajectory of experiencing ongoing transformation.

A third reflection comes as a result of seeing hope develop in ARC One and anticipation for the future develop in ARC Two. Recently I met with a struggling church that asked me if there was anything they could do and if there was any hope. This project gave me the confidence to tell them that there is no magic formula or guarantee. However, God, through the Looking process can provide hope and a way forward.

The wise philosopher-king, Solomon, said, "...of making many books there is no end..." (Ecclesiastes 2: 12). I am so thankful for all the development that has taken place in my life. I believe that I have learned a great deal. I have deepened my understanding of how vast and deep God's love is for all of humanity and all of creation. I also am reminded about how much more of God's love and his mission I have yet to understand.

Conclusion

Albert Einstein is reported to have said, "We can't solve problems by using the same kind of thinking we used when we created them." Romans 12:1, 2 remind us that ongoing transformation takes place when we renew how we think and re-orient that thinking toward Christ and his Kingdom values. There are no

easy answers. However, ongoing transformation is indeed possible. Churches can experience ongoing transformation by discerning and participating in the mission of God. Ongoing transformation is possible for churches that embrace the Looking Perspectives – Trinitarian, Missionary and Organic, and journey through Looking Up, Around, Back, In and Forward.

APPENDIX A:
SUMMARY OF LOOKING MATERIAL

In Chapter One under the heading Definition of Key Terms, the significance of the succession of three words, “Theology-Missiology-Ecclesiology,” was discussed. This concept shapes the ordering of the Looking workshops. Looking Up starts the process where it matters most; it puts the focus on God. Next, the focus moves to God’s redemptive mission in the world. This is empowered by Looking Around. Next, the focus goes to the church, Looking Back and Looking In. When this is done the church can begin to participate with God by Looking Forward.

The material that follows is the outline of what was taught at the five different Looking workshops. These items are covered at each of the five workshops:

- **Dwelling in the Word.** Luke 10:1-12.
- **Reflection on Romans 12:1-2.** How the church should experience ongoing transformation from the patterns of the world to Christ’s values. How the church should move from Consumerism to Cause, from Counting to Kingdom, and from Determining to Discerning. This material was covered in Chapter One. Included in this reflection is the “Me Church” video that reiterates this concept with humor. This is not used at every workshop, but usually used in Looking Up, Back and Forward.
- **Reflection on the mission of God.** This is done utilizing one of the definitions of the mission of God offered in Chapter Two.
- **Biblical and theological reflection.** This reflection is based on the focus of the particular Looking workshop. The material in Chapter Two provides much of what is covered.
- **Review of the Looking perspectives.** These perspectives were explored in Chapters Two and Three and are further explained in Appendix B.
 - Trinitarian
 - Missionary
 - Organic

- **Review of the Looking process.**
- **Review of previous Looking workshop.** After Looking Up there was a review of the previous material and dialogue around what was done with that material during the time between workshops and other gatherings.
- **Stories of Looking.** There are video stories of Looking Up, Around, Back and In that CBOQ has produced. These videos are played to give an example of how a church can discern through each particular portion of the Looking process.

From the material that was covered in all of the Looking workshops, this appendix gives the summary of the material covered in each of the Looking workshops. It begins with Looking Up.

Looking Up

The purpose of the Looking Up workshop and exercises are to listen carefully to God through his Spirit and Word to discern what he is saying to his church about his mission and how to participate in it. Key components in the Looking Up workshop include:

- **Places of prayer.** This exercise sends the participants to symbolic places in the facility to direct their focus on God's mission globally, locally and in the life of the congregation.
- **Quotes.** Three different quotes on the significance of Looking Up are interspersed throughout the material.
- **Video teaching.** "Inoculating a Generation" (Jethani 2011). This teaching explores five postures of a person's relationship with God and how the first four postures have inoculated a generation against true Christianity by offering a lesser form of it. The four postures are: life over God, life under God, life from God and life for God. The conclusion is a fifth posture that is urged, life with God. The tie in is that as we live life with God we will discern his mission.
- **Looking Up exercises and resources.** These are explained to the church to enable them to work on these independent of the workshop facilitator.
- **Prayer at the tables.** Groups pray together that the church would discern the activity of God that they are to participate in.

- **Homework.** Individuals are given homework to engage in personal *Lectio Divina* to listen to the Spirit's voice and direction.
- **Close in prayer.** The time together closes with reading a prayer together.
- **Further Direction.** It is suggested that a posture and practice of Looking Up be maintained throughout the Looking process.

Looking Around

The purpose of Looking Around is to move from a focus on the person of God to the activity of God in the broader culture and the local community. The activity that is discerned is that which the church may be called to participate in.

Key components in the Looking Around workshop include:

- **Teach on the emerging/postmodern culture.** Videos, PowerPoint and other material from *Emerging Culture* (Long 2004) are utilized.
- **Teach on how a church can respond to the emerging/postmodern culture.** Material from *The Great Giveaway* (Fitch 2005) is utilized.
- **Prayer around the tables.** Groups pray together that the church would have discernment in how to respond to the emerging culture.
- **Process the church's demographic report.** The demographic reports are purchased and specifically prepared for the church by a Christian research organization called Outreach Canada.
- **Utilize community assessment tools.** This was done in various ways. ARC One brought in a local business owner and interviewed him. Previous iterations of the Looking Around workshop have utilized tools to help a church assess its community by driving around, walking around and interviewing people.
- **"Lonely People" video clip.** Reminding the participants that it's about people more than reports and surveys.
- **Close in Prayer.**
- **Further Direction.** Subsequent to the Looking Around workshop, participants were left with the assignment of utilizing the community assessment tools and practicing giving and receiving hospitality in their neighborhood.

Looking Back

The purpose of Looking Back is to utilize the history and past experiences – both positive and negative – of the church to empower its present and future participation in the mission of God. Key components in the Looking Back workshop include:

- **Teach on the biblical feasts and festivals.** A reminder that the people of God in the Old and New Testament celebrated the past and how this encourages the church to be Looking Back.
- **Prayer that God would renew in this day what he has done in the past.** This comes from a biblical reflection on Habakkuk 3:1-2.
- **Create a storyline of the life of the church.** The storyline is constructed with newsprint on the wall it includes:
 - When participants joined the church and what they valued most about the church when they joined.
 - Significant events in the life of the church.
 - Lessons learned.
 - DNA of the church.
 - Values of the church.
- **Dialogue around the storyline.** Particular attention is given to getting a first draft of the values of the church.
- **Close in prayer.** Prayer is focused on asking God to help the church discern their present and future from reflecting on their past.
- **NCD Survey.** Before participants leave they are invited to complete the Natural Church Development survey in preparation for the Looking In workshop.

Looking In

The purpose of the Looking In workshop is to help the church move toward being “internally strong but outwardly focused” (Rusaw and Swanson 2004, 12). It also focuses on discerning God’s mission in the internal life of the church. Key components of the Looking In workshop include:

- **Teach on church health.** This material covered is the eight quality characteristics of a healthy church (Schwarz 2006, 22-41).

- **Case studies.** These case studies are intended to demonstrate how the eight quality characteristics impact the mission and ministry of a local church.
- **Debrief NCD survey.** This debrief includes:
 - Understanding their strengths.
 - Affirming what they appreciate about their growth areas.
 - Defining what they would want more of in their growth areas.
 - Listing some resources that are needed to achieve this.
- **Close in prayer.** Prayer that God would grant the church discernment in understanding his mission for the internal life of the church.

Looking Forward

The purpose of the Looking Forward workshop is to tie together the discerning that took place in the previous workshops and move toward clarifying calling, values and next steps. The Looking Forward workshop puts the items in place that empower the church to begin participating (more fully) in the mission of God. Key components of the Looking Forward workshop include:

- **Teach on how to plan in uncertain times.** This utilizes material from *20/20 Foresight* (Courtney 2001).
- **Teach on the Calling of a church.** Part of this portion utilizes teaching from Simon Sinek’s video entitled “How Great Leaders Inspire Action” (Sinek 2009).
- **Teach on Calling and Values.** This section uses the CBOQ as an example.
- **Interaction around the church’s calling and values.** The church usually has a first draft of their calling and values.
- **Interaction around next steps.** Input is given to the discernment team regarding what they should consider regarding next steps.
- **Models of Looking Forward.** Presentation of different models of Looking Forward.
- **“Leadership Lessons from the Dancing Guy.”** A video to inspire the church that it only takes one or two people to start a movement (Sivers 2010).
- **Discussion around what happens next.** Explanation that a discerning team will synthesize the input and report back,
- **Close in prayer.** Emphasis on giving the discerning team wisdom.

APPENDIX B:

SUMMARY OF THE LOOKING PERSPECTIVES

The following three Looking Perspectives are intended to paradigmatically shape the five stages of the Looking process.

1. Trinitarian
2. Missionary
3. Organic

Looking Perspective – Trinitarian

The Looking Perspective – Trinitarian encourages churches to embrace all three persons of the Trinity. In *Color Your World with NCD*, Christian Schwarz suggests that different denominations and churches tend to focus on one of the persons of the Trinity. Churches from a mainline tradition tend to focus more on God as Father and rely heavily on rationalism or reason in their discerning process. Churches from an evangelical tradition tend to focus more on God as Son and utilize Scripture as their primary means of discernment. Churches from a charismatic tradition tend to focus more on God as Holy Spirit and use more listening or sensing in the discerning process. Schwarz asserts that discernment and participation is enhanced when a church focuses on all three persons of the Trinity and the emphases that they bring (Schwarz 2005, 46-77). This is the essence of the Looking Perspective – Trinitarian that is reviewed at each of the five Looking workshops. The summation or application of this Looking Perspective is that churches can more effectively discern the mission of God as

they utilize their rational ability, remain true to the Word of God and are led by the Holy Spirit. For participating, it means that churches serve in deed, word and in the power of the Holy Spirit (Schwarz 2006, 46-77).

Looking Perspective – Missionary

The Looking Perspective – Missionary encourages the church to view the culture around it like a missionary would. Rather than trying to get the culture to come to them, they learn about and are sent to the culture around them. Just as a missionary would take the effort to learn the culture they were sent to for the purpose of contextualization, so too should the church today. For many years denominations have sent and continue to send missionaries to nations that are more Christian than Canada. Overseas it was missions, here it was “church.” This perspective seeks to help the church see its local context through the eyes of a missionary. This need for a missionary paradigm for the West is not a new insight. Almost one hundred years ago, Karl Barth suggested “that the age of Western Christendom was ending.” This was not viewed negatively by Barth; rather, he saw that it meant “a new freedom for the world as well as a new freedom for the gospel in the world” (Bosch 2011, 543).

Looking Perspective – Organic

The Looking perspective – Organic helps a church view itself not as an organization, rather that it would see itself as an organism. While this organism does have effective structures, the church would endeavor to create a climate or atmosphere where mission and ministry can flourish on its own. This process is

reinforced by looking at the biblical images for the church and how they are all alive. The implication of the exponential organic growth of The Kingdom of God is also explored.

APPENDIX C:

ARC ONE, FIELD

Two members of the leadership team of ARC One were requested to provide the context of their church before they embarked on the Looking process.

Respondent one:

We had gone through a very hard and long split, going from an average of 160 for a morning service to 55, resulting from a change in pastors, dissatisfaction and dissention. We were struggling with the next steps trying visiting Pastors, music teams and times relating to child and youth ministry. Along the way we set aside what I call house duties such as having a bulletin for services, Sunday School activities and greeters at the door. Our numbers still fell even further and visitors only were one time attendees even though we are very friendly, we had nothing to cause them to want to come back.

We did have a core group, who wanted to rebuild but ran out of ideas, and answers as to why we were not growing, and what the next step should be. When sharing our problem with Clint he offered to speak to the (leadership) and introduced us to the Looking program, which we appreciated, and accepted his offer to lead us through this (Board Chair, email message to author, June 7, 2012).

Respondent two:

Before September of 2011 prior to Clint's assistance the church was, simply stated, floundering. A bit of background may help to explain. Our revenue had been declining steadily over a few years and the causes were not addressed as they were likely not recognized by the leadership. Once the effects of the revenue decline were acknowledged the leaders made the tough decision to remove the pastor responsible for the youth and children's ministry out of sheer economic necessity. The effect was almost immediate and devastating. About half of the congregation left. The result was foreseeable. The remainder of the congregation was not able to support the expenses and a very "defeated" group was left behind. The pervasive feeling of uncertainty and lack of direction was now woven into the fabric of the congregation who felt desperate to mend the broken church. Unfortunately the decline in attendance continued and soon the church was forced to remove its full time pastor and try to continue with part time preachers who helped out. While (ARC One) was blessed with some very good teaching another situation occurred. Out of desperation to recruit steady leadership from a single pastor and stabilize the church,

(ARC One) engaged the services of a pastor who now believed we should sell the building and focus on community and small cell groups. This exacerbated an already troubled declining congregation's negative feelings and low morale and half of the remaining congregation left. This pastor, who had said he would stay "as long as needed," changed his mind when he learned the (leaders) and congregation did not support the sale of the building and so he left. The church members had reached a new low and were questioning whether or not God wanted to close this place of worship. We struggled with part time pastors for the next few months. This was the very low point just prior to Clint's involvement. One might well imagine the anxiety, uncertainty and struggles the church membership was facing (Board Member, email message to author, June 26, 2012).

APPENDIX D:

MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING BETWEEN CLINT MIX AND ARC ONE

August 10, 2011

This is a memorandum of understanding between Action Research Church One (ARC One) and Clint Mix.

Purpose:

The purpose of this agreement is to have Clint Mix serve as a consultant and coach in guiding ARC One in a transforming process; empowering ARC One to discern and engage in the mission of God. To a far lesser degree Clint Mix will serve as an interim pastor for preaching and leadership.

Process and Timeline:

This discernment process will take place from September 2011-June 2012. It will involve an interdependent flow of sermons, workshops, congregational gatherings, small group gatherings and leadership gatherings.

- Looking Up Sept 11-Oct 23
- Looking Around Oct 23-Dec 4
- Looking Back Jan 8- Jan 22
- Looking In Jan 22-March 4
- Looking Forward March 4-Annual Meeting

Schedule of Events

While it is understood that there is need for some flexibility on both parties, this schedule will endeavor to be adhered to.

Looking Up

September 2011

- 11: Looking Up Sermon one and Looking Up Workshop (By Clint)
 - 10.00-11.15, Lunch, 12.15-3.30
- 18: Looking Up Sermon Two (By ARC One)
- 20: All Small Groups Meeting at Church (By Clint)
 - 7.00-9.00
- 25: Looking Up Sermon Three (ARC One)
- Leadership Team Meeting (TBD)

October 2011

- 2: Looking Up Sermon Four (By ARC One)
- 4: All Small Groups Meeting at Church (By Clint)

- 7.00-9.00
- 9: Thanksgiving Sermon (By Clint)
- 16: Looking Up Sermon Five (By ARC One)
- 18: All Small Groups Meeting at Church (By Clint)
 - 7.00-9.00

Looking Around

- 23: Looking Around Sermon One, Debrief Looking Up and Conduct Looking Around Workshop
 - 10.00-11.15, Lunch, 12.15-3.30
- 30: Looking Around Sermon Two (By ARC One)
- Leadership Team Meeting (TBD)

November 2011

- 3: All Small Groups Meeting at Church (By Clint) (Note this has moved from Tuesday to Thursday)
 - 7.00-9.00
- 6: Looking Around Sermon Three (By Clint)
- 13: Looking Around Sermon Four (By ARC One)
- 15: All Small Groups Meeting at Church (By Clint)
 - 7.00-9.00
- 20: Looking Around Sermon Five (By ARC One)
- 27: Looking Around Sermon Six (By Clint)
- 29: All Small Groups Meeting at Church (By Clint)
 - 7.00-9.00
- Leadership Team Meeting (TBD)

December 2011

Christmas Break

- 4: Christmas Sermon One, Looking Around Debrief (By Clint)
 - Sunday Service and a short debrief of “Looking Around” after the service
- 11: Christmas Sermon Two (By Clint)
- 18: Christmas Sermon Three (By Clint)
- 25: TBD
- Leadership Team Meeting (TBD)

January 2012

- 1: New Years Service (By ARC One)

Looking Back

- 8: Looking Back Sermon One and Looking Back Workshop
 - 10.00-11.15, Lunch, 12.15-3.30
- 10: All Small Groups Meeting at Church (By Clint)
 - 7.00-9.00
- 15: Looking Back Sermon Two (By ARC One)

Looking In

- 22: Looking In Sermon One and Looking In Workshop and Looking Back Debrief
 - 10.00-11.15, Lunch, 12.15-3.30
 - Conduct the NCD Survey Today
- 24: All Small Groups Meeting at Church (By Clint)
 - 7.00-9.00
- 29: Looking In Sermon Two (By ARC One)
- Leadership Team (Elders) Meeting (TBD)

February 2012

- 5: Looking In Sermon Three (By Clint)
 - Debrief NCD Results after church, about two hours
- 7: All Small Groups Meeting at Church (By Clint)
 - 7.00-9.00
- 12: Looking In Sermon Four (By Clint)
- 19: Looking In Sermon Five (By ARC One)
- 21: All Small Groups Meeting at Church (By Clint)
 - 7.00-9.00
- 26: Looking In Sermon Six (By ARC One)
- Leadership Team Meeting (TBD)

Looking Forward

March 2012

- 4: Looking Forward Sermon One, Looking Forward Workshop (By Clint)
 - 10.00-11.15, Lunch, 12.15-3.30
- 6: All Small Groups Meeting at Church (By Clint)
 - 7.00-9.00
- 11: Looking Forward Sermon Two (By Clint)
- 18: Looking Forward Sermon Three (By ARC One)

- 20: All Small Groups Meeting at Church (By Clint)
 - 7.00-9.00
- 25: Looking Forward Sermon Four (By ARC One)
- Leadership Team (Elders) Meeting (TBD)

April 2012

- 1: Palm Sunday Service (By Clint)
- 3: All Small Groups Meeting at Church (By Clint)
 - 7.00-9.00, Passion Week Focus
- 8: Easter Sunday Service (By Clint)
- 15: Post Easter Sermon (By ARC One)
- 17: All Small Groups Meeting at Church (By Clint)
 - 7.00-9.00
- 22: Sermon Topic TBD (By ARC One)
- 29: Sermon Topic TBD (By ARC One)
- Leadership Team Meeting (TBD)

May 2012

- 1: All Small Groups Meeting at Church (By Clint)
 - 7.00-9.00
- 6: Sermon Topic TBD (By ARC One)
- 13: Sermon Topic TBD (By Clint)
- 15: All Small Groups Meeting at Church (ARC One)
 - 7.00-9.00
- 20: Sermon Topic TBD (By ARC One)
- 27: Sermon Topic TBD (By Clint)
- 29: All Small Groups Meeting at Church (By Clint)
 - 7.00-9.00
- Leadership Team Meeting (TBD)

June 2012

- 3: Sermon Topic TBD (By ARC One)
- 10: Sermon Topic TBD (By Clint)
 - Annual Meeting Today with Launching Mission
- 12: Final All Small Groups Meeting at Church (By Clint)
 - 7.00-9.00
- Leadership Team Meeting (TBD)

Terms and Conditions

- The MOU is based on an average of five meetings per month, should it be less than four or more than six meetings the remuneration would be prorated accordingly.
- In addition to the coaching Clint will make himself available to work with gifted women and men from ARC One who would be open to preaching
- Should either party, for whatever reason (s), deem this MOU to be not working; this agreement can be terminated with one months notice to the other party.
- Clint Mix is not contracted for pastoral care, weddings, funerals or other duties commonly associated with the pastoral role.

APPENDIX E:

ARC TWO, FIELD

The pastor of ARC Two was requested to provide the context of the church before they embarked on the Looking process.

ARC Two is now a church with an average Sunday attendance of 125 people from across generational, economic, and cultural spectrums. There are over 30 countries represented, with a strong representation of specialists in the tech industry, and banking field.

The church is actively engaged in outreach to the high school across the street from the church building. For over 15 years volunteers from the congregation have hosted a Wednesday noon Pizza Drop In at the church, attracting over 300 students weekly. Volunteers serve pizza, coach basketball, inside and out of the building, and are available to listen and talk with students (Pastor, email message to author, August 15, 2012).

The congregation, having recently purchased adjoining residential property east of ARC Two, was eager to participate in a series of workshops which might help lead them toward a clearer understanding of their strengths and weaknesses, values and core beliefs. They were seeking practical tools to help them in their visioning process, as they begun an exploration of potential uses for the newly expanded property. They hoped this “Looking” process would better enable them to decide how to extend or re-focus their mission efforts in the community surrounding their church (Pastor, email message to author, October 24, 2012).

APPENDIX F:

RELEASE OF INFORMATION FORM

By participating in this Group interview I understand that I am taking part in a research project for Clint Mix, Doctoral of Ministry candidate at Tyndale Seminary Toronto.

I understand that the name of the church may be used but my name will not be used in this project. Ideas, insights and quotes from me may be used in his thesis.

Name:

Signature:

Witness:

Date:

Contact Information Regarding Research and Ethics

Dear ARC Group Interview Participant:

I am required to give you the name of a qualified representative from Tyndale who can explain the scientific or scholarly aspects of the research conducted that you were a part of. If you have any questions you can contact Dr. Mark Chapman. I am also required to give you the contact information of an appropriate individual that you may contact regarding any possible ethical issues arising from the research that you were a part of. If you have any questions you can contact Dr. Mark Chapman.

Permission to use Research in the Future

Dear ARC Group Interview Participant:

Since (the) group interview I have become aware of a second item that I should have asked you to give consent to but did not.

It is possible that for future seminars, teaching and publications I will utilize the research material that you provided. Any use of this material will keep the same level of confidentiality.

You are under no obligation to say yes and there are no repercussions if you decline.

Could you please reply to this email and state that you agree that I am able to utilize this research in future seminars, teaching and publications. Or, could you please reply to this email and state that you disagree with me using your research for these reasons.

APPENDIX G:

CSC ONE, FIELD

CSC One began as an initiative of (a church planter) when he served (in the denominational office). When (the subsequent pastor) heard of the new work planned for (our city) he felt God's call and in the (1970's) he relocated to (our city) with his wife. The first service was held in a local school gymnasium (in) (the 1970's). (The interviewee) was called to lead the congregation in 1984 and by 1986 the first sanctuary was built and the congregation prospered. CSC One has engaged in many important initiatives in the community including the local food bank, a Community Resource Center and an affordable housing complex called. CSC One continues to engage in local and international mission while developing mature disciples through worship, small groups and leadership development.

Mission at CSC One:

We believe that a church that has lost sight of its mission is like a country club. For this reason, the pastors and leaders of CSC One make every effort to build mission into the very DNA of the congregation. From our architecture to our budget, from our Sunday messages to our web page -- the great commandment and great commission go hand in hand to craft a balanced message of discipleship and mission. Preaching and teaching regularly emphasize the importance of mission with supplemental teaching series on practical issues such as how to share your faith. Congregationally, we engage in dialog with local community leaders to discern community needs as well as look for creative ways to serve our community such as the Open Table (a free meal for anyone in the community). We also encourage members to volunteer at local Christian agencies such as (the) Inner City Mission. Additionally, we send mission teams to (two countries) annually to provide an international mission opportunity and to fuel the fire for missional interest which we pray will also kindle a more 'hands on' involvement in local mission when the team returns (Pastor, email message to author, July 25, 2012).

APPENDIX H:

CSC TWO, FIELD

Scottish emigrants landed in (our region) in the early 1800's. (Soon) a small group made their way north some 20 miles to stake claims for farms. They named their new land (rural Ontario) in memory of their familiar Scottish homeland. (CSC Two) was formed in (the 1800's) with 13 original members. The church was led by two elders until they obtained the services of their first ordained minister ...who was a product of the Haldane Revivals in Scotland. Though the record is incomplete it would appear that (CSC Two) has been involved in the planting of at least 4 congregations over its years...

(As an old church CSC Two) finds itself (in rural Ontario) and on the right hand side of the theological spectrum in the CBOQ. Primary leadership roles such as pastor and deacons have always been filled by men. We are a congregation of 70-90 people on Sunday morning with representation from all age-groups. (CSC Two) values biblical teaching, families, missions and prayer. This is evidenced by the emphasis that is placed on the Sunday morning (and up until 2008, Sunday evening) sermon and on mid-week, small group studies where the Bible is expounded. Family is valued because much effort is placed to ensure there are good weekly children's ministries and summer VBS programs. Missions are valued in that 10 –15% of the budget goes towards missions work. Prayer is valued by emphasis placed on prayer meetings and the call for prayer support for the larger family of believers.

(CSC Two's) Engagement with the Mission of God:

Locally: It is a common experience to meet an adult in the community who had a positive connection to (CSC Two) through a children's ministry. Though the congregations were often small it was not unusual to have VBS programs with 70 to 100 children attending. A weekly children's program, (a VBS hybrid), TAG – *Taking Action for God*, ran for 4 years in (a nearby town) and was well attended by children who were not connected to any church. The (CSC Two) pastor has been involved in coaching local basketball teams for about 12 years. Other ministries that engage the community are Alpha, men's breakfast, the annual Christmas Eve service and the Easter Sunrise Service.

Globally: (CSC Two) financially & prayerfully supports,

- For almost 2 decades, A Bishop ...as he works to improve the lives of the lowest castes...
- Seminary students who become church planters...
- CBM and its global work.
- A group of orphans...
- (Another) family, who minister in a seminary...

Congregation:

- Preaching and teaching the Word of God
- Encouraging and enabling individuals to use their gifts to minister according to how God leads them. One couple began a national ministry that reaches the rural community with the gospel. They have developed local chapters throughout Canada. (Fellowship of Christian Farmers, Canada)
- (Pastoral Staff person that) work as a Spiritual Director benefits congregants and local Christians.
- Women's groups, small group studies.
- Girl's group & Knight's School (program for boys 8-14 yrs) (Pastor, email message to author, October 2, 2012).

APPENDIX I:

CSC THREE, FIELD

(CSC Three) was planted shortly after World War II in (a major Canadian city) that was blooming with post-war housing. The first chapter of (CSC Three's) history was written as a relatively successful ...church plant focused on being a neighbourhood church.

The second chapter began in (the time that the community) matured as a neighbourhood of (the major city) and (CSC Three), under the leadership of (the pastor), was one of the first (city) churches to adopt the Evangelism Explosion program. The church experienced significant expansion and growth alongside a growing affluence. One long time resident in the neighbourhood describes (CSC Three) as the "Fur Coat and Cadillac Church" during that era.

By the (next block of time) the neighbourhood was changing again with the demolition of detached houses to make way for high rise condos, most of which were marketed in Asian newspapers. During this period division related to music and the (a charismatic movement) began to undermine the affluent evangelical culture of the church. This accelerated with continued neighbourhood development and diversity alongside (the current pastor's arrival); CSC Three has largely recaptured a commitment to the neighbourhood as opposed to aspiring to become an affluent regional large church (Pastor, email message to author, August 15, 2012).

APPENDIX J:

CSCS RELEASE OF INFORMATION FORM

This email is given to affirm the verbal permission that was previously given to have information from Case Study Churches One, Two and Three, and (the pastoral leader (s) who was/were interviewed) used in Clint Mix's thesis for his Tyndale DMin program. This information was gathered through an interview that Clint Mix conducted with me/us. I acknowledge that quotations from me/us will be used in his thesis but my/our name or the name of the church and statements that would divulge the identity of the church will not be mentioned anywhere in the thesis. My name and the name of the church will be given pseudonyms.

Contact Information Regarding Research and Ethics

Dear CSC Interview Participant:

I am required to give you the name of a qualified representative from Tyndale who can explain the scientific or scholarly aspects of the research conducted that you were a part of. If you have any questions you can contact Dr. Mark Chapman. I am also required to give you the contact information of an appropriate individual that you may contact regarding any possible ethical issues arising from the research that you were a part of. If you have any questions you can contact Dr. Mark Chapman.

Permission to use Research in the Future

Dear CSC Interview Participant:

Since (the) group interview I have become aware of a second item that I should have asked you to give consent to but did not.

It is possible that for future seminars, teaching and publications I will utilize the research material that you provided. Any use of this material will keep the same level of confidentiality.

You are under no obligation to say yes and there are no repercussions if you decline.

Could you please reply to this email and state that you agree that I am able to utilize this research in future seminars, teaching and publications. Or, could you please reply to this email and state that you disagree with me using your research for these reasons.

APPENDIX K:

ARC ONE CALLING, VALUES, DISCERNED

DRIVERS AND NEXT STEPS

Calling

- Loving God – Loving People
 - We believe in God the Father Almighty, who loves us unconditionally,
 - and in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord, who came to save humanity,
 - and in the Holy Spirit, our guide sent to empower us to serve.

Values

- We Value Family
 - We will regard them as being entrusted to us by God
 - This means that we strive to spend appropriate time and energy with our families, and stand together in times of trouble and celebration
- We Value our Community
 - We will actively serve with God as he directs
 - This means that we encourage each other to actively discover and meet needs, sharing Christ in our local and global community
- We Value our Church
 - We will joyfully gather to celebrate God's goodness and our hope in Jesus
 - This means that we will not give up meeting together, both corporately and in smaller groups
- We will
 - Proclaim the good news of Jesus
 - Develop our Spiritual Gifts
 - Develop relationships
 - Show unconditional love and respect
 - Be welcoming
 - Remain true to our convictions

Discerned Drivers

- Children and Youth
- Pastoral (team) Leadership
 - A leadership team
- Passionate Spirituality
- Worship
- Outreach
 - Maintain our current activities as per peoples passions
- Empowerment/Support/Encouragement
- Administration
 - Effective feedback/Communication
 - Implementation
 - Consistency
- Equipping

Next Steps

- Present calling, values and next steps to the church
- Continued focus on prayer and passionate spirituality in the life of the church
- Family Centered worship/Kids Church
- Create a pastoral search team
- Empowering/Equipping
 - People to serve with their passion in and out of the church
 - The church to bring friends on the spiritual journey
 - Assimilation of people into serving
- Outreach
 - Stay with what's happening and maintain an ongoing openness to what God is doing
- Rebranding the Church

APPENDIX L:

ARC ONE “NEXT STEP” ACTIVITIES

Next Step One: Continued focus on prayer and passionate spirituality in the life of the church.

- **Next Step One Action:** ARC One immediately engaged in a renewed emphasis on prayer with a weekly gathering to pray for the needs of the church and to pray for the ongoing implementation of the discerning process. This emphasis on prayer is continuing still at BAC.

Next Step Two: Family Centered worship/Kids Church.

- **Next Step Two Action:** ARC One took a dual approach of sometimes having integrated worship with the children and sometimes employing a Kids Church. This is continuing on.

Next Step Three: Create a pastoral search team.

- **Next Step Three Action:** ARC One created a pastoral search team and has posted the position on the denominational website. Previous to the final submission of this thesis ARC One hired a part time pastor who had participated in some of the Looking process.

Next Step Four: Empowering/Equipping people to serve with their passion in and out of the church, the church to bring friends on the spiritual journey and assimilation of people into serving.

- **Next Step Four Action:** ARC One took the bi-weekly slot that they were using for the discerning process and used the Willow Creek resource, *Just Walk Across the Room*, as a means of equipping the church to help their friends on the spiritual journey.

Next Step Five: Outreach, stay with what’s happening and maintain an ongoing openness to what God is doing.

- **Next Step Five Action:** ARC One has responded to opportunities that presented themselves to the church.

Next Step Six: Rebranding the Church.

- **Next Step Six Action:** ARC One has begun the rebranding process.

APPENDIX M:

ARC ONE, SUMMARY OF CATEGORIES AND CODES

- Transforming
 - Consumer to Cause
 - Focus on Mission
 - Success to Kingdom
 - Not about the building
 - Determining to Discerning
 - Prayer

- Transforming of the church
 - Paradigmatic Shift
 - Expanded Perspective

- Engaging (Participating) with the mission of God
 - Group Commitment

- Positive look back fuels the positive movement forward

- Hope, we have hope for the future
 - Catalyst
 - Hope

- God, the focus is on God, not our plans or perceived needs
 - God is Delivering
 - Prayer

- Understanding and unity
 - Unity
 - Deepened relationships
 - Empowerment

APPENDIX N:

ARC TWO, SUMMARY OF CATEGORIES AND CODES

- Transforming
 - Consumer to Cause
 - Focus on Mission
 - Success to Kingdom
 - Not about the building
 - Determining to Discerning
 - Prayer

- Transforming of the church
 - Transforming
 - Paradigmatic Shift
 - Expanded Perspective
 - Questions

- Engaging (Participating) with the mission of God
 - Group Commitment
 - Start

- Positive look back fuels the positive movement forward

- Hope, we have hope for the future
 - Catalyst
 - Excitement
 - Tipping Point

- God, the focus is on God, not our plans or perceived needs

- Understanding and unity
 - Unity
 - Deepened relationships
 - Communication

APPENDIX O:
VERIFIED FINDINGS FROM ARC ONE
GROUP INTERVIEW

As noted in Chapter Four the feedback from ARC One group interview went through a process of coding and categorizing. Each category was given a title. These category titles were then given a summary statement based on the codes and comments from the interview manuscript. These category titles are the findings. These category titles (findings) and their summary statements demonstrate the influence of the Looking process on empowering ARC One in discerning and participating in the mission of God resulting in ongoing transformation. These summarizing statements were sent to the group interview participants so that they could verify and confirm that the findings reflect both what the group interview participants said and also reflect their own experience of the Looking process.

The following findings demonstrate the impact that the Looking process had on the life of ARC Two as articulated by the participants in the group interview that took place on May 29, 2012.

ARC One Finding One:
Discerning

The discerning process has given the church clear direction regarding its calling, values and next steps. The church is united in this discernment.

ARC One Finding Two:
Participating

The discerning process has already resulted in the church participating with God in mission. The church is committed to following this discerned path.

ARC One Finding Three:
Transforming

There has been a very significant change in the life of the church in terms of viewing our joining with God in his mission rather than us just running programs to attract people to come to us.

ARC One Finding Four:
Hope

The church has experienced renewed (God-given) hope about its future mission with God.

ARC One Finding Five:
God

The focus has gone away from programs, budgets and buildings to God. As the church joins with God, God appears to be joining with the church!

ARC One Finding Six:
Proud Of Past, Excited About A Changing Future

The church definitely has honoured the past, yet is not stuck there.

ARC One Finding Seven:
Deeply United

The church has deepened its relationships with one another and with God. This has been catalytic in bringing unity for our future mission together.

ARC One Supplementary/Clarifying Comments

After soliciting confirmation of the above themes from the group interview participants the following comment was submitted. “Corporate Prayer needs to be the priority moving forward. We have seen more but need more, which we are starting tomorrow night (every Wednesday night from 7 PM)” (Group Interview Participant, email message to author, July 24, 2012.).

APPENDIX P:
VERIFIED FINDINGS FROM ARC TWO
GROUP INTERVIEW

As noted in Chapter Four the feedback from ARC Two group interview went through a process of coding and categorizing. Each category was given a title. These category titles were then given a summary statement based on the codes and comments from the interview manuscript. These category titles are the findings. These category titles (findings) and their summary statements demonstrate the influence of the Looking process on empowering ARC Two in discerning and participating in the mission of God resulting in ongoing transformation. These summarizing statements were sent to the group interview participants so that they could verify and confirm that the findings reflect both what the group interview participants said and also reflect their own experience of the Looking process.

The following findings demonstrate the impact that the Looking process had on the life of ARC Two as articulated by the participants in the group interview that took place on June 6, 2012.

ARC Two Finding One:
Transforming

Not that the church was not thinking or acting in a mission mindset, but this process greatly enhanced the transformation to mission. By far the most feedback comments were included in this category and its related codes. It appears that there is a significant shift in thinking.

ARC Two Finding Two:
Discerning

The church has affirmed its commitment to being multi-generational.

The church has begun discovering and articulating its values.

While the church hasn't arrived at its "next steps plan," it has experienced the necessary paradigmatic shift to help get there.

ARC Two Finding Three:
Participating

The church is already participating in excellent missional activity. This process helped the church to realize this. It is too early to say that there is a new, specific engagement because of the process we went through.

ARC Two Finding Four:
Starting

The church has a great start on the discernment and engagement process, but it is not yet completed (not that it every really is). It is clear that there is significant momentum and expectation that it will be realized in the near future.

ARC Two Finding Five:
Proud Of Past, Excited About A Changing Future

The church definitely has honoured the past yet is not stuck there.

ARC Two Finding Six:
Deeply United

The church has deepened its relationships with one another. This has been catalytic in bringing unity for our future mission together.

ARC Two Finding Seven:
Anticipation

The church is excited about how they will engage with God in the future.

APPENDIX Q:

CSCS, SUMMARY OF CATEGORIES AND CODES

- Discernment
 - Overall trying to discern the mission of God
 - Discerning the mission of God by *Looking Up*
 - Discerning the mission of God by *Looking Around*
 - Discerning the mission of God by *Looking Back*
 - Discerning the mission of God by *Looking In*
 - Discerning the mission of God by *Looking Forward*
 - Group Discernment
 - Specifically endeavoring to discern the mission of God
 - What questions to ask to discern
 - Ongoing Discernment
- Participating
- Leadership
 - Role and necessity of senior pastoral leader
 - Senior leader leading strongly
 - Senior leader demonstrating character
 - Senior leader leading by example
 - Senior leader working in leadership development
 - Senior leader being aware of their gifts and the gifts of others
 - Senior leader being aware of own weaknesses and failings
 - Senior leader and team empowering others to engage
 - Senior leader giving intuitive leadership
 - The role and necessity of leadership Team
 - *The role that the different offices from Ephesians 4 play*
 - The need for missional leadership development
- Patience
- Preaching
- Partnership
- Opposition
 - Clashing with Christendom
 - Counting the cost of engaging with God in mission
 - Mission messing with worship and the church

- Outside Input
- God's Provision

APPENDIX R:

VERIFIED FINDINGS FROM CSC ONE INTERVIEW

As noted in Chapter Four the feedback from the CSC One interview manuscript went through a process of coding and categorizing. Each category was given a title; these titles became the findings. Each finding was given a summary statement. These findings and their corresponding summaries were given back to the interviewee for them to verify. They were given the opportunity to agree, disagree, nuance or add to the finding summary statements to further clarify the findings. Clarifying comments are included in this appendix. CSC One revealed six findings:

1. Discernment
2. Leadership
3. Patience
4. Preaching
5. Opposition
6. Outside Input

CSC One, Finding One: Discernment

Over the years the church has continually and intentionally sought to discern and engage the mission of God. This has been both an intentional and an intuitive process that has in overt and subtle ways incorporated the various aspects of Looking Up, Around, Back, In and Forward.

CSC One, Finding Two:
Leadership

Empowering, self aware, Leadership (pastoral and senior leadership team) has played an incredibly significant role in the capacity of the church to be continually discerning and engaging in the mission of God. In particular, strong leadership that stands firm around the undergirding values of the mission of the church being in participation with God in his redemptive mission.

CSC One, Finding Three:
Patience

The church's discernment of and participation in the mission of God has taken many years of patience and persistence.

CSC One, Finding Four:
Preaching

Preaching that is adaptive to the context of the culture and church has and continues to play an essential role in the transforming process at the church.

A clarifying comment was added to this finding: "A natural tendency is for the congregation to drift toward its own comfort and away from the challenges associated with mission so the mission emphasis is regularly emphasized" (Pastor, email message to author, July 25, 2012).

CSC One, Finding Five:
Opposition

For the church to become and remain transforming; to discern and engage in the mission of God, rather than focusing on the perceived needs of “Christendom” and “consumerism,” it has faced significant opposition.

CSC One, Finding Six:
Outside Input

Credible, outside voices have been very beneficial in shaping the discerning and engagement process at the church.

A clarifying comment was added to the all the findings:

Overall the thoughts are accurate and reflect the sentiment I tried to share. If there has been one phrase that would wrap it all up over the years it would be Peterson's Message translation of John 1:14 The Word became flesh and blood and moved into the neighborhood... (Peterson 1993, 185) Love that. (Interviewee, email message to author, August 14, 2012).

APPENDIX S:
VERIFIED FINDINGS FROM CSC TWO
INTERVIEW

As noted in Chapter Four the feedback from the CSC Two interview manuscript went through a process of coding and categorizing. Each category was given a title, these titles became the findings. Each finding was given a summary statement. These findings and their corresponding summaries were given back to the interviewee for them to verify. They were given the opportunity to agree, disagree, nuance or add to the finding summary statements to further clarify the findings. Clarifying comments are included in this appendix. CSC Two revealed seven findings:

1. Discernment
2. Leadership
3. Patience
4. Preaching
5. Partnerships
6. Outside Input
7. God's Provision

CSC Two, Finding One:
Discernment

Over the years the church has continually and intentionally sought to discern and engage in the mission of God. This has been both an intentional and an intuitive process that has in overt and subtle ways incorporated the various aspects of Looking Up, Around, Back, In and Forward.

A clarifying comment was added to this finding:

I wouldn't say that the church has not always looked forward, up etc. You say "over the years" ... I would say that the church was your typical godly

congregation that looked “inward” for the most part. That the goal of the church was “keeping the doors open”. They viewed their ministry of fulfilling being “the light” in the community was accomplished by just “being” physically in the community. It wasn’t until somewhere around year 5 to 7 that I started pushing for more “outward” looking. So the statement would be more correct if you said over the past decadeBUT... Very intentional seeking of God’s leading from within, above etc. has really only been in the last 5 years. (Interviewee, email message to author, July 27, 2012)

CSC Two, Finding Two:
Leadership

Empowering Leadership has played an incredibly significant role in the capacity of the church to be continually discerning and engaging in the mission of God. In particular, team leadership at the church focuses on hearing from God and building consensus before moving forward.

CSC Two, Finding Three:
Patience

The Church’s process of discerning and engaging in the mission of God has taken patience and sensitivity to God’s timing.

A clarifying comment was added to this finding:

Patience is a great insight and probably more important than we realized at the time. We have a few deacons that I am sure would complain that the process was “too slow” but in hindsight I think it was just right. That being said, I can’t claim to have one foot on the brake. ...As I reflect on the process it was as though God used the good and the bad aspects of our character to keep us on His timing. Not sure how you plan for that. (Interviewee, email message to author, July 27, 2012)

CSC Two, Finding Four:
Preaching

Preaching that is adaptive to the context of the culture and church has played an essential role in the church becoming a transforming church.

A clarifying comment was added to this finding:

Not sure about the preaching statement. The church has always had good Bible teachers. So, why didn't good Bible teaching "transform" the church in the past? Yet, I don't think any of this would have happened without good Bible teaching. I would see it more as the foundation that made transformation possible. (Interviewee, July 27, 2012, email message)

CSC Two, Finding Five:
Partnerships

Symbiotic relationships have been helpful in the church's discernment and engagement process.

A clarifying comment was added to this finding:

"Symbiotic Relationships" like typical Baptists this is not part of the church's history ... at one point in their history they had closed communion... not trying to toot my own horn but it is one of my strengths to build partnerships with other pastors and groups. The church would not have trusted me to do this early on in my ministry. I think I had to show myself competent before they let me build these relationships. (Interviewee, email message to author, July 27, 2012)

CSC Two, Finding Six:
Outside Input

Credible, outside voices have been very beneficial in shaping the discerning and engagement process for the church.

A clarifying comment was added to this finding:

This is true but not complete. Probably the most significant outside input that has directly affected our church has been leadership development that

(the pastoral staff) have engaged in. The Spiritual Direction training has been a vital piece of the picture. I have been part of two leadership development programs that have helped me more than any Seminary course I have taken. Even the process we went thru to apply for the grant was very significant. (Interviewee, email message to author, July 27, 2012)

CSC Two, Finding Seven:
God's Provision

The experience of the church is that when we discern and engage with the mission of God, then God abundantly provides the necessary resources to move his mission forward.

APPENDIX T:
VERIFIED FINDINGS FROM CSC THREE
INTERVIEW

As noted in Chapter Four the feedback from the CSC Three interview manuscript went through a process of coding and categorizing. Each category was given a title. The titles then became the findings. Each finding was given a summary statement. These findings and their corresponding summaries were given back to the interviewee for them to verify. They were given the opportunity to agree, disagree, nuance or add to the finding summary statements to further clarify the findings. Clarifying comments are included in this appendix. CSC Three revealed seven findings:

1. Discernment
2. Leadership
3. Patience
4. Preaching
5. Partnership
6. Opposition
7. Outside Input

CSC Three, Finding One:
Discernment

Over the years the church has continually and intentionally sought to discern and engage the mission of God. This has been both an intentional and an intuitive process that has in overt and subtle ways incorporated the various aspects of Looking Up, Around, Back, In and Forward.

CSC Three, Finding Two:
Leadership

Empowering Leadership has played an incredibly significant role in the capacity of the church to be continually discerning and engaging in the mission of God. In particular, strong leadership that stands firm around the undergirding values of the mission of the church being participation with God in his redemptive mission.

CSC Three, Finding Three:
Patience

For the church to make the paradigmatic shift away from “Christendom” and “consumerism” to engagement with God in his mission takes patience and persistence.

CSC Three, Finding Four:
Preaching

Preaching that is adaptive to the context of the culture and church has and continues to play an essential role in the transforming process at the church.

CSC Three, Finding Five:
Partnership

Symbiotic relationships have been helpful in the discernment and engagement process at the church.

CSC Three, Finding Six:
Opposition

For the church to be transforming, to discern and engage in the mission of God rather than focusing on “Christendom” and “consumerism,” they have faced significant opposition.

CSC Three, Finding Seven:
Outside Input

Credible, outside voices have been very beneficial in shaping the discerning and engagement process at the church. These voices can take various forms.

A clarifying comment was added to all the findings: “I’m happy and content with what you have just asked me to sign off on” (Interviewee, email message to author, August 15, 2012).

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