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Tyndale University College and Seminary

Using Appreciative Inquiry and Focused Sermons to Move Congregational  
Members of Cedarview Church in Paris Ontario  
to Develop Friendships with  
Non-Christian Neighbours

A Project Report  
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by  
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## **CHAPTER ONE:**

### **INTRODUCTION**

The aim of this project was to encourage members of a southern Ontario Pentecostal church to develop friendships with their non-Christian neighbours. The congregation had been excited about community involvement; however I did not see relationships with non-Christians developing with congregants of the church. To address this issue I did theological research into incarnational living and collaborative ministry, precedent literature and cases on cultural trends, contemporary and historical missional projects, and developing relationships with non-Christians, and an action-research appreciative-inquiry project which included a 3-month preaching series on the importance of an incarnational lifestyle, and group meetings involving a total of 57 different people to envision and generate ideas to engage non-Christians in the community. Steps were taken to overcome the initial fear of connecting with non-Christians and tap into their passion to relate hospitably and witness to them.

#### **Ministry Context**

My wife, Elaine, and I came to pastor Cedarview Church in Paris, Ontario in 2007. We became involved in an expansion project, with the building extending from 13,000 to 21,000 square feet. The addition includes nine

classrooms, a ministry centre seating 100, a 1000-square-foot food bank and storage facility, and a cafe in the lobby. The expansion gave momentum for our children and youth outreach which has attracted a number of non-Christian participants. This is precisely what has given energy to our ministries to our non-Christian neighbours. The children and youth emphasis comes from our community context.

For a number of years a mid-week children’s program known as “KidVenture” has operated in our church. The program includes an open session in our new Ministry Centre complete with monitors, computerized graphics, LED strobe lights and an elaborate sound system. The people who are involved in KidVenture include adults and LIT’s (leaders in training). The goal is that relationships will be developed, as well as an understanding of Biblical knowledge:

**Table 1: Registered KidVenture Children**

<u>KIDVENTURE CHILDREN</u>	<u>CHILDREN REGISTERED</u>
Children from Cedarview	21
Children from Other Churches (Incl. Catholic)	30
Children with no known Church Background	32
<u>Total Children Registered</u>	<u>83</u>
(Marie Teskey, March 6, 2014, email message to the author)	

In order for us to facilitate a bridge between KidVenture (ages 3-11) and Youth (ages 13-18) a junior high program was developed. This program is

interactive and inclusive of a time of spiritual growth, and also involves a physical component in the gymnasium. My associate (youth) pastor gave the following perspective regarding the junior high ministry: “This past season of our ‘Jr. High at Cedarview’ which began in September 2010 and ended in July 2011 had an approximate attendance of 25 kids. Many of these kids are from our community and have parents who do not attend our church” (David Dwarka, October 7, 2011, e-mail message to the author).

We also have an annual summer program for our children known as Vacation Bible School (VBS):

**Table 2: VBS Children**

VBS	CHILDREN REGISTERED
Children from Cedarview	18
Children from other churches (including Catholic)	26
Children with no known church background	42
Total Children Registered	86

(Marie Teskey, April 30, 2014, email message to the author).

In addition, we have programs where we facilitate connections with the community. One of these is Neighborhood Friends. Neighborhood Friends is designed to link up with our community. The ministry includes monthly meals and a Christmas dinner. The monthly meal takes place every third Saturday night in our gymnasium. We serve between 30 and 40 people in our monthly meal. The

2013 Christmas dinner served 110 people from our community (Annual General Report 2013, 19). We also have a food bank.

The leader of the ministry reported:

We are open every Tuesday 1:00 – 4:30 p.m. and Friday 9:00 a.m. – 12 noon. We encourage singles, families, and single parent families every visit in the giving of much needed food. Many of these clients come to receive food that helps them make ends meet through the month. We serve as many as 50 singles, families, or single parent families. Some may need assistance once per month, every other month, or twice a month. Every client that comes in receives info regarding Cedarview’s weekly schedule of programs offered and info regarding specific programs i.e. Celebrate Recovery. They sometimes receive ‘Our Daily Bread’ book, a Family magazine, or Sunday School Papers we may have. (Barb Gellner, email message to the author April 22, 2014)

This is another example of our church developing ministries for our non-Christian neighbours.

### **Challenge and Opportunity**

However, when it came to the area of relationships, I began to notice that in our church our relationships were primarily within the church community. This was actually verified in the first meeting we held with our Project-Participants. One of the initial responses as to what people felt Cedarview was like was that it had a “family feel” with “spiritual fellowship.” All references to relationships were within the context of our church family. Although we ran a number of programs designed for our community, when it came to actual interaction with our non-Christian neighbours, I saw little of this happening. For instance, I noticed that when we ran programs for community children, the community neighbours would sit in the café by themselves; while the members of Cedarview

Church remained secluded by themselves. I began to think that a proper project for Cedarview Church would be to begin to interact with our non-Christian neighbours.

I began to think a positive project would be to analyze how our believers have been engaging non-Christians, and then mentor the church participants through preaching and small groups to develop deeper relationships with non-Christians. This project would not deter from the ongoing discipleship ministry to believers inside the church, but focus on developing greater self-awareness of those who are outside the church. Therefore, this project became an opportunity for our people to focus on the importance of developing relationships with non-Christians. The ultimate objective would be that some seekers would eventually encounter Christ.

### **A Theological Framework**

There is a need to be incarnational within the church community. When it comes to being incarnational Jesus is our best example of living out the incarnational life. Jesus was incarnate and was also incarnational. The incarnation is about God's becoming human and revealing God to humanity. The incarnational approach is that God did not just merely become man; He lived and dwelt with man, and ministered to the needs of man. This incarnational approach has a serving component. Jesus who existed in the form of God came in the likeness of men to dwell among us, but not only to dwell among us, but to serve us. Christians also have an incarnational experience. Those who believe in Christ

experience God indwelling them and working through them. This incarnational experience challenges believers to live in an incarnational way. Jesus has given Christians the example of how Christians should live. Part of the incarnational approach includes befriending our non-Christian neighbours and serving our community. This is dealt with in detail in chapter 2.

### **Precedent Literature and Cases**

In chapter 3, I review precedent literature and cases related to developing relationships with our non-Christian neighbours with a view to their encountering Christ. After examining cultural trends, I review advocates of incarnational living and meaningfully reaching out to those in our community. A brief review of co-developing bridging strategies and an overview of appreciative inquiry concludes the chapter.

### **Design of the Project**

The project itself had two phases: the first was a sermon series focusing on incarnational living and connecting to our non-Christian neighbours; the second was a series of planning group meeting using *Appreciative-Inquiry* as an organizer. We used the 4-D system developed by Cooperrider and Whitney (Cooperrider and Whitney 2008, 25-35). This organizer worked through four phases: *Discovery (who we are as a church community and what has made us effective)*; *Dream (what we could become in terms of developing relationships with our non-Christian neighbours)*; *Co-Designing (strategies for developing relationships with our non-Christian neighbours)*; and *Destiny (an accountability*

*phase to ensure that the project continues to move forward.* Beginning with the *Discovery Phase*, we had two group meetings (with different participants) in which we inquired into what initially drew us to Cedarview and what kept us coming. Then we a meeting using the *Dream Phase*, during which we envisioned what Cedarview could become. In the *Design Phase*, participants, in a series of two meetings, co-developed a perceived ideal future. The responses generated during the Design Phase meeting included a need for heightened awareness to engage the unchurched, to practice a higher level of acceptance and hospitality, to have greater intensity in serving the community and providing relevant programming, and to communicate the importance of self-awareness when ministering to the unchurched. After about a month, we had a testimony meeting concerning our experiences of connecting with neighbours, including acts of hospitality. Finally, we had a meeting using the *Destiny Phase*, during which we adjusted what was needed to ensure continued changed behaviour. This resulted in an implementation program being developed by Cedarview Board. This process is outlined in more detail in chapter 4.

### **Findings**

I will work through my findings in detail in chapters 4 and 5, but have included a summary here. Our first phase of meetings was the *Discovery Phase* which actually took place twice because a certain group of people could not attend the initial meeting. We found that the most re-occurring theme was that Cedarview Church was known for her “Community Outreach.” The next highest

re-occurring theme stated that “Spiritual Fellowship” was highly valued at Cedarview. Here I noticed that the focus on community and fellowship was the Church Community. Next, the people stated that Cedarview was known for her “Dedicated Volunteers”. We are a hard working church that strongly endorses our programs through service. Finally, we have an appreciation for “Children’s Ministries”. None of these discoveries were a surprise for me.

In the *Dream Phase* I discovered a shift from the *Design Phase*. The major focus became “Acceptance and Hospitality”—not just for the church community, but inclusive of our non-Christian neighbours as well. The thrust became that we should be a church that is accepting of all, whether they are believers or not. The next category was that we should become more “Revivalistic”—that if there were signs of the miraculous happening within the church, this would draw our non-Christian neighbours into our circles. This in turn would cause an “Increase in Attendance” to happen, which in turn would cause an “Increase in Outreach”. In the *Design Phase* certain topics from the *Dream Phase* were selected by the Pastoral Committee as topics to be further examined in the *Design Phase*. In the *Design Phase* we discovered that the first re-occurring theme was the “Need to be Hospitable”—which was inclusive our non-Christian neighbours. The next greatest reoccurring theme stated that in the process of ministering to our non-Christian neighbours, we need to have the mentality of “Serving our Community”. This serving needs to take place within the framework of “Relevant Programs”. Finally, through this process of engaging our non-Christian neighbours we need to practice “Self-Awareness”—because some of the non-

Christian community may have prejudices against the church based on past experiences, or by what they have heard from the media, or may have fears and anxieties of what transpires in church because they have never been a part of a church before. I noticed that the focus of “Self-Awareness” was a transitioning away from “Being Revivalistic” found in the *Dream Phase*.

We also decided that one of the things we wanted to accomplish in the *Design Phase* was to engage a non-Christian and record the results. The results provided data that led me to ask certain unexpected questions, and as I analyzed the data from the project-participants I discovered that the greatest re-occurring theme stated that “Prayer was Vital.” They also discovered that “Sharing their Faith’ was important and that opportunities came up for the project-participants to do this. Then it was important to “Practice Hospitality” with their non-Christian neighbours, and finally it was imperative to “Build Relationships based on Common Ground.”

In the *Destiny Phase* the project participants stated that it was important to “Make the Best of Every Opportunity” that God gives us. Also, in order to ensure that the project continues to move forward, we need to have an “Annual Review of the Ministries.” We are developing a 2015 Vision Committee that will ensure this happens. We also need to “Pray and allow God to Lead us” in developing relationships with our non-Christian Neighbours. All of this needs to be continually “Communicated to the Congregation.

## Discussion

I found that the members of Cedarview Church learned a significant amount about developing friendships with their non-Christian neighbours. Although we ran a number of programs for our non-Christian neighbours, and although there was excitement about our community involvement, I did not initially see relationships developing between the church community and our non-Christian neighbours.

However, I found that as we progressed in the project our church became open to an incarnational lifestyle. The preaching sermons coupled with the project helped refocus our priorities to be willing to develop relationships with our non-Christian neighbours. The focus of relationship-building in the *Design Phase* was the participants of Cedarview Church. However, by the time we got to the *Destiny Phase*, the focus transitioned into developing relationships with our non-Christian friends, including the need to “make the most of every opportunity.” I develop this and more in chapters 5 and 6.

## Definition of Key Terms

A few key terms in this paper warrant a definition.

**Appreciative Inquiry:** A collaborative process of designing a preferred future building from the strengths and successes of the organization.

**Co-Develop:** When I mention co-develop, this refers to our church participants collaborating with each other and developing bridging strategies to our non-Christian neighbours.

**Convert:** An individual who experiences Christ personally and commits to following Christ (John 3; Acts 26:18). This is often a process. The fruit of a converted life will include many facets including the pursuit of learning the Word of God, the demonstration of the fruit of the Holy Spirit, and the caring for one's neighbor. A devoted Christ-follower who continues to pursue spiritual growth is a disciple.

**Incarnational:** There may be two senses to the theological term 'incarnation.' The first incarnation was the Son of God becoming human. The second incarnation is us becoming Christ to the world.

**Non-Christians:** Those who are not or who have not yet become Christ-followers.

**Seekers:** Those who are beginning to attend our events but have not yet accepted Christ.

## **CHAPTER TWO: THEOLOGICAL RATIONALE**

In this chapter I developed a theological framework for the project, so I developed a project to help Christians develop relationships with their non-Christian neighbours in order to create opportunities for showing Christ to them. As Christians who worship at Cedarview Church understood their role in community, they came to value a project which would become important.

I begin with the definition and the need to be *incarnational*. Then I focus on *The Great Commandment* which became the action force in challenging our church members to develop relationships with their non-Christian neighbours. In order to make this work practically, we began to work *collaboratively* to develop means to reach our non-Christian neighbours. Finally I examined *Wesley* and his influences in building relationships between Christians and non-Christians. This became an encouragement that God uses the church to reach the non-Christian community.

### **The Need to Be Incarnational**

Jesus is the best example of living out the incarnational life, as He was both *incarnate* and *incarnational*. The incarnation came with a purpose. The incarnation is God becoming human and revealing Himself to people. It went

beyond God living as a human, and includes how He came to earth with a purpose—to redeem us and bring us back into relationship with Himself.

Although Jesus existed in the form of God, He came in the likeness of humans (Phil. 2:7). Narratives such as Matt. 1:18-2:12 and Luke 1:30-38, 2:1-20 confirm this. Jesus had a human development and grew up learning and experiencing life as we do (Luke 2:40, 52); He had biological human needs such as for food and sleep, he gained knowledge and wisdom. He grew up physically and received affirmation and instruction from his parents. He experienced the full range of emotions and experienced death as we do. Nevertheless, as God he was perfect and without sin. As God, He was perfect and without sin (I John 3:5; II Cor. 5:21). Hebrews 4:15 tells us that Jesus understood every human weakness, was tempted in every human way, and yet remained without sin. II Peter 1:4 tells us that God made great and marvelous promises, so that his nature would become part of us so that we could escape our evil desires and the corrupt influences of our world. Jesus revealed the Father; (John 1:18); as prior to His advent no one had seen God in earthly life. Jesus declared that whoever has seen the Son had seen the Father (John 14: 9). He is the face of the invisible God:

In his divine person absolutely considered, he is the essential image of God, even the Father. He is in the Father, and the Father in him, in the unity of the same divine essence, John 14:10. Now he is with the Father, I John 1:1, in the distinction of his person, so is he his essential image, Col. 1:15; Heb. 1:3. In his incarnation he becomes the representative image of God unto the church, II Cor. 4:6; without whom our understandings can make no such approach unto the divine excellencies but that God continues to be unto us what he is in himself the “invisible God.” In the face of Jesus Christ we see His glory. (Owen 1987, 294)

Christ humbled Himself in order to minister as a servant. He emptied Himself by voluntarily giving up the use of some of his divine attributes (Phil. 2:7):

He did not surrender these attributes in any sense; He was always perfectly holy, just, merciful, truthful, and faithful. He always loved with the full intensity of His being, but emptied Himself by giving up the independent exercises of his relative attributes. Thus He was omniscient, omnipotent, and omnipresent as the Father granted him all of these attributes. Jesus gave up the glory which He had with the Father before the world was (John 17:5), and took on the form of a servant. (Phil. 2:6, Thiessen 1976, 296)

Jesus in his incarnation was both God and human. As such, Jesus showed us what humanity was to be like, and what God is like. He was the God-man, which allowed Jesus to become the intermediary between God and man, connecting us to the Divine.

Jesus lived with us, and allowed people to experience God face to face. This is *incarnational* ministry. In describing Jesus incarnational approach, Frost and Hirsch write: “Jesus moved into the neighbourhood; he experienced its life, its rhythms, and its people *from the inside* and not as an outsider” (Frost and Hirsch 2003, 39).

The incarnational approach changed how people viewed God. The incarnational approach had a purpose—Jesus wished to show the community that God was interested in a relationship with people—even sinful people. God, who is merciful, wants people to experience Him. God, who is merciful, wants people to have the opportunity of salvation and redemption. So Jesus interacted with those who were not in right relationship with God, or far from God. Roxburgh and Romanuk write:

In the incarnation we discern that God is always found in what appears to be the most godforsaken of places—the most inauspicious of locations, people and situations. God seems to be present where there is little or no expectation. (Roxburgh and Romanuk 2006, 17)

For instance, Jesus interacted with Matthew (Matt. 9:10) and accepted him and the others right where they were in life. He went to Matthew's house and ate with many sinners and tax-collectors. (Barclay 1975, 329) tells us other seekers that came to meet with Jesus at Matthew's house were also people of questionable character. They reclined with Jesus and His disciples and ate together.

He also interacted with Nicodemus (John 3) a leader of the Pharisees, and told him how he could experience God personally. This act of regeneration allows humanity to *experience* the incarnation, as Jesus emphasized. Regeneration is from above (verse 3) and is of the Spirit (verse 8). Titus 3:5 states that God saved us not because of our own good deeds, but rather the virtues and renewal of the Holy Spirit. Bavinck considers this rebirth and renewal as brought about by the Holy Spirit (Bavinck 2008, 50). This regeneration gives us the assurance of salvation and sonship by the witness of the Holy Spirit (Rom. 8:15-16; Gal. 4:6; II Cor. 1:22; Eph. 1:13; 4:30). This causes us to be in fellowship with Christ (Bavinck 2008, 50) as we have been buried; raised and made alive with Christ (Rom. 6:3; Eph. 2:1-5). We have received the spirit of Christ (Rom. 5:5; 8:15; I Cor. 2:12; II Cor. 11:4; Gal. 3:2; 4:6; 5:18) and the Holy Spirit lives in us (Rom. 8:11), God with us. The old things have passed away, and all things have become new (II Cor. 5:17). We no longer live, but Christ lives in us (Gal. 2:20). We are new creations (II Cor. 5:17), and God's workmanship (Eph. 2:10). Believers walk

in newness of life, are now temples of the Holy Spirit, and are led by Him (Rom. 6:4; 8:14; I Cor. 6:19; Gal. 5:25; etc.) (Bavinck 2008, 50).

Ultimately, Jesus died a sacrificial death on our behalf (Col. 1:22) in order to make peace with mankind. He brings mankind into the presence of God as people who are holy, faultless and innocent. If we accept this sacrifice by faith, we have eternal life (John 3:16).

Jesus' incarnation gives us the template of how Christians should live. In Hebrews 12:2 we read that Jesus is the author and finisher of our faith—and we are to look to him as our example. Owen tells us that it is an example of God putting on flesh that in turn becomes the example of how the church is to live and act. He writes: As he is in his divine person his eternal, essential image; so in his incarnation, as a teacher of men, he is the representative image of God to the church (Owen 1987, 18). True incarnational living is sacrificial in nature and causes us to want to carry out God's ministry in this world. Jesus lived this type of life as is seen in how he engaged with Matthew the tax-collector.

In the same way we need to look to Jesus as our prime example. The life in the Spirit or being in Christ is about being incarnational. At salvation, the Spirit comes into the Christian and the incarnational life begins. For Paul to live is Christ (Phil. 1:2). It was no longer Paul living, but Christ living in him—and the life he lived he lived by the faith he had in the Son of God—who loves us and gave Himself up for us (Gal. 2:20).

This incarnational experience causes us to want to develop relationships with our non-Christian neighbours, as was the practice of the early church. The Spirit continues to challenge believers to connect with our communities:

This early church apologetic may be rightly called an “incarnational apology”. The church is the continuation of the incarnation. It is the earthed reality of the presence of Jesus in and to the world. Herein lies the ancient apologetic. The church by its very existence is a witness to the presence of God that is in Jesus Christ, but the church, being his body, sustains an incarnational dimension. That church is a witness to the presence of Jesus in the world as it embodies and lives out faith. (Webber 2002, 95)

For Webber, truth must be embodied. Truth is known only by those who live it out; the Christian community (Webber 2002, 105-106). It causes us to want to serve and minister to our non-Christian neighbours: “In ministry of servanthood, descending to the level of the group being ministered to, adopting their lifestyles, struggles, and aspirations and totally identifying with them” (Kurian 2001, 387).

Being incarnational causes us to be there for those who suffer in our communities:

Christ sought out people. He picked them up, healed them, loved them, laughed with them, went to their depth and pulled them out, then died for them. Christ paid for humanity with His life. Don't let His sacrifice go another day in your life without you pulling someone up out of his or her sin and asking if you can help. Because the truth is, you can. (Gross and Mahon 2007, 25)

When it comes to being *incarnational* I appreciate this interpretation supplied by Kjos Ministries. Berit Kjos (whose ministry has evolved out of a Lutheran context) has written books associated with religious trends and is associated with Harvest House Publishers. His definition of Incarnational is that “Everywhere we go, we are His church, His Body, His life with skin on. We are

on holy ground everywhere we are because He is with us, in us, and working through us” (Thoman 2005).

Therefore, this project was about expressing God’s love to non-Christians. As we began to work together the incarnational theme became a priority. It was not just about developing relationships with the non-Christian community; the project transitioned into serving our neighbours. Jesus is our example; He who took on the form of a servant and became obedient even to the point of death on the cross has become the Example of incarnational living (Phil. 2).

### **The Great Commandment**

While the incarnational event is to be experienced, the Great Commandment (Matt. 22:37-40) is the Biblical support for developing relationships with our non-Christian neighbours. We are to love God (experience the incarnation) and love our neighbours (be incarnational). This became the emphasis of the project.

It is interesting to note that the ancient Jews were passionate about loving God; however that did not include the love of neighbour (Deut. 6:4). Jesus adds this test in the Great Commandment:

This twofold command (love for God and for the neighbour) is the peg on which the whole “law and the prophets” hang. Remove the peg, and all is lost, for the entire Old Testament, with its commandments and covenants, prophecies and promises, types and testimonies, initiations and exhortations, points to the love of God which demands the answer of love in return. (Hendriksen 1973, 810)

Jesus builds on this Jewish text and makes a point that in all of Scripture, this supersedes all else. The Great Commandment guided my actions to initiate a

project to implement strategies to develop relationships with our non-Christian neighbours. Our neighbors include our non-Christian relationships. They involve those who attend the programs at Cedarview Church but who have not yet become believers. They also include those with whom we have friendships. They include the associates with whom we work. They include our relatives who know us.

### **Working Collaboratively**

The incarnational experience, coupled with the Great Commandment text, challenged our church to build relationships with our non-Christian neighbours. Working collaboratively is both practical and Biblical. We have numerous examples of this in the Scriptures.

#### **Example of Nehemiah**

One of these examples in Nehemiah is a historical account of God's faithfulness. While Jewish history begins with Abraham in approximately 2000 B.C.; it was not until 1000 years later that Israel would take on world significance as a nation. This happened under the leadership of three kings: Saul; David; and Solomon. Israel became known as a major military power under David's 40-year term of office. Prior to his death he turned his throne over to his son Solomon. At the last part of Solomon's life the wisest man that had ever lived so obviously compromised his spiritual convictions that God judged him (I Kings 11:11). Following Solomon's death there was a split in the nation's military ranks and Israel became a divided nation. Ten tribes lived in the north and settled in

Samaria. The other two tribes went south and settled in Jerusalem and surrounding areas.

God had promised Israel in Deut.28 that if they would continue to obey Him; then He would bless them as a nation. However, if not, then He would judge them and lead them into captivity. As God had forewarned, his hand of judgment fell on the people of Israel. The northern kingdom was the first to fall and was taken captive by the Assyrians in 722 B.C. The southern kingdom of Judah and Benjamin remained a nation for more than 136 years. However, in 586 B.C., King Nebuchadnezzar from Babylon invaded Judah and took the people captive. The biblical account is found in II Chron.36: 13, 19. Eventually Nebuchadnezzar died and two nations joined forces (the Medes and the Persians). Cyrus (Babylonian leader) became the leader of this joined coalition and became concerned for the welfare of the Jews. God's ultimate plan was to get the Jews back to their land, and therefore God began to work in Cyrus. And so the return of the Jews to Jerusalem began through three leaders. The first company left with Zerubbabel. He was involved in rebuilding the temple. This took a period of 21 years. Group B went with Ezra in 458 B.C.; approximately 80 years later. At this point in history Cyrus had died. Media-Persia was now led by Artaxerxes. Through Ezra's faithful teaching ministry most of the Jewish people turned from their sins and once again followed God's will for their lives. The third group returned with Nehemiah in 444 B.C.

One's first glimpse of Nehemiah is his role as cupbearer in the court of Artaxerxes. Some event of which we are unaware, called Nehemiah's brother to

go to Jerusalem. When his brother returned to Susa he reported to Nehemiah the state of the dismantled holy city. He described the affliction and reproach of her inhabitants. This threw Nehemiah into a state of grief. He sat down and wept, and mourned for days, fasting and praying before the God of heaven (1:4).

Artaxerxes, noting the sadness of his attendant, inquired what was wrong.

Nehemiah revealed it. The king asked *for what do you make request?* Here was the origin of Nehemiah's commission. Nehemiah received a leave of absence from the court and went to Jerusalem to repair the governor's house; repair the fortress, which commanded the temple area; and rebuild the walls of the city.

Nehemiah left Susa early in the spring of 444 B.C., accompanied by an escort of Persian troops. Nehemiah had the following qualities: First, he had a passion to serve God. Closely associated with this was a confidence that came resulting from his fervent prayer life. He also was a man of courage. However, one of his greatest strengths was his ability to work collaboratively with others. So he registered the people and challenged them to work together to repair the broken walls. Nehemiah developed a plan of how to rebuild the wall (2:11-20). The people who would build the wall would consecrate (sanctify) their portion of the wall they were building (Nehemiah 3). Each group of people was responsible for their section of the wall repairs. There were times of persecution—but the people collaboratively continued to persist. They were mocked and threatened, and often the opposition can become very confrontational (4:7-8). However, Nehemiah continued to encourage a collaborative approach through his

encouraging and stimulating speeches (4:14). The persistence paid off and the people were able to complete the project by working together (Neh. 6:15).

### Example of the Acts 2 Church

When it comes to the New Testament and the early church (Acts 2:42-47) we see a church that collaboratively participated in the apostle's teachings and spent time in fellowship. We see a church that takes on an incarnational approach. They wanted to live "Christ" in their community. In addition, the church family sold their resources and cared for each other. I John 3:17-18 tells us that if we see someone in need, and close our eyes to that person, how God's love can dwell in us. Many miraculous signs and wonders are taking place, with the result that others nearby are being filled with awe. Their activities have such an impact on the society that the church begins to enjoy the favour of their community at large. People are added to the church on a daily basis.

### Example of the Jerusalem Council

When it comes to resolving a church doctrine issue, we have an example of this in Acts 15 of the Jerusalem Council. This text tells of leaders coming together to determine a church issue. The context includes Paul and Barnabas ministering in Antioch and ministering to non-Jews. Some who arrived from Judea began teaching that circumcision was a necessary step for salvation (verse 1). These teachers would have received their circumcision beliefs from Gen. 17:9-14. This was a sign of belonging (Genesis 17). Pulpit Commentary (Exposition 2001) brings across the thought that circumcision serves a variety of issues,

including distinguishing the seed of Abraham from the Gentiles, perpetuating the memory of Jehovah's covenant and reminding the Jews of the duty of cultivating moral purity.

Therefore, some of the people combined circumcision with faith in Jesus. The Jews were convinced that they had to be Jews first before being Christian. This seems to be such an ongoing source of tension in the church that Paul decides to deal with it once and for all at an early church council meeting. There they begin to deal with the issue of circumcision and ultimately, the church becomes involved in the dispute. So Paul and Barnabas, as well as some local believers, attempt to deal with this dilemma. Kistemaker discerns at least three separate meetings:

First, a general meeting during which Paul, Barnabas, and other delegates from Antioch are welcomed and at which time the missionaries give their reports (verses 4-5). Next, there is a separate meeting of the apostles and elders with Paul and Barnabas (verses 6-11). Finally, there is the fall assembly meeting to hear the missionaries and James. During this last meeting the four requirements for gentile Christians are formulated and approved (verses 12-22). (Kistemaker 1990, 543)

When the delegates arrived from Jerusalem, Paul and Barnabas are welcomed by the whole church. The committee reports everything God has been doing in the lives of the non-Jewish seekers. The meeting is deliberate and allows for participation (Acts 15:7).

Paul and Barnabas participated in the discussion, and then James the leader of the Jerusalem church spoke. He is the half-brother of Jesus (Matt. 13:55) and contributes highly to the theological debate. Being the pastor of the Jewish church, he carries a lot of weight in causing change to happen. He reinforces what

Paul and Barnabas have been saying by using Scripture (Amos 9:11-12) and supports the view to not make it difficult for non-Jews who are turning to God. Parameters of what is acceptable behavior are outlined in Acts 15:20-21. The non-Jewish people are to abstain from idols, and from eating strangled animals. James plays a large role in embracing seekers which causes a change to take place among the leadership.

The fact that it seemed good to follow this plan implies that these leaders were willing to be led by the Holy Spirit. The whole event happened when a group of leaders became eager to strategize how to relate to the non-Jewish seekers. This is a story of working collaboratively.

#### Example of Paul the Apostle

There are other examples of collaborative ministry in the church. One of these examples is seen in Paul, the Apostle, and his relationship with Timothy. Acts 16 depicts Paul visiting several communities (Derbe and Lystra) and finding a young disciple named Timothy. Timothy's mother is a Jewish believer and his father is Greek. Timothy is well respected in these communities. Paul is determined to mentor Timothy, and takes him along on his missionary journeys. From this time forward Paul trains Timothy. By Acts 19:22 Timothy is doing ministry on his own. In Romans 16:21 Paul calls Timothy his fellow-worker and they are working collaboratively. There is little doubt they begin to influence each other. In I Cor. 4:17 Timothy teaches the same message Paul presents. Paul includes Timothy in writing the church in Corinth (II Cor. 1:1), Philippi (Phil.

1:1), Colossae (Col.1:1), and Thessalonica (I Thess. 1:1). Paul shares his life with Timothy and talks about his personal suffering for the gospel (II Tim. 1:8-11). Paul uses himself as an example so that Timothy will be able to endure suffering for the cause of Christ (II Tim. 2:3). A good leadership skill includes being both an educator as well as a learner. This collaborative process between Paul and Timothy is a picture of how vital it is to work together. It is strength building on strength. The collaborative approach allows us to build on each other's gifts and talents.

Another picture of leaders strengthening each other is seen in Paul's relationship with Priscilla and Aquila (Acts 18:3). The tent making experience becomes a relationship building event. Paul mentors them and ministers with them. Eventually Priscilla and Aquila come into contact with a man named Apollos. Apollos is a learned man who has an understanding of the Scriptures, but he knows only the baptism of John. Priscilla and Aquila invite Apollos into their home and explain the way of God more clearly. Here we see strength building into strength. The three minister to each other, and together they minister to their community. In the same way we need to strengthen each other as leaders so we can effectively engage our seeker community. Priscilla and Aquila invite Apollos into their home and explain the way of God more accurately. Here we see strength building into strength. The three minister to each other, and together they minister to their community.

## Example of Barnabas

An additional story of working collaboratively is seen in the life of Barnabas. In Acts 4 we learn that Barnabas is a Levite originally called Joseph who was born in Cyprus. The apostles called him “Barnabas” which means “Son of Encouragement.” His quality as an encourager was a vital need of any collaborative efforts.

In Acts 4 he sells a piece of land and brings the money to the other apostles, making an offering to the other apostles. In Acts 9, following the conversion of Paul, Barnabas takes Paul under his wing. Prior to Paul’s conversion he had persecuted the believers, and a fear continued among the apostles even following Paul’s conversion that perhaps he was still a persecuting man. Therefore Barnabas introduces Paul to the other apostles and stands up for him, informing the other apostles that God rescued Paul and saved Paul on the way to Damascus. After Barnabas stands up for Paul, Paul was accepted by the other apostles as one of them.

In Acts 11, the apostles hear that God is moving among the Gentiles, so the church in Antioch sends Barnabas to check out the Antioch church. When Barnabas arrives in Antioch he sees that God is ministering to the Gentiles, and he throws himself behind the work. Then Barnabas goes to look for Paul in Tarsus where he had been living. Paul and Barnabas begin to work collaboratively in the Antioch church teaching many people. It is interesting to note that each person brought their strengths to the table for ministry. Paul was a strong leader; and Barnabas an encourager.

In Acts 13-14 we see Barnabas involved in a collaborative ministry alongside the prophet-preachers and teachers Simeon, Lucius of Cyrene, Manaen, and Paul. Furthermore, the Holy Spirit selects Paul and Barnabas to continue to minister to the gentiles. They minister together in Antioch, Iconium, Lystra and Derbe. They handpick leaders in each church, continuing the model of collaborative ministry.

God works in community and helps us achieve His goals in community. It allows us to collectively hear from Him (Prov. 15:22). In this project, we worked to develop strategies in forming friendships with our non-Christian neighbours using Appreciative Inquiry, a collaborative method of assessment and planning.

### **Wesleyan Influences**

This incarnational approach is also seen through John Wesley's influences. His life's work is analyzed in *John Wesley: A Biography* (Tomkins 2003). John Wesley was born on June 28, 1703 in Lincolnshire, England. Although being ordained a priest in 1728, John had a conversion experience with God on May 24, 1738, following a layman's reading of *Luther's Preface to the Epistle to the Romans*. Wesley became a transformed preacher riding over 250,000 miles on horseback, a distance equal to ten circuits of the globe along the equator. Active until his death in 1791, he preached *over* 40,000 sermons (Tomkins 2003, 199). This led to the development of the Methodist church, now 33 million strong worldwide. Some of his direct incarnational influences are seen in the following people and ministries.

## William Wilberforce

For instance, Eric Metaxis in *Amazing Grace* (Metaxis 2007) records that William Wilberforce was born on August 24, 1759, to a prosperous family in Hull. When he was 10 years of age his father died and his mother sent him to live with his father's brother and Aunt Hannah, 200 miles away to Wimbolton. The largest change in his new settings was religious: "William's aunt Hannah was an evangelical convert and a follower of Whitfield, and she raised the boy in the same faith, teaching him daily devotions and taking him to Methodist meetings" (Tomkins 2007, 11).

This Christian context had a powerful impact on Wilberforce as his aunt and uncle were at the epicenter of a spiritual renaissance in England at the time (Metaxis 2007, 6). They were also friends with John Newton, the former slave-ship captain who wrote the now famous hymn "Amazing Grace." It was he who would have given Wilberforce his first knowledge of the evils of slavery (Metaxis 2007, 6-7).

In 1780, the idea entered Wilberforce's mind to run for election in the House of Commons, district of Hull, which was one of the prize ridings in England. Elections were quite corrupt in those days, and people had to be paid to vote for one in the running. On October 31, 1780 Wilberforce was successfully elected and his friend William Pitt, the Younger, was soon installed in the Appleby district. Pitt ended up becoming the Prime Minister of England (Metaxis 2007, 20-29). Wilberforce became a passionate debater in parliament (Metaxis 2007, 30) and his conversion took place in 1785.

John Newton and Wilberforce connected and began to strategize together. At the same time John Wesley had also been campaigning against the slave-trade. A certain man named Granville Sharp had joined the effort, going as far as helping a black man earn his freedom in a court of law. This was a watershed moment that began to initiate change (Metaxis 2007, 91-115). The horrors on the slave ships began to be exposed everywhere, and Wilberforce knew that the appalling conditions under which white Englishmen worked in the slave trade would become a powerful argument for ending it (Metaxis 2007, 117). A report was released on the slave trade by the Privy Council to the House of Commons in April 1789. When the West Indian interests perceived that a push would be made for abolition, they began campaigning for regulations instead. On May 12, 1789, Wilberforce began to speak for three and a half hours, challenging parliament to change. He did not run down his counterparts, because his conversion to Christ had changed his previous tactics. He cited many first-hand facts to reveal what was really happening in the slave industry. The debate ended with a non-decisive decision— to hear more evidence (Metaxis 2007, 130-137). In 1790, Wilberforce was back for the new session of parliament and questioned all of the witnesses in the slave trade. Then on April 18, 1791, the debate on the abolition of slavery in parliament was opened. Wilberforce spoke for four hours, the vote was taken, and abolition was voted down 163 to 88 (Metaxis 2007, 143-144). During this time he was still being encouraged by the then elder John Wesley. While just a few years before there had been a lot of ignorance on the subject, now the horrors of what was happening on the ships were on some people's minds. Images of the

Africans in chains began to appear everywhere, and the month following the abolition debates, 517 petitions showed up in parliament, with only 4 in favour. There was a new movement gaining momentum (Metaxis 2007, 147-148).

A new debate began in parliament and Pitt was involved. In the session of 1792, Wilberforce gave notice that he would again move for abolition and a motion was passed by 230 to 85, in favour of gradual abolition. Brendlinger documents the fact that Wesley was involved with the anti-slavery movement, very proactive in social justice issues:

He was exposed to Native Americans, to slaves and to the cruelties of slavery. This was an important aspect of his time in America and he would never forget these impressions. He saw firsthand what he later described as the results of human depravity: drunkenness, greed, debauchery and human brutality. (Brendlinger 2006, 1-25)

Wesley never discriminated against black people and ministered to them in his services (Brendlinger 2006, 16). Evidence shows he spoke out against slavery in Georgia and Carolina (Brendlinger 2006, 17) and he published an article called *Thoughts Upon Slavery*, released when he was 70 years of age (Brendlinger 2006, 23). In the tract, he makes an appeal to those in the slave trade. In the slave trade, referring 'to the humanity of the slave', as those equally human and "the humanity of the slave trader", as those 'capable of compassion.' Wesley also freely threatened eternal judgement (Brendlinger 2006, 25). As far as Wesley was concerned, there was no justification for slavery on economic, practical or pragmatic grounds (Brendlinger 2006, 53). Any system or practice that took the highest beings of God's created order, those of infinite worth, and degraded them

to the level of or below brutes was obviously inherently wrong (Brendlinger 2006, 56). Human equality had a solid basis in Wesley's thinking:

1. Since the Fall, all people are equally depraved.
2. All of us are equal recipients of God's grace.
3. Black persons are equally "human" and classed among all people as God's "noblest creatures" with immortal souls.
4. While there may be physical differences, they are only in appearance. (Brendlinger 2006, 68)

### William Booth

Another person who was influenced by Wesley and practiced incarnational living was William Booth, the founder of the Salvation Army. Part of his vision was to help the poor, minister to the slums, and sympathize with people's afflictions, with the ultimate goal of seeing people come to faith in Jesus Christ (Railton 1912, 121). His way of engaging seekers was through street witnessing, and also ministering to the physical needs of the people. This response is a holistic attempt to follow the Scriptures. This is precisely what we are beginning to do at Cedarview Evangelistic Center, as noted in chapter 1.

### Pentecostalism

When it comes to our denomination, the Pentecostal movement (the Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada [PAOC]) also was influenced by Wesley and began as a seeker movement emphasizing the gifts of the Holy Spirit when engaging non-Christians (Dawes Dec. 1998, 2). Pentecostals were experiencing God in a real and personal way, and using the gifts of the Holy Spirit in their worship services. However, falling short in practicing the incarnational approach,

the trend modified and moved toward a more inclusive theology. Developing social justice skills and building relationships with our non-Christian community became a vital component of evangelism in our denomination (PAOC General Conference 1998, 29).

This change of thinking was far from instantaneous. Its slow progression over time is reflected in conference minutes. For instance, at the General conference of the PAOC in September 1954 the minutes stated that a standing committee was to be formed on ministering to the unchurched. In the minutes of the PAOC General conference of August 1972, it was resolved that a committee for the Evangelism Department would be responsible for planning and promoting evangelistic outreaches through crusades, campaigns, visitation programmes, literature distribution, radio and television and other methods. It was to work in close association with the district executives and local churches. It was to encourage crusades, visitation evangelism, campus evangelism, family counselling, literature distribution, radio and TV programming, together with all other approved methods of evangelism.

At the General Conference of the PAOC in 1996, the conference adopted a general social concerns philosophy that endorsed both special service issues and social justice ministries (PAOC General Conference 1996, 14). Here a transition begins, inspiring a higher level of incarnational living. They affirmed the predominantly grassroots strategies regarding both social services and ministries criteria in discipleship training curriculum, and recognized that social services and social issues are an integral part of evangelism. They decided that both social

services and social issues ministries are best conducted by Christians simply living out their faith, practically and socio-politically, in accordance with their respective contexts and convictions, sometimes requiring direct denominational (national and district) leadership. At the General Conference in 1998 this trend intensified:

Whereas the 42<sup>nd</sup> General conference of the Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada resolved the importance of Social concerns and its importance to evangelism, and whereas the Social concerns committee attest to the disintegration of social mores, godly and righteousness, and basic biblical conscience of the nation, and whereas the Social concerns Committee feels that there are a great many scriptures that point towards representing God's love in society to do justice, love mercy; love our neighbour as ourselves; to look after orphans and widows in distress; to tend to the sick, to visit people in prison; to show hospitality to the lonely, to feed, clothe and give to the poor; to free the oppressed and loose the chains of injustice. (PAOC General Conference 1998, 29).

The evolution o movement from a predominantly revivalistic thrust to an incarnational approach continued to gain momentum. Today this social-justice thrust in building bridges to our non-Christian community continues.

### **Discussion**

The *incarnation* is a powerful example of how we should live. God became a part of mankind—not just to show mankind what God was like, but to live among men and serve mankind. Jesus lived with us, and allowed us to experience God. Jesus was *incarnational* in his approach, living and dwelling as God with flesh among mankind. In the process he ministered to the needs of mankind and developed relationships with those who were away from God (Matt. 9:9-10). Jesus who practiced being a friend of those who had little or no faith

becomes our model for developing relationships with our non-Christian neighbours.

In turn we are called to emulate Jesus. Those who are Christian have experienced the *incarnation* through accepting Christ as Saviour. Therefore we are called to live out the *incarnational* life. The early church apologetic included and *incarnational Apology* whereby they lived the continuation of the *incarnation* in their communities. We need to continue to minister and serve our communities as Christians.

In addition, the Great Commandment gives us the directive to love God and love our neighbours as ourselves. God created and cares for people: the antagonists, the indifferent and their behaviour. It is therefore imperative that we are open to our non-Christian neighbours. The first step in accomplishing the goals of the Great Commandment is for us to develop relationships with our non-Christian neighbours.

Therefore, we began to work actively with our church participants to co-develop strategies of how to build relationships with our non-Christian neighbours. The project is about developing friendships with our non-Christian neighbours. In the following chapter, I will examine critical areas of research as well as looking at precedent cases of study. As we inspected previous literature on the subject and looked at other models of those who built relationships with non-Christian neighbours in the past, it helped give us insight and assisted us in developing a better project for Cedarview Church.

## **CHAPTER THREE: LITERATURE REVIEW**

Understanding that God is interested in believers developing relationships with their non-Christian neighbours it was important to gain wisdom and insight from other resources and contexts. This was helpful in identifying critical areas of research, determining the process and developing a sermon series. The intent of the literature review was to discover how to minister effectively to our non-Christian friends and to assist as a resource in facilitating the project.

### **Cultural and Social Paradigms Related to Religious Beliefs, Attitudes, and Practices**

We live in a time of cultural and social change. To understand our context and neighbours, we need to examine these paradigms.

George Barna

George Barna is an American pollster who surveys religious attitudes and practices in particular. In his book *Futurecast*, Barna shows attitudes and cultural values in the United States, values that also have an effect on Canada. He states that United States has moved toward becoming a nation in which expertise is less esteemed than passion and participation (Barna 2011, 56). He comments that it is now rare to find someone who will stay with a company or organization from

college through to retirement (Barna 2011, 57). This research indicates that most people do not believe it is possible to work one's way out of poverty (Barna 2010, 59), so the culture has moved away from a state of delayed reward to that of instant gratification (Barna 2011, 61). In addition, he cautions our state of attitudes and values:

In the absence of an anchored set of standards, we wind up with values that are ever-shifting, somewhat unpredictable, and often self-serving. In practical terms, it means we have growing numbers of people who contend that society is unjust and unfair because of standards based on a shifting set of norms will never perfectly coincide with their individual desires and expectations. It also means that people feel free to manipulate the system for their own ends.

Recent research supports these observations. A grown percentage of adults (40 percent) do not believe that America is "fair and decent." Large and increasing numbers of young people are abandoning traditional definitions of integrity to satisfy their momentary needs and desires. For example, teenagers are five times more likely than Boomers to believe that lying and cheating are necessary to succeed (51 percent vs. 10 percent, respectively). Those 51 percent—whom researchers labelled "cynics"—are three times more likely than others to like to customers or exaggerate expense reimbursement or insurance claims)...

Things are not much better among teens in general. They are four times more likely than older adults to intentionally deceive their employer (31 percent vs. 8 percent) and three times more likely to keep change that was given to them by mistake (49 percent vs. 15 percent). Young Adults (18-24) are twice as likely as older adults to lie to a spouse or domestic partner (48 percent vs. 22 percent), and they're much more likely to make unauthorized copies of copyrighted music or video content (69 percent vs. 27 percent). Substantial numbers of teens also admit to stealing from a store in the past year (30 percent), lying to a parent about something significant (83 percent), lying to save money (42 percent), cheating on a test (64 percent) and plagiarizing material from the Internet (36 percent). (Barna 2011, 68)

Here we see the integrity is being forfeited for the cause of self-gratification.

While it is true that this is not the case of everyone, these stats are indicative of a culture that includes a large portion of people open to parting with integrity if it

means it will help them succeed. Barna also includes Gallup’s research in regards to the moral conditions in America:

76 percent of adults contend that the nation’s moral values are getting worse. And by a ratio of 3:1, adults are more likely to describe the moral values of the United States as “poor” than as “excellent of good” (45 percent vs. 15 percent). Few people see much in the way of positive movement: Less than 5 percent said the people are becoming more honest and responsible, parents are raising more moral children, or young adults are demonstrating good values. (Barna 2011, 74)

Barna notes that Gallup Polls and Harris Polls indicate that faith in our key leaders continues to decline for categories of leaders except the military:

Gallup has been tracking the attitudes of Americans towards the nation’s institutions for years. Gallup reports that only five of the 16 institutions they track have a “great deal of confidence” or quite a lot of “confidence” toward the nation’s major institutions for years. In a similar way the Harris Poll has tracked the public perception of the leaders of major institutions for the past forty-five years. They have found that faith in our key leaders continues to decline for all leadership groups except one—the military (Gallup and Harris in Barna 2011, 59).

Compounding this is that most adults and a vast majority of teenagers no longer believe in absolute moral or spiritual truth (Barna 2010, 66). He developed the following chart demonstrating cultural thinking:

**Table 3: Cultural Shifts in Values**

WHAT WE USED TO EMBRACE	WHAT WE NOW EMBRACE
Excellence	Adequacy
Optimism	Pessimism
Common Good	Individual Advantage
Delayed Gratification	Instant Gratification
Respect	Incivility
Christian God	Amorphous God
Truth	Tolerance
Trust	Skepticism
Heroes	Celebrities
Knowledge	Experience

(Barna 2011, 79, Used by permission).

### Reginald Bibby

When it comes to Canadian research, a leading authority is Reginald Bibby, a Canadian sociologist who has tracked religious beliefs and practices in Canada. According to Bibby's research belief in God has stayed high and consistent:

Belief in God has stayed fairly steady at 82%; while the remaining 18% are leaning toward either agnosticism (11%) or atheism (7%). Belief that "miraculous healing sometimes occurs" continues to be endorsed by more than 70% of Canadians. (Bibby 2006, 187)

However, in spite of the high number of people who declare they believe in God, many do not believe in an absolute God or absolute truth. That is, they are relativists. The Canadian culture embraces a subjective view of God. Our society welcomes tolerance while at the time being more skeptical. Bibby writes:

One of the ways that individualism manifests itself is defining morality and ethics in personal rather than external terms. Truth is not seen as absolute—something that exists apart from life itself—but rather is "relative" to people and places, circumstances and time. In practice, truth is highly subjective; it is largely, if not completely, in the eye of the beholder....Since 1990, approximately 2 in 3 Canadians having agreed with the idea that *everything's relative*. The agreement level has risen from 65% to 70% in the last decade and a half. (Bibby 2006, 39)

While we have a relative view of God, we still acknowledge that we have spiritual needs. Bibby writes:

Since 1995, I have been trying to get a reading on the extent to which Canadians feel they have spiritual needs, and what they have in mind when they use the term "spiritual." The surveys have found that approximately 3 in 4 people across the country acknowledge they have spiritual needs. Indicative of the pervasiveness of such needs is the fact they are expressed by almost equal proportion of people of all ages—71%

of Boomers and Pre-Boomers, 74 % of Post Boomers. What does stand out, however, is that women are more likely than men to indicate spiritual needs, regardless of age (78% versus 66%). (Bibby 2006, 184)

This is helpful information for our project because it verifies that our non-Christian neighbours have spiritual needs, and are open to admitting the same.

#### Carey Nieuwhof

Another Canadian perspective is seen at Connexus, a church in Barrie, Ontario. In a journal article Carey Nieuwhof gives his church's point of view when ministering to the non-Christians (Church Leaders: Lead Better Every Day 2013, 15 Things you need to know about Unchurched People Today, <http://www.churchleaders.com/outreach-missions/outreach-missions-articles/167420-carey-nieuwhof-things-you-need-to-know-about-unchurched-people-today.html> accessed January 28, 2014). Carey Nieuwhof serves as Lead Pastor and began to notice seeker trends. His findings helped me with my project in that it gave me understanding into how non-Christians think in our Canadian context. These findings helped me develop an incarnational understanding from within a Canadian context. He states that there has been a big shift in how unchurched people think in the past 18 years. The shift is particularly noticeable in Canada where we occupy a medial position between the US and Europe. Canadians are less 'religious' than Americans, but less secular than Europeans. Here are some characteristics of seekers that he identifies in his article:

Nieuwhof states that not every non-Christian has big problems. If we are waiting for the unsaved to show up at church because their life is falling apart, we will wait a long time. He has found that non-Christians feel less guilty than we might think, even not at all. Unbelievers may not sense

conviction and may view themselves as good people (Accessed January 28, 2014).

Nieuwhof states that not every non-Christian has big problems. If we are waiting for the unsaved to show up at church because their life is falling apart, we will wait a long time. He has found that non-Christians feel less guilty than we might think, even not at all. Unbelievers may not sense conviction and may view themselves as good people.

He continues that most seekers are spiritual, and believe in God and may even be surprised and offended if we regard them as atheists. In addition, they are not sure what *Christian* means, so we cannot form assumptions. We may have to explain what a Christian is, and should not form our own conclusions about what an individual understands regarding the Christian faith.

He brings out another thought--many non-Christians have actually tried attending church but have left. At Connexus, they have a group of people who have never been to church (60% of their growth is from people who self-identify as not regular church attendees), but a surprising number of people have tried church at some point – as a child or young adult. Due to the fact that it was not a good experience, they left; we need to remember that. Seekers want us to be Christian; actually they want us to live incarnationally and authentically—the way Jesus would live. They want us to authentically follow Jesus. They want us to live incarnationally. They want us to “walk the talk.” This convinced me that the type of project I was interested in doing was timely and invaluable.

## **Literature on Relationally Engaging Non-Christian Neighbours**

I was also interested in learning what others have said about the topic of engaging their non-Christian neighbours. First, I chose this area of study to grow in personal understanding. I was also interested in learning about the subject to become better equipped to handle questions on the subject should they arise during the project. I examined precedent-setting cases in the area of developing friendships with non-Christian neighbours, and what methods were discovered to be effective. Our denomination and other churches that have made it a priority to develop relationships with non-Christians provided helpful studies in this outreach.

It is important not to place the cart before the horse. Too often we may have good intentions of trying to lead people to Christ on the spot. However, as I stated in the Theological Rationale, our first priority should be to develop relationships with non-Christians.

Jim Belcher

One of the authors I examined was Belcher who states that we need to give people time to experience God. In his book *Deep church: A third Wave Beyond Emerging and Traditional* he emphasizes the issues of “belonging before believing.” In today’s culture the priority is relationship when trying to minister to non-Christians. Deep community is vital in this culture (Belcher 2009, 103). This caused me to think that we needed to do things differently at Cedarview if we

were to engage the unsaved community. We needed a project that would develop relationships first before we pursued deeper spiritual things.

Michael Frost and Alan Hirsch

In Michael Frost and Alan Hirsch's book *The Shaping of Things to Come: Innovation and Mission for the 21<sup>st</sup>-Century Church*, they state that if we are going to reach those around us we are going to have to live where they live, and spend time where they spend time (Frost and Hirsch 2003, 39). They wrote about the Incarnational Approach to church life. In their view "the first churches were concerned with balancing commitments to fostering relationships with God, one another, and the world (Frost and Hirsch 2003, 77). In their view their relationship with the world includes serving and giving (generosity and hospitality) and gospel telling and sharing (Frost and Hirsch 2003, 79). They find this in the Acts 2 passage (verses 42-47). We need to become the message of Christ to the world (Frost and Hirsch 2003, 154). This is what incarnational living is all about. God wants to speak to the non-Christian community through our incarnational living. We need to become partners with God in trying to connect with our neighbours (Frost and Hirsch 2003, 159).

In the past I have struggled with the focus of the church building as the place where "ministry" happens. In the context of our denomination, which the previous chapter summarizes, people often came to "Pentecostal Services" in order to "experience the power of God." While this focuses on a strong incarnational experience, it often downplayed the incarnational living within our

neighbourhoods. The emphasis was placed on inviting people to our services in order to experience “God.” I experienced this type of thinking in my own church and family—where the focus of Sundays was often to “invite someone to church.” What was missing was building relationships with the non-Christian neighbours, and understanding that we do not have to just invite people to church, but we need to live incarnationally among them and develop relationships, both in the church setting and outside the church walls.

### Bill Hybels

In addition Bill Hybels wrote a book entitled *Just Walk Across the Room*. This book undergirds the thrust of my project. It emphasizes the incarnational walk in a practical way. Hybels is the founding pastor of Willow Creek Community Church in South Barrington, Illinois. Hybels leads one of America’s largest and most influential churches and has made it his life’s goal to be missional. He shares a story of ministering to an individual at a luncheon (Hybels 2006, 19-24). Here he meets a former Christian converted to Islam. This man tells Hybels that he loves his books. At the event, they are temporarily separated from one another. Following the luncheon, Hybels *walks across the room* towards this Muslim. At the beginning of their interaction, they talk about mutual professions, families, businesses and sports. Eventually the conversation finds its way to faith. Hybels demonstrates interest in the Muslim and his faith and this begins an ongoing relationship. The man tells Hybels his story—namely that as a child he had been a Christian, but attended a church that was racially prejudiced. Hybels

then shares why he has given his life to Jesus Christ. Finally there comes a day when this Muslim feels compelled to pray to God and give his life back to Jesus Christ. This testimony of taking steps to approach the unbelieving inspires Hybels to write his book *Just Walk Across the Room*. He says it is the story of God. God sent His son to walk across the heavens and bring us eternal life. As Hybels reflects, he realizes that Willow Creek is all about walking across the room to engage seekers. This story influenced my passion for our Cedarview project.

Bill Hybels states that when we try to develop relationships with non-Christians this becomes a step of entering into the zone of the unknown (Hybels 2006, 22). This is what incarnational living is all about. Furthermore, during an interview (Lowry 2014, 1-4), Hybels shared His concern regarding the church experiencing an incredible shift in the last few years with the lack of Christians sharing their faith with non-Christians. While there is an increased passion for Christians opening their lives to one another as fellow Christians, he is not seeing the same intensity and passion with Christians engaging non-Christians. Hybels believes that left alone, churches develop an inward-looking dynamic (Lowry 2014, 2-3).

His concern helped formulate what Hybels calls *Living in 3-D* (Hybels 2006, 59-60). The 3-D's are: *Developing Friendships* by engaging in the lives of people around us; *Developing Stories* by sharing our own story and God's redemptive story; and *Discerning Next Steps* by following the Holy Spirit's direction. This is the pattern that we emulated in the Cedarview Project. Our first step in the project was to *develop friendships* with our non-Christian neighbours.

We actually participated in this and developed this in the *Design Phase* (which I will speak to in the next chapter). I recorded the results in chapters 4 and 5. Then, after we engaged a non-Christian, some of the project participants recorded the results of non-Christians having *shared their stories* with their non-Christian neighbours. I also recorded these results in chapters 4 and 5. Finally, the project concluded with *discerning next steps* in the *Destiny Phase* (which I will speak to in the next chapter) in Chapter 6. I recorded these results in Chapter 6.

In his 3-D's Hybels works at challenging his congregation to engage those around them. That means choosing to traffic where non-Christians traffic (Hybels 2006, 92). It also means trusting in God to use our natural ability. It incorporates practicing commonality—watching for ways to build bridges instead of walls (Hybels 2006, 92). It also means being sensitive—remembering that irreligious people will not be very holy when we find them (Hybels 2006, 92). This is precisely what I was determined to do in the Cedarview project of developing friendships with our non-Christian neighbours.

He then encourages them to share their transformation story. He states that Jesus was well aware of the power of a good story (Hybels 2006, 115). Every person alive today has a story too (Hybels 2006, 115). The person who realizes this, comes to this conclusion—my story fits into *God's* greater story—and that is the greatest story ever told (Hybels 2006, 115-116).

Finally, he coaches them to rely on the Holy Spirit for the next steps and for discipling his involves allowing the Holy Spirit to lead and guide us (Hybels 2006, 38). This was precisely what I was determined to do. In my preaching

series I challenged the church to begin considering building relationships with our non-Christian neighbours and to be ready to share their stories if God would open the door for that possibility. Finally, I emphasized the need to pray and rely on the Holy Spirit to lead us to those individuals who we should build relationships with. This is what the project was all about.

### **Other Church Stories**

I also felt it would be beneficial to read about other churches in Canada that have made it a priority to build relationships with their non-Christian neighbours, and find out how they do this. This could give me some ideas that I could use in developing strategies of how to build relationships with our non-Christian neighbours, especially when we discern next steps in moving the project forward. These stories will become beneficial for our 2015 Vision Committee that will be developing the next phase of the project (I will explain this later in fuller detail).

#### **Richmond Hill Community Church**

Richmond Hill Community Church (Salvation Army, Richmond Hill Ontario) is this type of church. Matt Delaney, Sports and Recreation Coordinator, emailed me information on the strategies their church uses in developing relationships within their community (Delaney June 16, 2014). First, they are consultants. They go outside of their church walls into their community to serve without pretense. They do not go into the community (people, school boards, community groups) with a pre-packaged formula to try to “sell” their ministry.

They do their best to meet the needs that are presented to them without dominating the people that they minister to.

They also work at building trust. Richmond Hill Community Church believes that quality relationships are built on the foundation of trust. Trust is not initially assumed. This church wishes to present the position that they consider others equal to themselves, and when doing ministry, do not view it simply as a project for the church to complete. They work at building a base of trust.

They also promote consistency. Their congregation is heavily involved in the programs they offer to the community. This is intentional. They want to make sure the non-Christians they serve see ‘the church’ consistently involved in all parts of their lives. This helps unbelievers become more naturally connected and assists the church in building bridges of trust and equality in the community. For instance, consistency is demonstrated in their hockey league and sports camp. The coaches and volunteers come from the church to run and facilitate the programs. The leadership team at Richmond Hill Community Church are very intentional about selection of volunteers—the people for these ministries are chosen on the basis of their diversity and naturally friendly personalities.

Finally, involvement is emphasized. As the people join the church (sometimes the first day people show up) people are asked to lend a hand or contribute to the everyday tasks of ministry. Some churches wait until people are “ready” for ministry. This church believes everyone comes ready and it is the job of the church leadership to find the best fit for believers to serve where God wants them to serve. Some of their basic guidelines include following the Great

Commission and the Great Commandment (Matthew 28). They believe that this is the responsibility of every believer and follower of Jesus, and that the immediate response of a Christian is to serve. They follow an “Emergent Design,” meaning they are always open for change. As needs change, so do the means and modes that they serve in. In addition, they emphasize justice, kindness and humility (Micah 6) as they minister. Some of their outreach includes camps (sports, adventure, moms and tots); family ministries (including seminars for single moms); sports leagues; student ministries (including conflict resolution, mentoring, school sports programs). Throughout a typical week of the school year, the church serves over 400 kids and 30 single or marginalized mothers. This does not include any of the Sunday morning activities. They see each relationship (no matter what phase of trust it is at) as a progressive connection. The ultimate goal is that each life they touch would come into a deepened understanding of the Saviour's love and plan for their lives, and to give them the tools they need to grow as a follower of Christ.

I appreciated this information as it challenged me to find that everyone had to be and was willing to serve and build relationships with their non-Christian neighbours. This gave me energy to promote our project at Cedarview, and influenced my thinking to continue this line of ministry. Our project emphasized the need to have relative programs that could also serve as a *vehicle* to help build relationships with our non-Christian friends. We emphasized building trust in our relationships with our community, and emphasized consistency—and we were determined to keep the project moving following the group meetings. Finally, one

of the main thoughts that came out of the project was that we would continue to serve our non-Christian community as this was paramount to maintain the relationships built between ourselves and our non-Christian friends.

#### Christian Life Community Church

A PAOC church that has adopted an incarnational approach is Christian Life Community Church in Abbotsford, BC which has maintained an effective ministry to seekers. Dr. Jim Lucas is the Lead Pastor. When asked for input, the following information was received from his associate, Rev. Richard Ball.

They have a three-fold mission statement that outlines their vision. It includes loving God, loving people, and reaching the world. Their goal is to teach all members to engage seekers and emulate the love of Christ. They seek to create a culture of grace which usually happens in the context of building relationships with seekers. They focus on training leaders to reach the world in which we live and their challenge is that the church be *missional*: to live our lives, wherever we go, whatever we do, as a missionary. They emphasize that believers not look upon seekers as projects, but rather build friendships, and share their lives with those who are searching (Ball, 2012). I particularly appreciated this stance.

It was also our goal to love God, love people and reach the world. As we love those around us and build relationships with our non-Christian neighbours, we can begin to reach the world. That is precisely what happened at Cedarview—our project began to emulate this church—we were seeking to promote an incarnational lifestyle.

## Aurora Cornerstone Church

In our previous place of ministry, Aurora Cornerstone Church, we were largely focused on seekers, and building relationships with them. In 1993 Elaine (my wife) and I made the move to Aurora, Ontario, to take over a three year old church plant. This ministry place would be our first as Lead Pastors and we served in this community for 13 years. Our theme was *Committed to Christ, Caring for People* and the congregation grew at a rapid rate.

By 2005, 28 small groups were developed (many designed for seekers and relationship-building) and numerous outreach events followed, including Summer VBS (which drew 173 children--over 130 from the community), Rubber Chicken Company (a contemporary Kid's Ministry--over 100 attended per night for several days), two Alpha programs, a Post-Alpha Program, Divorce Care (with 22 participants, many whom were unbelievers), Buddies in Prayer (an outreach for children which ran as a small group at someone's house), being involved on an annual basis in the Aurora Street Sale that drew 30,000 people, annual participation in the Santa Claus Parade, serving in several downtown Toronto Missions (including helping and feeding the poor), and a drop-in centre two times a week at church for mothers and their children (CTV National News with Lloyd Robertson covered this outreach). We were focused on our unsaved neighbours (Aurora Cornerstone Church, Reports for 2006, 2).

The emphasis was building relationships, not programs, and these experiences and preceding stories have had an impact in choosing this project for our church. It was therefore imperative that we, as a church, began to strategize

how to best minister to our community. This took intentionality. This is precisely what we were determined to do.

This experience in Aurora truly determined the direction that I intended to go in ministry. It had been a place of learning and implementing ministries that were geared to connecting with our non-Christian neighbours. These stories gave me energy for the project.

### **Co-Developing Bridging-Strategies for our Non-Christian Neighbours**

We needed a strategy of how to design a project that would help us build relationships with our non-Christian neighbours. I decided to use a type of the Appreciative-Inquiry (A-I) Model because it involves active participation on the part of the congregation which allowed our members to be directly involved in the planning details, providing a strong sense of ownership. Cooperrider and Whitney (2008, 2-12) wrote that the principles and practices of AI suggest that collective strengths do more than perform—they transform. They gave the following practice-oriented definition:

Appreciative-Inquiry is the cooperative, co-evolutionary search for the best in people, their organizations, and the world around them. It involves systematic discovery of what gives life to an organization or a community when it is most effective and most capable in economic, ecological, and human terms. (Cooperrider, Whitney, and Stavros 2008, 3)

A-I is collaborative in nature, and open to changes in outcome.

Cooperrider et al. (2008, 27) state that A-I makes space for people to be “free to be heard.” They bring across the thought that those who might otherwise feel that they are being ignored are invited to come forward and share information, ideas

and innovations that are subsequently put into action throughout the organization. This allows people to be “free to dream in community” (Cooperrider et al. 2008, 28).

In the book *Appreciative Inquiry* by Barrett and Fry they speak of building capacity (Barrett and Fry 2008, 13). One way is to fix problems; the other way is to improve performance (Barrett and Fry 2008, 15-16). One is a *deficit* orientation leading to problem solving; the other a positive, *appreciative* orientation leading to increased capacity and innovation (Barrett and Fry 2008, 17). For them AI is building cooperative capacity (Barrett and Fry 2008, 13). They write:

Appreciative Inquiry is a strength-based, capacity building approach to transforming human systems toward a shared image of their most positive potential by first discovering the very best in their shared experience. (Barret and Fry 2008, 25)

They view A-I as strength based methodology: an A-I approach begins with the assumption that every human system already has strengths; key features of health and well being (as opposed to needs, diseases, problems and gaps) (Barrett and Fry 2008, 25). They also consider AI to be an artful research: the “art of appreciation” is the art of discovering and valuing those factors that give life to any organization or group (Barret and Fry 2008, 26). In addition, they state that AI is a collaborative effort in every aspect---people together discover and create that which is healthy, successful, and positive in organizational life (Barret and Fry 2008, 26). They also mention that it is inclusive—A-I invites a widening circle of voices, creating opportunities and forums for surfacing inspirational stories (Barret and Frey 2008, 26). They add that A-I is generative—any systems

imagined future is embedded in everyday conversations and stories articulated in meetings, and hallway discussions. It creates conversations relating to highest ideals, assets, and successes which will make the positive collaborations regarding the future even more desirable (Barret and Fry 2008, 26).

Cooperrider et al. (2008, 113-116) write that the role of the facilitator includes explaining the A-I process and emphasizing anonymity. The facilitator must manage the negatives, encourage story-telling, keep track of time and encourage people to have fun in the conversation. Thayer-Hart (2007, 20) brings across the point that the facilitator takes responsibility for guiding the process of discussion and decision-making, but does not ordinarily engage in the content of the meeting. I guided the discussion and ensured that we did not go off topic, by going through the questions and answering concerns people had in terms of clarification.

A-I involves several principles. First there is the *instructionist principle*. This is the building of the action-research project. The questions asked become the material out of which the future is conceived and constructed. Therefore, the way of knowing is fateful and unpredictable (Cooperrider, Whitney, and Stavros 2008, 8).

Next there is the *simultaneous principle*: this principle recognizes that inquiry and change are not truly separate moments; they can and should be simultaneous (Cooperrider, Whitney, and Stavros 2008, 9). The inquiry focus is actually an intervention strategy where thoughts are planted and implemented in order to cause change to happen. This happens through the question which are

formulated and asked of the participants (Cooperrider, Whitney, and Stavros 2008, 9).

There is also *poetic or narrative principle*. An organization's story is constantly being coauthored. Moreover, pasts, presents, and futures are endless sources of learning, inspiration, or interpretation (as in the endless interpretive possibilities in a good work of poetry or a biblical text) (Cooperrider, Whitney, and Stavros 2008, 9). This contains a strong narrative focus.

In addition there is the *anticipatory principle*. The anticipatory principle gives us a sense of imagination and mysticism as to what is coming up next (Cooperrider, Whitney, and Stavros 2008, 9). There is a sense of excitement and creative anticipation that happens in A-I. Included is the fact that all information is accepted as noteworthy.

Finally there is the *positive principle*. A-I is known for being positive. Organizations, as human constructions, are largely affirmative systems and thus are responsive to positive thought and positive knowledge. The more positive the questions used to guide a group that is building an initiative, the more long-lasting and effective is the change (Cooperrider, Whitney, and Stavros 2008, 9-10).

In addition, there is also the choosing an intentional topic stage: Starting with an *intentional* topic choice is crucial because all human systems move in the direction of what they most deeply and persistently talk and ask questions about (Barret and Fry 2008, 77). I introduced the topic through a series of sermons which will be discussed in the following chapters.

Following a Sermon Series introducing the topic of building relationships with our non-Christian neighbours we met in groups over several months to discuss four groups of topics related to four themes. A-I works through a series of Four Themes. Cooperrider and Whitney use the 4-D's (*Discovery, Dream, Design and Destiny*) with participants in developing strategies for change (Cooperrider and Whitney 2008, 25-35). Barret and Fry also use the Discovery/Dream/Design and Destiny Language (Barret and Fry 2008, 55), although different authors use different terms, and an example of one of these will follow later.

We worked at *discovering* who we are as a church community and what has made us effective. This phase celebrated the positive things that have happened in our context. We began to *dream* what we could become, in terms of developing relationships with our non-Christian neighbours. It would be energizing for our leaders and church if Cedarview became known as an open community embracing non-Christians. Then we met regularly and *co-designed* bridging strategies for developing relationships with people, developing a vision for change. Finally we formed a *destiny* plan to keep the project moving forward. This was an accountability plan to ensure that the project will keep moving forward. I will speak to how this all unfolded in the following chapters.

Cooperrider, Whitney, and Stavros (2008, 3) bring out the thoughts that A-I interventions give way to inquiry, imaginations, and innovation. Instead of negation, criticism, and spiralling diagnosis, there is discovery, dream and design. AI involves the art and practice of asking unconditionally positive questions that

strengthen a system's capacity to apprehend, anticipate, and heighten positive regard.

A-I is also important within a Christian context. Philippians 4:8 is an important roadmap and was used as backdrop text for First Presbyterian Church in Altadena. This is a church of Japanese heritage (Branson 2004, 13). Branson views AI as following biblical patterns. Additional texts such as I Thess. 1:2-3 show the positive side of Scripture in the life of the believer. They considered Appreciative Inquiry to be a new way of seeing, hearing, and thinking (Branson 2004, x-xi). In relation to the Altadena church, they described their challenges and congregational issues stating that by late fall of 2000, disoriented by the unexpected departure of their pastor and somewhat tired of discord, members of the congregation expressed an awareness of the challenges they faced (Branson 2004, 6), so Branson began a process of intertwining theory and practice in four action steps. As opposed to the 4-D model, this church developed the 4-I Model.

First there was the *Initiate Stage*: The "Initiate" Phase includes laying foundations, determining the research focus, forming the generic questions, and creating initial strategies for the project (Branson 2004, 67). He accomplished this with his church elders. The focus of the initial questions (see above) included the values of both relationships and ministry.

Then there was the *Inquiry Stage*: The Inquiry Phase included the finalizing of the interview questions, developing a protocol, selecting interviews, and gathering the data. This was in preparation for the interpretive work that began imagining possible futures (Branson 2004, 72-73).

Next there was the *Imaginative Stage*: This stage included the collating and sharing of the interview data, finding the life-giving themes, deciding what to initially focus on, and developing “proactive” proposals concerning possible futures (Branson 2004, 77).

Finally, there was the *Innovative Step*. This dealt with how the imaginative futures became tangible and integrated into congregational life (Branson 2004, 103). As they worked through the process they developed a vision for the future.

A-I can also be used as Action-Research. Stringer outlines Action Research in his definition:

Action research is systematic and rigorous inquiry or investigation that enables people to understand the nature of problematic events or phenomena. The research can be characterized by the following: A focus on a problem or issue to be investigated, a systematic process of inquiry, and the development of *explanations* that lead to increased understanding. (Stringer 2014, 5)

He continues that all research is an extension of day-to-day inquiries and involves procedures that require people to move past their day to-day understandings to engage more precise and rigorous forms of description, observation and explanation (Stringer 2014, 5). This pursuit of developing explanations through the process of inquiry leads to the work of gaining data and its evaluation, and becomes an ongoing cycle of search and re-evaluation. A-I is a methodology that can be used in Action-Research:

Appreciative Inquiry is presented here as a mode of Action Research that meets the criteria of Action Research. It is more than a method or technique. The appreciative mode of inquiry is a way of living with, being with, and directly participating in the research with the individuals we are compelled to study. (Cooperrider, Whitney, Stavros, 2008, 354)

When it comes to Action Research, Judith Bell speaks of two types of researching: “Quantitative researchers collect facts and study the relationship of one set of facts to another...Qualitative Researchers are more concerned with an individual’s perceptions of the world” (Bell 2010, 5). Punch gives attention to an important distinction that “qualitative research not only uses non-numerical and unstructured data, but also, typically the research questions and methods are more general at the start, and become more focused as the study progresses (Punch in Bell 2010, 6). One begins to focus and define the data and redefine the data to give a theoretical interpretation of the data at hand. I focused on both Quantitative and Qualitative Research (I will talk about how I accomplished this in Chapter 4). She also speaks to the various styles of research approach, such as ethnography (attempting to develop an understanding of how culture works), narrative inquiry and stories (Bell 2010, 18). She includes the importance of the selection of a topic (Bell 2010, 27). There is a section mentioning the need for ethics and integrity in the research (Bell 2010, 44). She gives helpful information on reading, referencing and the management of information (Bell 2010, 63). The section on literature review is imperative (Bell 2010, 104). Finally, developing skill in the interpretation of data is a must (Bell 2010, 234-235). In terms of how this was done in my project, it will be explained in chapter 4.

### **Discussion**

It was important to learn about the cultural shifts in society that have influenced our non-Christian neighbours. It was equally exciting to learn that

belief in God has remained strong in Canada despite the cultural views in society regarding relativism. Therefore the timing of this project for members of Cedarview Church to develop relationships with their non-Christian neighbours could not have been better.

This is why I became interested in learning what other church leaders have to say about the topic of engaging their non-Christian neighbours. The topics I investigated helped me realize that deep community is vital with today's non-Christian community. Therefore the need to live incarnationally is paramount.

I also appreciated learning about how Hybels teaches his people how to engage the non-Christian community. I followed his plan and methodology in my project work. His 3-D's *Developing friendships* by engaging in the lives of people around us; *Developing Stories* by sharing our own story and God's redemptive story; and *Discerning Next Steps* is primarily what I wished to accomplish with our project (Hybels 2006, 59-60). The first step of this project was to develop friendships with our non-Christian neighbours. The next step was to share our stories (some of this happened in the Design Phase and I will speak to this in chapters 4 and 5). Finally, we needed to discern our next steps in the project (which we did in the Destiny Phase).

I am thankful for other churches and their stories of how they developed relationships with their non-Christian neighbours, and how they live incarnationally in their community. I found these stories beneficial when it comes to discerning next steps for our church. I then give a summary of what A-I is as a methodology. This collaborative approach was helpful for our church in that it is a

strength-based cooperative organizer that helped us develop our project. I also outlined how we began the project through a series of sermons (in order to address the topic) and then moved through the four phases in our small groups (Discovery, Dream, Design, Destiny). All of this is a part of Action Research which involved the participants of Cedarview Church.

In Chapter 4 I will detail the sermon series. In addition, I will state how I applied my ethical principles. I will outline the questions asked in each phase of A-I. I will also describe what happened in each meeting, including the demographics of each meeting, and the outcomes of each meeting. Finally I will define the data that was analyzed into codes related to occurrences related to the themes.

## **CHAPTER FOUR:**

### **METHODOLOGY**

In this chapter I outline the sermons that were preached introducing the topic of developing relationships with our non-Christian friends. Then I describe how I applied my ethical principle. I summarize the seven collective collaborative meetings that took place, and the results of these events. I mention how I was influenced by my methodology. Finally, I review the data sources and collection of the data, as well as how my data was analyzed.

#### **Method of Project**

In developing the method of the project there were four specific areas I dealt with. Initially we (Pastor David Dwarka, Pastor Elaine Tonn and I) prepared sermons in order to introduce the topic of developing relationships with our non-Christian neighbours, and then described how I applied my ethical principles. Questions were developed for the project that would explore the values and desires of Cedarview church spanning six collective meetings. Finally I described the expressions of the meetings that were spontaneous and deliberate.

#### **Prepared Input through Sermons**

The project included a series of sermons designed to help understand the context and culture of the seekers, and the importance of developing cultural

awareness. We worked through the sermons from May 26 2013 until August 25, 2013 in our Sunday Morning services. While the sermons were not a part of my research, they introduced the topic of developing relationships with our non-Christian neighbours. The series began on May 26, 2013 with the subject being “The Great Commandment Enhanced.” The sermon dealt with the need to create friendships with our non-Christian neighbours.

On June 2, 2013, I preached on “Hospitality” and used Matthew 9:13 as my text. Here Jesus goes to Mathew’s house and many sinners and tax collectors are invited to come and meet Jesus. I stressed that getting to know our neighbours is often best accomplished through developing hospitality (Rom. 15:7).

The series continued on June 9 2013, where I preached on “Jesus’ Mission Statement” (Luke 4:18-19). Here I focused in on Jesus’ incarnational ministry. I emphasized that the incarnational approach when ministering to our non-Christian neighbours is vital.

On June 30 2013, Pastor Elaine Tonn spoke on the subject “Hospitality 2.0”. Here Elaine addressed the practical side of hospitality (1 Peter 4:7-11). We are to offer hospitality to one another without grumbling, and maintain an attitude of kindness when welcoming guests. Hospitality draws people together and allows them to get to know one another. It is to be offered freely—without the expectation of payment and should be something that involves “thoughtfulness and a caring attitude.”

On July 14 2013, Pastor David Dwarka preached on the subject “The

Blessings We Are Unaware Of.” He spoke from Matt. 5:13-16 and described the church as the “Salt of the Earth.” In this historical context, salt was used for the preservation of food. The metaphor centered on the importance of Christians developing relationships with their non-Christian neighbours through our incarnational living. He also emphasized the metaphor of light. Light makes a difference to its surroundings, illuminating and dispelling darkness. We are called by God to be a spiritual light in a dark world.

On July 28, 2013 I spoke on the message was “Take Off Your Grave Clothes.” The text was John 11:1-44 with the raising of Lazarus. One of the things we can do is live incarnationally be a support for those who are broken in our community. Many in our community are spiritually dead. Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead, but first asked the people to roll away the tombstone. While God raises the spiritually dead we can be involved in the preparation process.

On August 11, 2013 I preached on the subject “Pursuing Cultural Intelligence”. It is important to learn the worldview of our non-Christian neighbours. In addition, on August 18<sup>th</sup> I preached a sermon entitled “Giving a Reason for your Faith” (1 Peter 3:15-17). I stated that if we build relationships with our non-Christian friends, there is a possibility they will ask us why we believe the way we do. We must be equipped to give a logical account to anyone who asks us for the hope that is in us. However, this must be done in a spirit of gentleness and reverence.

Finally, on August 25<sup>th</sup> Ray Edwards (one of my board members and the

Director of Braeside Pentecostal Camp) shared on “The Lost Coin and the Lost Sheep (Luke 15).” Our community is lost and God seeks out the lost. The focus of his sermon was God’s passion for our non-Christian neighbours.

### Ethical Principles

I also ensured that the project we handled ethically. The project was designed for the members and adherents of Cedarview Church. The focus of the project was the development and implementation of building friendships with our non-Christian neighbours. This project would be a normal part of ministry in any church environment. Using the A-I Model, we co-developed bridging strategies with our church members to learn how to develop ongoing personal relationships with the non-churched.

We ensured the preservation of confidentiality by not revealing the names of the participants. All of the data was shared in a collective form. We asked participants to sign a document in respect of confidentiality (Appendix A and B). We made certain that all the data was stored in a file or locked cabinet; or in a password protected file in my computer.

We made certain the data attended to “the respect for persons, the concern for welfare, and the concern for justice” (Canadian Institutes of Health Research et al. 2010, 8). When it came to consent, we followed the Canadian Institutes of Health Research et al. Tri-Council Policy and ensured the information was given voluntarily, and could be withdrawn at any time. We did not place undue pressure on people to participate and avoided influence and manipulation. We gave people

time to think about their willingness to contribute to the project.

We ensured there was no discrimination in research by not excluding people based on gender, ethnic background, or age (Canadian Institutes of Health Research et al. 2010, 51). The purpose for putting such safeguards in place was to allow all who wished to participate to be a part of the project without the potential to harm any participants.

My personal role was to facilitate the process and guide the discussions, without influencing the data. The risks to the participants were minimal, included the fear of moving out of our comfort zones to interact with seeker groups. For some, meeting new people and developing relationships was a stretch. However these risks were no different than the risks of everyday life, such as job situations, or similar scenarios, therefore, there was little danger to the participants.

Furthermore, some of the probable benefits of the research to the participants included developing skills in effectively developing relationships with others. It was helpful to take this step and move out of our comfort zones. We did not study non-Christians *per se*, but rather developed strategies of how to be open to building relationships with our all of our neighbors.

Everyone gave consent and permission for allowing us to use their input through the signed physical document. Consensus forms were reviewed, signed, and witnessed and were handed in to either Marie Teskey or David Dwarka (Cedarview staff) and filed. Every time we began a new phase, the newest participants signed the permission document.

## Exploration of Values and Desires of Six Collaborative Meetings

I developed questions for our collaborative meetings by using various templates of other corporations, those of (Cooperrider, Whitney and Stavros 2008, 229-380), and Appreciative Inquiry Commons (). I then re-worked these questions with Dr. Chapman (Assistant Professor of Research Methods and Assistant Director of the Doctor of Ministry Program) in order to apply them to Cedarview Church and our project.

The Cedarview members who participated in the A-I events included people involved in: Christian Education, Senior's Ministries, Worship Teams, Women's Ministries, Youth Ministries, Small Groups Ministries, Outreach Programs and our Church Board. Marie Teskey (the Children's Pastor) and David Dwarka (the Associate Pastor) administered the evenings and recorded any pertinent information in the form of minutes in their personal computers, and then sent the documents to me. Pastor Marie and Pastor David sent me the minutes of each collaborative meeting via email and it was placed into my password protected computer. These minutes were used in this chapter to help formulate the events that happened during the various phases.

The project-participants met in our Ministry Centre in small groups. Each small group table chose someone to document the information in the form of paper notes from the table discussions and conversations, including any corporate discussions. The data that came out of these meetings was retrieved at the end of the meeting and placed into locked filing cabinets. The project included six

collaborative meetings as well as a testimonial night. We had 57 different people involved as participants in the Cedarview-project. I determined that inclusivity was the best practice for the project, therefore we announced in the Worship Services that any who were interested could participate. In addition, I influenced our leadership to participate in board meetings and private conversations. There were four Project Phases that spanned over seven different meetings, including testimonial evening. Note the demographics of the participants:

**Table 4: Project Participants**

<u>NUMBER</u>	<u>AGE</u>	<u>DEMOGRAPHICS</u>	<u>MINISTRIES</u>
2	0-20	1 Male 1 Female	
8	20-40	1 Male 7 Female	Grief Coordinator Pastors Worship Leader Youth Worker
23	40-60	9 Male 14 Female	Board Members Celebrate Recovery Christian Education Food Bank Leader Hospitality Pastors Worship Team
24	60 and Over	11 Male 13 Female	Christian Education Evangelism Finance Committee Hospitality Men's Ministries Senior's Small Group Leader Visitation Leader

## Discovery Phase Meeting

The project began with the *Discovery Phase* meeting held on August 18, 2013, with an additional meeting held September 4, 2013 for those who could not make the initial meeting. Refreshments were provided. At the first meeting we had 30 people participate in the event, while the September 4 meeting had 14 individuals for a total of 44 contributors. In these meetings, we focused on Cedarview's history that has contributed to Cedarview's successes. We collectively reviewed the questions on the table to avoid any possible discrepancies. The participants talked in their groups and recorded their perspectives and the event ended at 8:45 pm. The demographics were as follows:

**Table 5: Discovery Phase Participants**

NUMBER	AGE	DEMOGRAPHICS	MINISTRIES
1	0-20	1 Male	
8	20-40	1 Male 7 Female	Celebrate Recovery Pastors Worship Leaders Youth Worker
15	40-60	6 Male 9 Female	Board Celebrate Recovery Christian Education Hospitality Pastors Sound Room Worship Team
20	60 and Up	10 Male 10 Female	Christian Education Evangelism Finance Committee Hospitality Senior's Small Group Leader Teaching Visitation

People divided into small groups and each group discussed four sets of questions. We began the process by asking initial questions pertaining to our geographic context. I was interested in discovering why the participants had come to this community, and what has kept them in the community. We also asked the people to define what they perceived to be the most significant trends shaping the future of this area. I asked these questions in order to develop a healthy understanding of why the participants appreciated this community, or why not. This would assist us in understanding the cultural context of the participants.

I asked questions pertaining to what the participant felt had given life to Cedarview Church. The questions began with: "What attracted you to Cedarview?" This would help us understand what made people feel welcome at our church. I then asked the participants to define the three most important qualities of Cedarview. A similar question was then posed to define what they perceived were the three most important strengths of the church. These questions would help us understand the valued giftings and talents in the church. Then we asked questions pertaining to how the church has contributed to the life of the participants. These results would give insight as to whether or not the project participants felt valued at Cedarview Church.

I then inquired into some personal involvement questions. I was interested in discovering which ministries the participants were currently involved with, why they were involved, and what they found meaningful in these ministries. I was interested in discovering if the participants cherished serving in the church. If we were going to develop relationships with our non-Christian neighbours, I

needed to know if there was a willingness to serve personally in this type of endeavor.

Finally I asked some topic questions including asking for the most powerful story the project participants ever heard regarding Christians developing relationships with those who did not know Christ. I asked the participants if they were involved in the process, and if yes, what their role was. I also asked if there were a Cedarview story that came to their minds regarding Christians at Cedarview developing relationships with those who did not know Christ. I was interested in discovering how the participants viewed evangelism, and in particular, how they viewed developing relationships with non-Christian neighbours.

### **Dream Phase Meeting**

Our *Dream Phase* meeting took place on Sunday September 15 at 6:00 p.m. I did a devotional from I Cor. 9, and a project participant opened in prayer. We focused on dreaming what could be. There were 27 in attendance including 5 new people. There were three new ladies and two new men. The ladies' ages of the ladies were two "(40 to 60)", and one "(60 and older)". Two of the new ladies were involved in Christian Education Ministries, and one of them is involved in the Worship Team. The ages of the two new men were both "(40 to 60)". One of the new men was on my board. I reviewed the "Dream Questions" and then visited at each table, engaging and reviewing their notes and offering assistance and encouragement. The tables were in continuous conversation. The meeting

ended at 7:05 pm and I thanked everyone for their participation and prayed for them. The demographics were as follows:

**Table 6: Dream Phase Participants**

<u>NUMBER</u>	<u>AGE</u>	<u>DEMOGRAPHICS</u>	<u>MINISTRIES</u>
0	0-20	0	0
3	20-40	0 Male 3 Female	Celebrate Recovery Grief Group Pastor
10	40-60	4 Male 6 Female	Board Members Christian Education Pastors Worship Team
14	60 and Up	6 Male 8 Female	Christian Education Evangelism Finance Committee Hospitality Senior's Small Group Leader Visitation

The questionnaire began by summarizing the *Discovery Phase*, and then the groups were challenged to envision and dream a preferred future. I told the participants to dream that they were entering Cedarview Church in 2016. “Seeing a panoramic view, you are moved and proud in a heartfelt way. It is the kind of Cedarview Church community you want to be part of—one that is living God’s call in fresh, vibrant, meaningful and powerful ways.” I asked the groups to share highlights of what they see in this vision that is vital and good. What is new, different or better? What things involve our greatest potential? I asked them to share from two perspectives, from a non-Christian’s point of view, as well as

from a Cedarview Church member's and not to worry about risk factors (e.g. financial restraints)—they were to dream anything. I asked them to wrestle with their sense of what God is calling us to do as a church in the future. I asked if you could change or develop Cedarview Church in any way to unleash her potential, what that would look like. “What is God calling us to become?” At the end of the session I thanked everyone for coming and prayed before we were dismissed.

I used this data to implement my first-phase key-words coding. Then I met with the pastoral staff in a meeting on September 29, 2013 at 9:00 am and collaboratively decided which of the codes were most valuable for us to discuss in the *Design Phase*. We could not list every desire, but needed a committee to 'short-list' the topics. We did not categorize the codes by popularity, but in terms of what would be most helpful for our church. Some of the key words included “Children,” “Evangelism,” “Mentoring,” and “Using our Gifts.” Other topics included “Renovation programs,” Youth Ministry,” “Transportation,” “Providing Community Services,” Concerts,” “Facilities,” “Revivals,” and “Hospitality.” We decided we would focus on the following topics at the *Design Meeting* for further development: Mentoring; Hospitality; Revival; Providing Community Services; Facility. It must be noted that although we asked the participants to focus on these terms in the *Design Phase*, the project-participants expanded the discussion.

## Design Phase Meetings

Our next collaborative meeting that took place with our project-participants was the “*Design Phase*” meeting which took place over two Sundays - September 29 and October 6, 2013 at 6 p.m. One of the participants opened in prayer. In our first meeting we had 24 people. We had 3 new people at our including 1 person “40-60” who worked in Christian Education) and two people “60 and up”. We worked together as a unit at this event (as opposed to small groups) in order to ensure cohesion. The demographics are represented in Table 7:

**Table 7: September 29<sup>th</sup> Design Phase Participants**

NUMBER	AGE	DEMOGRAPHICS	MINISTRIES
0	0-20	0	0
1	20-40	0 Male 1 Female	Pastor
7	40-60	4 Male 3 Female	Board Members Christian Education Pastors Worship Team Leader
16	60 and Up	5 Male 11 Female	Christian Education Evangelism Finance Committee Hospitality Outreach Coordinator Senior’s Small Group Leader

At our second meeting (October 6), we had the following participants: (see Table 8).

I defined “coding” and explained how the pastoral team came up with the list of five Key Terms following the *Dream Phase* meeting. We then

collaboratively designed our preferred future. I did not ask the participants to work in groups, as that would hinder a unified focus. In this session we worked as a unit and asked the project-participants to select the ideas they would be most enthusiastic to endorse, and challenged them to 'push the envelope' and develop something innovating and exciting. We emphasized that recommendations had to be rooted in Cedarview's collective history—because we are building on the positive foundation of who we are and asked them to describe characteristics in our culture which may have an impact on the effectiveness of this project.

**Table 8: October 6<sup>th</sup> Design Phase Participants**

NUMBER	AGE	DEMOGRAPHICS	MINISTRIES
0	0-20	0	0
2	20-40	0 Male 2 Female	Grief Group Pastor
7	40-60	5 Male 2 Female	Board Members Christian Education Pastors Sound Room Worship Team
15	60 and Over	10 Male 7 Female	Christian Education Finance Committee Hospitality Outreach Senior's Teaching Visitation

I asked which human resources would reflect our core values. We developed the following list of core values: that we continue to be supportive of the PAOC (Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada) statement of faith; that we

continue to inspire each other to live for God; that we continue to emphasize prayer; that we be a loving church; that we continue to be a church that emphasizes salvation; that we continue to highlight ministry to our community; that we continue to support missions; that we continue to be a church that continues to care for children; that we continue to be a church that responds to crisis issues; that we continue to be a church that is accepting of newcomers; that we continue to be a church that develops new ministries; that we continue to support our Drop-In Center; that we continue to be a church that helps refugees; that we continue to be a church that supports the sanctity of marriage; that we continue to be a church that supports the sanctity of life; and that we continue to promote benevolence. Then I asked the group which of the recommendations listed would they be most enthusiastic to support, and which of these recommendations would help us best intergenerationally. Finally I asked the group to write out a story of how this project is impacting them.

As we worked through the project I avoided solving problems. This project did not use a top-down approach, but rather a collaborative one. My personal goals included encouraging emerging developments, and allowing participants to develop their own plans and structures to developing friendships with non-Christian neighbors. Therefore I did not pursue personal, clear, detailed plans or goals.

Following lengthy deliberation we decided on participating in a short-term project that would include engaging a non-churched person or groups on a social level. We asked everyone to document the event and reemphasized the

importance of maintaining a spiritual focus without being judgmental. We decided to reconvene at the end of the month to hear some of our stories and testimonials.

In regards to the discussion at the *Design Phase*, hospitality became the key emphasis. We began to investigate what hospitality would look like, and how were we going to 'do hospitality'. Our discussion became centered on “what will we do at Cedarview that will make us hospitable to our non-Christian neighbours?” We challenged each other that we needed to avoid any forms of judgementalism. We stated that it was important not to label those around us. We also mentioned that some of our neighbours may have personal struggles. We discussed avoiding compromising situations when trying to reach out to others and emphasized that the goal of hospitality must be to build trust with each other. It was also stressed that our homes must be safe places for the neighbours. Hospitality is not a quick-fix event, but must be practiced on a continuous basis. We decided to invite a non Christian ('seeker, sinner or tax collector') to our home and to record the results, whether they came, or rejected our invitations. On October 27 we were to reconvene for the testimonial evening. I asked one of the participants to close in prayer. The meeting ended at 7:10 pm.

### **Testimony Meeting**

On October 27 at 6 PM we came together to share with the group our individual stories of hospitality with our non-Christian neighbours. The demographics were as follows (Table 9):

**Table 9: Testimonials:**

NUMBER	AGE	DEMOGRAPHICS	MINISTRIES
0	0-20	0	0
0	20-40	0 Male 0 Female	0
7	40-60	3 Male 4 Female	Board Member Christian Education Pastors Worship Team
13	60 and Over	5 Male 8 Female	Christian Education Evangelism Finance Committee Hospitality Senior's Teaching Ministry

We opened in prayer, and then the participants shared their stories and documented their experiences of having engaged a non-Christian neighbour. Some of the participants who were unable to attend this evening gave me their stories at a later date. Seventeen people participated in this testimonial evening, and I received 19 stories in total. I collected the stories and filed them away. This event was a practical way to develop a relationship with our non-Christian friends. For many it became a positive experience, a type of “breaking the ice” for a new paradigm in the lives of the project-participants.

### **Destiny Phase Meeting**

The *Destiny Phase* was the final phase which dealt with ensuring that we would continue to build relationships with our non-Christian neighbours after the project was completed. The meeting began at 6 p.m. on November 10, 2013. We

had one additional participant—a female student. We shared Chinese food then met in small groups. The demographics were as follows (Table 10):

Table 10: Destiny Phase Participants:

<u>NUMBER</u>	<u>AGE</u>	<u>DEMOGRAPHICS</u>	<u>MINISTRIES</u>
1	0-20	1 Male	0
1	20-40	0 Male 1 Female	Pastor
8	40-60	5 Male 3 Female	Board Members Christian Education Pastors Sound Room Coordinator Worship Team Members
18	60 and Up	7 Male 11 Female	Christian Education Evangelism Finance Committee Hospitality Senior's

This is the sustaining or accountability phase. We talked about ensuring that our church would continue to place a high priority on developing relationships with non-Christian neighbours in the future.

I asked what we have learned from the project experience. What things stand out as priorities? How will we continue to apply this learning to our future daily interactions with others? How will we informally communicate these principles to those we meet? What must we adjust or improvise in order to continue changed behavior?

The small groups reviewed their ideas and I visited each table to

encourage them and answer any questions. At the end of the evening we had an “open mike” time following the group discussions. One of the suggestions was that we should hold an annual meeting to evaluate what is effective in our church in ministering to our non-Christian neighbours, and what might need to be changed. We discussed our discipleship-focused ministries, and our outreach-focused ministries, and the need for both. We decided it would be good to review our ministry efforts annually. We also discussed that this should be collaborative in nature as well. The response (from one of the leaders in the church) was that leadership does not have to come from a select group of people, and that these evaluations should include volunteers as well as leaders.

We also discussed the need to communicate the need for building relationships with our non-Christian neighbours by leading through example. In addition, it was emphasized that prayer and the direction of the Holy Spirit is paramount in trying to develop relationships with our non-Christian neighbours. We need to ask God to reveal to us the needs of the non-Christian neighbours we will encounter on a daily basis. Then, following prayer, we need to do our best and make the opportunity to build relationships with our non-Christian neighbours.

At the end of the meeting I thanked all for participating in this project and mentioned we will be reviewing their ideas and hopefully use them to make a positive impact on our church and in our community. One of my board members closed off the event in prayer at 7:30 pm.

## Project Presentation

I also hosted a presentation for the project on August 7, 2013. There were 28 participants whom I had personally invited. The demographics of the participants were as follows (Table 11):

**Table 11: Project Presentation Participants:**

NUMBER	DEMOGRAPHICS	MINISTRIES REPRESENTED
28	18 Male 10 Female	Cedarview Board Cedarview Ministry Leaders Denominational Leader Pastors Professors Therapist

Dr. David Russell gave some opening remarks. He explained his position with Tyndale, and that he has been involved in my program for the past three years. Dr. Russell introduced his fellow Tyndale staff, Dr. Paul Bramer and Dr. David Sherbino. He then reviewed the general idea of my doctoral project report.

Following an opening prayer, I gave remarks and thanked all for taking the time to participate in the day's events. I shared some stories of how God had helped Cedarview develop friendships with our non-Christian neighbours, and how today, they are a part of our church family. I gave a PowerPoint presentation of what the project was about, as well as some of the results, under the title of "Becoming a Missional Church: Encouraging members of Cedarview Church in Paris Ontario to Develop Friendships with their non-Christian Neighbors." The PowerPoint overview projected the number of children we have in our programs,

as well as how many are from our church, other churches, and non-churched backgrounds. In addition, the participants from Neighbourhood Friends were highlighted, which included those at the monthly suppers and the Christmas Dinner. We also reviewed the number of people we have been serving at our Food Bank.

I then outlined the purpose of the project and gave some of my personal observations as to why I thought the project was important. Although we were running programs for our non-Christian friends, our church did not always seem to interact with our non-Christian community. We provided programs for our non-Christian community, but as I stated previously we avoided building relationships with this group. I highlighted some of my theological rationale for developing relationships for our non-Christian neighbours. I began by stating the importance of living incarnationally among our non-Christian neighbours.

I also explained the process of the project—that there had been an initial preaching series to introduce the topic of building relationships with our non-Christian neighbours to our church. I then explained the methodology we used for the project. A chart of how A-I works was displayed. We then looked at the knowledge gained and lessons learned from the project. Overall data from all of the results of the project was demonstrated, along with the *Discovery Phase* results (which will be highlighted in the following chapter). We examined the *Dream Phase* results (also in the following chapter), and moved on to the Design-Phase results (following chapter). We looked at the *Destiny-Phase* results (following chapter) and I concluded by outlining Cedarview's Board response to

the project (will be outlined shortly in this chapter).

Some of the questions pertained to the spiritual conditions of the project-participants. I explained that the majority of the people who participated were leaders and have a passion for evangelism. However, three of the participants were new believers from our Grief Group. I explained that the project was inclusive, and we had participants from a wide age range. There were questions pertaining to what did we learn from the project. There was interaction from the actual project-participants who indicated a positive outcome of the project. It has built self-awareness and there is a greater sensitivity now in the church for developing relationships with our non-Christian neighbours. Some also stated that they have seen change in the church; people not only socializing in their own groups, but coming early to participate in the pre-service café in our foyer. People are interacting on a higher level.

There were additional questions pertaining to the data; the methodology with the numbers; the way I came to these conclusions and, in each process, did I see consistency in my numbers. There was some concern if the questions were leading or influencing questions. I explained that Dr. Mark Chapman and I created the questionnaires for each phase. I read a set of questions from the Discovery Phase. Dr. Paul Bramer emphasized that my questions were not leading ones but that they were strong and helpful questions.

There was a question regarding the word “revivalistic” which came out of the data (this will be explained later on)—whether or not people used the word, or did I use the word. I explained that the word revivalistic did not come up, but

revival did. I coded the word “revivalistic”, which precipitated questions about “revival.” A response from one of the participants was that she was at the table when the term revival was used. Their dream was to see more people coming to the altar, praying, and seeing salvations and baptisms.

In addition, Dr. Russell brought out a good point; he perceived the project was moving towards encouraging people of the church to build more relationships with their unchurched friends. He saw the focus becoming one of inward change, as opposed to being missional. One must have an incarnational focus before one can be missional.

Furthermore, one of the Project Presentation participants stated that she appreciated the inclusivity of the project. There was some difficulty in determining the goal of the project—whether or not we are to be more missional as a result of the project. We began to speak to the point that “incarnational” may be a better word than missional, that the project was addressing inward change more than anything else. Dr. Bramer stated that perhaps these are good questions to wrestle with for the next steps in the church.

There was an additional inquiry of how the board would be using the information in the future. I responded by stating that the board is using the data to focus on building on the four statements: Hospitality, Relevant Programs, Serving Church, and Self Awareness when ministering to the non-churched. We will be pro-active in training congregants in the future by employing a spiritual giftings test and training in the four areas.

There were further questions surrounding the long-term effects of the

project, including what the project participants have discovered about people outside the church that will help us develop friendships with our non-Christian neighbours. One of the project participants responded that the efforts need to be ongoing. Another stated that these relationships need to be built on authentic interest and care. We need to be Christians, and not just to try to make non-Christians into Christians. Another stated that he was challenged with the title of this project report. We are not missional churches. We have become something else. We need to get Christians who are inside this building to be aware of forming relationships with non-Christians, and to dare to set out on this journey. He stated that it helped him realize the strength of this project.

An additional set of questions about the project included questions pertaining to calling—are we hearing God speaking through the project, and are people accepting their calling through the project? The project-presentation proved to be helpful in clarifying a number of things for me personally. I began to realize that the project was about being transformed in our thinking and becoming incarnational more than anything else. Dr. Russell closed the event in prayer at 8:37 pm—and I asked for everyone’s input by handing in our evaluations.

#### How I Was Influenced by My Methodology

The goal of this project was for members of Cedarview Church to develop friendships with non-Christian neighbors. We used the *Appreciative-Inquiry A-I Model* as an organizer to assist me in the project. My use of AI was somewhat different from the norm as there was a strong preaching emphasis on developing

relationships with our non-Christian neighbours. It set the stage in a strong way for the topic. I was influenced by the 4-D's because of the qualities the four phases exhibit. I will outline them as follows:

In A-I the first cycle is the *Discovery Phase*. Here we examined the DNA of the church. I appreciated the positive focus in the group meetings. This was enhanced by the positive questions that were used for the Discovery Phase which allowed everyone to describe how they viewed Cedarview Church. It demonstrated what our project participants valued as being important and gave insight as to what the congregation was thinking. This was not a project about “we need to change and do things differently.” What I appreciated about the *Discovery Phase* is that it values the good things that have made the church what she is. The positive component was a helpful tool in unearthing what has been valuable at Cedarview Church in the past:

The list of positive or affirmative topics for *Discovery* is endless: high quality, integrity, empowerment, innovation... team spirit, best in class, and so on. In each case, the task is to discover the positive exceptions, successes, and most vital or alive moments. Discovery involves valuing those things that are worth valuing....As part of the *Discovery* process, individuals engage in dialogue and meaning-making. This is simply the open sharing of discoveries and possibilities. (Cooperrider, Whitney, and Stavros 2008, 6)

Then we moved from *Discovery* to *Dream Phase*. Here we dreamed or envisioned what might be. The *Dream* step spoke to the dreams people envisioned regarding the future of Cedarview. I have often preached that God gives a personal vision to every believer. What I appreciated about the *Dream Phase* is that we were allowed to listen personally to what God was telling us, and then incorporate it

into a group setting. By building on the positive experiences of the past (referenced in the Discovery Phase) we began to envision and develop hopes and dreams for our collective future (Cooperrider and Whitney 2005, 27). This became helpful information for me in knowing how our people were sensing God's voice in their lives

Next we moved to the *Design Phase*. Collectively we co-developed bridging strategies for engaging our non-churched neighbors. I was excited to experience the Project Participants sharing their collective creativity for change in our groups. Cooperrider and Whitney write:

In the Design stage, participants work to determine “what will be”, by discovering innovative ways to bring about the closest possible approximation (under the circumstances) of the image of “what could be” that they developed in the Dream stage. It is at this stage in a development scenario, that collaboration and cooperation may face their biggest challenges in the effort to balance the rights and wishes of all parties. (Accessed September 7 2013)

Finally we met for the *Destiny Phase*. Here we strategized on how to keep the momentum going in the future. Here we will build upon the model that we have already built. This phase ensured that we will continue to connect over time, that the project does not lose any momentum:

What is needed, as the destiny phase of A-I indicates, are the network-like structures that liberate not only the daily search into qualities and elements of an organizational positive core but the establishment of a convergence zone for people to empower one another—to connect, cooperate, and co-create. Changes never thought possible are suddenly and democratically mobilized when people constructively appropriate the power of the positive core and simply *let go* of negative accounts. (Cooperrider and Whitney 2005, 35)

I appreciated this phase—as it gave us accountability for the future. The

destiny phase will continue to help move the project forward. It built components that will help maintain the success of the project. I was very happy with the collective approach of A-I and am using it in other ministries in the church. It involves the church community in the process of change which appears extremely beneficial to the life of the church.

### **Data: Sources, Collection, and Analysis**

All of the statements about the qualities of the church were internal perceptions by the Project Participants. I began to organize the responses from the data from each 4-D (Discovery, Dream, Design, and Destiny) phase. This also revealed any change of behaviour that occurred from one phase to the next. I perceived to work through all of the data and to code the data using Saldana's which I will mention later. In Chapter 5 I will give reasons as to why I chose the category headings in each phase. I worked through the rough drafts at first on paper, and then revised the data several times. In some of my first level coding work I began to discover thematic patterns. I reorganized the patterns in the Second Level Coding and came up with a number of categories.

It must be noted that there were multiple messages in all of the data, including, in some cases, multiple messages within a single sentence. The data was recorded as responses to the 4-D questions, and often took on a narrative approach. It was out of these responses that my data was interpreted. When it came to interpreting the data, some of the inferences I concluded are reasonable but not necessarily the only interpretations. Finally, I also combined

themes and collapsed them in what I perceived to be a common thematic statement.

As mentioned previously, I used Saldana's work for analyzing the data (Saldana 2013, 88-91; 207-213) and began by looking for topics, primarily nouns describing what appeared to be stated in sentences. All the statements about the qualities of the church are internal perceptions. My questions involved what the people were attempting to say. From there topics were categorized into a tabulated account. The Second Cycle of Coding provided for additional interpretation. The narrative surrounding the topic was added and themes and patterns were grouped together. The major themes were centered around causes and explanations for the data (Saldana 2013, 210). This began to give formation of major themes, patterns of action, and a theoretical construct of the data (Saldana 2013, 212). "Focused Coding" began in the Second Cycle, to develop the "most salient categories" (Saldana 2013, 213). Themes were developed from the coding that is represented in this project report.

### **Discovery Phase Coding**

In the *Discovery Phase* coding I observed the following occurrence statements related to the theme:

#### **Outreach**

I developed the following category (68 Responses) by combining and collapsing the following responses into "Community Outreach":

**Table 12: Community Outreach:**

1. Positive Testimonials.....	32 Responses
2. Community mindedness .....	10 Responses
3. KidVenture .....	8 Responses
4. Neighbourhood Friends/ICE.....	6 Responses
5. Food Bank.....	4 Responses
6. Celebrate Recovery.....	3 Responses
7. VBS.....	3 Responses
8. Willingness to cooperate with other churches in outreach .....	1 Response
9. Pregnancy Center .....	1 Response

This data suggests three clusters of responses. The first cluster (# 1) or responses was superior to all other categories, as people stated that there are positive testimonials regarding Cedarview Church. Some of the responses related back to the Destiny Question, “What CEC story comes to your mind regarding Christians at CEC developing relationships with those who do not know Christ?”

The next cluster (# 2 to #4) that follows behind the initial cluster of positive testimonials is that we are known for being “community minded.” Our church is community-minded—caring about ministering and caring for the community. In addition, our church is concerned about missions both in our community and globally. The project participants also stated that KidVenture is a priority in our church. Furthermore, the data stated that Neighbourhood Friends is our ministry dedicated to our community—including the community dinners and involvement in Christmas Parades. This particular cluster suggests there is a high value laid on the ministries we organize for both our non-Christian and Christian community.

The final cluster states that our church is recognized for serving our community through our Food Bank. Our church is also acknowledged as helping

the marginalized. In this cluster our Celebrate Recovery ministry is mentioned, which supports people with addictions. Included in this cluster is VBS, which is an outreach-focused ministry. In addition, we are acknowledged for cooperating with other churches in outreach events. Cedarview is known for supporting our local Crisis Pregnancy Centre. These were the *Discovery Phase* responses by the project participants in identifying “Community Outreach” as a priority in the history of Cedarview Church.

### Spiritual Fellowship

I developed this category (54 Responses) and collapsed the following responses into “Spiritual Fellowship”:

**Table 13: Spiritual Fellowship:**

1. Family Atmosphere .....	13 Responses
2. Deep Concern for One Another .....	10 Responses
3. People Being “Available” for others .....	7 Responses
4. Non-Judgmental (Acceptance) .....	6 Responses
5. Fellowship.....	6 Responses
6. Café.....	3 Responses
7. Church Maintains a “Small Church Feel” .....	2 Responses
8. Focus on Hospitality by the Church Community .....	2 Responses
9. Pastors lead in this area—spiritual fellowship and transparency	2 Responses
10. Door Greeters.....	1 Response
11. Relationship Emphasis.....	1 Response
12. Belonging.....	1 Response

This data also suggests three layers of responses. The first (# 1 and #2) zeroes in on Cedarview being a church that has a family atmosphere, and has a deep concern for one another. Our church is known to maintain a family atmosphere where people care for each other as “family.” There is also a deep concern for one another - to help in times of crisis. What I found interesting with

this cluster-grouping is that it emphasized relationships within Cedarview Church, as opposed to the community. My interpretation of these results suggests that Cedarview focused on their own church family when it came to relationships.

The next cluster (# 3 to # 5) was also interesting. While there was an inference that Cedarview Church was known to be “available for others,” and that fellowship was important, there was a response that our church was accepting and non-judgmental. There was a segment of new Christians present at the Discovery Meeting who may have interpreted our church as being non-judgmental.

The final cluster includes the café; the “small church feel,” the focus on hospitality, and the pastors who lead in emphasizing spiritual fellowship and transparency. This cluster also suggests that the focus was on the church family, as opposed to the community. This data helped me understand that although we were running programs for the non-Christian community, we were not interacting with this non-Christian community.

### Volunteers are Especially Dedicated

I developed this category and collapsed the following responses into “Volunteers are Especially Dedicated”. There were 49 responses in this category.

**Table 14: Dedicated Volunteers:**

1. Our Church is Encouraged to Walk in our Giftings and Calling...	15 Responses
2. Providing Ministry .....	14 Responses
3. Fulfillment in Serving.....	6 Responses
4. Experiencing God through Serving .....	6 Responses
5. Seeing a need and filling it .....	2 Responses
6. Being Available .....	2 Responses
7. Developing Friendships in Serving .....	2 Responses
8. Opportunities for Creative Leadership .....	1 Response
9. Our church is a place to serve.....	1 Response

I observed three clusters of data in this category. The first one (# 1 and # 2) was that our church is encouraged to walk in her giftings and callings, and in so doing providing ministry. This is the “service” side of the dedicated volunteers. I perceived this to mean this includes some of our ministry obligations to God. The responses indicate that our church is encouraged to walk in her giftings and calling. If we have a gift or a calling, the leadership encourages people to use their gifts. It is a church that provides ministry both inwardly and outwardly.

The next cluster (# 3 and # 4) suggests that people feel fulfilled in using their ministry gifts at Cedarview and sense God’s closeness as they serve. This suggests a spiritual benefit when it comes to serving. It suggests that a personal spiritual need is met as we serve.

The final cluster states that some serve because they see a need—which depicts a servant’s heart. Some are just available for God’s usage. People have found that they have developed friendships while serving. There is openness to creative leadership at Cedarview. Cedarview is a place where one can serve—a place where serving is emphasized and appreciated.

## Appreciation for Children’s Ministries

I developed this category (40 Responses) and collapsed the following responses into “Children’s Ministries”:

**Table 15: Children’s Ministries:**

1. Cedarview has a Focus on Ministry to Children .....	10 Responses
2. Sunday School Emphasis .....	9 Responses
3. KidVenture .....	8 Responses
4. VBS .....	5 Responses
5. Christmas Musical .....	3 Responses
6. Real Deal .....	2 Responses
7. Beginner Bible Ministry .....	2 Responses
8. Nursery .....	1 Responses

I perceived two cluster groups when it came to Children’s Ministries. The first group (# 1 to #5) stated that Cedarview church is known for her special ministry focus on children. Sunday School is valued at Cedarview. Cedarview also emphasizes outreach ministries to the children of our community, such as KidVenture and VBS (Vacation Bible School). What I found intriguing here is that there are two emphasis in this cluster—the ministry to our church family (Sunday School) and the ministry to our community (Kidventure and VBS). The project-participants acknowledged that both were important.

The same pattern continued in the next cluster. Our annual Christmas Musical draws hundreds of people, many from the community. This is an emphasis to our community. The other mentioned ministries are primarily focused on our church family. Real Deal (ages 6-11) is a ministry that runs during our service for our Cedarview children. Beginner Bible Church runs simultaneously for children (ages 3-5) and is focused on helping our toddlers learn about Christ.

Our nursery is well monitored with safety mechanisms for all mothers who leave our children in church. There are testimonials to the positive effect of children’s ministry at Cedarview. I also added additional responses:

The “other” category continues to suggest a focus on Cedarview church, as opposed to our non-Christian neighbours. I find three main clusters in this group. The first cluster (# 1 and # 2) includes an emphasis on discipleship. I doubled up on some of these categories, especially when it came to the ministry of our children and youth. The ministry to our children and youth did not just have an outreach component, but included a discipleship focus. Other ministries such as Celebrate Recovery include a discipleship perspective. This strong “us mentality” is also seen in the project-participants emphasizing Cedarview

**Table 16: Additional Discovery Responses:**

Discipleship Priority .....	35 Responses
Community PAOC Church.....	27 Responses
Appreciation for Pastoral Staff.....	14 Responses
Appreciation for our focus on Youth.....	12 Responses
Appreciation for Prayer .....	11 Responses
Appreciation for Small Groups.....	11 Responses
Facilities.....	10 Responses
Appreciation for Leadership .....	6 Responses
Appreciation for Music at Cedarview.....	6 Responses
Appreciation for Global Missions .....	6 Responses
Appreciation for Women’s Ministries .....	4 Responses
Appreciation for the Family Focus .....	2 Responses
Appreciation for Senior’s Ministries .....	2 Responses
Appreciation for Men’s Minstries .....	2 Responses
Appreciation for the Door Greeters .....	2 Responses
Appreciation for Church Maintenance .....	1 Response
Appreciation for Visitation.....	1 Response
Appreciation for the Church Library .....	1 Response
Appreciation for Communion.....	1 Response

Church as being a Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada (PAOC) church. This is often a traditional concept whereby it matters to some that our church is part of a fellowship/denomination. It has become my experience that this is less important to non-Christians.

The next cluster (# 3 to # 7) includes an appreciation for the pastoral staff, our youth ministry, for prayer, for small groups as well as our facilities. As I examined the data, this information seems to favour our church family. The final cluster gives a variation of information. There is an appreciation for the leadership of our church (internal [Cedarview Church focused]); as well as our music program (internal); for Women's Ministries (internal); for our family focus (primarily internal); for Senior's ministries (primarily internal); for men's ministries (primarily internal); for church maintenance (internal); for visitation (primarily internal); for our Church Library (internal) and for communion (internal). However there is also an appreciation for Door Greeters (could be internal or external). In addition there was a strong appreciation for global missions (external), which has been traditionally emphasized in our church, but often at the expense of being incarnational in our community.

In this data I continued to observe an emphasis on the Cedarview Church Family. Although there was some movement away from the church family through the reporting on missions, I perceived the overall perspective to be internally focused. I will summarize these responses in more detail in the following chapter.

From the Discovery Phase we moved to the Dream Phase.

## Dream Phase Coding

In the *Dream Phase* coding I observed the following occurrence statements related to the theme:

### Acceptance and Hospitality

I combined themes and collapsed the following responses into the category “Acceptance and Hospitality (30 Responses):

**Table 17: Acceptance and Hospitality:**

FollowUp of People .....	16 Responses
Acceptance of all .....	5 Responses
Having people over for meals.....	4 responses
Ministering to the sick .....	3 responses
Pursuing new people.....	1 response
Door Greeters.....	1 response

In this section I perceived three clusters. The first cluster (#1) includes the follow-up of all people. This may be indicative that people have been absorbing the sermon content. In the Dream Phase no one is left out—people will notice when others are missing, and intrinsically follow-up on everyone

The next cluster (#2 to #4) suggests that our church is accepting of all, we have people over for meals, and minister to the sick. A reasonable conclusion, although not absolutely conclusive, is that the information presented here came from some of our newer Christians, many of whom came to the Lord through our Grief Program. I perceived this data as welcoming news in that it meant that people were taking seriously the importance of ministering to our non-Christian neighbours, while at the same time not neglecting the needs of our church family.

The final cluster included the importance of pursuing new people and having “Door Greeters”. When it comes to the “Door Greeter,” in all probability this was documented by a traditionalist because the ministry of “Door Greeting” was eliminated as a Cedarview ministry several years ago. The café replaced “Door Greeting” as the relationship building segment of our church (which runs prior to the service). It could be that the person who responded in this way appreciated the “Door Greeting.” Perhaps this could be explored in a deeper way in the future.

### Being Revivalistic

I combined and collapsed the following responses (22 Responses) into the category “Being Revivalistic.” Although the word “revivalistic was not used, the term “revival” was. I interpreted from the data that the project-participants were dreaming of a “revivalistic” church emphasizing the supernatural and conversions.

**Table 18: Being Revivalistic:**

1. The Supernatural Happening .....	8 responses
2. Prayer involving various ages.....	4 responses
3. Revival Happening (Conversion in the midst of worship services)	4 responses
4. People worshipping .....	3 responses
5. More involvement with People Praying Together.....	1 response
6. People praying at the altars.....	1 response
7. Fasting.....	1 response

In this grouping I perceive three clusters. The first one (#1) indicates that the supernatural is happening. As I observed the data, it was my opinion that the strong responses were inclusive of both the older and younger generations. The

older generation recalls our church as being part of a past movement that highly emphasized the miraculous and the operation of spiritual gifts. On the other hand, the younger generation wishes to see more of an experiential/ incarnational theology.

The next cluster (#2 to #4) indicates people from all age brackets are praying. There is actual conversion to Christ in the middle of the worship services. The people are passionately worshipping. The final cluster (# 5 to # 7) indicates that people are praying together, including at the altar (front of the church). People are spending time withdrawing from food in prayer.

What I perceive from the data is that as people are involved in prayerful intercession, God is responding to the prayers of the people. He responds in a variety of ways, but all based on the supernatural. In addition, there may be a need for a theological discussion on this matter. Some may think that if we pray and do good works, then God will answer us. The struggle that I have is this may detract from God's sovereignty. This may lend to having a further discussion of exploring whether or not revival can just happen, or can we take steps to please God and allow God to respond to us. Nevertheless, the people see a church where the supernatural is happening.

#### Increased Attendance

I combined and collapsed the following responses into the following category of "Increased Attendance" (16 Responses):

**Table 19: Increased Attendance:**

1. Video/Computer/Satellite services .....	3 responses
2. Increased number of seekers coming out.....	3 responses
3. Increased membership and people.....	2 responses
4. More Pastors .....	1 response
5. Sunday night Service .....	1 response
6. Transportation assistance to bring new people to church.....	1 response
7. Youth Concerts .....	1 response
8. 1000 people attending.....	1 response
9. A full sanctuary .....	1 response
10. Muslims being converted.....	1 response
11. 400 children coming out in different daily children's programs .....	1 response

The project participants gave the following responses. In this church attendance is increasing. One of the things I caution from the data is that attendance can often increase, but that is not always reflective of discipleship. In addition, some churches grow at the expense of other churches. Nevertheless the participants dreamed about a church where the attendance is on the rise. There are video-linked satellite services. There is an increased number of non-Christians coming out to the worship services. Membership is on the rise. New pastors are being hired. There is an additional Sunday Night Service. There is a transportation service bringing new people to church. There are Youth Concerts happening. The church has hit an attendance of 1000 people. There is a full sanctuary of believers. Muslims are being converted. This may be in response to the Muslims that have actually attended Cedarview on a Sunday Morning Worship service, invited by one of our missionaries who is part of Pioneer international. In addition, 400 children are coming out in difference daily children's programs.

## Outreach is Increasing

I combined and collapsed the following responses into the category

“Outreach is Increasing” (14 responses):

**Table 20: Outreach is Increasing:**

1. Ministering to the needs of seekers .....	4 responses
2. The facility is being used 7 days per week .....	2 responses
3. Cedarview people connect with the unchurched community .....	2 responses
4. Children are being ministered to.....	2 responses
5. Alpha Program is running.....	2 responses
6. Sending out Missional Teams into the community .....	1 response
7. Muslims are being converted.....	1 response

The project participants gave the following responses. Our church is ministering to the personal needs of non-Christians. The facility is being used seven days per week, including non-churched entities (currently we allow public use of schools, quilt sales, elections, weddings and funerals in our facility). Cedarview is actively connecting with the non-churched community. The emphasis still included ministering to children; however Alpha is being used to address the spiritual needs of adults. (It might be interesting to note that we had a good response of Alpha in our past church [Aurora; where we had two Alpha groups], but I found that it was a struggle for Alpha to run at Cedarview. In my opinion it is because we are a different demographic. What succeeded in people experiencing God at Cedarview were people who participated in our ministries such as Kidventure; VBS, the Grief Group, and our FoodBank). In addition, the project-participants dreamed of a church that was sending out missions teams into the community. Muslims are also being converted.

There were other responses that came up including:

Table 21: Other Dream Phase Categories:

1. Growing Programs .....	7 responses
2. Having full worship band.....	4 responses
3. Being Involved .....	4 responses
4. Children's Ministries.....	3 responses

I will summarize the *Dream Phase* results in the next chapter. From the *Dream Phase* we moved to the *Design Phase*.

### **Design Phase Coding**

As noted previously we had two design meetings. The overall theme continued to suggest and incarnational living among our non-Christian neighbours. In the *Design Phase* coding I observed the following occurrence statements related to the theme:

#### The Need to be Hospitable

I combined and collapsed the following responses (75 responses) into the category "The Need to be Hospitable" (Table 22).

I observed three main clusters. The first cluster (#1) is the project participants decided they needed to be personally motivated and practice hospitality. This cluster of responses superseded the rest which was indicative to me that people had responded significantly to the sermons.

**Table 22: The Need to be Hospitable:**

1. We need to be personally motivated and practice hospitality .....	36 responses
2. We need to be interested in building relationships.....	12 responses
3. Invite people who are close to you .....	4 responses
4. We can bring food when ministering to people.....	3 responses
5. People need safe haven.....	3 responses
6. Invite people out of a heart of love.....	3 responses
7. Pray about whom to invite.....	3 responses
8. The Community Dinner is an Exercise of Hospitality.....	2 responses
9. Small Groups is a good way to practice hospitality .....	2 responses
10. Common Interest Groups is a good way to practice hospitality.....	2 responses
11. We can connect with people who have gone through similar issues..	1 response
12. We can connect inside and outside the church .....	1 response
13. God uses people through hospitality.....	1 response
14. It is important to be available and accessible .....	1 response
15. Do not be disappointed if turned down.....	1 response

In the next cluster (#2) I noted a strong response included building relationship with our non-Christian neighbours. This ultimately led to our short term-project of the project-participants engaging a non-Christian neighbour through the act of hospitality and recording the results. This became a major theme in the Design discussion.

The final cluster (#3 to #15) includes some of the project-participants giving clues as to which non-Christian neighbour to invite. Perhaps the building of relationships with our non-Christian neighbours is not as difficult as we thought. Some stated that we should just focus on the non-Christians we already have relationships with. I found this to be a vital response in that we do not have to go and “look” for non-Christians; we often already have relationships with them. Therefore the project participants concluded that during the following month they would endeavor to engage a non-Christian through hospitality and record the results. They determined that their motivation had to come out of

sincerity of purpose and genuine concern for the people whom we approach. The participants resolved they had to pray about whom God wanted them to connect with and who to invite. They also decided not be disappointed if turned down.

### The Need to Serve

I combined and collapsed the following responses (52 Responses ) into the category “The Need to Serve” (Table 23).

I discovered three clusters here. The first one (# 1 to #4) includes the fact that our church has many gifts which can be used to help build relationships with our non-Christian neighbours. There are trades people who can serve those who are in need. There are people in our church who are able to prepare and bring food to people in crisis. Cedarview has people who can assist the non-Christian community with their financial plans. Cedarview has a number of school teachers who can help tutor children from the community.

**Table 23: The Need to Serve**

1. Trades People to help those in need .....	10 responses
2. Teachers/Tutoring.....	7 responses
3. Bringing food to people .....	6 responses
4. Helping people with finances .....	5 responses
5. Sports Camps.....	3 responses
6. Food Bank.....	2 responses
7. Lawn cutting and Landscaping .....	2 responses
8. Serving in Children’s Ministries.....	2 responses
9. Mentoring people through teaching Life Skills .....	2 responses
10. Caregivers .....	1 response
11. Celebrate Recovery Support workers .....	1 response
12. Childcare.....	1 response
13. Using the Gifts God has given us .....	1 response
14. Willing to volunteer wherever necessary .....	1 response
15. Helping people with housekeeping.....	1 response
16. Helping people who need community service hours.....	1 response
17. Helping in Senior’s Homes.....	1 response
18. Serving in Nursery.....	1 response
19. Providing Transportation .....	1 response
20. Helping Refugees.....	1 response
21. Starting Ethnic Services.....	1 response
22. Serving at Why Not Paris Youth Outreach Center.....	1 response

The following cluster (# 5 to #9) suggests there are people at Cedarview who are capable of running sports camps. Cedarview people can serve in the Food Bank. We can assist our non-Christian neighbours who are not capable of dealing with their landscaping issues. There are those in our church who can provide caregivers for those in need. Cedarview has capable teachers who are able to serve in children’s ministries. We can serve in the nursery. We can mentor people by providing life skills and seminars.

The final cluster suggests Cedarview has those who can serve in Celebrate Recovery for people attempting to overcome addictions. There are people at Cedarview who can provide childcare for those who need it. We can assist those

who need to comply with community service hours. We have the ability to assist in Senior's homes. We can provide transportation for people. Cedarview can help refugees who have personal needs. We can start ethnic services. We can serve at Why Not Paris Youth Outreach Center—a ministry for youth in our community which is supported through the local churches of Paris. It is important to use the gifts that God has given us to serve. I also found the one response interesting—the development of ethnic ministries at Cedarview. I was wondering if this was a response to a project our church did a few years ago, whereby we as a church sponsored a refugee from another country.

#### The Need to Provide Relevant Program

In the following category I doubled up a number of the responses from the last category. I noticed that there was an intense desire in not only to serve, but to provide relevant programs. I combined and collapsed the following 37 responses into “The Need to Provide Relevant Programs” (Table 24)

I observed two clusters. The first one (# 1) indicate some specialized ministries that we can provide at Cedarview. Our Cedarview Board is currently developing programs in order to implement some of these strategies that came out of this project. Some of the programs include Grief Share for those who have worked through a death of a family member or a friend. A Grief Group which I personally led following the tragic death of one of the adherents of Cedarview Church (from which a number of project-participants came) had a large impact on some people coming to Christ at Cedarview. Celebrate Recovery has been

**Table 24: The Need to Provide Relevant Programs:**

1. Life Skill Counselors such as Grief Share/Celebrate Recovery/Financial Counseling/Parenting Seminars/Tutoring.....	19 responses
2. Children’s Ministries .....	4 responses
3. Sports Camps.....	3 responses
4. Food Bank.....	2 responses
5. Practical Home Improvement Ministry for those in need .....	1 response
6. Caregivers .....	1 response
7. Ministry to Refugees.....	1 response
8. Ministry at Why Not Paris (Paris Youth Drop-In Center).....	1 response
9. Community Dinner .....	1 response
10. Visitation Ministry.....	1 response
11. Providing Transportation for People .....	1 response
12. Helping Refugees.....	1 response
13. Initiating Services for Ethnic People .....	1 response

effective for those who working through addiction issues; Financial Counseling for those who have financial needs; Parenting Seminars and tutoring. The initial large of cluster of responses indicates the need for us to be incarnational and minister to our community in practical ways.

The final cluster focuses a significant amount of responses to practical ministry endeavours. We are able to provide children’s ministries for those in our community. We can run sports camps. The Food Bank is a relevant ministry that can have long-term positive effects as we minister to our community. We can assist people with practical home improvements for those in need and be caregivers. We could minister to refugees, and at the Why Not Paris (the Paris Drop-In-Center). The community dinner is a relevant ministry and we can formulate \a visitation ministry which is relevant to the needs of our community. We can provide transportation for people. We can help refugees and initiate services for ethnic people.

## The Need to Practice Self-Awareness

I combined and collapsed the following responses (28 responses) into the category “The Need to Practice Self-Awareness” (Table 25).

I sensed two clusters in this section. The first one (# 1 and 2) suggests we need to be careful when developing relationships with our non-Christian neighbours. Some of our non-Christian neighbours may have prejudices against the church based on culture (derived from media, whether print, broadcast or social media online. In addition, some of our non-Christian neighbours may have had past bad experiences with churches. Therefore it is important to have this self-awareness when ministering to our non-Christian neighbours.

**Table 25: The Need to Practice Self-Awareness:**

1.	Some of the nonChristians may have prejudices against the church based on culture (media/etc.)	8 responses
2.	Some of our nonChristian Neighbours may have had bad experiences with churches in the past	6 responses
3.	Some of our nonChristian neighbours may think that the expectation of the church is to take their money	3 responses
4.	Uncertainty—nonChristians may not know what to expect	3 responses
5.	Hypocrisy	2 responses
6.	Tired of TV Evangelists	2 responses
7.	Some nonChristians may be introverted and reluctant to meet new people	1 response
8.	Some people may find church boring	1 response
9.	Some may find that the church has too much rules	1 response
10.	We may put up barriers between ourselves and our nonChristians whether knowingly or not	1 response

The following cluster suggests that some of our non-Christian neighbours may think the expectation of the church is to take their money. There is also the fear-element, non-Christians may not know what to expect from the church.

Perhaps they have seen some hypocrisy. Some may be tired of TV evangelists. Non-Christians may be introverted and reluctant to meeting new people. Non-Christians may find the church to be boring. Some may perceive the church to be rule-oriented. We may have put up barriers between ourselves and our non-Christian friends either knowingly or not. I was interested in discovering that the participants are aware of how the non-Christian perceives Christianity in our culture. This again lends to the need of being incarnational and living out the incarnational life in our community, especially among those non-Christian neighbours who know us personally. Some additional responses included (see Table 26)

I observed three clusters. The first one includes (#1). My interpretation of this category is a response based on the giftings in our church. For instance, it is known among the congregation that Rev. David Dwarka and I have training in counseling.

The second cluster (# 2 to 10) is of interest to me. The project-participants felt it was important to avoid embarrassing non-Christians about their lives. This continued along the theme of practicing self-awareness. In addition, the project-participants stated we should have literature available outlining the ministries at Cedarview Church. It was equally vital to continue to have a prayer focus, in particular for our non-Christian neighbours. We can also use small groups as a way of reaching our non-Christian neighbours. In all we do, the Design Phase included an emphasis on maintaining doctrinal purity. The final cluster

emphasized practical ways in which we can minister to our non-Christian neighbours.

**Table 26: Additional Design Phase Categories:**

1. Having counseling available for people .....	20 responses
2. It is important to avoid making our nonChristian neighbours ..... feel embarrassed about their lives.....	11 responses
3. Being a Place for Literature Distribution outlining ..... Cedarview’s ministries .....	8 responses
4. Prayer Focus .....	7 responses
5. Facility .....	6 responses
6. Small Groups .....	6 responses
7. Food Bank.....	5 responses
8. Teaching/Preaching .....	5 responses
9. Doctrinal Purity .....	5 responses
10. Outreach.....	5 responses
11. Mother/Baby Drop-Ins .....	3 responses
12. Community Meals .....	3 responses
13. Youth Ministry.....	2 responses
14. Pregnancy Center.....	1 response
15. Seniors’ Dinners .....	1 response
16. Nurse.....	1 response
17. Welcome Wagon .....	1 response
18. Need for Prayer.....	1 response
19. Men’s Ministry .....	1 response
20. Being an Evangelistic Church .....	1 response
21. Discipleship .....	1 response
22. New Ministries.....	1 response
23. Strengthening Marriages.....	1 response
24. Cooperating with Other Churches .....	1 response
25. Salvation Focused.....	1 response

### **Testimonials**

I will summarize these results in the following chapter because it will give a stronger understanding of the project. As was noted above we decided that one of the things we wanted to do in the following month was to engage a non-Christian and record the results. I analyzed the data of 18 responders. This

constitutes roughly one third of the project-participants. When it came to the testimonials the following top categories emerged.

### Practicing Hospitality

Our project participants also stated that practicing hospitality was imperative. I combined and collapsed the following responses (9 responses) into the category “Practicing Hospitality.”

**Table 27: Practicing Hospitality:**

1. Was only able to build an initial relationship with the nonChristian neighbour but will practice hospitality when the time is appropriate.....	3 responses.
2. Inviting nonChristians for hospitality.....	2 responses.
3. We need to begin to practice hospitality on ongoing basis .....	2 responses.
4. The café ensures hospitality.....	1 response.
5. We are beginning a neighbourhood program out of our home for nonChristian neighbours.....	1 response.

The project participants gave the following responses. What I noticed was that for a number of people the project did not entirely go as planned. Some were only able to take the initial step of developing a relationship with their non-Christian neighbour, and were not ready to practice hospitality. Others were able to take the step of practicing hospitality with their non-Christian neighbour. In addition some of the project-participants observed the need to continue practicing hospitality, and that a “one-time shot” is not sufficient in developing relationships with our non-Christian neighbours. A project participant invited one of the non-Christian neighbours to one of our community meals, but he turned it down—so the non-Christian neighbour will select the appropriate timing and invite the non-Christian neighbour over to their home for a meal. Another project participant

decided that after connecting with a non-Christian neighbour to invite the non-Christian neighbour over to her home for a coffee. An additional project participant invited two non-Christian couples over to their home in order to build a relationship with them. A further project participant made an initial connection with a non-Christian neighbour but was also waiting for the right time to have them over to their home for hospitality. Another project participant was engaging a non-Christian in the café and connected the non-Christian neighbour with a group of Christian ladies. In addition, a project participant invited a group of neighbours to her home for tea. Yet another project participant invited a lady from a quilting class over for tea. There were also two responses in the data stating that practicing hospitality must happen on an ongoing basis.

### Prayer is Vital

I combined and collapsed the following responses into the category “Prayer is Vital” (8 Responses):

**Table 28: Prayer is Vital:**

1. It is important to pray for the needs of our non-Christian neighbours .....	4 responses
2. Non-Christian neighbours appreciate the prayer of the Christian ...	3 responses
3. It is important to ask other believers to pray for the needs of the nonChristians .....	1 response.

The project participants gave the following responses. It was interesting to note that some of the project participants understood the value of praying when ministering to their non-Christian neighbours. I also found it intriguing that some of the non-Christian neighbours were happy to have the project-participants pray

for their needs. This is very encouraging as there may be the potential ministry of prayer available for our non-Christian neighbours. When our non-Christian neighbours are working through times of crisis, perhaps many would be open to prayer. One of the project-participants prayed for a need of non-Christian co-worker she was engaging, and the need was met, to which he responded “I guess it works.” There was appreciation by three different non-Christian neighbours for prayer. This same project participant then solicited prayer from her Christian friends for the non-Christian she was engaging. Another of the project-participants was running some programs out of her home for her neighbourhood ladies and solicited prayer for the event. She also solicited prayer for non-Christian children who have Christian parents. An additional project-participant engaged one of his neighbours and asked for prayer from other Christians so that he can continue to minister to his neighbour and lead his neighbour to Christ. One of the non-Christian neighbours actually invited the project-participant to their home and solicited the project-participant to pray for the food, although it was not the custom of the non-Christian neighbour. Another project-participant prayed for two non-Christians on separate occasions she was engaging. This may warrant a sermon emphasizing the need to be available to pray for our non-Christian neighbours.

### Sharing Faith is Important

I combined and collapsed the following responses into “Sharing Faith is Important.” The project participants (8 responses) also stated that sharing our faith

with our non-Christian neighbours was important I collapsed and combined the following responses into “Sharing Faith is Important”:

**Table 29: Sharing Faith is Important:**

1. Having doctrinal discussions with nonChristian neighbours.....	2 responses
2. Loving and encouraging seekers .....	1 response
3. Being incarnational around nonChristian neighbours as a form of sharing faith.....	1 response
4. Allowing nonChristians to share their feelings about not believing in God .....	1 response
5. Allowing nonChristians to ask questions .....	1 response
6. Sharing miraculous stories with nonChristians .....	1 response
7. Sharing personal conversion story.....	1 response

I found this to contain pre-evangelism material, and also as reflecting an incarnational approach. The project participants gave the following responses. One of the project participants began sharing the scriptures with one of the people he was engaging. It is important to note that this non-Christian neighbour was willing to engage the project-participant on a doctrinal level. This person claimed to believe in Jesus but did not know much about the scriptures. It is the project-participants desire to keep engaging this non-Christian. Another project-participant invited a number of non-Christians to participate in a grief study at her home. This project participant was also going to make her home available for a seeker bible study (beginning in February). An additional project participant was sharing with a seeker about the claims of Christ and who Jesus is. Yet another project-participant had the opportunity to minister to a non-Christian neighbour who made a point of stating he is not a Christian. The project participant decided the correct approach is to be incarnational because the non-Christian neighbour

was not ready for a discussion on faith issues. A further project participant stated the non-Christian person the project-participant was engaging began to ask many questions about the Christian faith. Another project participant shared a story of a miracle with a non-Christian neighbour in order to challenge the non-Christian to be open to God.

### Building Relationships based on Common Ground

In addition, the project-participants stated that building relationships based on common ground was valuable. I collapsed and combined the following responses (7 responses) into “Building Relationships based on Common Ground”:

**Table 30: Building Relationships based on Common Ground:**

1. Developing Relationships with non-Christian neighbours through specialized groups .....	5 responses
2. Missions trips involving non-Christian neighbours.....	1 response
3. Playing games with non-Christians in homes.....	1 response

I observed two clusters here. The first on (#1) is that one can develop relationships with one’s non-Christian neighbours through specialized groups. One of the project participants opened her home and developed a thematic group topics night for her neighbours (during the time of the 4-D Meetings). Another project participant made a connection with a non-Christian neighbour because her grandson was in the same class as the project-participant’s grandson. A further project participant made a connection with a non-Christian neighbour through classic cars.

The next cluster involved an additional project participant actually made a connection because the non-Christian neighbour was actually going on a

mission’s trip with a Christian church, although she herself was not a Christian. I found this most interesting. The people played some games together—a good idea in building common ground. Finally another project participant made a connection with a non-Christian neighbour through a quilting class.

Some of the other testimonial responses included:

**Table 31: Other Testimonial Categories:**

1. Friendships played a role in developing relationships with nonChristian neighbours.....	5 responses
2. Connections played role in developing relationships with nonChristian neighbours.....	5 responses
3. Being a support and ministering to nonChristians.....	5 responses
4. Inviting nonChristians to Church.....	4 responses
5. Allowing nonChristians to vent against the church.....	2 responses
6. Fellowshiping with nonChristians.....	1 response
7. Loneliness as a reason in building relationships with nonChristians	1 response
8. God’s Blessings Resting on Believers because they minister to nonChristians.....	1 response
9. Positive testimonials from our nonChristian friends.....	1 response

I noticed two clusters in this category. The first cluster (# 1 to #4) includes the thoughts that friendships played a role in developing relationships with our non-Christian neighbours. Connections also played a role in developing relationships with our non-Christian neighbours. It was important to be a support to our non-Christian neighbours. There were also a significant number of non-Christian neighbours who were invited to church.

The final cluster talked about fellowshiping with our non-Christian neighbours, as well as being there for them when they are lonely. One response stated that God’s blessings rest on Christians when they minister to their non-Christian neighbours. There was also a positive testimonial from one of the non-

Christian neighbours. I will summarize the testimonials further in Chapter 5.

### **Destiny Phase**

By the time we get to the Destiny Phase I observed that we had move from a strong “Us” mentality found in the Discovery Phase to a strong “Them” mentality found in the Destiny Phase. We had moved into the incarnational focus on ministering to our non-Christian neighbours. I was very encouraged.

#### **Making the Best of Every Opportunity**

I combined and collapsed the following responses (73 responses) into the category “Making the Best of Every Opportunity”:

**Table 32: Making the Best of Every Opportunity:**

1. Being available for God to minister to our nonChristian neighbours	33 responses
2. The Importance of developing friendships and getting together .....	16 responses
3. We have the positive programs available for ministry .....	12 responses
4. The Importance of engaging the unsaved with the purpose of leading them to Christ.....	6 responses
5. We need to be inclusive .....	4 responses
6. We need to be culturally relevant .....	1 response
7. We need to be servant-oriented.....	1 response

I observed three clusters here. This was the predominant focus in the development of a strong cluster (# 1). The first one includes a strong emphasis on the need to be available for God to minister to our non-Christian neighbours. This strong cluster was an encouragement to me in that I perceived the project had reached its objective of developing relationships with our non-Christian neighbours.

The second cluster (# 2 and # 3) placed value on continuing to develop friendships and participating in hospitality in the future. In addition, we need to make the most of every opportunity because we have the right programs in place to minister to our non-Christian community.

Other lesser ideas (# 4 to #7) were also disseminated, such as the underlying goal or ultimate goal of developing friendships with our non-Christian neighbours is that some of them would encounter Christ. In our development of relationships with our non-Christian neighbours we need to practice inclusivity. Finally, we need to be aware of the need to be culturally relevant, and minister to our non-Christian community from a servant-orientation.

#### An Annual Review of the Ministries

I collapsed and combined the following responses (31 responses) into the category “An Annual Review of the Ministries”:

**Table 33: Annual Review of the Ministries:**

1. We need to see what is effective and what needs changing .....	23 responses
2. We need to involve the laity in reviewing our ministries.....	5 responses
3. We should encourage others (even those who were not part of the study) to bring their ideas .....	2 responses
4. Relevance is vital.....	1 response

I observed three clusters here. In the first one (# 1), we need to ensure that our ministries to our non-Christian community are effective. This is something that we have now implemented as a result of this project. We need to have an annual review of our ministries in order to see what is effective and what needs changing.

In addition, (# 2) informs us that we need to involve our laity when reviewing our ministries. This is something that we are doing. We need to have an annual review of the ministries involving all a large spectrum of people, including laity, in order to examine the programs that are effective and which need changing. Some are designed for the church and discipleship, and others to engage the unchurched. Finally (# 3 and #4), we should encourage others (even those who were not a part of this project) to bring their ideas to build effective change. In addition, it is important to remain culturally intelligent in our ministries to our non-Christian neighbours.

#### We Need To Pray And Allow God To Lead Us

The participants also emphasized that prayer and the leading of God. I collapsed and combined the following responses (19 responses) into the category “We need to Pray and Allow God to Lead Us”:

**Table 34: We need to Pray and Allow God to Lead Us:**

1. We need to pray for the leading of the Holy Spirit.....	10 responses
2. We need daily prayer for strength .....	9 responses

The project participants gave the following responses. A major theme that emerged is the need to be in prayer and open to the leading of the Holy Spirit. It is important to pray on a daily basis for strength. This may have to be flushed out in future sermons, mainly, attempting to ask the question of what it actually means to rely on the Holy Spirit.

Communicate the Vision of Building Relationships  
with our Non-Christian Neighbours to the  
Congregation

I collapsed and combined the following responses (14 responses) into the category “Communicating to the Congregation”:

**Table 35: Communicating to the Congregation:**

1. We need to challenge others in the church to 'get on the bandwagon' and build relationships with those around them- .....	8 responses
2. One way to communicate this vision is through personal example—we need to show others the importance of building relationships with our non-Christian neighbour .....	6 responses

One of the main ways of communicating our vision to other congregants is by our example—as we do the proper thing, others will follow. I am somewhat concerned about this approach as there may need to be deliberate strategies and tactics needed to encourage a broader range of congregants to participate. As we have an annual review of our ministries, the passion to keep the focus on the non-Christian will continue. This emphasis needs to be included in our preaching and church advertising. There were a few other categories in the Destiny Phase. I have included them as follows:

**Table 36: Other Destiny Phase Results:**

1. To show hospitality.....	7 responses
2. The Importance of Being Positive about our programs.....	7 responses
3. The Importance of Discipleship.....	6 responses
4. The Importance of Showing Love to our NonChristian Neighbours	4 responses
5. The Importance of Children’s Ministries .....	2 responses
6. The Importance of Cultural Relevance.....	1 response

## Discussion

The aim of this project was to encourage members of a southern Ontario Pentecostal church to develop friendships with their non-Christian neighbours. The congregation was excited about the community involvement however I did not see this happening in the church. Therefore I began the project with a preaching series. The sermon series provided the theme for the project. I then developed the A-I questions and phases (note Appendices C, D, E and F).

The *Discovery Phase* questions were designed to determine where we came from, what was found as a positive component of the church, and what the general DNA of our church looked like. We asked questions pertaining to what has given life to Cedarview Church in the past, what attracted us to Cedarview, what attracted us to the church, why have they stayed in the church, and what personal ministries have the project-participants been involved with.

Then I developed the *Dream Phase* questions. Here we were allowed to dream without restriction, envisioning what the church could become. We focused on envisioning what kind of church we could become entering 2016. We began to dream of what would be vital and good in the future. What is new, different, or better? What things involved our greatest potential? I challenged the project participants not to worry about any risk factors, but to dream anyhow.

In the *Design Phase* we architected the type of church we could be. Here we asked the group to push the envelope and develop something innovating and exciting that fits the available resources that we have at our disposal at

Cedarview. Part of the planning that came out of this phase included engaging a non-Christian or a group of non-Christians and recording the results.

*In the Destiny Phase we developed a strategy that would keep the church moving forward. This was the sustaining or accountability phase. I wanted to learn what the project participants had learned from the experience, what things stood out as priorities, and how would we apply this learning to our future daily interactions with our non-Christian neighbours. The incarnational approach means that everyone receives a personal vision for God for ministry.*

In addition, I held a *Project Presentation* where I reviewed the outcomes of the project with pastors, professors, and some of the project participants. I then worked through the data sources and how I collected the data. I went through some of the results of the data. I will share more about these findings in the following chapter, and my interpretation of this data.

## **CHAPTER FIVE: RESULTS AND INTERPRETATION**

In analyzing the internal perceptions of the project participants I chose the top four reoccurring themes for each phase. I chose the numbers based on quantity because I wished to ensure that the collaborative approach was respected based as much as possible on the feelings of the majority. I found in the *Discovery Phase* that the reoccurring theme was first and foremost “Community Outreach.” In attempting to describe what has made Cedarview the church she is, “Community Outreach” was the most popular way of defining the church. Our church is known for her ministry to the community. The next most popular theme was “Spiritual Fellowship.” Cedarview was a church that practiced a strong level of fellowship within her church community. We were also known for our “Dedicated Volunteers”. Cedarview is known to involve a large group of volunteers that have given of their time in order to minister in the various programs at Cedarview Church. The data also indicated that Cedarview church has placed a high value on” Children’s Ministries”.

When it comes to the *Dream Phase* the most popular theme was “Acceptance and Hospitality.” The focus on acceptance and hospitality shifted away from the church family in the *Discovery Phase* to our non-churched neighbours. The project participants began to recognize that although we have

emphasized relationships in the past, it was primarily directed towards our church family. The project participants began to recognize that it was equally important to build relationships with our non-Christian neighbours. The next category was “Being Revivalistic.” We began to dream of a church where there is a passionate focus on worship. We began to dream of a church where many people were accepting Christ and being converted in the worship services. The project participants began to dream of a church where the miraculous was happening. All of these things combined to give our church an “increased attendance.” The project participants dreamt of a church which has off-site satellite services. There is an increased number of our non-Christian neighbours coming to our worship services. As a result of practicing of hospitality with our non-Christian neighbours happening, and the revivalistic thrust, our attendance is increasing and our “outreach is also increasing.” What I perceive through the data is that the cycle begins all over again.

In the *Design Phase* the number of responders indicated that we need to design a church that will be “Hospitable”, including being hospitable to our non-Christian neighbours. The project participants stated that as we are hospitable we can “Serve” our non-Christian neighbours through the gifts and talents that God has given us. These gifts and talents need to be used with the framework of “Relevant Programs.” The project participants also stated that we need to practice “Self Awareness” when ministering to our non-Christian neighbours. Here I noticed a shifting away from “Being Revivalistic.” The project participants began to sense that “Self-Awareness” is important, and that the non-Christian

neighbours may become afraid of the church setting because they do not understand it. Part of the strategy of the *Design Phase* was to engage a non-Christian person or group and record the results. I have included my interpretation of these results in this chapter. The project participants stated that “Practicing Hospitality” was of utmost importance in their experience of developing relationships with their non-Christian neighbours. In addition, “Prayer is Vital”. We need to pray to God for whom He wishes us to develop relationships with. Then I saw another pattern develop as an occurrence theme related to the topic—the “Sharing of Faith” was important. There were actual opportunities that took place for this to happen. Finally, the project participants stated that “Common Ground” was a good place to start in terms of which non-Christian neighbours they wished to engage. It is the connections we already have that make for the best foundations for developing relationships with our non-Christian neighbours.

The final phase was the *Destiny Phase*. The occurrence statements related to the theme having the largest response were “Making the Best of Every Opportunity.” God will give us opportunities and it is imperative that we make the best of these opportunities. In this process it is vital to remain non-judgmental. The project participants also determined that we need to have an “Annual Review of our Ministries”, and it should include people beyond the leadership. This needs to happen to ensure that we have programs that relate to our non-Christian neighbours, as well as appropriate discipleship programs for our church family. We need to pray and allow “God to lead us” to the non-Christian neighbour He wishes us to engage. Finally, it is vital that this message of living incarnationally

and developing relationships with our non-Christian neighbours is

“Communicated to our Church Family.”

### **Discovery Phase Interpretation**

The first phase data was centered on the project participant’s perception of Cedarview church. Their emphasis was placed on community outreach, spiritual fellowship, dedicated volunteers, and children’s ministries.

My data was focused on the occurrences related to the theme:

**Table 37: Discovery Phase Interpretation:**

Themes	Occurrence Statements Related to Theme
1. Community Outreach	68
2. Spiritual Fellowship	54
3. Dedicated Volunteers	49
4. Children’s Ministries	40

#### **Community Outreach**

I perceived a pattern developing in the coding (Table 4.9) relating to the ministry we do in our community. So I entitled this pattern “Community Outreach.” This category refers to the ministries we do for the community, as opposed to those done for the church. In the *Discovery Phase* the analysis of the data reaffirmed that Cedarview Church has a history of connecting with the community. Community outreach has given success to Cedarview in her past. The

project participants stated that this is evidenced through the positive testimonials from our Brant/Paris Community. People have perceived the church to be community-minded and missional. Programs such as KidVenture, VBS, Neighbourhood Friends and the Food Bank are strong indicators that Cedarview places a high value on Community outreach. The project participants also indicated that Cedarview is known as a church that reaches out to marginalized people. Examples of this include our serving through the Crisis Pregnancy Center, and Celebrate Recovery. In addition we are known for caring for those who are in hospital. We are also known for ministering to people who have deaths in their families and assisting people in funerals, either from within the church or without the church. Cedarview is also willing to cooperate with other churches in outreach. These statements in the data indicate the perception of Cedarview is that we are a church that cares about outreach and ministering to the needs of the community. It tells me that the Pentecostals at Cedarview are quite serious about attempting to fulfill the Great Commandment in their context.

What I discovered here was not a surprise for me. We have a positive reputation in our community and are known for our community mindedness. What the data told me about the Pentecostals at Cedarview is that from a historical perspective this church has been known as a place that ministers to the needs of our community.

## Spiritual Fellowship

I also perceived a pattern developing (Table 4.10) stating that our church has been known as a place that emphasized relationship and community at Cedarview. One of the comments was that Cedarview is a place of spiritual fellowship. I used this term and called this pattern Spiritual Fellowship. The data stated that Cedarview is a place that fosters positive relationships. There were a number of comments that indicated Cedarview were known for a family atmosphere, and that Cedarview is a place that fosters a deep concern for one another. Other comments surrounded Cedarview's non-judgmental attitudes and the emphasis of belonging. I perceived the data to state that Cedarview placed a high value in caring for one another within the church body, but the emphasis on building relationships outside of the church was lacking in emphasis. What I perceived was that although while did significant ministry outside of the church in the community, we were not emphasizing the building of relationships with that community. The focus of building relationships was within the church family.

## Volunteers are Especially Dedicated

I also perceived a pattern develop in the coding (Table 4.11) that made reference to our volunteers. One of the comments made was that our volunteers are especially dedicated. This term resonated with me so I used this name for this category. Cedarview has maintained a high level of volunteerism, contributing to her success. The data indicated that the people in the project sensed that we as leaders encourage the church to walk in their giftings and calling. The responders

also stated that they found fulfillment through serving, and experienced spiritual satisfaction in serving. They also saw the importance of being available for ministry. What I perceived in the data was that Cedarview is known as a place to serve. The data tells me that the members of Cedarview feel encouraged to use their giftings in ministry. I perceived the data to say that the members of Cedarview church feel supported by the leadership in their ministry. The data also tells me that the people do not feel “controlled” when doing ministry, and that the leadership gives them permission to fulfill their personal vision for ministry.

### Children’s Ministry Focus

I also perceived a pattern develop in the data (Table 4.12) with an emphasis on Children’s Ministries at Cedarview. First there was a general reference to children’s ministries. There was an emphasis placed on the value of Sunday School, Real Deal, and Beginner Bible (our ministry to those who attend Cedarview). We also saw references made to KidVenture, VBS, and the Christmas Musicale (our ministry to children to our community). The data tells me that Cedarview is interested in child development including the spiritual, emotional, mental and the physical well being of the child. I also perceive the data to state that this ministry has been a high priority at Cedarview which has enhanced the church’s reputation in the community.

### **Dream Phase Interpretation**

The Discovery Phase led to the *Dream Phase* which continued to build on the theme of fellowship, but now expanded the theme by adding the component of

developing relationships outside of our church community. I perceived the data to state that by becoming more revivalistic it would help us draw the non-Christian community into our church. This in turn would cause our attendance to increase as well as increase our Outreach Programs. Furthermore, the *Discovery Phase* contributed to the *Dream Phase* by continuing to recognize the value of our dedicated volunteers. Without our volunteers we could not have accomplished the goals we dreamed about.

I perceived the emphasis of the *Dream Phase* was placed on acceptance and hospitality, being revivalistic, seeing an increase in attendance, and seeing intensified outreach to the community. My data was focused on the occurrences related to the theme:

**Table 38: Dream Phase Interpretation:**

Themes	Occurrence Statements Related to Theme
1. Acceptance and Hospitality	30
2. Being “Revivalistic”	22
3. Attendance Increase	16
4. Outreach Increase	14

#### Acceptance and Hospitality

When it came to the *Dream* phase results (Table 4.14), I perceived our people dreamt our church is not only valuing relationships within the church family which was emphasized in the *Discovery Phase*, but now has added the

component of building relationships with their non-Christian neighbours. In this phase I recognized the participants began to recognize that we have to be inclusive and move beyond just caring for our church family. Therefore I called this category “Acceptance and Hospitality.”

The participants stated that in their dreaming of a future church we follow up on all people. This includes anyone who has had a connection to Cedarview Church through our ministry efforts. In addition, we are tolerant and accepting of those who are not yet believers. We practice the art of hospitality and minister to those in crisis issues. What this tells me about Cedarview people is that we are very open to moving from an “inward focused fellowship and hospitality” model that we saw in the *Discovery Phase* to an “inclusive hospitality” model that includes ministering to our non-Christian neighbours.

### Being Revivalistic

I found another interesting trend I perceived in the data (Table 4.15)—there was an emphasis placed on the term “revival.” When I speak about being revivalistic this was my interpretation of what the data stated. The data indicated that “revival” was on the increase at Cedarview. This was defined in the data as seeing more of the supernatural happening. It included an increase of prayer. It included conversion to Christ happening in the midst of our worship services. There was an intentionality of people worshipping. In this context the data indicated people are passionate in their worship. Many non-Christians are being drawn to becoming Christ-followers. The data stated that as people worship and

pray there is an outward expression of the supernatural. The data stated that miracles are happening. These events are increasing the worship attendance which in turn is intensifying outreach because it is believed that more church participants build a larger scope and vision for reaching our community. What I perceived from this data is a longing to become more “Pentecostal”, a desire to move back to our historical roots. The participants spoke about people being baptized in the Holy Spirit and speaking in other tongues; with signs and miracles following. I perceived that if people see God working in a greater supernatural way, then this will help draw more non-Christians into our church. I perceived a longing from the people that they wished to see more of the supernatural occurrences in the church services. I sense the data to indicate that if God in a great supernatural manifesting way in our worship services this is an indicator that God is with us and blessing us.

#### Increased Attendance

The data (Table 4.16) stated that because of “revival” at Cedarview this drawing of non-Christians into our church results in an “increased attendance.” I used this word from the data to define the category “increased attendance. The data stated that in the dreams of the participants there was an increase of worship services which included off-site satellite church services. The data also stated that there was an increased number of non-Christians coming to our worship services. I perceived the data to state that membership was on the rise, and more pastors needed to pastor our church. The data stated that there was an increase of weekly

worship services as well as a more intense Children’s Ministry taking place. What the data indicated to me is that in the minds of the project participants the attendance is rising due to our practice of hospitality and our acceptance of non-Christians, and the fact that we are being “revivalistic” in our worship services.

### Outreach is Increasing

I also perceived a pattern emerging in the data (Table 4.17) that as our attendance and ministry was increasing so was our outreach to our community, so I entitled this category “Outreach is Increasing.” The *Dream Phase* data stated that we are ministering to the needs of our non-Christian neighbours. Furthermore, the participants made comments that our facility is being used seven days per week. The *Dream Phase* data stated that there is a greater emphasis on children’s ministries than is happening today. Some of the comments state we are running nightly events for children with different leaders. There are a variety of leaders because the church attendance has grown, and we are able to run multiple children’s ministries. Other comments state we have 400 children participating in our programs. In addition to the increase in number of children’s events, we are seeing an increased number of outreach ministries and programs into the community. The data states that hospitality is emphasized. No one is left out—we are attempting to be inclusive. This data tells me that Cedarview is prepared to engage her community on even a greater level than she has been in the past. As we promote “Acceptance and Hospitality” and are “Revivalistic” in our approach, the “Attendance is Rising” which results in an increase in “Outreach to the

Community.” This data informs me there is even a greater desire to minister to our non-Christian neighbours than we have in the past.

### **Design Phase Interpretation**

The acceptance and pursuit of developing relationships with our non-Christian friends found in the *Dream Phase* assisted in making the primary response of the *Design Phase* to be hospitable. I perceived the data to state there is an increased awareness of developing relationships with our non-Christian neighbours. Serving will continue to be a major thrust of the church in order to accomplish our goals of developing relationships with our non-Christian neighbours. This will mean that in order for us to be successful in increasing our outreach programs we will need to continue to be a serving church. In the process of being a serving church it is important to provide relevant programming for our non-Christian neighbours. Finally, the emphasis of being revivalistic found in the *Dream Phase* was neutralized in the *Design Phase* as we considered the possible perceptions of our non-Christian neighbours about the church. My data was focused on the occurrences related to the theme:

**Table 39: Design Phase Interpretation:**

Themes	Occurrence Statements Related to Theme
1. Being hospitable	75
2. Serving	52
3. Providing Relevant Programs	37
4. Self-Awareness	28

#### The Need to be Hospitable

I continued to observe an emerging theme (Table 4.19) emphasizing the need to practice hospitality with our non-Christian neighbours. Therefore I entitled this category “The Need to be Hospitable.” The participants stated that we need to be personally involved and motivated to practice hospitality. The data stated we need to be interested in building relationships and invite people who are close to us. The data stated that in providing hospitality we need to be a safe haven for our non-Christian neighbours. We should pray about whom God would have us invite. The data continued that one way we can practice an easy way of hospitality is to invite our non-Christian neighbours to our Community Dinner (part of Neighbourhood Friends). The data stated that Cedarview Church (but not necessarily the building) needs to be a place that practices hospitality. It is an essential part of developing relationships. Some of the comments included statements that people will come to our homes before they come to our church. The discussion emphasized being hospitable to all walks of life including those

we are not comfortable with. Therefore we need to avoid any forms of judgementalism. It is imperative to show love and foster a family atmosphere. Some of the comments included statements that we can develop small groups to invite our non-Christian neighbours, particularly special interest groups. We can connect with people who may have gone through similar struggles we have gone through. It is important to be available and accessible. We should not become discouraged if we are turned down.

What the data indicated to me was that there was a paradigm shift developing from the *Discovery Phase* where the emphasis of relationship had been in the church community. The project participants were ready to modify their sphere of only having relationships within the church community to include their non-Christian neighbours.

#### The Need to Serve

I also noticed that the emphasis of serving (Table 4.20) reappeared. Therefore I entitled this category “The Need to Serve.” In addition to being hospitable, the participants felt we need to continue to be a serving church. The data stated that we have multiple gifts including health care workers; teachers who can tutor, those who can provide music lessons, people who can play music in seniors’ homes, individuals who can help with catering and give cooking lessons, those who can assist with housekeeping, business accountants, financial budgeting experts and people who can help during tax time. There are trades people such as electricians, carpenters, painters, handymen, plumbers, chefs and

landscapers. We can help people apply for grants and assist co-op students with their necessary hours needed in a volunteer capacity to graduate. Furthermore, we have great facilities that can help us connect with the community. We can host art clubs and art exhibits. We can have basketball groups in the gymnasium.

What the data told me is that there is a lot of energy in serving the community at Cedarview. The data indicates a developing love for the community, and a willingness to make a difference in our community. The data also tells me that people are open to innovative ways of ministering to our community. It was decided at a Cedarview Board Meeting (Cedarview Board Minutes, December 18, 2015) to establish a Vision Committee made up of ministry leaders and Board Members that will go through these recommendations coming out of the *Design Phase*.

#### The Need to Provide Relevant Programs

I also noticed a pattern developing in the data (Table 4.21) indicating the project participants' desires that we provide relevant programs for our non-Churched Community. Therefore I developed the category "The Need to Provide Relevant Programs." The data indicated that we can continue to enhance our Food Bank and provide practical home improvement ministries for those in need. In addition, we can develop seminars to help people with life skills. What the data told me is that there is a willingness to serve our community in practical ways that will cause us to build relationships with our non-Christian neighbours. The Vision Committee in 2015 that will address these recommendations by the project

participants. What this told me about the project participants is a desire to engage the non-Christian community through practical measures.

### The Need to Practice Self-Awareness When Ministering to Our Non-Christian Neighbours

I also noticed a concept developing from the data (Table 4.22) centered on the need to practice self-awareness when ministering to our non-Christian neighbours, so I entitled this category “The Need to Practice Self-Awareness when Ministering to our Non-Christian Neighbours.” I noticed a shifting away from being “Revivalistic” from the *Dream Phase* to considering sensitivity when ministering to our non-Christian neighbours. The data stated that some non-Christians may have prejudices against the church based on culture such as the media. In addition, some of our non-Christian neighbours may have had bad experiences with churches in the past. The project-participants voiced their concerns that some non-Christians may struggle with actual or perceived hypocrisy they have witnessed in the church. The church may also be putting up barriers between ourselves whether we mean it or not.

I perceived the project-participants began to have a higher and higher awareness of caring for their non-Christian neighbours. This is seen in their concern about being self-aware when ministering to the needs of the non-Christian community. It also included moving away from a more demonstrative worship service to being sensitive to the non-Christian and how they are thinking. I do not think that we were negating a more revivalistic worship service, but are adding the importance of sensitivity when ministering to our non-Christian

neighbours.

### **Testimonials**

Following deliberation and in consideration of the time constraints of the project, we decided that this part of our *Design Project* would be to engage a non-Christian through hospitality. The project-participants determined the following guidelines: Ask God whom we should engage, be careful to talk about the seeker and not ourselves, refrain from being judgmental and show the love of Christ to the non-Christian. Our experiences would need to be documented. I have included the stories I received as we were working through the project:

One of the project-participants invited two non-Christian couples into their home. An additional project-participant practiced hospitality with a man whose wife has health issues. A further project-participant connected with their neighbor across the street. Hospitality is being practiced with this individual. It was encouraged that all stay the course and not let after the project concludes. The reports from the group were that the project-participants enjoyed the project sessions and have been challenged on the importance of engaging seekers.

Another project-participant was inviting seekers to a Victorian Tea Luncheon at her home on Wednesday November 27<sup>th</sup>. She left her phone number and email addresses in her advertisements which were distributed in her community. This same project-participant invited their neighbors in for tea/and coffee under the umbrella of “Back to School Celebrations” and give away prizes.

Another project-participant was involved in a personal witnessing event. He shared his faith but there were differences of opinion as to who Jesus is. An additional project-participant has become friends with three couples who are the parents of someone's son in church. Two couples are non-Christians; one couple is Christian. In this case the non-Christians actually asked the project-participants to come to their home. The project-participants reported they had a great time of building relationships. The non-Christian neighbours knew the beliefs of the project-participants and asked the project participants to pray before the meal even though it was not their custom. The one non-Christian lady was actually going to Guatemala on a "Mission Trip" with a group of nurses. This gave the project-participants some common ground because their children had gone to Guatemala before. They showed them some pictures. They also shared a miracle story with the people—the project participant's nephew had been healed. The project participants played some games with the non-Christian neighbours. The project participants are committed to continuing to enhance these relationships.

A different project-participant met a man through a third party. The three have something in common— they both love classic cars. The man they met has a Seventh Day Adventist background, but has been turned off to Christianity. He is currently attending a United Church. His wife has just been admitted into long care nursing home. Consequently he is only living by himself. He wants fellowship and needs it desperately. The project-participant has tried to take him to two church functions, however he only half commits. When the participant calls he does not answer the phone. He also does not return messages that the

participant leaves. The participant has loaned him a wheel chair in order to save him money. They have also practiced hospitality and have continued to love him. The wheel chair was for his wife in the nursing home.

A further project-participant befriended a waitress. Relationships were established and built. The lady accepted a book that was loaned to her. They were also going to try to give this lady a bible.

Another non-Christian neighbor stated that she had to miss a meeting due to a medical appointment for her husband, but was so thankful the project-participant was praying for her.

Another project-participant was part of a quilting class. One of the non-Christians at the class needed a listening ear. The project-participant invited the non-Christian neighbour for coffee. The project-participant ended up praying with the non-Christian neighbour.

An additional project-participant spoke to a non-Christian in the local library and began to encourage her about spiritual things. The non-Christian came to church to investigate the worship services. Another project participant frequents a restaurant and has befriended the owner. There is a group of men who go for breakfast and see this lady once a week for the Men's Breakfast program. The project participant looked for an opportunity to share his faith with her. Through conversations over several weeks they have discovered she has kidney failure. So the participant is using this need to approach her on the basis of faith. Each week he lets her know that the men are praying for her healing. So far, her comments in return have been very positive. Several times she has commented

that our group is her favorite group coming to her restaurant. Currently, they are praying for her salvation and her healing. He is also waiting for an opportunity to invite her to church on some special occasion such as Christmas. The saga continues. The impact of this project is that it has caused this man to realize that he needs to do more to reach the lost for Jesus.

A further project-participant befriended a lady. This lady is a friend of her daughter-in-law's family for years, but in the last couple of years she has been at various family functions. She seemed to take a liking to the project-participant; she would even ask a lot of various questions about the church. The project-participant did not invite her out for coffee but felt she should be some kind of witness to her. The lady would ask the project-participant if she went to church every Sunday and why did she go. The project-participant told her that the participant loved to go to church to worship God and join with other believers. The project-participant believes that the door has been opened to this lesbian to share more about Jesus as the Holy Spirit leads the project-participant to do so. The project has spoken to the participant about stepping out of the project-participant's comfort zone and speaking to people to be some kind of witness. This has been very hard for the project-participant to do.

A different project-participant attended their grandchildren's school for special events. They tried to enter through the wrong door. It was locked. A lady came from the inside and opened it for them. The project-participant did not know her. They initiated a conversation and discovered that she lived in the same town as the participant and her grandson was in the same class as the project-

participant's grandson. As they entered the meeting room they had to sign in. The lady was right behind the project-participants and started another conversation. The project-participants were served snacks within groups and they happened to be in the same group as this lady. The project-participant later learned that she did not know the Lord. It was at this moment that the project-participant realized the Lord was trying to get her attention. The project-participant planned to call the lady and invite her for coffee. The project has made the project-participant aware of the Spirit's prompting in the project-participant's life.

A further project-participant was engaging a non-Christian neighbour and the discussion centered on church attendance. The response for the project-participant's friend was "I find that church is the last place I can be myself. I have to put on a phony smile for the 'door group' who have their Sunday 'smiling faces on.' But if you meet them at the mall they do not know you"! The person was glad when they left to go home; the church seemed to have such an artificial atmosphere. The lady said that she seemed to not be able to "measure up" to the requirements of the long-term church goers. The church seemed so judgmental. As a result of this response, Cedarview Church has continued to try to develop self-awareness in our teachings.

Another project-participant has contacted his neighbor many times to attempt to build a relationship with him. The project-participant has invited him and his wife to the monthly community meals but has had no success in having them come to the event because the neighbors go to the cottage every week. However the project-participant asked him to come to the seniors' dinner this

week and he agreed. They also enjoyed themselves tremendously. They had some great conversations at the dinner. The project-participants are also planning on inviting them over for dinner in the future. The main purpose for the project-participant is to be a Christ-like example to him. The project-participants are praying that he would give his life over to Christ. The neighbor also said to the project-participant that he is not a Christian and does not go to church. He also attended their mother's funeral which was greatly appreciated.

One more project-participant has been engaging a fellow co-worker and praying for them. The co-worker is opening up to spiritual things. Another project-participant has been engaging a neighbor and inviting him to our community dinner.

The project-participants have also contacted other participants asking for prayer for God to bless them in their endeavor. They have enjoyed the Project Sessions tremendously and have caused the project-participants to see the importance of evangelizing others. The testimonials responses were as follows:

**Table 40: Testimonial Interpretation:**

Themes	Occurrence Statements Related to Theme
1. Practicing Hospitality	9 Responses.
2. Prayer is Vital	8 Responses.
3. Sharing our Faith	8 Responses.
4. Common Ground	7 Responses.

## Practicing Hospitality

In the testimonials (Table 4.24) I noticed that one of the reoccurring themes was that in order for the participants to make have a deliberate attempt to practice hospitality with their non-Christian neighbours. This of course was in alignment with the *Design Phase* Decision. So I called this category “Practicing Hospitality.” I discovered through the responses of the project participants that some of the participants were only able to build an initial relationship with their non-Christian neighbours and that they will practice hospitality when the time is appropriate. It is important to be sensitive to the Holy Spirit as to when one should practice hospitality. Others were able to invite their non-Christian friends for a time of hospitality. Some of the other responders stated that what they had learned was that it was vital to begin to practice hospitality on an ongoing basis. Another responder stated that the café had been a good place to practice hospitality. Finally another responder stated that she was beginning a neighbourhood program out of her home for her non-Christian neighbours. What I learned from our Cedarview participants was that they recognized the importance of developing relationships with their non-Christian neighbours and that this had to be an ongoing event. It also showed me that the Cedarview participants learned the importance of practicing hospitality with their non-Christian neighbours.

## Prayer is Vital

In addition the data (Table 4.25) indicated that prayer was vital. The project participants discovered that it is important to begin to pray for the needs of

our non-Christian neighbours. I also discovered that the non-Christian neighbours appreciated the prayer of the participants for their needs. I also saw that the participants saw that it is important to ask other believers to pray for the needs of their non-Christian neighbours. What I learned from the Cedarview project participants is that they recognized the need for prayer when developing relationships with their non-Christian neighbours.

### Sharing our Faith

I also saw another pattern develop—that sharing the faith of the project participants with their non-Christian neighbours became important (Table 4.26). Therefore I developed the category “Sharing Faith is Important.” I noticed that there were doctrinal discussions which evolved out of engaging a non-Christian neighbour. There was a need to be loving and encouraging when sharing their faith with their non-Christian neighbours. It was also noted that being incarnational was of utmost importance in ministering to the non-Christian neighbours of the participants, particularly if there was no interest in Christianity. The interest may not be there because of the bad images the non-Christian neighbours may have of what they perceive Christianity to be, as outlined in (Table 4.22). In the process of sharing faith it was vital that the non-Christians were allowed to share their feelings about whether or not it was important to believe in God. It was equally important that the participants allowed the non-Christian to ask questions. One of the participants found it valuable to share a “miracle story” with their non-Christian neighbour. It was also important for the

project-participant to share their personal conversion story. What I learned from the Cedarview participants was the importance of sharing their faith with their non-Christian neighbours. Although this had not really been a point of discussion in the phases, it naturally evolved into this type of discussion as the project participants engaged their non-Christian neighbours.

### Building Relationships on Common Ground

Finally I noticed that a pattern that developed in the testimonials was that it is important to build relationships based on common ground, so I called this category “Building Relationships based on Common Ground.” I noticed that some of the participants were able to develop relationships with non-Christian with whom they participated in specialized groups (such as school groups, classic cars, a missions trip, a quilting class). What I learned from this was that the Cedarview project participants realized that God gave them opportunities with the people they already were associating with, and this is often the best target group when wanting to develop relationships with our non-Christian friends because a certain level of trust already exists between the Christian and their non-Christian neighbour.

### Destiny Phase Interpretation

The final phase was the *Destiny Phase* which included ensuring that the project would continue to move forward. The emphasis of the project participants in the Destiny Phase was taking advantage of any opportunities God would give us to engage our non-Christian neighbours, to have an annual review of the

ministries at Cedarview, to ask God for wisdom as to which non-Christian neighbours we should engage, and to communicate the passion of developing relationships with our non-Christian neighbours to the remainder of the church.

My data was focused on the occurrences related to the theme:

**Table 41: Destiny Phase Interpretation:**

Themes	Occurrence Statements Related to Theme
1. Opportunities	73
2. Ministry Reviews	31
3. Prayer	19
4. Communication	14

#### We Need to Make the Best of Every Opportunity and Remain Non-Judgmental

I noticed a pattern emerging from the data stating that if we are going to develop relationships with our non-Christian neighbours it is vital that we make the best of every opportunity and remain non-judgmental in the process. This includes the importance of inclusivity and avoiding judgementalism. The project participants found that it is important to be available for God when ministering to the needs of our non-Christian neighbours. It was also important to develop friendships and to get together with our non-Christian neighbours. It was important to have positive programs available for our non-Christian neighbours. The data stated that the ultimate goal of developing relationships with their non-

Christian neighbours was to bring them into a relationship with Christ. This fulfilled part of the *Dream Phase* where the project participants dreamt of a church that was practicing acceptance and hospitality. What I learned from these responses was that the Cedarview project participants had developed a keen awareness of ministering to their non-Christian neighbours and becoming self-aware to the needs of their non-Christian neighbours. They were also determined to keep developing relationships in the future with their non-Christian neighbours. I also perceived a real desire for the project participants to be inclusive when it came to developing relationships with their non-Christian neighbours.

We need to have an Annual Review of the Effectiveness of our Ministries

I also noticed a pattern develop indicating it was important that we have an annual review of our ministries. This would ensure that we never lose the focus of ministering to our non-Christian neighbours. The project participants stated that we need to see what is effective and what needs changing. In addition, it is important that we involve our laity in reviewing these ministries. This will be looked at in our Vision Committee in 2015. One of the ways we are going to try to accomplish these goals is by running A-I for the various departments of the church. We have already scheduled a *Design Phase* for Christian Education in February 2015. What I learned from our Cedarview project participants is that they recognized the importance of ensuring that we truly are engaging our non-Christian community, as opposed to being inwardly focused.

### We Need to Pray and Allow God to Lead Us

In addition I perceived another pattern develop in the project data, namely, we need to pray and allow God to lead us to the non-Christian neighbours He wishes us to engage. Therefore I entitled this category “We need to Pray and Allow God to Lead.” The data indicated that we need to pray for the leading of the Holy Spirit and for daily strength and guidance. The project participants stated that it is important to be alert to the promptings of the Holy Spirit and to pray on a daily basis for God’s direction to the non-Christians He wishes us to engage.

### We Need to Communicate the Vision of Building Relationships with our Non-Christian Neighbours to The Congregation

Finally, another category emerged, namely, that it was important to communicate the need to engage our non-Christian community to our church family as a whole. The project participants emphasized that we need to continue to mention this to our church family as a whole, but also lead by example. As we continue to do this we will have influence over those who have not yet taken the risk of developing relationships with our non-Christian neighbours. In our Vision Committee 2015 we will strategize how best to accomplish these goals. What I learned from our Cedarview project participants is that they take seriously the building of relationships with their non-Christian neighbours. A passion has - developed and the intent is that all should become a routine part of this process.

## Discussion

What this project told me is that our church is known for having a passion for ministering to her community. This project also informed me that relationships were vital in the church, but initially they were primarily within the church family. This project also has told me that volunteers have worked hard in ministry at Cedarview. They have been especially dedicated to ministering to children.

This project has told me that our project participants were willing to make a paradigm change and begin to develop relationships with their non-Christian neighbours. This involved being hospitable and actually physically practicing hospitality with their non-Christian neighbours. This involved practicing self-awareness when ministering to their non-Christian neighbours. As the participants did this, they realized that they needed to pray whom God would want them to engage, and that the best group was those with whom they already had a common ground. This project also told me that God opens doors when we practice hospitality so that we can share our faith with our non-Christian neighbours. This project also taught me that the project-participants found it important to provide relevant programs, and to have an annual review of the ministries in order to ensure that the relevant programs were provided.

What this project taught me about the Pentecostals at Cedarview is that this church cares for the community. In addition, this church wishes to serve the community with the ultimate goal of seeing some of these non-Christian neighbours encounter Christ. It also taught me that the project participants were willing to take a risk and practice hospitality with their non-Christian neighbours.

I was very encouraged by this. It is an honour to serve this church that truly wishes to practice the Great Commandment.

## **CHAPTER SIX:**

### **CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS**

The goal of this project was to build relationships with our non-Christian neighbours by generating relationship-building ideas in focus groups using the A-I model.

#### **Re-Shaping My Priorities**

It was important to gain wisdom and insight from a variety of resources and contexts in order to learn how to minister effectively to our non-Christian neighbours. I was especially interesting for me to learn that Canadians in general have a strong appreciation for spiritual issues, and given the proper context, would respond to these spiritual needs. If we as believers take the time to develop relationships with our non-Christian neighbours, there will be an openness to spiritual things by many of our non-Christian neighbours. This enhances the need to be incarnational all the time. In addition, I have personally benefitted from learning that people will often initially belong to a Christian community before they believe in God. Therefore, we need to place more emphasis in challenging believers to consistent incarnational living, rather than just telling non-Christians how to live.

What I also learned from this project is that working collaboratively is

important. A-I is a methodology that allows people to work in collaboration. It allows us to hear collectively from God (Prov. 15:22). I am grateful for its positive approach and the openness to changes in outcomes. I discovered that our project-participants were grateful for the inclusive approach of A-I.

I was especially grateful for the number of participants who became involved with the project. This number exceeded my personal expectations. What I learned about the research in the *Discovery Phase* was that people valued Community Outreach. Although I had suspected this to be the case, it was verified through the *Discovery Phase* results. It also showed me that we were ready to engage the non-Christian community even more intensely than we had previously done. I also realized through the research that our church valued fellowship within her church community. I found this research helpful in that it suggested a hunch of mine to be true—that we were open to ministering to our non-Christian friends but not necessarily open to building friendships with our non-Christian friends. The *Discovery Phase* verified other Cedarview factors, such as we have dedicated volunteers and an appreciation for children's ministries.

I noticed a shifting away from focusing on fellowshiping within our church family in the *Design Phase*. In the *Dream Phase* a shift took place and the first priority the research identified is that we need to be accepting and being hospitable of all, not just our church family.

The *Design Phase* continued on this theme and developed strategies of how to develop relationships with our non-Christian neighbours. Not only was this an emphasis for the project, but that we make this a continuous part of who

we are and what we become in the future. In this process we need to practice self-awareness and serve the non-Christian community through our relative programs.

When it came to the small project we designed in the *Design Phase* to engage a non-Christian neighbour through hospitality, I appreciated some of those results. The research stated that the project participants found that prayer was vital when engaging non-Christian neighbours. Subsequently, if God opens a door for the Christian to share faith with their non-Christian neighbours, one should take advantage of this. I also found the project influenced some of the project participants to a decision to begin to engage their non-Christian neighbours on an ongoing basis. Finally, I learned from this research that common ground is a good way to build on—that if we approach our non-Christian neighbours from the premise of common ground, a certain level of trust already is in existence to be used to develop these relationships.

### **Useful Ministry Outcomes**

Our leadership team has also taken up the challenge to accomplish these goals. They have challenged our church to use the research results to stimulate our church to further activity. It will be necessary to keep reminding the congregation of the importance of hospitality – reinforced by leadership either through sermons, bulletins, and other media. Our café should continue to be a place where developing relationships with our non-Christian neighbours is emphasized. Those who have the gift of hospitality should look out for new people and exercise their

giftings, however it must be emphasized that the gift of hospitality is a spiritual gift but can be encouraged amongst the entire congregation.

Furthermore, we must continue to emphasize serving. We need to continue to educate our church that no one is “so busy” that we cannot be used. We have actually planned a “spiritual gift inventory” in February of 2015.

In addition, we are developing a Vision Committee that will assist us in using the giftings and talents recommended by our project participants to serve our community. In this process we will have an annual review of our ministries in order to ensure that we provide relevant programs for our community. It is vital to emphasize self-awareness in ministering to the non-Christian friends through consistent teaching by the pastors on this subject. In our Prayer Meetings we are including prayer for our non-Christian community, and this will continue to be a priority in our church. We will also encourage our people to be open to sharing their faith with their non-Christian friends. We must continue to encourage people to be hospitable to not only their church family but their non-Christian neighbours. Then we will encourage people to build relationships with those with whom they have common ground, including their friends, neighbours, relatives and associates. We will encourage the church to make the best of every opportunity and communicate this vision to others in their church family.

### **Ministry Model**

I trust this document is helpful in reminding all of us about the importance of developing relationships with our non-Christian neighbours. I hope this project

report will encourage us to continue to challenge churches to participate in focused ministry to our communities. In addition, I trust that we will not forget to be involved in *developing relationships not only with our church families, but with our non-Christian neighbours*. It is important to live the incarnational lifestyle, and to teach our congregants to be incarnational. The incarnational approach is energized by the Great Commandment. I especially appreciated Hybels approach to evangelism: *Developing Friendships by engaging in the lives of people around us; Developing stories by sharing our own story and God's redemptive story; and Discerning next steps by listening to God* (Hybels 2006, 59-60). This 3-D approach was helpful for myself and became the focus of our project.

One of the ways we can influence change is through preaching. I have always felt that preaching from the text has the greatest influences on a congregation. My ministry experience has taught me that if we just focus on change in the church without the conduit of preaching, that often results in push back. However, through textual preaching, my experience was that push back happened less often.

In addition, I feel this document is helpful in challenging churches that working collaboratively is beneficial for the church. It has biblical support, as was mentioned in my theological rationale. The A-I model is a helpful methodology tool for churches to implement change in their congregations. The positive focus keeps people away from negative criticisms. I appreciate the strength-based focus

of A-I. It also deemphasizes top-down control and gives the power of change over to the group, which makes the group feel they are part of the change.

### **Concluding Thoughts**

I am grateful for all I learned in this project. I appreciated researching the Scriptures to answer the many “how and why” concerns of developing relationships with non-Christians. It was enlightening to view other people’s writings on the subject. Furthermore, learning the A-I model became a beneficial tool for leading change in the future. In addition, the results of the project clarified how we are to move forward at Cedarview.

The project helped us better understand the Great Commandment and how it functions. The project participants contributed to developing a plan as to how to implement loving our neighbors in our geographic context. We learned the importance of going outside our walls and developing relationships with non-Christians. I appreciate our church participants stating we need to develop relationships with non-Christians before trust can be established. I am thankful for their insight that we need to use our gifts and professional talents when ministering to the non-churched. With these skills relevant programs for our community can be developed. Finally, I valued the insight to be self-aware in our interactions with non-Christians. As we build trust with the non-Christian community, they will begin to see what a genuine Christian is like. It is important to learn about the culture of the non-Christian neighbourhood and become sensitive to their background.

I am convinced this project can be useful to others in similar places of ministry. Churches need to be reminded the Great Commission is about incarnational living and believers need to be prompted on building of relationships with non-Christians. We are to use our gifts and abilities in serving God. It is important that we ask God to tell us what He wants us to do in our contexts for His glory.

## APPENDICES

## **APPENDIX ONE: PARTICIPANT CONSENT STATEMENT**

My plan is to co-develop bridging-strategies on how to effectively engage the seeker-community at Cedarview Church. The study will be held in focus groups and will be interactive. We are inviting you to participate in this project and provide insight as to how you feel we can better connect with our seeker-community.

If you agree to be part of this it is with the understanding that the consent is voluntary and free of coercion. It is optimal to take this consent form home and think about your participation. You can withdraw from the study at any time. This consent is open at all times for review, and if you have any questions you are encouraged to contact us at any time. If there are any changes in the study we will inform you so that you may determine whether or not you wish to remain in the research.

Your name will remain confidential, unless you give consent for publication purposes. We ask that you maintain confidentiality in regards to discussions and details revealed in the focus groups. All data will be password protected, and the consent forms will be locked away in a storage unit. The data will be included as a unit without any specific names disclosed in the project report. If you have any questions or concerns please contact Dr. David Russell  
or myself

**APPENDIX TWO:  
CONSENT FORM**

By signing this document it is with the understanding that your name will remain confidential and that you will maintain confidentiality regarding the other participants. Thank you so much for your input. May the Lord bless you as you participate.

**Name** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date** \_\_\_\_\_

**Witness** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date** \_\_\_\_\_

**Witness** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date** \_\_\_\_\_

**APPENDIX THREE:  
QUESTIONS FOR DISCOVERY PHASE**

**I. Opening Questions:**

**A. Brant Community Question**

- What first drew you to this community?
- Why have you stayed here?
- What do you consider are some of the most significant trends that are shaping the future of this area?

**B. CEC Questions:**

- What attracted you to CEC?
- What, in your view, are the 3 most important qualities of CEC?
- What, in your view, are the 3 most important strengths of CEC?
- What is the single most important thing that the church has contributed to your life?

**C. Personal Involvement Questions:**

- What ministries are you currently involved with?
- Why are you involved in these ministries?
- What do you find meaningful in these ministries?

**II. Topic Questions:**

**A. What is the most powerful story you have ever heard regarding Christians developing relationships with those who do not know Christ?**

- Were you involved in the process, and if yes what was your role?

**B. What CEC story comes to your mind regarding Christians at CEC developing relationships with those who do not know Christ?**

## **APPENDIX FOUR: QUESTIONS FOR DREAM PHASE**

### **I. Summarize the Discovery Response.**

### **II. You are dreaming you enter Cedarview Church in 2016.**

Seeing a panoramic view, you are moved and proud in a heartfelt way. It's the kind of Cedarview Church community you want to be part of—one that is living God's call in fresh, vibrant, meaningful and powerful ways.

- Please share some highlights of what you see in this vision: What do you see happening that is vital and good?
- What is occurring that is new, different or better?
- What things involve our greatest potential?
- Share from the perspective of the seeker.
- Share from the perspective of the leader.

### **III. In light of the Dream, what is God calling us to become?**

- We have the freedom to dream in community.
- This is the envisioning time.
- Don't worry about risk factors (e.g. financial restraints)—dream anyhow.
- Imagine what God is calling us to do. What is possible in the future?
- If you could change or develop Cedarview Church in any way to unleash all of her potential, what would those ideas be?

**APPENDIX FIVE:  
QUESTIONS FOR DESIGN PHASE**

- A. Describe characteristics in our culture that may have an impact on the effectiveness of this project.
- B. What human resources exist that will benefit this project?
- C. What are Cedarview's shared core values?
- D. Let us build a Design Structure:
  - 1. Of the recommendations listed prioritize the ones you would be most enthusiastic in supporting.
  - 2. Are the recommendations pushing the envelope enough, if not, how can this be achieved.
  - 3. Are our recommendations grounded in Cedarview's collective history?
  - 4. Will this help us with our preferred future?
  - 5. Will it help us to relate better intergenerationally?
  - 6. Let us build a model.
- E. Write out a story of how this project is impacting you.

**APPENDIX SIX:  
QUESTIONS FOR DESTINY PHASE**

1. What have you learned from our 4-D Experience?
2. What things stand out as top priorities?
3. How will you continue to apply this learning to your future daily interactions?
4. How are you going to informally communicate these principles to others?
5. Open microphone for comments/suggestions of how we will ensure we will continue to engage seekers in the future, and make that part of the core values of CEC.

**APPENDIX SEVEN:  
CEDARVIEW BOARD RESPONSE TO THE  
PROJECT (DISCOVERY PHASE)**

**HOSPITALITY:**

1. We continue to need Greeters – not necessarily at the door, but throughout the café and other public places. Greeting should be more ‘organic’ than ‘forced’ out of a sense of duty.
2. It will be necessary to keep reminding the congregation of the importance of hospitality – reinforced by leadership either through sermon, or bulletin etc.
3. Difficulty was that could become too formal when it is required of them to do – café was an attempt to “deformalize” the process of hospitality
4. We need to encourage the core of people who are regularly at the café anyway to exercise hospitality.
5. Volunteers need to be identified that have a “gift of hospitality” – those who will always be on the look-out for new people.
6. A suggestion was made to have the people who hand out bulletins move further away from the door.
7. Wording such as: “It was nice that you visited today perhaps we will see you next Sunday” – that approach almost doubles the chances of those people coming back.
8. The gift of hospitality is a spiritual gift but can be encouraged amongst all the congregation.
9. Hospitality should be considered a departmental ministry of the church the same as Sunday School if it is a identified priority of the church.

**SERVING:**

1. One of the challenges we face is to educate the people that no one is “so busy” that we can’t be used. This will take some effort and communication.
2. One must be taught on spiritual and practical priorities.

3. Pastor can do a preaching series on each of the four major components.
4. People can be challenged to be used by God in their giftings by leadership.
5. Sunday night can be used as a teaching/training time to assist them in growing their gifts.

#### **PROVIDING RELEVANT PROGRAMS:**

1. At least once a year we invite the congregation to do an evaluation of the current ministries of the church – how that is conducted is all important.
2. Have the ministry team leaders do a self-evaluation of their own ministry.

#### **DEVELOPING SELF-AWARENESS WHEN MINISTERING TO NON-CHRISTIANS:**

1. Updating our website and social media (facebook, twitter, etc.) on a regular basis – helps to inform them what we “are” and what we “aren’t” through these communication vehicles.
2. Send out communications that are relevant to the pre-converted in our community.
3. People are still truly seeking “spirituality” in one form or another and we need to recognize this and respond in appropriate and effective ways.

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