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Tyndale University

The Use of Appreciative Inquiry to Help a Congregation Through a Crisis
Towards a More Positive Outlook: Reemphasizing Discipleship and Leadership
Development

A Research Portfolio
Submitted in Partial Fulfilment
of the Requirements for the Degree of
Doctor of Ministry
Tyndale University

By

Martin Edward Spoelstra

Toronto, Canada

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ABSTRACT

This portfolio was originally intended to research Discovery Church's journey to multisite. Over a four-month period just prior to launch of the second site, the church dealt with a leadership and financial crisis brought on by a drop in attendance. These changes necessitated putting multisite on hold and refocusing energies on discipleship and mission.

The original research question proposed the use of an Appreciative Inquiry model intended to help the congregation deal with the emotional and social shifts to become one church with two locations. Facing new circumstances, the Appreciative Inquiry model was modified to help the church deal with the emotional and social concerns they had around the dramatic change in their attendance and vision for multisite. This exercise gave an opportunity for the Church to recall why they started as a church plant, some of the great things that God had already done, the courage to risk once more, and step into a new future.

Out of the Appreciative Inquiry, Discovery Church embarked on the rebuilding process that focused on clarifying their existing vision, developing disciples making disciples, and a missional leadership development process, eventually leading them back to the potential for multiplication.

DEDICATION

To Jesus my Lord and Saviour, I commit myself into Your hands again for service. All the glory goes to You.

To my wife, AJ; my children: Joshua, Kara & Kevin, Jana & Adam, Aaron & Esther and my three grandchildren; Emmarie, Arya and one more girl on the way.

AJ you have been my biggest encourager and motivator. I love you.

All of you have given me such joy and peace. Your devotion to Jesus and to our family is inspiring. Thank you for your patience in this journey.

To my Discovery Church family: thank you for all the hours of understanding as I tried to balance family, ministry, and study.

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GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Multisite church - A multisite church is one church meeting in multiple locations such as different rooms on the same campus; different locations in the same region; or in some instances, different cities, states, or nations. A multisite church shares a common vision, budget, leadership, and board.

Appreciative Inquiry - It is a process for facilitating positive change in any human systems such as churches, organizations, groups, and communities. It assumes that every human system has something that works right—things that give it life when it is vital, effective, and successful. AI begins by identifying this positive core and connecting to it in ways that heighten energy, sharpen vision, and inspire action for change.

Disciple - The word disciple in Greek is *mathētēs*, which means ‘a learner’. A learner is one who follows and imitates someone else’s teaching. Therefore, a disciple is not only a learner who follows but also one who imitates (Vine, Unger, and White 1985, 171). A Disciple submits to a teacher who teaches him or her to follow Jesus. This is an act of humility and vulnerability. By submitting to a teacher voluntarily, because one trusts them, one allows oneself through humility and vulnerability to learn and be willing to apply what one is learning about Jesus. Through this process a disciple learns Jesus’ words, Jesus’ way of ministry, and imitates Jesus’ life and character. This comes full circle when the disciple finds and teaches other disciples for Jesus (Hull 2004, 36).

Disciple Maker-A disciple maker is a Christian who is invited into relationships with people to help them trust and follow Jesus. They teach and mentor a disciple to follow Jesus’ words, Jesus’ way of ministry, and to imitate Jesus’ life and character. They also disciple in such a way that the disciple can become a disciple maker.

Servant Leadership - Servant leadership puts the leader in the role of servant, who utilizes “caring principles” to focus on followers needs to help these followers become more autonomous, knowledgeable, and like servants themselves (Northouse 2016, 5). “This kind of leadership puts the good of the followers over their own self interests and emphasizes follower development by demonstrating strong moral behaviour towards followers, the organization, and stakeholders (Northouse 2016, 226).”

Transformational Leadership - is a process that changes and transforms people. It is concerned with emotions, values, ethics, standards, and long-term goals. It includes assessing followers' motives, satisfying their needs, and treating them as full human beings. Transformational leadership involves an exceptional form of influence that moves followers to accomplish more than what is usually expected of them. It is a process that often incorporates charismatic and visionary leadership (Northouse 2016, 161).

Provocative Proposal - This is an imaginative statement about the future, crafted as if it were already experienced as part of the system. These are not strategic plans or vision statements. Provocative Proposals engage in dreaming and envisioning to invite an organization to go beyond what they thought was possible. A Provocative Proposal pushes the creative edges of possibility to wonder about the organization's greatest potential (Branson 2016, 95).

Design Team-A strategic planning team intent on leading the congregation through the two-year change process of the multisite project. The design team was made up of six individuals who had extensive planning experience and were integral to the life of Discovery Church. The design team helped to guide the creation of the survey for the one-on-one interviews, participated in the interview process, and were themselves interviewers, helped with the implementation of strategic plans for the growth of Discovery Church once the research phase was completed and provided the Elder Board of Discovery Church with updates regarding the status of the various projects and our readiness to implement the provocative proposals and experiments.

Values Theme - A value is the importance each participant attribute to Discovery Church, another person, thing, or Multisite. They are the principles, moral codes, and situational norms people live by (Daiute, 2014, p. 69).

Attitudes Theme- An attitude is the way the participant thinks and feels about Discovery Church, another person, thing, or Multisite. Attitudes are part of "a relatively enduring system of evaluative, affective reactions based upon and reflecting the evaluative concepts or beliefs, which have been learned" (Shaw & Wright, 1967, p. 3).

Beliefs Theme- A belief is part of a system that includes our values and attitudes, plus our personal knowledge, experiences, opinions, prejudices, morals, and other interpretive perceptions of our Christian Faith and social world. "Beliefs are embedded in the values attached to them" (Wolcott, 1999, p. 97) and can be considered "rules for action" (Stern & Porr, 2011, p. 28).

SMART Goal-A SMART goal is used to help guide goal setting. SMART is an acronym that stands for Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, and Timely.

CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

David Beelan is the pastor of Madison Square CRC in Grand Rapids, MI, a church that has two multisites. A multisite church is one church that meets in multiple locations. In a discussion with him I heard him use an example that had helped his church understand the multisite journey. He used the example of an apple tree. He said that the natural life span of an apple tree is about eighty to one hundred years, but the years of best apple production is usually from years five to thirty. After that, the production of apples decreases. Most people believe that the purpose of an apple tree is to produce apples. While it is true that apples are produced, an apple tree produces apples so that it can produce more apple trees. So, the purpose of an apple tree is to produce more trees. If the apples did not produce more apple trees there would eventually be no apple trees, or apples for that matter.

If the church is like an apple tree, then disciples are like the apples. George Bullard suggests that a church has a life cycle of about eighty years (Bullard 2005). After its first thirty years, the evangelistic effectiveness of a church diminishes, and it begins to produce fewer disciples. If the church does not reproduce it will continue to decline and die. The end goal of disciple making is to make more disciples and the end goal of the church is to produce more churches.

To do that, the church nurtures and provides a place for disciples to grow and mature. It is a place to nurture and develop a disciple until they are ready to make more disciples. While one of the purposes of the church is to produce and mature disciples another key purpose of the church is to produce or reproduce and plant more churches. An emphasis on discipleship at Discovery Church led to the growth of our church and then to a discussion about multiplying. For many churches' multiplication is not part of the discussion of disciple making.

Discovery Church had decided to pursue multiplication and try to find a location for a multisite. Our journey to multisite is a natural part of the plan for churches. Many who attend church believe that the purpose of the church is to produce disciples. This portfolio endeavours to outline the journey to multisite and to chart the course of organizational change that was intended to move us from being a church that makes disciples to a church that plants churches who make disciples.

When the church was planted there was an expectation that the church would reproduce and start another church. After 11 years Discovery Church had not planted another church or engaged in any other multiplication process at an organizational level. After a year long discernment journey with eight members of the congregation and the elders, a consensus was reached that we would pursue multisite as a multiplication option over church planting or developing a network of missional communities. The congregation was included in this discernment journey by participating in congregation wide prayer meetings regarding the decision to multiply as an organization. Here again, the consensus from the prayer meetings was to pursue multiplication.

For Discovery Church the idea to multisite seemed to be the next stage of our growth and development as a church. Our church of 140 members and regular attendees had seen eleven years of growth; it seemed reasonable to assume that the two years it would require to launch a multisite would also see two years of growth. We did not anticipate that the church would decline in size in a very short period of time. This unfortunately coincided with the scheduled launch of the second site. The resulting uncertainty and turmoil in the congregation required a difficult leadership decision: we needed to decide whether or not to proceed with multisite. The decline also required the leadership to focus on the short-term financial, spiritual, and emotional needs of the congregation. It required us to question whether or not we could still pursue multisite and, in the end, we shelved the idea in order to focus on the needs at hand.

To continue with the David Beelan's apple tree metaphor, it seemed as though lightning had struck one of the main branches of our apple tree and the production of apples as well as the health of the tree were in jeopardy. There were pastoral care issues at hand as well as a financial crisis due to the loss of so many members in such a short period of time. With a wound that deep within the spiritual, emotional, and social consciousness of our congregation there needed to be a time of healing and renewed reproduction. This also required an investment in discipleship in order to reestablish a strong spiritual connection between the congregation and the God who heals and restores. This reproduction would have to focus on disciple making rather than multisite.

The research (chapter four) in this portfolio was originally intended to help the congregation move from a church of one site to a church of multiple sites. Instead, what we encountered was important enough that Appreciative Inquiry, as it was designed, could also provide a process through which the congregation could address the emotional and social shifts necessary to re-form our commitment to discipleship and express their spiritual and emotional concerns.

In chapter two I will outline the growth and development of a new church but you will also hear of the growth and development of its pastor. There will be a focus on the development of disciples as well as a growing desire as a church to multiply. As I have grown, I have become more and more convinced that discipleship is the key to multiplication. The development of disciples creates mature believers who are able to make disciples and as those disciples, growing in maturity, build the capacity of the church allowing it to carry out its mission. We will also note the desire of Discovery Church to become a multiplying Church but as often happens, unforeseen circumstances lead us to use the tools available to us and help us navigate a road back to discipleship. In chapter three I will outline my personal leadership philosophy which highlights discipleship, multiplication and leadership development. In chapter four, the use of Appreciative Inquiry helped our congregation to process the changing context of the church due to the loss of so many members in such a short period of time. Appreciative Inquiry was used by the leadership to not only turn the hearts and minds of the congregation

towards the positive but also to chart a course for the development of discipleship systems, leadership development and spiritual disciplines.

CHAPTER II: CONTEXT: PERSONAL NARRATIVE AND ORGANIZATIONAL DESCRIPTION

When I began planting Discovery Church, I was assigned a coach in church planting who led me through a process of self-examination and leadership development. During the first four years of being coached I felt that God shaped and change me in the most meaningful way. I began to wrestle with my own personal ministry philosophy and began to understand my giftings. It was during this time that I put the pieces together to identify one of my primary spiritual giftings as apostleship. I use the word apostle in its simplest form as it is found in scripture: being sent.

Apostles are tasked with the overall vigour, as well as extension of Christianity as a whole, primarily through direct mission and church planting. As the name itself suggests, it is the quintessentially missional ministry, as 'sentness' (Latin *missio*) is written into it (*apostello* = sent one) (Hirsch and Catchim 2012, 8).

Looking back over the course of my life up to this point I could see how God used me to develop new ministries and was using me to develop this new church. My first church as a youth pastor was an opportunity to develop some discipleship systems for the growth and the development of high school students. Even though the students were equally divided between attending a Christian school or a public school there were significant gaps in the discipleship development systems that

include parents, Christian school, public school, and church. Restarting the youth program with a discipleship emphasis shaped my perspective on the role that discipling has in the church. The second youth pastor position I worked in allowed me to experiment and explore with multiplying existing groups using interest-based small group discipleship. In the training and development of the leaders we were able to multiply the impact of our youth ministry by starting five different interest-based discipleship groups. Not only was this an experience in multiplication but it was also an experience in leadership development. It was here that I was able to identify my entrepreneurial and apostolic spirit.

Further clarity about my ministry gifts came through a terribly negative experience. As Discovery Church began to grow, the need for pastoral care also began to grow. I became aware that my abilities in pastoral care were limited when compared with other pastors. As much as I realized that I am an apostolic pastor I also realize that I needed help around pastoral care. I say with some clarity now, that I am not a “shepherd pastor.” Unfortunately, what led to this realization was a period of burn out. I was able to resolve this partially by hiring a pastoral care director and learning to grow in my pastoral care skills.

The struggle with my pastoral care skills caused me to wrestle with the idea of moving-on to another church. I remember going to prayer and asking for insight from God and other mentors about whether or not this was the right time to move on. Over the course of my ministry life I had made significant changes through a four-year cycle. I was once again at that four-year stage. Should I move on or should I stay? I remember receiving confirmation from God that I must do

something different but that I'm supposed to stay at Discovery Church. A new cycle of ministry was in front of me; however, I was not to move to a new place but rather into a new stage.

Shortly after, we began solidifying the church's governance model and began focusing on discipleship. I attended a church planters' conference in 2011 called Exponential and in that time felt God leading me to spend large amounts of time in discipleship development and using my Apostolic gifting for multiplication.

This led to some conflicts with my Worship Director who had been with the church since 2006. She and a young man that I was mentoring believed that we were heading in the wrong direction and resigned in 2013. This was a difficult conflict resolution scenario and was one of my most significant faith challenges. Up until this point, this was the most relational learning experience I had had. I learned more about conflict resolution, relationship dynamics, and heartache in ministry here than I had at any other time in my ministry. During this time of heartache and disappointment I redoubled my efforts along discipleship and leadership development. It was during this time that I realized that we needed to reproduce more leaders so that we can make more disciples.

God does not stop in the formation of a leader's character. The next stage focuses on the development of my leadership and relationship to God. The qualities of love, compassion, empathy, submission, and discernment are deepened. God uses a cluster of items to develop character and maturity. Robert

Clinton points out that these three are typically; isolation, conflict, and crisis (Clinton 1988, 155).

Going into this stage of maturing I began to realize that discipleship was the next area to develop. This began a three-year journey of emphasizing disciple making. I began a year-long mentoring and leadership development group with eight potential leaders from Discovery Church. This leadership development and mentoring group covered topics such as: Bible reading, prayer, personal spiritual disciplines, spiritual gifts identification, character, leadership skill development, evangelism training, and identifying a passion for ministry, all the while deploying them each time with specific actions they were required to accomplish before the next meeting. This was an action-reflection model of leadership development and mentoring. Action-reflection learning is a practice which helps the participants to become a better learner through reflection, assumption testing, and question asking by practising and participating in new learning experiences. It is generally done in a small group with a team approach where members equally contribute and learn/teach each other.

At the beginning of each new session we would go over the assignments from the previous meeting and do some mutual coaching and encouragement. This produced four leaders who identified a personal mission within Discovery Church. Two participants started a young adult's ministry, one started a mom and tots' group, and the other started a lady's exercise group. Not only did these groups make disciples but they also were evangelistic feeders for our church. Two of the other participants decided to attend Bible college and the remainder became

ministry leaders within existing programs. These discipleship groups and the leadership development pipeline continues to bear fruit today.

I also became involved in external activities outside of Discovery Church in the area of multiplication. I started an organization called *Mission Activators* that was designed to start ministries and new church expressions without the encumbrances of denominational structures or systems. This resulted in several new initiatives and a church plant in North Oshawa. This was a very fruitful time of exploring and developing my apostolic gifts. I took a part-time job with our denomination as a church-planting catalyst, which I ended up leaving after six months because I wanted to focus more time and energy internally at Discovery Church.

After those three years of successful ministry I once again began asking the question, “Why am I still at Discovery Church?” Part of my discernment process included a sabbatical during the summer of 2014. One of my primary reflections during this time was asking the question, “Lord, how do you want me to use my apostolic gifts at Discovery Church?” I went to our church board after my sabbatical and shared with them that I wanted to explore the use of these gifts within Discovery Church rather than externally in our denomination. This led to another 1-year journey of discernment regarding which model of multiplication we would use at Discovery Church.

In October 2014 I received permission from the elders to pursue multiplication as an option for Discovery Church. Between November 2014 and May 2015, I put together a discernment group to discuss the multiplication

opportunities for Discovery Church and hosted two congregation wide prayer meetings. We circulated information to the congregation on what we were doing. We spent six months working out whether we should pursue church planting, multisite or a network of missional communities as a multiplication strategy. This discernment group recommended to the Elders that we pursue a multisite model with a two-year timeline for launch.

Alongside this time of fruitful ministry was an exploration of my teaching gifts. I began speaking regularly to encourage church planting and taught a seminary course on the topic at Briercrest in 2015. I became a church planting coach and became involved in two initiatives to plant a church in North Oshawa and Scarborough/Pickering.

As we began planning for the multisite at Discovery Church, I realized that I needed another training phase in my life and ministry; therefore, I enrolled in the Doctoral program at Tyndale. This time has been extraordinarily fruitful in the development of my own greater walk with God. I have learned to trust in him and have my ministry flowing from who I am rather than from my skill set. The purpose of the Doctoral project was to help move our congregation through a difficult two-year start-up phase for multisite. What we did instead was to help us navigate the difficult circumstances around the loss of so many members and leaders and chart a course into the future that focused on discipleship and leadership development.

Ministry Context

Discovery Church began as a church plant in September 2006. It began with 75 people, including children, grew to approximately 140 in attendance in 2014, and has declined to 110 in 2017. The original makeup of the church came mostly from the Christian Reformed Church (CRC). We started with eight families that attended Rehoboth CRC and Maranatha CRC and had twelve adults join our launch team who had become Christians through Alpha. Over the first eleven years of our existence we saw eight to ten people make first time commitments of faith and be baptized per year. This has given our church a high number of new believers. Our desire when we started Discovery Church was to create a church that would be welcoming and inviting for those who stopped going to church or had never been to church before. We believe that our first connection with the community would most likely be through an act of service or random act of kindness. It was my belief that the church had received a “black-eye” in the last several decades and by doing random acts of kindness that led to conversations about Jesus, we would be able to reconnect or connect people to our church.

Vision at Discovery Church

Over the years I have modified the vision of Discovery Church down to the three statements listed below. It reflects my leadership philosophy and will be reinforced by the outcome of the research. I believe that everyone is on a journey of spiritual discovery no matter where they are on the journey of faith.

To DISCOVER God and all that he has for you!

There is a longing that God has placed in all our hearts for a relationship with the divine. This is a journey of spiritual discovery. Prior to becoming a follower of Jesus, there are often many points of intersection where someone who knows of Jesus gets an opportunity to share their faith journey, they may have invited someone to church, they were able to point out the fingerprints of God on their life and tell them more about Jesus.

One of the first things we do if they are still wondering about who Jesus is and want to DISCOVER more, is to recommend that they take *The Alpha Course*. Having a conversation about life, faith, and Jesus is hard. Alpha is about creating a welcoming, friendly place where people can come and ask questions to explore the Christian faith.

The Bible tells us that God loved us enough to send his one and only son and if they believe that and are willing to trust in him, we are promised eternal life (John 3:16). That is more than just a promise, it's about living every day on the journey with Jesus. Through repentance of sin and trust in him as saviour each person can have a relationship with our eternal heavenly Father because of what Jesus has done through the power of the Holy Spirit.

The next steps in the journey is to get baptized, do profession of faith, or become a member of Discovery Church, and to sign up for our *DISCOVER Group*. Once they commit themselves to Jesus Christ the Bible teaches us that we are called to commit ourselves to each other, "First they gave themselves to the Lord; and then, by God's will, they gave themselves to us as well." (2 Corinthians 8:5).

To GROW disciples on the journey with Jesus.

Once they begin a relationship with Jesus one of the best ways to grow in faith is to become part of a *GROW group*. GROW groups exist as a way for people to engage in biblical community that helps them become more like Jesus in every area of their lives. It is our version of a small group. John Ortberg writes: "God uses people to form people. That is why what happens between you and another person is never *merely* human-to-human interaction—the Spirit longs to be powerfully at work in every encounter. (Ortberg, 2017)"

The path to being a disciple is a journey not a destination. It begins when we find someone we trust; a GROW group leader, mentor, or mature Christian and voluntarily submit to their leadership and guidance. Being humble like this opens them up to allowing God to use them to speak and to teach.

Being a disciple that learns Jesus words, learns Jesus' way of ministry, and imitates Jesus' life and character is the goal of a growing disciple in the journey with Jesus. We do that by journeying with a group of people that are being led in becoming more like Jesus. GROW groups at Discovery Church are designed to give a deeper understanding of the Bible, help to know Jesus better and provide a safe environment to ask thoughtful and even hard questions.

Learning and growing in faith is exciting. Sharing how someone is growing is an important step in discipleship. You do not need to wait 5, 10 or 15 years to teach someone else how to follow Jesus. Sharing what you learned with your spouse, children, volunteering in Discovery Kids, learning how to serve with others, using your gifts and talents are ways that you can be discipling someone else.

One of the greatest joys is to be able to help others GROW in their relationship with Jesus. We want everyone to have enough skills and insight into the Christian faith to be able to share with others who Jesus is and to help them in their journey of faith. This requires the growing leader to be humble and authentic in the role of mentor.

To abundantly BLESS our family, church, and community.

To BLESS someone means to care for them, to provide for them in a way that helps them or to protect them (Gen 12:2; Numbers 6:24-26). Being a blessing in our family, church and community is a natural outworking of what God is doing within us. One of the ways we know that God is at work is when we have the desire to give back. We are called to BLESS others because we have been blessed so much.

As you get to know Jesus on the journey of faith there comes a point when you feel the desire to be a blessing to others. That most often happens within our own family, neighbours, and coworkers. Praying for them, inviting them to come to an Alpha course, inviting them to church are ways that can be a blessing. They can also volunteer in our community, participate in the churchwide events where we get together as a church family and try to BLESS our community.

In the first few years, we focused very heavily on conducting prayer walks, Take It to the Streets Sundays (where on a Sunday morning the whole church would participate in random acts of kindness), servant evangelism, and Alpha courses. We hired a Worship Director and an Office Administrator that brought an emphasis and focus on worship and small groups. We were involved

in many of the community events such as MapleFest and AppleFest, where we helped set up and take down. We were also instrumental in starting up a city-wide worship gathering for the churches in the Bowmanville ministerial.

As Discovery Church has grown, we have tried to add programs ministries and structures to address the 10 to 15 percent growth we saw during the first eight years of ministry. This was a fascinating and exciting time of seeing new people come to know Jesus, as well as the impact that we were having in our community. By the time we reached the eight-year mark, our Sunday morning attendance was bumping around 150 and we were asking questions regarding the future of Discovery Church. The answer to that question was to multiply. After a one-year discernment journey the Elders board agreed to multisite as a multiplication option. This would allow us to continue to grow and make disciples while remaining small enough to retain a small church feel.

The multisite church is one church meeting in multiple locations. Our intention was to develop a second site in Newcastle, ON which is located twenty km from our main location. The multisite church shares a common vision, budget, leadership, and board across all its locations. Essentially, we would become one church in two locations. This would involve a worship service in two locations with live preaching. The new site would have a similar worship style, provide its own nursery and children's ministry, as well as set up and takedown, hospitality, ushers, and greeters. Each site would share common ministries such as youth ministry, Celebrate Recovery, and small groups.

For Discovery Church to move towards multiplication we needed to create a sense of urgency. We had to focus on two things. Our call to make disciples as a church, and our desire to be a small, family-oriented (under 150) worshipping community. As we grew and bumped up against the 150 mark, we began asking the questions, “Are we too big for this space?”, “Do we want to be a big church?”, and “What do we do about it?” The Great Commission drives our motives, not our strategy for growth, therefore, we embraced the multisite approach. The goal is not to grow as a church, but rather to be as effective as we can with the Great Commission.

One of the values at Discovery Church is the relational intimacy within our congregation. As we have grown, we have seen that our ability to maintain those relationships begins to break-down because of our size. Worshipping in two locations would allow us to continue to develop that relational intimacy once again at each site.

However, during the summer of 2017, of the six staff members who are part-time at Discovery Church, I had to replace four of them. One resigned, one got a new job, one moved back to the United States and the fourth left for health reasons. The multisite research project upon which my Doctorate was being based was shelved with no foreseeable future implementation at hand. It was a significant period of crisis. We saw approximately thirty people leave Discovery Church in the four months from May 2017 to Sept 2017. The Elders took the time to interview these families and found that six families left because of job changes and two families left because of the vision for multisite. For a church of 140, that

is a lot of people. The people leaving were not just fringe members, but staff and core members of our team. Donations to our church dropped dramatically and there were weeks when we were not able to pay staff salaries from the offerings being given.

In September, all these conditions came to a head and as a result I called an emergency Elder's meeting to address the issue. We decided that for the time being the journey to multisite would have to be shelved. To regroup and to grow we would need to remove multisite as an option for the future growth of Discovery Church. I was clear with the Elders that this would not be permanent. Part of the Doctoral research project was to conduct an Appreciative Inquiry. This still seemed like the best way to address the emotional and social concerns in the congregation despite the dramatic changes to the church's immediate vision. For the Appreciative Inquiry to have a positive effect multisite could not be a predetermined future.

Community Context

Discovery Church is in the municipality of Clarington. During the 11 years of growth we as a church have benefited from the fact that the municipality of Clarington is going through a growth-spurt. All indications are that the municipality will continue to grow and provide an ever-growing mission field for our church. The region and the municipality have continued to grow at extraordinary rates over the past five years. The expansion of the 407 freeway past Bowmanville, the north-south interchange of the 418, and the extension of the GO Transit system by 2023 has already placed Clarington in a position to

accommodate rapid growth in residential and commercial properties. Clarington will be the recipient of a new outlet mall and a redesign of the two 401 interchanges with the potential for a third in addition to the new police station, incinerator, and the refurbishment of the Darlington nuclear plants over the next thirty years. The municipality recently announced that Toyota Canada will be building a parts distribution centre in Bowmanville (Municipality of Clarington 2017).

In 2016, Clarington showed higher new housing development starts than anywhere else in all of Durham region. Over 990 new residential building permits were issued in Clarington compared to 900 in Oshawa which is a city that's three times the size of Clarington (Municipality of Clarington 2016). Clarington's population growth has continued to rise, and predictions see the population passing 100,000 by the end of 2018.

The table 1 shows the density of churches by population as of 2017. This also shows the church density by population in 2021 if no new churches are opened in the next 5 years.

Table 1 Church to Population Ratio Growth Prediction 2016 - 2021

Community	Number of churches 2017	Population 2016	Church to population ratio 2016	Population 2021	Church to pop. ratio 2021(w/o new churches)
Bowmanville	17	42,140	1:2478	50,400	1:2964
Newcastle	5	12,760	1:2552	16,500	1:3300
Courtice	10	28,300	1:2830	29,300	1:3055

Source: adapted from Municipality of Clarington. 2016. Official City Plan Review.

Missiologists use a church to population ratio of 1:1000 in urban areas and 1:1500 in rural areas. There is nothing biblical about this ratio, rather, it is based on the

diffusion of innovation theory. While there are many factors that go into the diffusion of innovation one aspect of this theory argues that whenever 10 to 20 percent of a population accepts a concept the society reaches a “tipping point” that will result in the diffusion of the concept across the people (Payne 2011). Other than the fact that we need more churches in Clarington one can draw the conclusion that there will be a greater need for new churches in Newcastle by 2021 than there will be in Bowmanville or Courtice (Municipality of Clarington 2016).

In an interview with Mayor Adrian Foster and Councillor Steven Cooke, I found that there was a need within the municipality for charities to play a role in community engagement (Mayor Foster 2017). The gap between the growing population’s needs and the municipality’s ability to accommodate them financially, administratively, and through its infrastructure is widening. At this point, the municipality does not have the funds to step into those gap-spaces. They are willing to help facilitate organizations who can and there is a desire to see social needs met. It was clear to me from my conversation that both Mayor Foster and counsellor Cooke desire more for their community but are unable to meet that need (Mayor Foster 2017).

As our church struggled with the desire to multiply and the inability to do so, our community continues to grow rapidly. There is a growing mission field and it was our desire to multiply this there, but our church infrastructure is also unable to handle multiplying. All the while churches in our community and in our denomination are by and large declining and our church was no longer growing.

The Christian Reformed Church and Church Multiplication Movements

Our denomination, like many others, is going through a season of decline. In 2017, twenty-nine churches in the Christian Reformed Church were disbanded (Christian Reformed Church 2017, 136). In the Christian Reformed Church and specifically in our Classis (regional grouping of churches). Sunday morning attendance for Classis Quinte in the 2018 yearbook states that 3542 people are present on Sunday morning but, only twenty-nine people were received through profession of faith or baptism by evangelism (Christian Reformed Church 2018, 40). That means that the denomination's evangelism ratio is 122 to 1.

Many church planting studies suggest that the conversion ratio in a church plant is twelve to one (Rainer, 2013). The main reason for that is that all its members are on the evangelism team, the idea of evangelism has a high priority and the pastor is likely one of the chief cheerleaders and practitioners of evangelism. Thom Rainer, in a blog post, suggests that ratio in an article he titles, *Ten Rules of Thumb for Healthy Churches*. In the blog he states a healthy rule of thumb for evangelistic effectiveness:

Twelve conversions per year for every one hundred in average attendance. Different congregations used different terminology: conversions, baptisms, professions of faith, salvations, etc. In this metric, the number refers to those in the past year who became Christians and became active in that specific congregation (Rainer 2013).

As a church plant we were seeing a ratio of conversions at about thirteen to one for the first eight years of Discovery Church's existence. The intention of going to multisite was to maximize the evangelistic output of our church and yet remain

small. As we continued to grow as a church, we also started to see our conversion ratio climb.

I remember Adrian VanGiessen, the Eastern Canada Regional Director for CRC Home Missions, laying out the situation of the Christian Reformed Church. I remember the holy discontent that it gave me, and I think it was the beginning of my desire for multiplication.

As the twentieth century closed, there were signs of challenge and change for the CRC. Twenty years of doctrinal squabbles sapped the energy of many of our churches. Churches largely dependent on internal growth began to plateau, with too many congregations showing little or no real evangelism growth. The immigration and baby boom that in large part fueled our growth during much of the twentieth century slowed to a trickle. Many churches began to report concern about a younger generation that seemed to be quietly slipping away and the average age of our membership increased.

For example, during the twenty-five years from 1985 to 2010, while the general population of Canada grew by over 20 percent, the CRC membership in Canada shrunk by 15 percent. To be fair, this was not a struggle unique to the CRC. Many Christian denominations faced the same challenges and the same opportunities.

This raised important questions for us. Do we continue a slow but steady path of decline of size and influence or will we seize the day and see what is happening around us as a unique opportunity placed before us by God to do ministry in a new way? (Van Giessen and Contant 2011).

I remember Adrian, at one-point, sharing with us that the denomination had done a study and found that: 5 percent of CRC churches might close in the next ten to fifteen years; 55 percent were declining; 25 percent were plateaued; and 15 percent were growing. The question I want to ask is, how many of the 15 percent are multiplying? Much of this information came to my attention before I went on sabbatical. During my sabbatical it became a point of holy discontent and I

wanted to move Discovery Church toward multiplication. I began asking myself why Discovery Church had not multiplied in the ten previous years? The plain truth was the we had not planned for it.

The national averages across all denominations throughout North America show similar Statistics: 80 percent of churches are plateaued or declining and they function with a scarcity mindset; 16 percent are growing where their growth is attributed to addition; 4 percent are multiplying; and 0.001 percent would be considered a movement (Hirsch 2010).

I began to see that there was a discipleship problem in our CRC churches that is connected to a multiplication problem. They are not two different things. They are connected. When there is a lack of disciple making there are not enough mature disciples to lead a ministry or church. Some will take the responsibility on themselves and find a way to be discipled, but I do not believe that will produce enough mature disciples who can make more disciples. That leaves pastors to do much of the disciple-making. Mature disciples that are given an opportunity to develop leadership skills in the mission field will contribute to the infrastructure of the church. These structures create the ability for the church to expand and influence more people. Once that infrastructure grows, if it is focused on disciple-making, the ministry grows. When disciple-making and leadership development function well together then the church is more likely to multiply. A movement begins with disciple making, which leads to disciples who make disciples, which leads to structures that build for growth, which leads to kingdom vision beyond

our institution. When all these things are combined you have a multiplication movement.

These thoughts and this new information that I reflected on during my sabbatical set the stage for my desire to take Discovery Church on the journey towards multisite. One of the benefits of multi-siting is that the new site behaves like a new church in its evangelistic effectiveness. In a recent study done in the United States by Warren Bird, new churches and multisites will see their greatest growth in the first five years of life. They typically grow 170 percent faster than the average of all subsequent years (Bird 2017). They also meet the needs of new people in a new area, in that a second site can have a slightly different character, evangelize to a new group of people, or meet different needs because of the area it is located in.

The use of a multisite approach most often re-energizes the evangelistic ministry of each location therefore creating two evangelistic engines functioning for the same organization. This is an example of multiplication rather than addition. Addition is the making of individual disciples, multiplication is the multiplying of churches that make disciples. Churches or multisite campuses started in the last five years are 52 percent more likely to invite friends and family to consider faith in Jesus Christ than at any other time in the life of the church (Bird 2017). By multiplying we were hoping to see a much higher rate of evangelistic effectiveness. Our goal was not to grow bigger or to put together a growth strategy but rather to accomplish the Great Commission in the most effective way possible. We began the journey to multisite with these expectations

and set benchmarks for the launch of the second site that included continued growth, raising financial resources and leadership development

The Structure of a Movement

According to Ed Stetzer, there are at least five statements that define the structure of church multiplication movements: you need leaders who share the vision to build momentum; success stories need to be found and trumpeted; remember that what you celebrate, you become; nothing can splash cold water on a tiny spark of a movement quite like someone dismissing or undermining the church planting work; we need to trust and follow the Spirit (Stetzer 2014). Although, there is probably more to structuring a movement than these five, this is a good start at understanding how church multiplication movements work.

First, you need leaders who share the vision to build momentum. Without a clear and compelling vision for a future that is different than the situation you are dissatisfied with, there is no movement. Finding a team that grabs hold of the vision and mobilizes a group of people is the first step in structuring a movement. The next chapter will outline how we gathered passionate, visionary people from our congregation to champion the development of multisite. Pastors, denominational leaders, and network leaders cannot make a movement, but they can shape the culture of a movement by empowering and encouraging the right leaders. Having persuasive, passionate leaders at the forefront calling others to join them is a great place to start.

Second, success stories need to be found and trumpeted. Stories grant the information an emotional connection, which is why the Gospel is the greatest

story ever told. To encourage this momentum, we organized a trip to Madison Square CRC in Grand Rapids Michigan where we interviewed the staff and experienced a Sunday multisite church. This allowed our design team to hear the stories and to see the application of what it meant to be a multisite church.

To help a movement pick up steam we needed to find and tell stories of the impact that church plants have had on communities and individuals. We had to tell the story of how church plants changed a context (e.g. relationships, social issues, and culture). We had to tell the story of how a church planted a church. We must tell the story of sending. The stories had to be told so that we can inspire multiplication. We must tell these stories in our churches, at classis, and at denominational gatherings. When the team returned from Madison Square CRC, they were able to tell those stories to our congregation and they were very excited to be part of the journey.

Third, remember that what you celebrate, you become. If we wanted to encourage the journey to multisite and inspire the people of our congregations, we needed to celebrate other multiplication efforts in our denomination. We invited a local church planter to preach several times to help celebrate what we wanted to become. Without celebration we lose momentum. I would even suggest we create a scoreboard of success that includes people ready to plant, churches willing to plant churches, and fundraising that meets or exceeds expectations.

Fourth, nothing can splash cold water on a tiny spark of a movement quite like someone dismissing or undermining the church planting work. There was a key leader in our church who was outwardly in favour of moving forward towards

multisite but who behind-the-scenes was sowing seeds of discontent and doubt.

There needs to be buy-in across the people of God if a church plant is to succeed.

This includes both from the denomination and the seminary. Without training and denominational support, the enormous task of developing a movement would be hindered. I believe that the CRC has several problems related to the buy-in of believers to church plants:

- 1 - There is an expectation that a church planter must have six to seven years of education and training. Within the CRC there is an expectation that every Minister of the Word have a Master of Divinity.
- 2 - Church planters have expertise that others do not have. If we believe that church planters are the only ones that can plant churches we will miss out on the development of movements because that requires trained and approved clergy in our denomination.
- 3 - Our Christology forms our ecclesiology which forms our missiology, instead it should be Christology–missiology–ecclesiology. In the CRC we have addressed mission as an extension of the existing church structure. The most effective movements are developed by gathering people from the mission field, discipling them and then forming structures that meet the needs of these specific groups of people.
- 4 - We fight against the idea that the apostolic mission happens through the people of God. Every believer is an agent for the King and in the apostolic mission everyone gets to play. If everyone gets to play that we must have structures that allow each believer to participate in the apostolic mission. Once we form structures that require a long period of time or a certain amount of expertise and we limit a movements ability to grow.

Movements are stopped because, institutionally, we have set up a two-tiered system: clergy and everybody else. When we lower the bar of control and increase accountability it allows for the release of a movement.

Fifth, we need to trust and follow the Spirit. He, in accordance with His word, births a disciple-making movement that becomes an exponential movement toward multiplication. There will be clusters of movement based upon the work of the Spirit, the making of disciples who make disciples, and leaders who

understand that multiplication is the target for every activity in the church. When we see and sense the movement of the Spirit of God, we should be quick to join what God is already doing (Stetzer 2014).

Several things were happening at Discovery Church and I was learning more about multiplication movements. With a growing church and a desire to multiply I began moving the church leadership towards a structure that would allow our church to continue to grow by multiplication and stay small by creating a second site through the use of multisite. Disciple making, leadership development, healthy structures and multiplication were the thoughts and convictions that I had with our Elders and congregation. Unfortunately, we went through the decline in membership which placed the whole idea of multiplication on hold. With eleven years of healthy growth, strong discipleship, and leadership development, it seemed to be the right next move. The next chapter will explore my thoughts and my convictions regarding these topics.

CHAPTER III: PHILOSOPHY OF LEADERSHIP

Jesus' leadership style was to call disciples into a life of imitation and transformation. As I think about my journey as a leader I look back at the influence of godly men and women who have imitated Jesus. They modelled to me what it means to be a disciple and how to be a humble leader. They taught me how to think critically and to go deep so that the Holy Spirit might do the transforming work necessary to deal with my character defects. I am grateful for these men and women. I think specifically of my catechism teacher, my professors at Bible College and seminary, my coach in church planting, and especially my wife. Without these people pushing, evaluating, encouraging, and inspiring me I would not be the leader that I am today.

As leaders, our first calling is to become disciples of Jesus. A disciple reflects and imitates the words, ways, and ministry of Jesus then they are called to disciple others in the way that Jesus disciplined (Hull 2004, 36). When we make disciples, we are leading. Leadership is about moving a group of disciples toward a vision. Discipleship implies taking someone to a destination. The job of the leader is to create a vision and strategy for moving that existing group of potential leaders and disciples toward a foreseeable future.

Over the years, I have become convinced that my role as a leader is to develop leaders in a context where spiritual formation, character transformation, and skill development are the primary actions. My belief is that character transformation happens best in community. It is in community that the nature of our relationship with God is explored in a setting that allows for discussion and accountability (Breen 2011, 68-69). Skill development is also best done by leaders who have themselves led. Leading by example and from experience is the first step in skill development, the second step is debriefing the actions of a disciple in skill development so that it can be practiced and refined. Once the skill is mastered then the disciple can innovate based on their preferences and skills. It is the role of the leader to provide information that leads to imitation and eventually to innovation (Breen 2011, 48-49). Leaders are servants that give away more than they keep. The model of servant leadership forms the basis for my leadership approach. A biblical theology of leadership is rooted within a highly relational community. It's not a solo journey but an activity that is engaged in with a community, not standing outside or over a community. Servant leadership is shared. It's not a hierarchical position that separates leaders from others. We are each leader and follower interchangeably. Servant leadership promotes vision but not the vision of one person. It is shared within community. Vision is not what one person gives to another. It is a gift of God to a community. The communication of God's will happen within our relationships and flows out of a highly relational community (Bell 2014, 355). I hold in tension the model of transformational leadership because it fits my personality: I desire to motivate and

inspire people to go deeper in their discipleship, provide charismatic and visionary leadership, carry out the mission of the church, and disciple others.

Transformational leadership is a process that changes and transforms people. It is concerned with emotions, values, ethics, standards, and long-term goals.

Transformational Leadership includes assessing followers' motives, satisfying their needs, and treating them as full human beings. Transformational leadership involves an exceptional form of influence that moves followers to accomplish more than what is usually expected. It is a process that often incorporates charismatic and visionary leadership

My personal definition of leadership is: To be led by God to create a vision for a future and lead a group of disciples towards this future while discipling existing and potential leaders.

Leadership Theory

As I have been exposed to various leadership theories, I have come to the conclusion that I share the traits of two leadership theories that are most like my personality and temperament. I also feel that the Lord has shaped my capacity and leadership ability through the development of submission and humility. The two leadership theories that I most identify with are servant leadership and transformational leadership.

Servant Leadership

Servant leadership is a model of leadership and the method that is most prominent in the life of Jesus. Jesus set the tone for servant leadership when He described His mission in Mark 10:45: Jesus said, "For even the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve others and to give his life as a ransom for many."

The characterization of Jesus as the “suffering servant” from Isaiah 53 and His own descriptions of Himself as being sent by His Father to do His will (John 17:20) are indications that Jesus believed His mission to be that of a servant.

I believe that Jesus is our ultimate example and the example that I must base my leadership on. The idea of servant leadership is spread throughout the scriptures. Jesus’ servant leadership style can be seen in His treatment of marginalized individuals during His time on Earth. He spent time with people that others would consider untouchable or unclean. Only a servant mentality could explain why Jesus spent the time He did with social and religious outcasts. Some examples include healing the lepers, valuing women (John 4), and casting out demons from a Gentile woman’s daughter (Mark 7:24-30). He also took a servant’s posture when He washed the disciple’s feet (John 13:1-12).

One of the characteristics of servant leadership is the willingness to submit to a higher moral authority. Although some current philosophies may claim that there is no moral authority and there is no standard upon which to base the moral requirements for leadership (Burns, Shupe, and Simmons 2014, 115), servant leadership assumes there is a moral authority. This is the basis for all transformation. If we are to serve others in leadership one of the key components of that task is to move people toward Christ’s likeness. This requires an understanding of ethics and morality as they relate to our Christian theology. A moral authority is the standard upon which we base transformation, whether we are in the church or not. As a Christian, we understand this to be a submission to Christ and His leadership. Jesus Himself submitted to His heavenly Father on

several occasions, in doing so He modelled the idea of submission in servant leadership. In the garden of Gethsemane, Jesus prayed to His heavenly Father to “let this cup of suffering be taken away from me. Yet I want your will to be done, not mine” (Matthew 26:39).

I believe that Jesus modelled servant leadership and it is in the last forty years that there has been a desire to reclaim servant leadership as a leadership model. Robert Greenleaf (1904-1990) in his seminal work *The Servant as Leader*, first published in 1970, gives us the beginnings of a definition on servant leadership:

The Servant-Leader is servant first... It begins with the natural feeling that one wants to serve, to serve first. Then conscious choice brings one to aspire to lead... The best test, and difficult to administer is this: Do those served grow as persons? Do they, while being served, become healthier, wiser, freer, more autonomous, and more likely themselves to become servants? And what is the effect on the least privileged in society? Will they benefit, or at least not further be harmed? (Greenleaf 1977, 7)

The practice of servant leadership should always address whether people are growing in their faith and being empowered for faithful service. This is the discipleship journey. In his survey of servant leadership theory and research, Dierendonck suggests that there are six characteristics of servant leaders that can be extrapolated from the various theories and models on servant leadership, “Servant-leaders empower and develop people; they show humility, are authentic, accept people for who they are, provide direction, and are stewards who work for the good of the whole” (Dierendonck 2011, 1232).

This approach to leadership challenges our traditional beliefs about leadership and influence. Servant leadership emphasizes that leaders should be

attentive to the needs of followers, empower them, and help them develop their full human capacities. The servant leader makes the conscious choice to serve first—to place the good of the follower over the leader’s self-interest. The goal of the servant leader is to give up control rather than seek it. Servant leaders do not dominate, direct, or control. Instead, they share control and influence. This is accomplished by building strong relationships that are empathetic and ethical and serve the greater good of the organization.

Peter Northouse, after reviewing Greenleaf’s servant leadership writings lists ten major characteristics of servant leadership: listening, empathy, healing, awareness, persuasion, conceptualization, foresight, stewardship, commitment to the growth of people, and building community (Northouse 2016, 227, 253). In some situations, leaders need to direct, create vision, and must have a concern for the direction of an organization, including goalsetting. Servant leadership tends to diminish the role of the leader in these categories because of the emphasis on putting others first (Northouse 2016, 240). According to Northouse there are seven behaviours of the servant leader:

- 1 - **Conceptualizing** – understanding the organization and its purposes, complexities, and mission.
- 2 - **Emotional healing** – being sensitive to the personal concerns and well-being of others.
- 3 - **Putting followers first** – this is the defining characteristic of servant leadership.
- 4 - **Helping followers grow and succeed** – making followers’ career-development a priority, including mentoring and coaching.
- 5 - **Behaving ethically** – doing the right thing in the right way.
- 6 - **Empowering** – sharing power with followers by allowing them to have control.
- 7 - **Creating value for the community** – consciously and intentionally giving back to the community (Northouse 2016, 233-236).

My understanding and comprehension of servant leadership over the past three years has grown from the study done during this doctoral process. As I reflect on my previous leadership experience, there have been many years where I have been more of a servant leader than I had imagined. I was engaged in delegating responsibilities, serving the needs of others, creating a shared vision with the leadership rather than relying on the singular vision that was proposed when the church was planted. I have come to realize that servant leaders think more about the kingdom of God than about myself or even Discovery Church. We should be reluctant to advance the kingdom of God or accomplish Jesus mission if we do not apply principles of servant leadership. Every true movement of Jesus' mission would begin with where the leader's heart is. I had to take the spotlight off myself. As I have begun to shine that light on others, equipping others, empowering them to be leaders and sharing the development of vision I have begun to model servant leadership.

Transformational leadership

Transformational leadership is defined as a “leadership style with explicit attention to the development of followers through individualized consideration, intellectual stimulation, and supportive behavior” (Dierendonck 2011, 1235). When a leader is respected and trusted enough to be imitated that leader then has the ability to motivate others. In doing so, a transformational leader will invite innovation and encourage creativity. They will also pay attention to each individual's need for achievement and growth by acting as a coach or mentor (Ledbetter, Banks, and Greenhalgh 2016, 8). This definition of transformational

leadership is comparable to that of servant leadership. There is one aspect of transformational leadership, the charismatic side of idealized influence, which raises the question: for whom or for what do followers grow? This is where servant leadership and transformational leadership differ. The focus of transformational leaders is the organization. The personal growth of followers is seen within the context of what is good for the organization and a desire to perform better. There is an obvious risk of manipulation to achieve organizational goals or to meet the leader's personal goals. Transformational leadership leads to the problem of narcissism when a narrow focus on the short-term goals of the leader may lead ultimately to long-term disastrous consequences for the follower (Dierendonck 2011, 1235).

The largest difference, according to Dierendonck, between servant leadership and transformational leadership theories is that servant leadership focuses on humility, authenticity, and interpersonal acceptance and transformational leaders use inspiration to focus on the objectives of the organization. Servant leaders focus more on concern for their followers by creating conditions that enhance their followers' wellbeing and facilitate a shared vision. Servant leaders must trust the followers to do what is necessary for the organization. "Servant-leaders are perceived as focusing more on the needs of the individual; their allegiance lies more with the individual than with the organization, while the opposite indeed holds for transformational leaders" (Dierendonck 2011, 1235).

As I reflect on the journey towards multisite prior to the crisis in 2017, I would say that I was functioning more as a transformational leader. I was more focused on the needs of the organization and using my ability to inspire others to continue to move towards multiplication. After accepting that the multisite journey would have to be shelved due to the leadership and financial crisis, I would say that I began functioning more within the scope of the servant leader. There were pastoral issues, personality conflicts, and a large group of people who were hurt or disillusioned by the circumstance we found ourselves in. This required us to focus a substantial amount of time and energy on pastoral care in discipleship. There was a time when I had to realize that there was nothing more that I could do and that I needed to trust in the willingness of the individuals to move towards a new future.

Humility, Authority and Submission

My personal leadership journey can be described as one of submitting to Jesus. I had believed in Jesus as my Saviour, but it wasn't until much later that I submitted my life to His leadership. My leadership journey also required that I submit myself voluntarily to the oversight and accountability of someone that I trusted. Before going further, I think it would be wise to address the concept of authority, submission, and humility. I use these words regularly and without some clarity around my use of these words, there will be some misunderstanding.

In any organization a leader must have authority in order to carry out goals and vision. What I mean by authority is the structural powers to lead an

organization: the power to hire and fire, set directions, approve budgets, and overrule colleagues when there is a disagreement. In a church context, this is the delegated authority that comes from Jesus: our ability to influence others to follow Jesus Christ and to cast vision and set strategy for the growth of the church and the expansion of the kingdom of God. This is one of the trickiest aspects of leadership as it can very quickly become about power if not approached with the proper character. Jesus only use in relationship to power was to give power away. Jesus consistently modelled a community leader capable of sharing rather than grasping at power. Jesus mentored the disciples in that very same way. Communities of faith will thrive on shared and decentralized power. “This idea of power-sharing includes mentoring, delegating authority, sharing decision-making, preparing successors, and fostering independence about members rather than either dependence of, or dependence upon, a dominant leader (Bell 2014, 348).” A proper use of authority comes by examining the relationship between God the Father and the Son, Jesus Christ. God the Father is described as our King; He has authority and power. The Bible speaks of Him ruling with splendor and majesty (1 Timothy 6:15-16, Psalm 93:1-2). God the Father delegates this authority to Jesus Christ. In Jesus’ own words, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me” (Matthew 28:18). Jesus then sends us, as one who has received delegated authority, to carry out the work that Christians are called to accomplish (Mark 16:15, John 20:21). The unique characteristic of this authority is seen in the way in which Jesus accepts authority from His heavenly Father.

Jesus accepts this authority from God the Father by submitting to God's will, humbling Himself, and being willing to carry out God's plan (Matthew 26:39, Philippians 2). This act of submission was not one of coercion but was characterized by humility and a willingness to voluntarily bring one's will under the direction and supervision of another. It is the willingness to hold power in service of others that characterizes this type of authority. This is a description of servant leadership at its finest. In his book, *Servants & Friends* Skip Bell describes servant leadership as it relates to humility:

Over and over, Jesus sought to drive home the truth that leadership is about servanthood by using two terms—*diakonos* and *doulos*—and their derivatives. The first term captures and conveys the idea of serving, as in serving tables, and connotes humility and attitudes associated with service. The second conveys service grounded in obedience rendered because one has given up certain rights, willingly or otherwise (Bell 2014, 279).

Servant leadership and discipleship require this kind of submission and humility. I suggest that we submit to a disciple-maker or leader, but as an act of humility done voluntarily. Appropriate and informed humility is the act of someone voluntarily and willingly placing themselves under the leadership of another. Healthy servant leadership requires the followers to trust the leader while still having the choice to remove themselves from under that person's leadership if necessary or desired. This act of submission facilitates a posture of learning and willingness to set aside a personal agenda or way of thinking so that discipleship or leadership development can take place. I believe this models Jesus' humility

when He voluntarily submitted Himself to the will of His heavenly Father for the good of others.

The apostle Paul in the book of Ephesians chapter 5 describes spirit guided relationships as “submit(ing) to one another out of reverence for Christ” (Ephesians 5:21). The word submit, *hypotasso*, in Greek means “arrange under.” Submission is a crucial ingredient in Christian living, especially in the leader. In the church of Corinth, Christians were asked to submit themselves to workers who had made themselves servants to the church—they were asked to submit to servants. Likewise, prophets were to submit to other prophets (1 Corinthians 14:32; 16:16). The apostle Paul appointed leaders and overseers wherever he went, and this idea of submission is included in the role of leader and overseer. Submission is a very important theme for the writers of the New Testament because it describes the “self-giving love, humility, and willingness to die that are demanded of all Christians.” (Snodgrass 1996, 292).

I will use the word submit and submission many times and I want to be clear that the word is not being used in relation to giving up power or when someone submits, they lose the ability to choose or remove themselves from the authority of a leader. The leader is called to submit to the disciple and the disciple is called to submit to the leader knowing that each person is making a conscious choice to set aside their agenda for the other, giving themselves to be disciplined or lead. It’s my position that mutual submission, done voluntarily with a humble posture, provides the best context for life transformation and leadership growth. From many of the one-on-one interviews conducted for the Appreciative Inquiry

there were comments about mentoring, discipleship, and coaching provided by the pastoral staff that had transformed the lives of the individuals being interviewed. These were indications of some of the best and most transformative things that Discovery Church had offered to them in their lives. A disciple who submits themselves to a disciple-maker voluntarily with a humble posture is much more likely to be transformed by the words of Jesus than if they had not thought through the process of submission. Inasmuch as a disciple submits to a disciple or leader the leader must also submit to the disciple. This is mutual submission (Ephesians 5:21). I believe that many leaders don't voluntarily submit because it leaves them open to critique, criticism, and feedback.

The Character of a Leader

As I have grown in my own leadership ability, I recognize that there have been times and spaces when God has had to work out some of my character defects. As I relate to this subject, I recognize that because I have been willing to do the hard work of reflection, I have seen God grow my leadership ability. During my reflection I have identified and come to understand my emotions, addressed my past mistakes, forgiven and received forgiveness, and become aware of the Gospel of grace in my brokenness. I believe there is a direct relationship between the transformation of character and the ability to lead well. Great leaders have taken the time to address their character defects.

Humility is one of the foundational character qualities of leadership

When identifying potential leaders and performing the tasks of leadership, humility is an essential character quality. Without humility, power can be used

and abused for the sake of the leader or the institution rather than for the benefit of people in their journey of discipleship. “Humility is the noble choice to forgo your status, deploy your resources or use your influence for the good of others before yourself. More simply, you could say the humble person is marked by a willingness to hold power in service of others” (Dickson 2009, 24). When combined with other leadership aspects I believe that humility enhances the ordinary and makes the great even greater. If leadership is influence, then humility is the way that influence is best communicated.

I have had several occasions when a skilled leader shows up at our church wanting to step into a place of leadership. My first concern is not their skills but rather their character, and the best indicator of good character is humility and teachability. I will often ask this skilled leader to serve in an area that requires humility such as usher, greeter, hospitality, or set up. Their willingness to do these things even though they are more skilled and qualified for other leadership positions tells me that they are humble enough to be used in whatever capacity is needed. If a leader is not willing to humble themselves to serve others this is an indication that humility is not a part of their character. The apostle Paul describes the selfless actions of Jesus as an example of humility. He counsels people to be humble and think of others first, to look out for the interests of others not just themselves, and to have the same attitude as Jesus did when “he gave up his divine privileges; taking on the humble position of a slave and was born as a human being. When he appeared in human form, he humbled himself in

obedience to God and died a criminal's death on a cross" (Philippians 2:6-8 NLT).

Without humility, a person with a great amount of skill is a problem waiting to happen, being unable to manage their character defects and are usually toxic to an organization. A person without humility, being toxic in nature, will come on too strong when they first meet you and will be overly positive. They will try to give you advice during your first contact or meeting. When someone leads off with a lot of advice when you first meet them, it may be an indication that they are not humble. When you do not know a person well and they want to tell you how to do things or how things should be done, it may also be an indication of a lack of humility. This is not to say that making changes or doing things well isn't important, yet doing these things within the context of a relationship is different than being offered advice without relationship. Toxic people are often trying to be the centre of attention and they will tell you what they think about their amazing track record and accomplishments in order to get your attention (Sampson 2012, 79-91). This is the opposite of humility. They tend to be very vocal when you first meet them and try to be far too influential in the first month of your relationship. They also likely have a track-record of moving around from church to church because of a "problem" they've had at another church (Nieuwhof 2013).

Leadership Is the Crucible of Character

I still remember when I read the book *Courageous Leadership* by Bill Hybels for the first time (I have since read it three or four more times as I go

through it with leaders I'm mentoring). The first lesson that I learned reading this book was about the three Cs of team selection. The first C is character, the second C is competence, and the third C is chemistry. Hybels states that you should always put character above competence. The occasional lapse in competence can be accepted, however, lapses in character create problems with far-reaching implications. He describes character as being confident in a person's walk with Jesus Christ, their commitment to spiritual disciplines, and evidence of honesty, teachability, humility, reliability, healthy work ethic, and a willingness to be entreated (Hybels 2002, 81). It is unfortunate that these words of Hybels about character now stand in contrast in light of the scandal that surrounds some questions of his honesty and humility.

Character

One of the leadership qualities Bill Hybels talks about is character. He suggests that a commitment to spiritual disciplines is an indicator of a healthy leader. It is in our time with God that we understand how to imitate our Saviour which shapes our character (Hybels 2002, 81).

In his book *Building Leaders*, Aubrey Malphurs outlines some qualifications for a potential leader:

- 1 - They are a Christian.
- 2 - They are a person of good character. The character qualifications need to be determined based upon each leadership level.
- 3 - They are a person of good reputation in the community.
- 4 - They are teachable. If the person thinks they know it all this is usually a sign of some deeper emotional issue.
- 5 - They are committed. People show their commitment through church membership and ministry involvement.
- 6 - They can agree with the ministry's statements of core value, mission, vision, strategy, and doctrine.

7 - They are a person with good personal habits and background (Malphurs and Mancini 2004, 136-137).

In his book, *The Emotionally Healthy Leader*, Peter Scazzero describes an unhealthy leader as “someone who operates in a continuous state of emotional and spiritual deficit, lacking emotional maturity and a ‘being with God’ insufficient to sustain their ‘doing for God’” (Scazzero 2015, 25). The ability of leaders to lead larger and larger groups of people is directly proportionate to the willingness of a leader to go deep with God and tackle issues of emotional maturity and spiritual deficit. For the apostle Paul, character was one of the fundamental aspects of choosing overseers in the church (1 Timothy 3:2-3).

Competence

Hybels describes competence as the second area that will allow a leader to lead at different leadership capacities. Some people have natural skills that they were born with and others need training, mentoring, and education in order to learn the skills that are required to lead larger and larger groups of people (Hybels 2002, 83). Malphurs and Mancini outline four core competencies for any leader: character, knowledge, skills, and emotions. They would include character in the competencies that are required of a leader (Malphurs and Mancini 2004, 147-150). Some of the necessary character qualities that we should look to are found in 2 Timothy 2:2 such as trustworthiness and teachability. We also look to passages such as 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:6-9 which provide the characteristics for Elders.

The second core competency is the leader’s intellect or their ability to acquire and process content or information. This competency is really based upon

knowing what to do. It is reasonable to assume that there would be different knowledge competency levels for different ministries or leadership capacities. Some general competencies would include knowing themselves and their gifting, knowing people and how they function, knowing how to study the Bible and how to pray, having a degree of organization and strategy, and agreeing with their organization's core statements.

The third core competency is skill. Leaders have to be able to put into practice what they learn. At some point a leader has to act and if they are going to be a leader must be able to lead. Some of those skills include how to cast vision, pray, discover and develop core ministry values, develop a ministry mission statement and strategy, and teach and preach the Bible or a Sunday school lesson. Some relational skills would include knowing how to listen, encourage, mentor or coach, resolve conflicts, network, counsel, motivate, take risks, problem solve, and build trust. In my opinion, if leaders are going to lead groups of 10-50 people, they should exhibit most of these skills in order to lead well.

The fourth competency is emotions. Leaders emotions reflect what they feel. It will affect his or her mood. A leader's mood is very contagious and spreads very quickly throughout a ministry. A good mood characterized by optimism and inspiration affects people positively. It is also important to create a climate for ministry leaders that exemplify the fruits of the Spirit (Galatians 5:21; Malphurs and Mancini 2004, 147-151).

Competence is based upon the nature of the skills necessary for that leadership position. It requires an awareness of temperament, natural abilities, and

spiritual gifts. Competence is also often equal to a person's work ethic. If someone is not able or willing to work hard, they will not grow the skills necessary to become competent. It requires a willingness to risk and a willingness to learn new skills. The apostle Paul also highlights competency when he suggests that that an overseer should not be a new believer and that an overseer should be "tested". He goes on to suggest that people outside the church should speak well of that person's character (1 Timothy 3:6-8).

I think there is an additional reason that character is important. When we are "pressed" under the stresses and burdens of leadership, what comes out because of the pressure is character. If there are character flaws they will be amplified under pressure. If there are good character qualities, they too will be amplified under pressure. Every leader must go through a journey of personal transformation by coming face-to-face with their character.

At three years old, one of our children got into the habit of plopping down on the floor, screaming and crying, when they didn't get their way. As parents, we knew that we had to refuse to respond to this negative behaviour. One of my mantras during that time was, "Will crying getting you what you want?" When the inevitable answer came, "No!" we would often answer by asking, "Then why do you keep doing it?" Too often leaders keep doing the same things and when they do not succeed, they try harder, thinking that it will produce different results. The problem many leaders have is that they haven't taken the time to reflect on their own behaviour. An action reflection model of discipleship and mentoring will help potential leaders go through the process of reflecting on their actions to

see their character defects. This kind of discipleship and mentoring can provide spaces for action reflection so that a leader can learn the process for further character development. Our behaviour is based on our character and any flaws in our character only amplify poor behaviour. Character transformation happens best as we look inside at our willingness to obey Christ (Harrington, Creech, and Taylor 2003, 7). Our capacity to lead will be in direct proportion to our character's reflection of Jesus Christ.

Character, not competency, determines your capacity. Character matters because you bring who you are into everything you do. Your character determines the kind of leader you will be, but also the kind of husband you will be, parent you will be, and even friend you will be (Nieuwhof 2016). Even the most skilled person on the planet will not have any followers if the people following you don't trust you, like you, or want to imitate you. I believe that the depth of your character will determine the capacity of your leadership. Without character transformation your capacity to lead will suffer and stagnate.

Chemistry

The third "C" is Chemistry. Chemistry is the intangible nature of relational fit with the leaders and the team (Hybels 2002, 84-85). One of the things I now ask myself is, "Do I have an immediate positive reaction to this person and how they interact with the team?" Much of my time will be spent with a few people engaging in kingdom causes that I need to know that I am going to enjoy the relationship and that connection helps me rely on and motivate a team.

Leadership

Where do leaders come from? Are leaders born or are they made? The Trait Perspective of leadership (Northouse 2016, 7) suggests that some people are just born to be leaders; they have characteristics and qualities that separate them from others. They may be extroverted, intelligent, or have unique physical characteristics, like height, that predispose them to be leaders. Conversely, there is the process view of leadership where leadership can be observed in the behaviours of a leader and it can be learned (Northouse 2016, 7). Yet there still is the idea that God gives a unique and special gift of leadership through the power of the Holy Spirit (Romans 12:8). Some leaders in the church lean toward leadership models that are not grounded in the scriptures, likewise, there are leaders in the church that are so focused on biblical models that they are unable to see the benefits that leadership outside of the church have to offer.

Leadership must always start with discipleship. I believe that too many leaders in the church have not paid enough attention to the discipleship process. When we do that, we neglect our purpose. The role of a leader, the purpose of a leader, and the actions of a leader are to go and make disciples (Matthew 28:19-20). Without discipleship we will not have a process to develop more leaders. One of the mistakes I made early in my ministry was to neglect discipleship. This led to me using the existing leaders to lead the organization without providing a means to develop new leaders as the organization grew. As the organization grew, the original leaders became overburdened and many stepped out of leadership. It was then left to me to fill the gap. It was not long after that that I experienced burn-out as a leader.

Disciple

A philosophy of leadership must begin with what it means to be a disciple. Very simply, a disciple is a learner who is to become like his or her teacher (Luke 6:40). The word disciple in Greek is *mathētēs*, which means *a learner*. A learner is one who follows and imitates someone else's teaching. Therefore, a disciple is not only a learner who follows but also one who imitates (Vine, Unger, and White 1985, 171). The journey of becoming a disciple starts with submitting to a teacher who teaches him or her to follow Jesus. This is an act of humility and vulnerability. By submitting to a teacher voluntarily, because one trusts them, one allows oneself through humility and vulnerability to learn and be willing to apply what one is learning about Jesus.

Through this process a disciple learns Jesus' words, Jesus' way of ministry, and imitates Jesus' life and character. This comes full circle when the disciple finds and teaches other disciples for Jesus (Hull 2004, 36). The purpose of discipleship is to go deeper with God and to be shaped into the image of Christ, because character is developed in community. Making disciples is a leadership development process. When someone hears the call of Jesus to "Come, follow me" (Mark 1:17) they begin the journey of transformation that takes men and women under the leadership of Jesus. This transforms them into effective spiritual leaders who contribute to the mission of God's kingdom.

Disciple making is the process of teaching this new convert to be obedient to the teachings of Jesus. While leadership is always a part of the process of disciple making at this point leadership plays a significant role in making sure that a disciple is looking to Jesus as the ultimate leader and example. As a result of

Jesus' teaching on forgiveness, love, mercy, and justice we teach the new convert to obey so that they can forgive someone, love someone, show mercy, or stand up against injustice.

There are five aspects to disciple making that are crucially important.

- 1 - Voluntarily submit to the teaching of a disciple-maker/mentor who teaches them to follow Jesus. Character is developed in the community and that development begins with mutual submission (Ephesians 5:21). Paul taught that submission is for everyone and it was the evidence of being filled with the Spirit. When we have a trusted disciple-maker who was willing to submit, we have a setting of mutual submission and humility that allows things that have been hidden in the darkness to come to light.
- 2 - Learn Jesus' ways of ministry.
- 3 - Learn Jesus' words.
- 4 - Model Jesus' life and character.
- 5 - Find and teach other disciples, become a disciple-maker (Hull 2004, 36).

Discipleship is the context through which leadership functions. Leadership in the church, at its basic level, is leading one person into a fuller understanding and knowledge of what it means to be a disciple, and at its most complicated level, is leading a group of people in an organization or church into a fuller understanding and knowledge of what it means to be a disciple. Without disciples there is no one to lead.

Unfortunately, discipleship in the church has typically only focused on learning Jesus' words, way of ministry, and imitating His life and character. In my experience it rarely includes submitting to a teacher who teaches them to follow Jesus or finding and teaching other disciples of Jesus. It was my experience and the experience of many of my peers in ministry that we were left to our own devices in figuring out how to be a disciple of Jesus. Is it any wonder that we have a lack of leadership in the church? Without submitting to a teacher or being

willing to find and teach others, we cannot continue to grow the body of Christ. I have often said that the role of a leader is to produce more leaders. Otherwise, I will always be the one standing in front of a group of people teaching them Jesus' ways, words, and how to imitate Him. By developing leaders, I can move from an inadequate model of leadership that is based upon my capacity to disciple to a leadership model of reproduction in which new leaders are developed and have the capacity to lead because they have submitted to a leader who has shown them what it means to be a disciple; a leader who required them to lead others.

It's more likely in these changing times that we see #1 and #5, from the list above, included in the discipleship process or system but too often we only see disciple-making systems that focus on 2-4, learning Jesus' way, learning Jesus' words and modelling Jesus' life and character. While I believe that these are the crucial parts of making a disciple, they do not include reproduction. Unless you are willing to submit yourself to the teaching of a disciple-maker who teaches them to follow Jesus and then be willing to do the same for others, we risk losing the ability to reproduce ourselves as followers of Jesus. I believe that these five aspects of disciple-making provide a template for a multiplying movement - disciples who learn to become disciples who make disciples.

The results of this kind of disciple-making takes the people of the church who have been discipled and provide them with the capacity and the capability to disciple others with simple rhythms that can be reproduced easily. This will add numerically to the growth of the church and provide a healthy growing maturing

congregation as disciples remain in groups to be disciplined. This is effective multiplication.

Rhythms

What are the rhythms that are appropriate for these five aspects of discipling? There are many different theories and systems that could be applied to this question. The CRC through Faith formation has provided appropriate information, many other disciple-making movements have identified specific systems. But what I am most interested in are the rhythms that flow from the process of discipling.

Action reflection is a model of mentoring that is used successfully to develop specific skills within a group of people without dangerously creating a hierarchy between disciple and discipler.

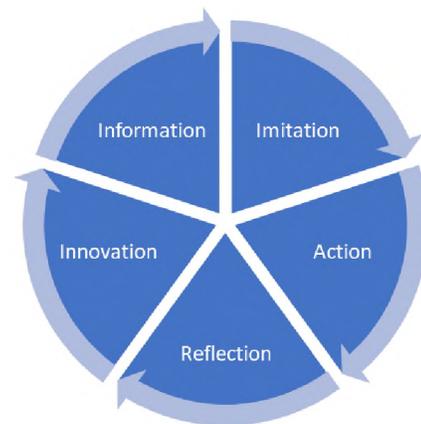
The model was developed during a time when mentors were facing criticism for taking too much control over the student teachers' practicum. It was assumed that the student teachers had to follow the mentor's wishes, since the final certification of teacher candidates was ultimately the mentor's decision. As a result, some were of the opinion that the teacher education primarily produced dependent teachers (Skagen 2004:31). The action-reflection model was hence developed as a counterbalance to a hierarchical tradition of apprenticeship, which was central in the Norwegian teacher education through to until the late 1980s (Baltzersen. CC BY 4.0)

We must be careful that we don't reinforce the clergy-parishioner model in our mentoring. That the pastor has a higher, more spiritual position in the mentoring relationship. I believe that a more accurate reflection of discipling is that of servant leadership, where the leader is looking out for the needs of the follower and they become more important than the needs of the leader.

Servant leaders provide vision and accountability as well as looking out for the spiritual well-being of their followers (Northouse 2016, 238).

The main idea of the action-reflection model is to provide information during a structured environment where new information is introduced and explained in a leadership

cohort. This becomes the foundation for each of the cohorts. The leaders then explain how this information was modelled



by Jesus and has worked out

in their life. This is the act of imitation, in the life of Jesus and the leader. Next comes competency using that information. This is facilitated by providing action steps to be taken between cohorts that will then be reflected upon at the next cohort. This provides accountability and the ability to innovate based upon the information provided at the previous cohort.

Any system for making disciples that you use will have aspects of the five listed above. Any system you choose can be adapted and developed and they will at some point address each of these main discipleship formation ideas. Once the church decides on a system (e.g. life shapes, radical mentoring, discipleship huddles, small groups) then the reproducing of disciples can begin. It's been my experience that when you take a group of eight disciples through this process, that 2-3 people in the group would become active disciple-makers. The rest would

become occasional disciple-makers. This rhythm of information-imitation-action-reflection can be used with any material around disciple-making.

It's my contention that once we figure out a disciple-making system that's reproducible it can then be modelled for a leadership development process that leads to multiplication. It's also important to continue to use the information-imitation-action-reflection-innovation rhythm for the development of leaders. As we will see the research in chapter IV will show that Discovery highly values discipleship and the mentoring that they received over the years. This is also part of my values that I will expand on below.

Biblical Disciples and Kingdom Capacity

Those who follow principles of biblical leadership must make a major philosophical distinction in their disciple-making journey. It is my belief that without a philosophy that focuses on disciples who make disciples one will have great difficulty moving a congregation or group of people toward multiplication and the development of kingdom capacity. Without an emphasis, from the beginning, on the philosophy of discipleship that includes disciples who makes disciples we will end up with cultural Christians who are more interested in what they receive from the congregation than what they can give. Discipleship has many phases. In the early phases of disciple making there is character formation, spiritual formation, and the development of spiritual disciplines. Without the added emphasis on developing disciples who can then go and make other disciples, we will end up with a group of Christians who are dependent upon the leadership of others to facilitate greater spiritual growth and transformation.

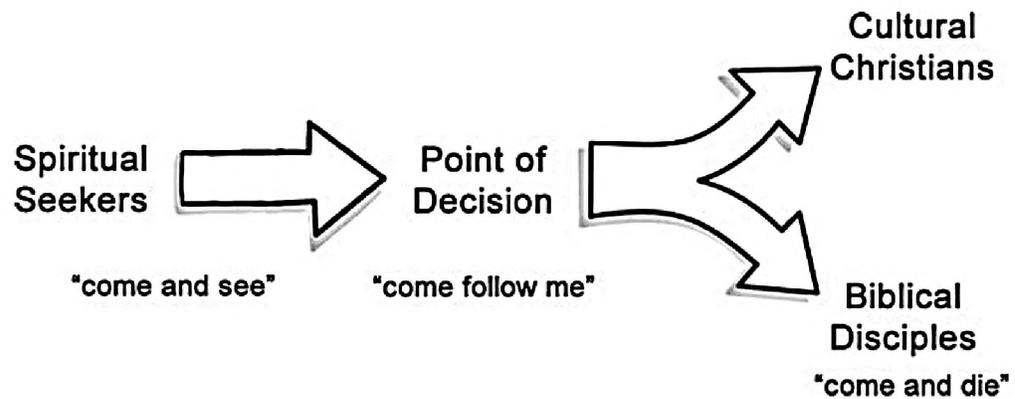


Figure 1 Cultural Christians or biblical disciples. From Wilson, Todd, Dave Ferguson, Alan Hirsch, and Ed Stetzer. 2015. *Becoming a Level Five Multiplying Church: Field Guide*. p. 56. Used with permission.

Will we make disciples that are cultural consumers that become part of our church in order to be fed? This kind of Christian always needs someone else to provide them with spiritual sustenance, they rarely commit to sharing their faith with others, and if they do, they do so out of a conversion rather than training. Or will we make disciples who are capable of making disciples? The difference in our approach will set the DNA for multiplication. Our responsibility is to bring them into a relationship with Jesus, that is characterized by obedience, in such a way that they could bring someone else through the same journey all on their own.

Prior to the two-year launch of the multisite strategy we as a church had gone through a leadership development process. Out of that leadership development four new ministries were started at Discovery Church. This is one of the reasons why we saw such an increase in our attendance over the three years prior to going into a multisite strategy. After losing all of those individuals in the Summer of 2017 we found ourselves having to focus and dig deep into discipleship once again. We had lost many leaders, therefore, we also needed to

move those disciples through several stages of their discipleship journey so that they may begin, and have a desire, to make disciples themselves. The Appreciative Inquiry highlighted the need for a time of healing and a time of discipleship.

Instead of creating cultural Christians, what would it look like to create new Christians who grew in their faith? What would it look like in our church, and the world at large, if we were producing modern-day disciples—those who were so devoted to Jesus that they left their ordinary lives to follow him and eventually died for spreading the Gospel (Wilson, Ferguson, Hirsch, and Stetzer 2015, 67)? Multiplication requires disciple-making to be its primary engine. It is at this stage when multiplication becomes part of the DNA of discipleship.

How you do disciple-making will determine whether or not you will have a group of people that naturally move toward developing your kingdom capacity. Multiplication happens when disciples believe that their journey through growth and maturity is to disciple other people into spiritual growth and maturity. As disciples become more like Jesus with His fullness in them, they carry that fullness to others and help bring new spiritual infants into the family. The process repeats and fuels itself. Biblical disciples reproduce while cultural Christians consume, and thus we see the importance of prioritizing the production of biblical disciples.

The relationship between discipleship and multiplication lies in the way in which we understand and develop leaders. The same rhythms for disciple-making would then be applied to the leadership development process. In addition, if we

use the same format for disciple-making that was listed above, we can see that the general aspects to developing leaders follow a similar pattern.

- 1 - Leaders reproduce leaders. Unless a leader is willing to submit themselves to another leader for leadership development and there is a mutual submission amongst the group of leaders, then character formation and learning may not identify true growth areas.
- 2 - Leaders learn Jesus' way of ministry and apply it in the leadership context.
- 3 - Leaders learn Jesus' words.
- 4 - Leaders model Jesus' life and character. This helps to identify passion and calling.
- 5 - A maturing leader who exhibits humility and teachability should be willing to find and mentor new leaders **not for organizational gain but for kingdom multiplication.**

Assuming that the leaders in this process listed above were disciplined in the process described earlier, they would have the rhythm of learning from a disciple-maker and being challenged to go and disciple others. It would be a hallmark of their leadership ability if they were able to show that they had been discipling others whether individually or one-on-one. This multiplication mentality would then become part of the leadership development pipeline in any organization. The expectation already set in disciple-making would become the expectations in leadership development.

Mentoring leaders would challenge new leaders to grow, become more like Jesus, look deeply at their character so that they could identify their character defects. It would also help them identify their ministry passions and calling. The emphasis will be placed on multiplying and kingdom growth. Leaders need to be challenged in their leadership development to focus not just on the institutional capacity building but on kingdom multiplication. If the result of disciple-making is just to make one church bigger and better through the development of leaders

then we have missed the call of the great commission. We've also missed the opportunity to build kingdom capacity. We can do more when we multiply than when we add individually.

Healthy growth also involves reproduction. Capacity must be reproduced. Locally, we grow our capacity by reproducing internally. This expanding capacity supports the discipleship efforts. As a church we have seen growth by reproducing our local capacity. We can then start new autonomous churches and send or deploy biblical disciples. These new churches then repeat the process. Multiplication is suppressed when we focus most of our effort on local capacity (macro-addition) (Wilson, Ferguson, Hirsch, and Stetzer 2015, 66). As a church, we had developed reproducing leaders who were also disciple makers. There were four ministries that were very effective in bringing new people to the church, seeing new conversions, and integrating dis-affiliated Christians back into a church community. This led us to a place where we had sufficient leadership capacity to move to kingdom growth capacity and the idea for multisite was developed. In the Summer of 2017, we lost thirty adults and some very proficient disciple makers and leaders. This led to our decision to focus and on making disciples and eventually on developing new leaders. The results from the Appreciative Inquiry workshop showed us that the participants were mostly interested in the discipleship process rather than the multiplication process.

Vision and Mission

Leaders are called to lead the congregation into a deeper, more vital spirituality, to teach them how to listen for God's call, and support them to sustain

the interior silence out of which God speaks. It is when the corporate vision of a church and the individual vision fit together that you actually have energy and synergy towards a common vision. It is the role of the leaders in the church along with the input of the congregation to identify a vision that is unique to the church and her future.

Vision is one of the indispensable qualities of a leader. The Bible tells us that without vision people are “destined to run wild” (Proverbs 29:18). “Vision is foresight with insight that is based on hindsight” (Barna 1992, 28). Vision is the product of God working in us. God creates the vision, and we receive it—it becomes a rallying point, a goal toward which we move as God’s people. The role of leader in the visioning process is to develop a willingness to see what cannot yet be seen with an ear towards what God is saying to the church. God speaks softly and uses *Kairos* moments (a moment in time where God gets our attention) that move us toward a desire that He placed within His church. “Vision for ministry is a clear mental image of a preferable future imparted by God to his chosen servants and is based upon an accurate understanding of God, self and circumstances” (Barna 1992, 28).

The skill that distinguishes visionary leaders from other leaders is “their profound ability with language, often in symbolic form, as metaphor. It is not just that they see things from a new perspective, but they get others to see them.” (Shawchuck and Heuser 1998, 148). Leaders function in this environment by helping to clarify the metaphor and giving the person responsible for

communicating the vision feedback to ensure the message is not dull, flat, or boring.

The primary spiritual vision for the church is that of reconciliation (2 Corinthians 5:20). The church has a spiritual purpose that is invisible to the world. The church exists to bring that message and example of reconciliation to the world. We have chosen to focus that vision into a vision and mission statement so that we can align all of our staff, ministries, and programs with clarity. These ministries are all part of the vision statements of Discover Grow and Bless. In a leaders meeting, the vision of the church is heard, shaped, synergized, and empowered. Once the vision is heard it then begins to take shape. Synergy develops as various components of the vision begin to emerge; then direction can be established. The leaders are then entrusted with empowering others so that the vision can be accomplished. This involves finance, personnel, and so on (Fairbanks, Ii, and Couchenour 2012, 12).

As a leader, it is our responsibility, to know the mission of our organization with clarity. Leaders are the guardians of the mission and it is our responsibility to safeguard the organization's identity. An effective mission statement states the results the organization intends to achieve, states who the results are to be achieved for, and it states what the cost will be to achieve the desired results for this group (Fairbanks, Ii, and Couchenour 2012, 22).

Not only was it important to cast a clear and compelling vision for multisite but it was also important to cast a clear and compelling vision for the Appreciative Inquiry process. During the Appreciative Inquiry process I used the

metaphor of plants that turn toward the sun no matter where they are located in front of a window. Branson believes that organizations are heliotropic.

Heliotropism is a botanical term used to describe a plant's orientation. Plants lean toward the sun. He suggests that organizations also lean toward their source of energy, especially if there is a hopeful, imaginative future (Branson 2016, 35).

Watkins, Mohr, and Kelly describe the reason this helps to cast vision for

Appreciative Inquiry:

A fundamental precondition for all organization change work... (is) to shift the flow of issue framing dialogues in the direction of health rather than pathology. This, then, shifts the flow of dialogues that result from the inquiries from an analysis of moments of malfunction to a holistic understanding of moments of optimal performance (Watkins, Mohr, and Kelly 2011, 49).

The metaphor of a flower turning towards the sun gives a visual context of the nature of Appreciative Inquiry; it focuses on the positive assets within the congregation moving towards a positive future. When we focus on the positive it is an intentional framing of the narrative (Branson 2016, 26).

Narratives and Teachings in The Bible

We should take our cue for Christian leadership from Jesus himself. The qualities of leadership Jesus modelled should be reflected in leaders today: mission, service, humility, developing leaders, integrity, and vision (Bell 2014, 278-288). The following is a reflection on Jesus' leadership inspired by Skip Bell's book, *Servants and Friends*. I will then look at the leadership ability of Nehemiah as he led change to rebuild the walls of Jerusalem. Lastly, I will

examine the life of the apostle Paul with regards to how he was discipled, mentored, and grew in his leadership capacity.

Servant Leadership in the life of Jesus

Jesus understood leadership to be grounded in His mission. His mission shaped all that He did. It was His sense of mission that fuelled His passionate pursuit of goals and objectives. “For I have come down from heaven to do the will of God who sent me, not to do my own will. And this is the will of God, that I should not lose even one of all those he has given me, but that I should raise them up at the last day” (John 6:38). After Jesus’ resurrection He gave us the same mission that He received, “As the Father has sent me, so I am sending you” (John 20:21). Jesus then turned to His disciples before His ascension and told us our mission, “Therefore, go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. Teach these new disciples to obey all the commands I have given you. And be sure of this: I am with you always, even to the end of the age” (Matthew 28:19-20).

Skip Bell’s book, *Servants and Friends*, lists five characteristics of servant leadership that Jesus exhibited. He describes the five characteristics as servants, humility, developing leaders, integrity, and vision.

Servants – Jesus embodied what we know today as servant leadership. Christ never overwhelmed people with His power and authority, instead He said, “The Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and give his life as a ransom for many” (Mark 10:45). Jesus drove home the theme that leadership is servanthood.

Humility–The call to servant leadership is a call to humility. God calls the humble, not the proud and self-important, into leadership (Luke 14:8-11). From this passage Bell points out what it means to be humble:

- 1 - To be free from selfish ambition and drive
- 2 - To serve in whatever context God places us
- 3 - To believe that God has called us not only to serve, but to lead
- 4 - To take on the responsibility of advancing the mission of Jesus
- 5 - To take joy in the success of others (Bell 2014, 281)

Developing Leaders–Instead of holding onto power and authority Jesus shared it with us. Jesus empowered others and entrusted them with leadership and even allowed them to stumble and fail without condemning them. He even was able to share whatever He had with those He led. Jesus developed leadership abilities in every disciple. Even though He didn't need it He built a leadership team because effective leadership is not a solo venture. Because we are not capable of fully imitating Jesus' leadership capacity, He modelled leadership to a multiplicity of leaders to carry out the mission. Jesus spent enormous amounts of time mentoring His disciples: instructing, qualifying, and encouraging them for service (Matthew 13; Mark 4:35-41; 10:32-34; Luke 14:26; 17:7-10; John 14)

Integrity–Character is the most important element of Christian leadership. History is littered with the human wreckage of leaders who lacked character and derailed their leadership while hurting others around them. Jesus' life was characterized by transparency, authenticity, and honesty. He practised prayer, which is the leader's most effective tool in leading the church.

Vision–Jesus was a master visionary especially when He was speaking of a time when life would be radically different. He spoke about the kingdom of

heaven and the kingdom of God helping us envision what heaven might be like. Jesus came to earth to complete the mission that His heavenly father sent Him on (Bell 2014, 278-288).

These characteristics as outlined are the basis for servant leadership. I have been growing into these characteristics or the most challenging characteristics is to together a servant heart with vision casting. In serving a group of people I am one member amongst many who share the Spirit of God and listen to his voice. God's vision for an organization must be considered through a servant heart.

Leading Change—Nehemiah's Leadership

There is nothing from the book of Nehemiah that suggests that he was anything other than an ordinary man that was highly motivated. Nevertheless, Nehemiah emerges as one of the greatest leaders in the Old Testament because he was highly motivated to do a job for God that had many difficult circumstances surrounding it. What I learned most from the book of Nehemiah was his ability to bring about change in an incredibly difficult situation. Nehemiah, as a transformational leader, was able to inspire the people of Jerusalem to rebuild the city's walls. He motivates them and inspires them by getting involved himself in casting an incredible vision of a protected and secured city. Nehemiah sets about reforming the nation, and his actions lead to a revival in the people's relationship with God. Transformational leaders are willing to risk and learn from their successes and failures. Nehemiah shows us his incredible ability to take a risk and institute change.

One of the lessons we can learn from Nehemiah as a servant leader is his reliance on prayer. He prayed for four months in preparation for the moment when the King would ask the right question and allow him to cast vision for the rebuilding the walls of Jerusalem. Many of these steps to change that we see in the book of Nehemiah are talked about in John Kotter's book, *Leading Change*. The leadership principles for instituting large-scale change can be seen in the efforts Nehemiah put into the call upon his life to rebuild the walls. He is able to develop vision and implement a strategy by taking the time necessary to understand the situation once he arrives in Jerusalem. In order to create a vision for the rebuilding of the walls, Nehemiah needed to understand the problem by surveying the city walls himself. On his return he casts a vision for the rebuilding of the walls so that the city of Jerusalem will not be in disgrace (Nehemiah 2:17-18).

Nehemiah enlists the help of a guiding coalition to begin the work of rebuilding the wall (Kotter 2012, 53). This coalition consists of officials, nobles, priests, and Levites. One of the role models for the people of Jerusalem would have been the High Priest. The first group to begin building the wall is done under the supervision of the High Priest (Nehemiah 3:3). He then puts the priests (Nehemiah 3:28) and the Levites (Nehemiah 4:17) to work as role models of the behaviour that he expects.

In order to continue to carry out the vision Nehemiah must remove some obstacles (Kotter 2012, 106). He encountered opposition even before he arrived in Jerusalem. When Nehemiah stays committed to the vision the sarcasm and threats

of Sanballat and Tobiah become opposition that he must address. He first experiences resistance from the people of Jerusalem because of the threat posed by Sanballat, Tobiah the Ammonite, the Arabs and, the people of Ashdod (Nehemiah 4:7-9). When he hears of the plot to come and fight against Jerusalem and stir up trouble, Nehemiah prays to the Lord for wisdom and then posts a guard at all the exposed places to protect the people while they worked on the wall. He also developed a strategy of defense so that the people felt safer as they rebuilt the wall (Nehemiah 4:15-23).

Some of the obstacles that we dealt with as a church regarding the journey to multisite was surrounding the development of new leaders. Many people were skeptical about a medium size church becoming two churches when we already had a challenge getting people to volunteer. When we explained that there would be many shared ministries and that we would enter into a leadership development process much, but not all, of the skepticism was removed.

A second obstacle Nehemiah faced involved an issue of injustice that was keeping the people from being committed to the vision. There was poverty, excessive lending, and borrowing practices that are making it difficult for the people to feed their families. He addresses this issue by confronting the officials and nobles of Jerusalem about their practices and insisting on changes (Nehemiah 5:1-12).

One of Nehemiah's genius ideas was to create short-term wins so that the people could see the evidence of the changes being instituted (Kotter 2012, 126). By beginning the rebuilding of the walls and focusing on the various gates

throughout the city, Nehemiah creates short-term wins that everyone can see and get excited about (Nehemiah 3:1, 3, 6, 13). He also assigns the construction of each section of the wall to people who live close by that section, thereby creating a sense of excitement and short-term victory in the rebuilding process (Nehemiah 3:10, 28, 29, 30).

Nehemiah and the people approach Ezra the priest to read the *Book of the Law of Moses* at a citywide gathering (Nehemiah 8:1-2). He is able to anchor this new vision of rebuilding the walls within the provisions of the Old Testament promise of restoration after captivity (Deuteronomy 30:1-6). God promised to bring back His people from captivity and bless them if they obeyed the law. After the reading of *The Book of the Law of Moses* (Nehemiah 8:1) the people were reminded that God would take care of His people and keep His promises (Nehemiah 8:1-12).

One of the hallmarks of servant leadership in Nehemiah is the willingness to openly share credit with the other priests and nobles. Through listening and challenging the community to openness and negotiation he was able to galvanize a group of people around a God-given shared vision. Creating that shared vision with the members of Discovery Church was a process of preaching, communication from the design team and regular updates at members meetings. Nehemiah gives a great example of how one can live in the role of servant leader so that the whole is greater than the sum of its parts. “That means bringing together multiple talents and building on them, a process that happens more

readily when those who lead know they are part of a community with shared mission, values, and ideas” (Bell 2014, 251).

In preparing for the multisite journey I recognize that I was going to need to find inspiration and direction for leading change. In preparation for the multisite journey I enrolled in the Doctor of Ministry program for help and direction. This example of leading change from Nehemiah help me to understand more clearly some of the steps in moving an organization to a new future.

Paul’s Discipleship and Leadership Journey

Paul’s discipleship journey and the development of his leadership capacity is descriptive of the journey that most leaders will have to go through. While his discipleship and leadership journey cannot be prescriptive it does give us insights into the stages of development of a leader. I will be drawing out some illustrations from the life and journey of the apostle Paul as he grew in his discipleship and leadership capacity. Paul’s life shows us that when we are thinking about planting churches there are some preconditions for planting that are evident in the life of Paul. The same conditions are required for successful church planters today. Discipleship lessons and skill development are crucial in sending out equipped church planters.

It could be implied that Paul learned most of these things through his mentoring from Barnabas. While nowhere in the scriptures does Paul give recognition to Barnabas for his instruction in this area, Barnabas’ relationship with Paul was important in preparing him for the mission field and planting churches all throughout Asia and Europe. When Paul goes on his own missionary

journeys, he learns many lessons about leadership development that every leader must go through. These stages are not unique to Paul but are common among everyone who grows in their leadership capacity.

Pre-Conversion discipleship

Being born into a religiously observant Jewish family in Tarsus, Paul could trace his ancestry from the tribe of Benjamin and was given the name Saul. He was born in a Greek centre of culture. Nevertheless, he was brought up in Jerusalem and trained in the school of Gamaliel “according to the strict interpretation of our ancestral laws” (Acts 22:3). This kind of upbringing would have given him a solid foundation in the Old Testament, provided extensive theological education, and his family connections put him on a fast-track towards rabbinic leadership.

According to his own words, Paul was an active persecutor of the church before he became a Christian. We could say without much of a doubt that Paul believed that Yahweh was the God of Israel and that he saw himself as an instrument in God’s hands to destroy this uprising. He tried to destroy this little church with violence, and it was his zeal for the law and the traditions of Israel that inflamed his zeal for persecution.

The leadership development process in a church follows a similar path but scaled down. One of the requirements for leadership development in the church would be a commitment to Jesus Christ and some basics around personal spiritual disciplines. We’re also looking for people who have had small experiences of leading others whether that’s just in social situations or in ministry situations. The

most common characteristic for a potential leader is character. Like Paul, we all have to address our character defects and a willingness to be humble and teachable are two of the primary characteristics of potential leaders.

Conversion and discipleship

When Paul is confronted by Jesus on the Damascus road and his personal encounter with Christ changes the course of his life, he becomes intent upon proclaiming the Gospel. He responds to the call of the Gospel by travelling to the nearby territory of the Nepean Arabs where he is confronted with his past. He is in need of an advocate back in Jerusalem. Paul finds an advocate in Barnabas. After two weeks he returns to his native Tarsus then spends almost three years proclaiming the Gospel (Galatians 1:21-24). He is then invited by Barnabas to join him in directing the new forward movement which had recently been launched in Antioch. In essence, he is called to disciple the new converts (Acts 11:19-26). The role that Barnabas plays in the life of Paul cannot be overstated. Barnabas, who was part of the early church already, quickly becomes a respected leader among the new converts to Christianity (Acts 4:36). It is Barnabas that introduces Paul to the Jerusalem leaders and, with the help of Barnabas, Paul is invited into the centre of church life. It is interesting to note that the leaders in Jerusalem sent Barnabas to pastor the fellowship in Antioch (Acts 11:22) and under his guidance the church grew even more. By this point Paul had already spent close to three years in Tarsus sharing the Gospel and seeing converts among the Gentiles. Since Tarsus was nearby and Paul had become well known in the

region for his evangelistic work, Barnabas invites him to join the work in Antioch. Paul and Barnabas co-pastor the church there for one year (Acts 11:26).

Paul is recognized as being someone who is able to disciple and submit to the leadership of an existing organization. I imagine that during this time he would have had to learn the lessons of being teachable and humble in order to earn the trust of the church leadership after such a dramatic conversion. Paul could not produce the credentials of the twelve disciples but was still an apostle because of his Damascus road conversion experience, where he was confronted by Jesus himself. It is only after he proves himself in leadership that the Jerusalem church acknowledges his leadership and call of apostleship to the Gentiles (Galatians 2:7-8).

Paul's ministry in the church of Antioch was mainly a Gentile audience where he discipled and trained new converts. When the church in Antioch sent a monetary gift to the church in Jerusalem, Barnabas and Paul were appointed to convey the gift (Acts 11:27-30). During this occasion Paul and Barnabas were received by the leaders of the Jerusalem church, James, Peter and John and it was agreed that Barnabas and Paul should continue to concentrate on the Gentile mission.

Potential for mission

When we look at Paul's discipleship journey in preparation for the missionary journeys that he undertook, we can recognize some principles that are standard in the recruitment for church planters. When looking for potential church planters we need to see evidence that someone has a conversion story, a

discipleship journey that produces the capacity to make disciples, and the affirmation of the local church in their leadership abilities. In order for Paul to have ministry experience in the Gentile church of Antioch and have an understanding of what the structure of the church might look like, Paul was given a co-pastor role with Barnabas. This provided him with leadership experience in a church setting under the guidance of Barnabas so that he could grow in his ability to disciple Gentile converts who need discipling.

We can see from Paul's experience and his spiritual journey that he was potentially ready for planting new churches. He had an authentic conversion experience, he had some theological training, he was given opportunities to grow in his relationship with God under the mentoring of Barnabas, he was given a chance to develop the skill of evangelism, and he was provided a leadership opportunity where he could prove that he was humble and teachable. In all of this there had to have been evidence of the fruit of the Spirit of God preparing Paul to meet the leaders in Jerusalem before being commissioned as apostles to plant churches.

Paul's relationship with John Mark

While mentoring and discipling Paul, Barnabas was also mentoring and discipling John Mark. On their first missionary journey Barnabas and Paul take along another protégé: John Mark. John Mark was already known in the Antioch church and it seems that Barnabas had once again taken on another apprentice (Acts 12:25, 13:5). He continued to train up leaders for the mission field. It appears from the text that Paul was much further along in the mentoring process

and this excursion with Barnabas may have been John Marks first exposure to leadership development in the field. Barnabas went along on the first missionary tour, but when Barnabas and Paul arrived in Pamphylia and climbed the mountains towards Antioch of Pythia John Mark turned back. On the second missionary journey Barnabas wanted to bring John Mark along again but Paul refused (Acts 15:36-41). Luke records that there was a sharp disagreement between them so that they separated from each other (Acts 15:39). Barnabas stood his ground and defended John Mark and they eventually returned together to Cypress while Paul went out on his own.

This was not the end of their relationship with John Mark. Both Paul and Barnabas seemed to have made amends and Paul spoke highly of Barnabas' abilities as a preacher. It seems clear that Paul, Barnabas, and John Mark had a longer working relationship than the book of Acts implies, because in the books of 2 Corinthians and Philemon and 2 Timothy both Barnabas and John Mark had reconciled with Paul.

Paul, through his leadership journey from first missionary journey to fourth missionary journey, not only learned through leadership development but also learned how to mentor and, consequently, grew in his understanding of the need to raise-up new leaders. We can see the connection between Barnabas's leadership development and mentoring strategy and that of Paul's. Barnabas provided Paul with discipleship training, ministry experience in Antioch, crisis management and support during the Jerusalem Council, modelled for Paul the necessity of raising up other leaders, and supported him on his first and second

missionary journeys. When Barnabas defended John Mark in what seems to have been a difficult separation, Barnabas stuck with John Mark and continued to mentor him. It is not until Paul returned from his second missionary journey that he began to raise-up leaders in a manner consistent with Barnabas' actions. It is likely that Barnabas was a cousin to John Mark (Colossians 4:10) and may have been related to the Virgin Mary as well. It is believed that John Mark went on to write the second Gospel. The influence of Barnabas cannot be overstated.

There are many books outlining the journey of leadership development. In *The Making of a Leader* Robert Clinton outlines six stages that a leader goes through in their development process (Clinton 1988, 44). This book has been extraordinarily helpful for me in charting-out my own leadership journey and understanding the stages, challenges, and development that it would require. Randy Reese and Robert Lohan, in their book, *Deep Mentoring: Guiding Others on Their Leadership Journey* build on Robert Clinton's material and outline four phases of the leadership journey (Reese and Loane 2012, 232). These two books have help me in the journey of mapping my own leadership journey and I'm very grateful for the insight that they provided on the various different aspects and incidents during my leadership journey. However, Neil Cole in his book, *Journey to Significance* identifies four leadership stages in the life of the apostle Paul as he makes his way through the four missionary journeys outlined in the book of Acts (Cole 2001). Cole uses the missionary journeys of Paul as boundary markers for the leadership development phases that are characterized in Clinton and Reese's book.

The apostle Paul, in his leadership journey, went through four different phases of development in his leadership capacity and ability to develop leaders. Neil Cole outlines the different phases of leadership development that Paul went through in his life as a church planter and missionary as they correspond to his four missionary journeys. In the first phase of his leadership development, on his first missionary journey, Paul and Barnabas traveled throughout Asia minor planting churches and making disciples (Acts 13:1-14:28). Unfortunately, they neglected to train up leaders healthy enough to manage these churches. Upon their return, Paul and Barnabas had to travel back and appoint leaders. There was a leadership vacuum in these new church plants and Paul needed to write letters to these churches in order to deal with unhealthy and domineering leadership. It is in this stage of leadership that the leader begins to flex their own leadership muscles and learns the necessary lessons that can be passed on to other leaders. Much of the leadership development of Paul surrounded skill development. A leader must go through this step-in order to become a second-phase leader.

The second phase of Paul's leadership journey can be seen in his second missionary tour (Acts 15:36-18:22) to Macedonia and Achaia. During this second journey, God forced Paul to shift to a multiplying church planting strategy and planted him in one of the darkest cities in the world at this time—Corinth. On this missionary journey, he recruited some leaders to go with him; Luke, Timothy, and Silas. As he traveled throughout Macedonia, he left these leaders behind to lead churches. By the time he reached Corinth, Paul was alone again and did not have enough leaders. While there “the Lord spoke to Paul in a vision and told him,

‘Don’t be afraid! Speak out! Don’t be silent! For I am with you, and no one will attack and harm you, for many people in this city belong to me’” (Acts 18:9-10). As a result, Paul remained in Corinth for a year making disciples and developing leaders. Priscilla, Aquila, and Apollos became leaders that went on to plant churches. This was part of Paul’s leadership development journey.

This marked a truly dramatic shift in the apostle's methodology. In essence, the Lord challenged Paul to raise up a team from out of the harvest itself. It was here at Corinth that Paul first learned the strategy of multiplying church planters in a single church ministry, who can then be sent out to start new works by making disciples (Cole 1998, 3).

During this phase of ministry, Paul learned the skills of developing leadership in others and the need to remain long enough in one location in order to apprentice new leaders. In this phase of leadership development, the leader must learn through pain, loneliness, conflict, and fear that they are not the ones in control and that their ideas may not be God’s ideas.

The third phase in Paul’s leadership journey began after he settled in Ephesus (Acts 18:23-21:16). For this third trip, Paul's emphasis seems to have shifted from that of making disciples to raising up leaders out of disciples. The results of this shift have been demonstrated above, but it is during this time in Ephesus that we actually find the valuable principles that Paul applied by doing this. By remaining in one location, Paul began a system of reproducing leaders that would eventually impact all of Asia. From this place, Paul visited many of the locations that he went to previously (Acts 19:21-22, 20:1-3) encouraging the

believers. It is during this time in Ephesus, as Paul visited groups of believers, that he recruited and trained leaders from the harvest field. His method was to disciple and then to train leaders to be released to do ministry. He became a multiplier of leaders using a teaching and mentoring strategy. Many leaders don't reach this stage because they have not dealt with their need to control or process their fear or pain from previous experiences. It is at this point in their leadership journey that the leader begins focusing on fewer things because of their ability to multiply leaders.

During the fourth phase, Paul was in a Roman prison where he had his most effective leadership influence. Paul himself considered his imprisonment as an event that increased effectiveness in the global expansion of the Gospel (Philemon 1:12; 2 Timothy 4:16). During this time, he mentored the following leaders; Epaphroditus, Timothy, Luke, Mark, Demas, Aristarchus, Jesus (called Justus), Epaphras, Tychicus, and Onesimus. Paul's trial itself became an evangelistic tool to spread the Gospel. He also had access to members of the palace guard in Rome, he had an audience with Caesar, and Paul had the time to write letters that would later become the books of Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, and Philemon. Cole suggests that most Christian leaders will never get to the fourth journey; they usually plateau or die on a previous journey (Cole 1998, 15). The leader's reputation increases even in the eyes of secular leaders and they have greater expansive influence beyond what expectations or circumstances would dictate. For Paul, he is able to expand his written influence so that

countless others are benefited by his experience and maturity and the books that Paul wrote on this journey are longer-lasting works (Cole 1998, 16).

Paul's journey of leadership development describes the stages of not only his growth as a leader but also the different stages of the leader and follower relationship. Inasmuch as Paul grows as a leader during this time it is also a description of how leadership can be applied situationally. Each stage that Paul went through is crucial in the development of leaders and every leader must take their followers through a process of empowering and developing that is similar to the learning process that Paul went through in becoming a more effective leader.

In my journey as a leader, in trying understanding the leadership lessons and stages of leadership development, I have come to realize that God develops a leader over a lifetime. Paul's journey helps me see that there are stages of development that every leader must go through. His journey helps me see that God uses me in spite of my mistakes and continues to transform me when I have learned the leadership lessons through each of the stages.

Leader Development

In this next section I would like to share some of my leadership philosophy around the development of leaders and the actions of a leader. Much of what I'm going to share I have learned the hard way. There was a time when I would cherry pick leaders who were already leading in other areas without thinking through the need for a leadership development pipeline. I have also learned that each person going into leadership will need to spend time at examining the costs associated with leadership. Getting involved in church

ministry is not for the faint of heart. I believe it takes courage to take action in the midst of crisis and be willing and humble to take criticism.

Leaders Give Up the Right to Be Offended

This axiom has rolled around in my head ever since I read it for the first time in *Leading in Disorienting Times* by Nelson and Dickens (Nelson and Dickens 2015, 137). They described this as a role that a leader takes whereby the leader relinquishes their right to take offence. Many people will be hurtful and criticize but choosing not to give those words power allows one to distance oneself from their personal nature. Much of what we do and say on Sunday mornings is open for criticism. As a leader, we are called to make decisions and take action, and these too are open for criticism. Criticism can be good and bad. By developing a posture of "I'm not easily offended" I can be more open to criticism and less defensive when it comes my way.

During the one-on-one interviews and the workshop that accompanied the Appreciative Inquiry there were many times where people being interviewed would make negative comments about decisions that I had made or about things that they felt I had done that had contributed to the situation we found ourselves in. Over time, I began to understand that many of those comments were coming from people who were struggling with their feelings regarding the crisis we were in. Furthermore, there may actually have been things that I did do to contribute to the situation we found ourselves in. Giving up the right to be offended did not come easily, but it did allow me some time to reflect on what those poor choices were. I believe that one of the poor choices was a shift away from relational

evangelism as a corporate strategy in favour of multiplication as an evangelistic strategy. I felt that by multiplying we would naturally engage in evangelistic work because of our excitement for the development of two sites. While this most likely would have been true it also took the emphasis off of relational evangelism for too long of a period.

Leaders Are Learners

John Maxwell teaches that the moment we stop learning we stop leading; therefore, it is essential that we become life-long effective learners if we desire to be life-long effective leaders. Maxwell says, “successful leaders are learners. And the learning process is ongoing, a result of self-discipline and perseverance. The goal each day must be to get a little better, to build on the previous day’s progress” (Maxwell 2007, 26). One of the challenges of being in the same ministry position for more than ten years is that I need to grow and develop as a leader in order to meet the needs of a growing, and increasingly complex, ministry structure. One of the main reasons for enrolling in the Doctor of Ministry program at Tyndale Seminary of Tyndale University was to provide learning opportunities that I could apply to our journey towards multisite.

Disciples Make Disciples, Leaders Produce Leaders

The process of making disciples and reproducing leaders has to be one of the core functions of any leader for the one simple reason: the Gospel is always one generation from extinction. In the Great Commission, we see Jesus’ priority to make disciples when He says, “Therefore, go and make disciples of all nations...” (Matthew 28:19). It is a disciple that makes disciples. The ministry of

Jesus is an example of disciple making when He recruited the twelve. As His ministry grew over time His followers multiplied, and yet, He focused primarily on the twelve. He attracted large numbers of people, but Jesus gave Himself to His disciples, not the crowd. Jesus equipped His twelve disciples and, even among the twelve, He spent more time with Peter, James, and John. These three men became, what Paul describes as, “pillars of the church” (Galatians 2:9). From the people that followed Jesus, He began to identify and equip emerging leaders.

John Maxwell is famous for saying, “Everything rises and falls on leadership” (Maxwell, 2013). All ministry endeavours will require leadership. In order for a ministry to grow it will require a leadership development process. Inasmuch as we need a discipleship development process, we also need a leadership development process. I was privileged to attend the 2011 Exponential church planters conference where the author Neil Cole (Exponential 2011) pointed out a principle of leadership development. He spoke about 2 Timothy 2:2 where the apostle Paul writes to his apprentice Timothy, “You have heard me teach things that have been confirmed by many reliable witnesses. Now teach these truths to other trustworthy people who will be able to pass them on to others.” Disciple making and leadership development like this reaches into the fourth generation. Those teachings that were passed on to Paul, were passed on to Timothy who is encouraged by Paul to pass them on to people that he knew would be able to pass them on to others. What Paul passed on to Timothy were principles and ideas that he could not forget. They had to be profound and yet

simple enough that Timothy could turn around and pass them on to others. In this passage, we see four generations of reproducing leaders so the mission could be carried out into future generations.

Within the context of transformational leadership, I have found that the work of Hershey and Blanchard in situational leadership provides a way to understand how leaders need to adapt to the needs of the followers (Ledbetter, Banks, and Greenhalgh 2016, 12). They suggest that the continuum of needs be addressed in different ways by the leader. One of the best ways I have found to develop new leaders is to use the leadership square outlined by Mike Breen in his book, *Building a Discipleship Culture*. Dave and John Ferguson add an additional step and make it five steps instead of four (Ferguson and Ferguson 2010, 64). I will begin with Mike Breen's four step square then add the fifth step from Ferguson and Ferguson (2010).

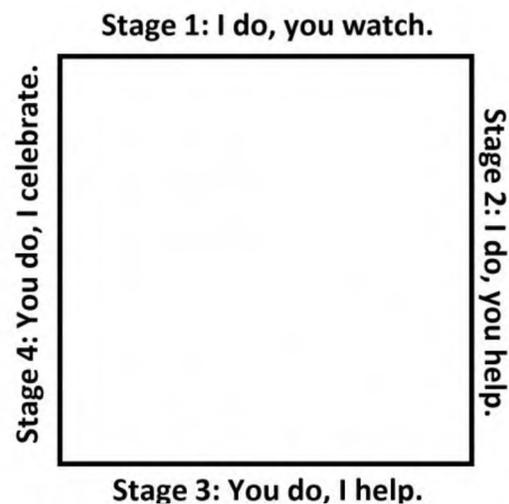


Figure 2. The leadership square. From Breen, Mike. 2011. *Building a Discipling Culture: How to release a missional movement by discipling people like Jesus did*. Used with permission.

The leadership square comes from Breen's book, *Building a Discipleship Culture* (Breen 2011, 132) and is an example of situational leadership. The

leadership square is a simple tool that outlines the leadership development process. It is intended to be reproducible and easy to teach. It is based upon Jesus' style of leadership. The first step, L1 "I do, you watch," comes from Mark 1:15-20 and describes Jesus' encounter with the first disciples. Jesus simply offers them a relationship with Himself and a vision to follow. A student of mine described the L1 leadership of Jesus as "the follow me" step. Leadership at this level is high in directive and low in explanation, requiring the leader to be modelling the kind of behaviour or skills required. The second step, L2 "I do, you help," comes from Luke 12:32-34 when Jesus tells the disciples to not be afraid. At this level of leadership, the followers are often disoriented and full of doubt. The leadership style here is to be a visionary and coach. This leadership style is characterized by high direction, high discussion, high example, and high accessibility. It is the leader's job here to offer God's grace and encouragement. The third step, L3 "You do, I help," comes from John 15:12-17. It is at this point that the leader transitions to friendship with the followers, a group of people that have a common objective and aim. The leadership style at this level is more pastoral and consensus driven and is characterized by low direction, higher consensus, high discussion, and high accessibility. The fourth step, L4 "You do, I watch," comes from Jesus' words in Matthew 28:18-20. Jesus gives his disciples the Great Commission and then reminds them that He is "with them always, to the very end of the age." Jesus is preparing His disciples to spend less time with Him. This leadership style is characterized by delegation. The characteristics of this style are low direction, high consensus, low example, and high explanation (Breen

2011, 99-112). After explaining this to a student of mine, they described the four steps using Jesus words as follows; I thought that they had described it well:

L1 – Come follow me.

L2 – Do not be afraid.

L3 – You are my friends.

L4 – I am with you always.

This feels to me like a simple explanation that is easy to remember.

The fifth step that Ferguson and Ferguson use in their book *Exponential* is “You do. Someone else watches” (Ferguson and Ferguson 2010, 64). In essence, the fifth step is about reproducing the first four steps all over again. This ensures that the leadership square continues.

Leaders of Tens, Fifties, Hundreds, and Thousands

Leadership development as defined by Aubrey Malphurs is “the intentional process of helping established and emerging leaders at every level of ministry to assess and develop their Christian character and to acquire, reinforce, and refine their ministry knowledge and skills” (Malphurs and Mancini 2004, 23). I believe it takes leaders to develop more leaders. It is when we train leaders that a ministry becomes self-sustaining. Leadership is absolutely crucial in any organization.

When Moses realized the burden of leadership that he was under, he consulted his father-in-law Jethro. The advice he received not only saved Moses from burnout but also helped him understand that there are several leadership capacity levels (Exodus 18:25). Some leaders have the capacity to lead groups of ten, others have the ability to lead groups of fifty or one hundred, and still fewer are able to lead thousands. There are three indicators that determine one’s ability

to lead larger groups of people. These three were outlined earlier in the section, “Leadership Is the Crucible of Character.” They are character, competency, and capacity.

Identifying Potential New Leaders

Identifying potential leaders in each of these categories and helping them transition to other levels of leadership is extremely important requirements for multiplying and reproducing leaders. What are the characteristics of a potential leader in each of these capacity levels? John Maxwell identifies qualities to look for in a leader (Maxwell 1995, 47).

The first thing to look for in any kind of leader or potential leader is strength of character. I agree with Bill Hybels; character is the first and fundamental characteristic of a leader (Hybels 2002, 81). Some of the qualities that make up good character are honesty, integrity, self-discipline, teachability, dependability, perseverance, conscientiousness, and a strong work ethic. Maxwell goes on to describe some warning signs regarding a leader’s character which include a failure to take responsibility for one’s actions, leaving promises or obligations unfulfilled, and a failure to meet deadlines (Maxwell 1995, 48).

Maxwell suggests that the second quality of a potential leader is influence. Not only is this a characteristic for the potential leader but also an indicator for measuring the quality of the followers. As I look for potential leaders I try to notice if they are having influence over a group of people. When a potential leader is standing in a group of people, I am asking the question, “Who has influence in this group and who is following them?” This can be seen at an early

stage by identifying people who organize social events, get groups excited or motivated to do something, and set the tone for a group's character based on their character. Every leader needs to know where they are going and be able to influence a group of people to follow. The ability to lead larger and larger groups of people is a measure of influence. As a leader transitions into leadership roles with more and more people their ability to influence must also continue to grow. Does their ability to influence rest solely on the position they hold or does their relationship with followers motivate them into producing results? Do they then move on to the process of developing other leaders? Leadership is influence.

Once character and influence are established, a positive attitude and excellent people skills give a leader potential and can cause a group of people to want to follow them. A potential leader with a positive attitude can go places that others cannot and, when combined with excellent people skills, sets the tone for excellent leadership. A leader at this level of character development and influence will function well as a leader of a team consisting of ten to thirty people.

As a leader begins leading with groups of fifties and hundreds there should be some evidence of giftedness in their area of leadership as well as a proven track record with the people, they are leading. The leader must be willing to learn and implement that learning successfully in order to lead larger groups of people. It has been my experience that as a leader moves into leading groups of fifties and hundreds, they will need self-discipline and the ability to learn from their mistakes. This will set the direction for future success. Some leaders are most successful with smaller groups of people. They have no desire to move to larger

and larger groups. Many leaders stall at this level because they are unable or unwilling to deal with character defects that impact not only their organization or institution but also their followers.

There are some major shifts regarding leadership that are happening within the Christian Reformed Church. In a gathering of two dozen Christian Reformed Church pastors we had a conversation regarding the changing expectations in pastoral leadership. From our conversation it was clear that all of the pastors in the room were frustrated because they went to seminary to learn how to preach and pastor, not how to lead, and yet their people expect strong, visionary leadership in addition to practical, challenging, and life-changing teaching. An increasing number of senior pastors are shifting from the role of preacher-counsellor to that of leader-trainer because of the shift towards visionary leadership as one of their primary, essential roles. In my own ministry I have been very clear to our congregation that I do not do counselling. My role as senior leader, outside of preaching and management responsibilities, is that of visionary, motivator, and mobilizer.

The Role of Teams

Sharing leadership within the congregation through teams and leadership development from the volunteers is one of the most effective ways to run a small church. Relying too heavily on staff is problematic in smaller churches and yet the demand of congregants to provide an experience of high quality and relevance from their church requires a higher level of emphasis on excellence in ministry rather than inclusion (Nieuwhof 2018) They choose inclusion in order to deal with

the hurt that might come from saying no to someone who is not gifted. Putting someone in a place of ministry for the sake of inclusion is theologically incorrect. Romans 6:6 tells us, “In his grace, God has given us different gifts for doing certain things well.” Putting people in positions for which they are not gifted denies the diversity and giftedness of the body of Christ. Choosing to do things well in a small organization requires finding the right people for the right positions and choosing the best that you have available from your congregation for these positions.

Instead of the uncomfortable task of denying someone in an area where they are not gifted, lead them to an area where they are gifted. This, of course, means that you should take the time to help them understand their talents and spiritual gifts. Long term, they will be more fulfilled and will lead from their strengths, the way God designed them. The disciples recognized this when none of them had the complete package of gifts, abilities, and insights necessary to facilitate the growth of the Christian church. Each one, however, had a significant and defined role to play in that revolutionary undertaking (Barna 2001, 22).

Developing teams in a small church context usually requires the inclusion of both part-time and lay-leadership. I have come to understand that although I might want a certain level of expertise from the part-time staff, it is often unattainable because of the nature of the ministry and the amount of time that someone has to put into it. Smart leaders focus on what they can control and not on what they cannot. In order to do that, one should start with where they are and move to where they want to be. Training, coaching, mentoring, and education can

all increase the effectiveness of existing leaders. An example of this would be hiring a part-time youth pastor from the congregation who does not have college-level theological education. While they may be able to relate well with high school students, the senior leader can provide teaching, conferences and webinars that will increase their theological insight. The senior leader should consult with the part-time youth pastor on the skills or knowledge that they wish to develop.

There sometimes comes the unfortunate task of forcing someone to address their leadership inability. John Maxwell states that, “leadership ability is the lid that determines a person’s level of effectiveness. The lower an individual’s ability to lead, the lower the lid on his potential. The higher the individual’s ability to lead, the higher the lid on his potential” (Maxwell 2013, 1). Without leadership ability the success and effectiveness of a volunteer or part-time staff is limited. Whatever that person wants to accomplish is limited by their leadership ability. The next step in the process is often the most difficult. Often, there are well-meaning, passionate people who have bought-into the vision and mission and who, by all accounts, are more committed than others to doing the work that they believe God has called them to do in their area of giftedness; however, their leadership ability limits the potential of the ministry because they are unable to take the organization through the process of growth, reorganization, training, or casting vision. It may become necessary to remove a committed volunteer or staff such as this in favour of finding someone who has the leadership ability that they lack.

In putting together a leadership team, the tendency of existing leaders is to find people who are like themselves and think the way that they think. This might make for great conversation and camaraderie, yet it makes for a poor leadership team. Teams should be developed using a diversity of giftings and skills so that the senior leader, who is not good at everything, has a gifted group of people working through the ministry functions of the church (Ephesians 4:12).

Great teams are made up of people who love and care for one another: “teams that don’t bond can’t build” (Maxwell 1995, 137). When a team gets together outside of their ministry context and spends time together they usually take time to look out for and care for each other. Knowing what is important to the team is crucial in the ability to keep a team achieving the goals of the organization. Strong communication allows a team to have an atmosphere of positive relationships and a workplace where they feel is safe to offer suggestions or criticism without feeling threatened. One of the important aspects of a team is its chemistry, when team members get along with each other, are loyal to each other and work towards the same goal. Without good chemistry there is a difficult problem to overcome; a group with bad chemistry can be adversarial and unproductive. Chemistry affects communication and the feeling of safety required to offer suggestions and care to one another. One must work with, converse with, and challenge other people every day. It helps if one likes being with the other people in the room.

Strategy Trumps Vision Every Time.

One of the primary tasks of a leader is to cast vision. Without vision there is no direction for the ministry. We hear a lot about vision and about the leader's role in creating vision. However, vision unrealized is simply an intention. For too many, vision is the beginning and the end of their leadership. To bring a vision to life you need a strategy and that strategy is often about changing behaviours. It requires getting people to do something different. If you want to accomplish vision, there will have to be a way to execute a behaviour-changing strategy. In the words of Carry Nieuwhof, "a B plus strategy, well-executed, trumps an A plus vision every time" (Nieuwhof 2016).

I have had extensive experience in coaching other leaders and when I hear something along the lines of, "I am a visionary" or "I am an ideas-person" I get nervous. What this typically means is that the person is only good at casting vision and not at executing it. I coached a pastor over four one-hour sessions, where, at the end of each session he would agree to work on two or three strategies. At the beginning of each session he tried to explain how he could not complete them. Needless to say, we ended our coaching sessions pretty soon after that. I regularly heard stories from this pastor about how frustrated he was that nothing seemed to change. Without an effective strategy and the willingness to work at executing it change will never happen.

The development of strategy and execution systems are going to be the way that vision and mission are accomplished. Leadership without strategy and execution disciplines leads to wishful thinking and dreaming.

If You Are Going to Be A Leader You Are Going to Make Decisions

In my opinion, one of the ultimate tests of leadership comes when you are travelling down a road; when you look behind you if people are following you are successfully leading. If they are not following you are not leading. When the fear of being stuck grows it often paralyzes the leader making it hard for them to make a decision. Typically, one of three things will happen. First, the leader makes no decision. When this happens, a leader is more afraid of the criticism than the call to a clear and compelling vision. The second thing a leader does in a situation like this is to try and make everyone happy. By pandering to everyone's needs the leader will adopt, cut, and modify until the lowest common denominator is reached and, in the end, no one is pleased with the outcome. I understand the frustration of Hybels when he says, "why a person would sit when he could soar, spectate when he could play, or atrophy when he could develop is beyond me" (Hybels 2008, 134). The third choice is to make a decision. The leader may consult other sources, run ideas past wise individuals, pray, and educate themselves on the issue but eventually they must make a decision. I will always lean in favour of action-oriented decision making rather than inaction. An action orientation will get the work done.

I have witnessed the cycle over the course of my ministry and have seen it in action in my own life. These three choices may not fully describe what leaders do when they're stuck or paralyzed with fear, but it describes my experience and my observations when leaders need to make decisions.

Personal Values

As I reflect on my journey of leadership over the course of my life and on the leadership lessons that I have learned I want to take a moment to summarize some of my personal values. These values are based upon reflections in servant leadership and transformational leadership, disciple making, leadership development, and multiplication

Integrity – A person’s integrity sets the course of their life. Your character is your outward behaviour, and it is consistent between your private life and in front of the people you lead. Your values, your beliefs, and your attitude are consistent in your dealings with your family, your spouse, and the people that look to you for leadership. My integrity is most often seen in my willingness to care for others, wanting the best for the church I serve, and acting in an ethical and responsible manner.

Servant leadership – at the heart of servant leadership is what can be described as a servant’s heart. This comes when power and leadership combine with integrity and humility in leading others. Servant leadership begins with humility and integrity. Leadership based on power and authority has, at its root, pride and self-centeredness. A servant leader’s nature is characterized by service to God and others, possessing a servant heart, and desire to give of oneself to the betterment of others. Servant leadership is ultimately done because we are trying to model Jesus’ example of being a servant king.

Transformational leadership – transformational leadership is my gift. I believe that I can initiate, develop, and carry out significant changes in an organization. I want to be a strong role model with a high set of moral values and

a determined sense of identity so that others might listen and trust that I have ideas and values that they can stand behind. I thrive when creating vision and want to work with people. Transformational leaders put a strong emphasis on the needs, values, and morals of the people they want to influence.

Disciple-making – the primary mission of the church and my primary mission is to make disciples. I don't want to be good at getting people together once a week, I do not want to be good at leading gatherings of hundreds or even thousands. I don't want people who just show up to our stuff, give money occasionally, and maybe feed the poor. Jesus did not call me to build His church, in fact, He said that He was the only one that could do that job (Matthew 16:18). My job is to make disciples. I make disciples in such a way that they can make disciples of others.

Leadership Development – as a leader I want to provide opportunities for people to develop leadership skills and abilities. I see myself as being adaptable to the needs of those people who desire to grow as leaders whether it is coaching, mentoring, delegating, or encouraging new and innovative ways of dealing with organizational issues. Leadership development is a key component of my personality and gifting. I want others to succeed, I want to give away power and influence so that others might be able to accomplish more than I could myself.

Multiplication – I am more focused on multiplying the church than the attendance in a church. I am less concerned with growing the church to 200, 300, or more than I am with planting two, three, or even five churches. I do not believe that only church planters should have a passion and calling to multiply the church,

but rather all disciples. A disciple can make disciples and leaders can develop leaders that are focused on multiplication not addition. This is the only way that the kingdom of God can advance beyond its current level of decline.

Personal Mission Statement

Recently I read Matthew chapter 20 and came across a question that had lingered with me for many months. The question is posed by Jesus in response to a plea from the two blind men when they cry out to God, “Lord, son of David, have mercy on us!” The question that Jesus asked has been rattling around in my brain for a long time. He stopped and called, “What do you want me to do for you? (Matthew 20:32)”

In my journal, conversations, and thoughts I have been asking the question, “Do I know what I want Jesus to do for me?” I spent much time thinking about an answer to that question. In reflecting on my leadership journey, one of the things that I want more than anything else, one thing that I want Jesus to do for me, is to let me have a meaningful impact for the kingdom of God. Not for my sake, not for my wife, not for the sake of my church or my family but rather for the kingdom and for God’s glory. It is my deepest desire to be used by God, for Him to allow me to use the gifts that He has given me so that His kingdom might come, and His will be done. I understand that a right relationship with Christ, full of humility and integrity, is about giving Him glory and seeing His kingdom come. When I get that right, I think I get close to an answer to Jesus’ question, “What do you want me to do for you?”

Personal Vision Statements

I was able to attend the Exponential 2017 church planters conference and listen to Louis Giglio talk about big dreams. One thing he said that has stuck with me was, “I’m determined not to die with small vision... If I die with little dreams, that’s on me. I’m committed to not going out breathing my last breath with small vision” (Giglio 2017). He then encouraged us to take some time to put down on paper what we believed God’s vision for the future will hold. He encouraged us to draw a diagram that would outline the next five years. It was a way of remapping my mind so that I would understand the destination that I believe God wants me to arrive at.

I believe that God is calling me to a vision of the future in the next five years where He uses me to be a multiplier, not only of Discovery Church, but also of leaders. The road to be a multiplier is the development of disciple who make disciples, leadership development that follows the same rhythms as disciple making and encouraging new leaders to engage in new ministry initiatives. I believe that God is calling me to:

- 1 - Double the size of Discovery Church’s existing congregation by 2021.
- 2 - Finish my Doctor of Ministry in order to teach a course at my denominational seminary on church planting.
- 3 - Continue to grow and emphasis the disciple making and leadership development practices that I have learned.
- 4 - Increase the work and effectiveness of a regional church planting multiplication initiative and play a role in its development and administration.
- 5 - Multiply Discovery Church so that there are three additional sites by 2025 and raise-up ten leaders that develop their own ministries or become reproducing leaders themselves.

As I reflect on these goals, I can see some of my personal values and the convictions that I have outlined in this portfolio. I see the passion in myself to be

a disciple maker who is able to teach and to train disciples; to make disciples. I am a learner at heart. I have consistently gone back to school for higher levels of education because I believe that there are stages of learning that I need in order to continue to develop significantly for the kingdom of God. I can see the desire that I have for multiplication as it relates to Discovery Church's journey towards a multisite ministry. I am more interested in the multiplication of the church than in the addition in the church and maybe there is a learning for me. I have to be just as passionate about disciple making as I am about leadership development and multiplication.

The journey out of the crisis scenario we found ourselves in is a journey that is focused on discipleship and leadership development. Those two things are foundational to the eventual multiplication and re-engagement of Discovery Church in the journey to multisite. The Appreciative Inquiry has shown that the congregation is still willing to take risks and that they want to see our church grow. But there is also a desire to focus on disciple-making because I believe that there was both emotional and spiritual harm that took place in our congregation. It is almost as if our self-confidence was shaken. I certainly felt like mine was. The Appreciative Inquiry really helped our congregation remember all the incredible things that God had done and how they were transformed as disciples. It also made them hungry for a close relationship with God and additional experiences that would push them outside of their comfort zone. Many of them recounted incidents of being outside of their comfort zone and challenged during a mentoring or coaching or discipleship scenario.

Ministry Strengths

Strength 1 – Commitment to the unchurched. We saw eight to ten people a year over the first eleven years make a first-time commitment to Jesus Christ. With that commitment comes a strong desire to communicate to a non-church audience, allowing them access to theological principles and a relationship with Jesus. We are taking steps to ensure that, when we communicate, we are doing so in a way that visitors and long-time members can engage the scripture in a way that is helpful and compelling. This way everybody in the audience is glad to have attended and drives away with every intention to return the following weekend (Stanley 2012, 234).

Strength 2–Preaching and pastoral care. As Discovery Church began to grow its need for pastoral care also began to grow. In addition to the needs of new Christians, we started a Celebrate Recovery ministry. I became aware that my abilities around pastoral care was less effective when compared with other pastors. I say with some clarity now that I am not a “shepherd pastor”. As much as I realized that I am an entrepreneurial and apostolic pastor I also realized that I needed help around pastoral care. Unfortunately, what led to this realization was a period of burn out. In 2010, I took six weeks of stress leave, went for counselling and, through a period of discernment, hired a pastoral care staff person to help alleviate the stresses of pastoral care in a growing church-plant.

This pastoral care Director has done an outstanding job of organizing and managing a pastoral care team, hospitality team, and a fund created for benevolence and to pay for Christian counselling. Consistently, in reviews with the congregation, our pastoral care ministry shows up as a blessing to our

members. Later, in the chapter four, we will see that pastoral care is one of the core themes that appear in the workshop and one-on-one interviews during the Appreciative Inquiry. Without trying to sound overly vain, there have also been a number of positive comments in a recent review regarding preaching.

Strength 3—Helping people discover their ministry strengths and gifts.

I have always had a strong desire to see people identify and be deployed in their ministry giftedness. We have used many different tools over the years: spiritual gift inventories, the Network Course, and Strengths Finders. It has been part of our discipleship process to encourage people to take the Network Course, which would allow them to identify the way that God has designed them and find meaningful places of service both within the church and in the community.

Ministry Weaknesses

Weakness 1—Looking and feeling old and tired. Doing portable church every Sunday for the last eleven years has taken its toll. Finding volunteers every Sunday for set up and take down as well as keeping the equipment in good working order has taken most of our attention when it comes to our Sunday morning experience. We went from a twenty-year-old soundboard that was donated to us when we first started, to buying a five-year-old soundboard, to upgrading to a brand-new system two years ago. The seating arrangement in the gym where we rent was aligned towards the stage at the narrow end of the space. This meant that the distance between the worship team and preacher and the person sitting in the back row was approximately seventy feet.

Weakness 2—Creating a Clear Path. We have had an eclectic approach to small group ministries over the years. I have been a proponent of sermon-based small groups, but I have also been encouraging discipleship huddles, long-term Bible studies, and age-specific groups. Consequently, we have not clearly laid out a path for discipleship. According to lifeway research, over half of pastors have no visible strategy for their small group ministry (Stetzer and Im 2016, 260). There have been seasons at Discovery Church where small groups have been extraordinarily well attended. Just two years ago we saw about 60 percent of our adults in a small group during that year. There have been other seasons, when we do not have someone coordinating small groups, when that number drops dramatically. In the near future we need to make a clear distinction between the purpose of the weekend worship teaching and the discipleship strategy. For instance, I think that we may need to clearly define that our discipleship strategy accomplishes a very different purpose than our Sunday morning teaching. My personal style is to use a topical approach to preaching that gives us the opportunity to connect with visitors and the unchurched in a meaningful way. This does not mean that there is no application or insight for those who have attended church most of their life. It does mean, though, that our small groups and discipleship need to carry the burden of disciple formation and Bible study.

In the same vein there is also the need for leadership development and discipleship groups. There are people who are looking for something deeper and more responsibility for discipling others, a clear path for developing disciple makers and leaders will also need to be explored.

Weakness 3–Diluted Vision. To structure for growth there is a need to be clear with vision. Otherwise, a church tends to wander in whatever easiest path presents itself. I heard Will Mancini, the coauthor of *God Dreams* (Mancini and Bird 2016), repeat a quote from Robert Brault at the 2017 Exponential Church Planters Conference that I found helpful. Brault said, “We are kept from our goal not by obstacles but by a clear path to a lesser goal.” Mancini went on to say that we settle for a lesser goal, a generic version of a big dream, or vision (Mancini and Bird 2016, 673). It is not that Discovery Church lacks vision, but rather, we have embraced a lesser vision without realizing it. There have been times, especially in the last three years, when casting a bold vision has created anxiety, worry, and disunity. There has been a lack of clarity when it comes to our vision, this may have contributed to our unwillingness to enter into a multisite journey, it may also have contributed to some of the decline in attendance we have experienced over the last eighteen months. It is time that we put every ministry of the church under the microscope and discern whether it needs a facelift, an overhaul, or a funeral—a necessary pruning exercise to make room for future growth.

Ministry Opportunities

Opportunity 1–Refresh. In September, we instituted a new children’s ministry curriculum and also began the process of implementing a new component of Planning Centre (a church management software that addresses safe church components for nursery check-in and Sunday school attendance). Both of these things corresponded with the hiring of a Family Ministries Director who

began asking questions regarding the implementation of a structured children's ministry program that spanned nursery through teenagers. The development of this family ministries emphasis prompted us to ask the question, what are we doing and how are we presenting ourselves on Sunday mornings? The family ministries renewal led us to ask questions around the signs we use to direct people, the systems we use in order to track visitors, and the way in which we communicate hospitality through the systems that we have currently. These and many more questions led us to look at all of our Sunday morning systems and completely refresh them.

This refresh corresponded with the use of new logo that we developed in the spring of 2017, which required all of our existing documentation as well as our signs be redeveloped. Once we decided on the new look, we also decided that there needed to be a new series of signs produced. We paid attention to details surrounding our service set up and created a hospitality team that focused on three components for a new ministry philosophy:

- 1 - Welcome to Our Place**—The opportunity for us to commit and train volunteers in the art of greeting, hosting, and welcoming new people
- 2 - Love and Care**—An attitude that says to someone new and returning that we love and care for them as best as we can during the time that they are there with us. We want newcomers and visitors to walk away from our services eager to come back the next week.
- 3 - An emphasis on Attracting Millennials**—Although we are not a church for millennials, with an emphasis on the style of worship and presentation that is attractive to millennials, we believe that we will be able to continue to grow a younger demographic that has diminished in the last three years.

It seemed appropriate that we should try to implement all these things around one date rather than one at a time. One of the areas that we decided to take a fresh look at was our sanctuary configuration. We decided that the configuration of our

sanctuary space in the gym needed adjustment so that those up front would have better connection with the congregation. This arrangement was temporary but seemed to be the most feasible option for us at the time. It became obvious that we needed to do this sooner, rather than later. Therefore, as a ministry team we decided that we would do a Sunday morning refresh by February 11, 2018; I started to write this section in October 2017. The staff have been assigned duties and implementation is going smoothly.

Opportunity 2–Simple Church. After reading the book “Simple Church” by Thomas Rainer and Eric Geiger I was struck by the recognition that Discovery Church has implemented and developed many things over the eleven years of its existence without being as clear and as streamlined as it should have been. There were many options for small groups, there were many ways that we blessed the community, and there were many opportunities that we tried when implementing evangelistic strategies. There are remnants of each that remain in each of these areas and there is no clear process for the development of unbelievers, disciples, or organized activities in the community.

Rainer and Geiger point out that Jesus managed to summarize the 613 laws, that represented the 613 letters in the Ten Commandments, into the two commands found in Matthew 22:34. The Great Commandment is in Jesus’ words the “greatest command” but more importantly it encapsulates “all the law and the prophets” (Matthew 22:40). In one very quick sentence he was able to simplify all the 613 commands into two (Rainer and Geiger 2006, 16-17). Simplicity does not mean simple. When things are too complex, or when the path is unclear, people

are not prepared to venture very far in their understanding of a system that they feel is too difficult to comprehend.

Opportunity 3—Clarify Vision. I have taken some time to go over the vision with the staff and Elders. This will allow us to clarify the existing vision and work toward clarifying and defining what we mean by these words. It needs to be a straightforward and strategic process that move people through the stages of spiritual growth. It must have clarity, movement, alignment, and focus. I believe that the church has gone through a time of challenge. We have dropped in our attendance and correspondingly so has our donations. This has “raised the heat” in our church insomuch that we are ready for change. Ronald Heifetz and Marty Linsky, in their book, *Leadership on the Line*, state:

If you try to stimulate deep change within an organization, you have to control the temperature. There are really two tasks here. The first is to raise the heat enough that people sit up, pay attention, and deal with the real threats and challenges facing them. Without stress, there is less stimulus for people to tolerate difficult change. The second is to lower the temperature when necessary to reduce a counterproductive level of tension. Any community can take only so much pressure before it becomes either immobilized or spins out of control. The heat must stay within a tolerable range—not so high that people demand it be turned off completely, and not so low that they are lulled into inaction. We call this span the productive range of stress. (Heifetz, Grashow and, Linsky 2009, 107-108)

The temperature was too high for multisite, but the temperature is still high enough to look at our vision using the Appreciative Inquiry information collected and chart out some strategic plans. This vision and plan will clearly define the process and examine how things are structured to move people to spiritual growth.

I have already begun these tasks with our staff team. The next stage is to plan sequential steps in the process that is going to move people toward greater areas of commitment. This is movement. After outlining the sequential steps, we have to align all of our ministries and staff around a much simpler process, and let go of things that fall outside the simple ministry process (Rainer and Geiger 2006, 71-77).

CHAPTER IV: FIELD MINISTRY PROJECT

This action research report is intended to provide information on the data collection, participant observations, research observations, and reflection and analysis for the research question proposed for the completion of the Doctor of Ministry final portfolio. It grows out of the context described in chapter two and is affected by my leadership philosophy in chapter three. Leading up to the research portion there were changes at Discovery Church that changed the research question which was described in chapter two. The use of Appreciative Inquiry during that time of crisis and change provided an opportunity for our congregation to talk about what they loved about Discovery Church and to dream of a new future. Multiplication is part of my leadership philosophy, which places a high value on dreaming about the future and going to places and spaces where the Gospel needs to be proclaimed.

The general focus of the research question was originally the shift that Discovery Church needed to make from being a church of one location to being a church of multiple locations. The research question changed when a drop in attendance necessitated a change in the goal to multisite. The congregation went through a crisis that involved both financial and emotional stress. The original intention was to chart the emotional and social responses of the congregation with

the change to multisite and it seemed appropriate to remain focused on the emotional and social responses as an objective of this research project. Through use of Appreciative Inquiry there was an opportunity to help the congregation look to the future and not just focus on the challenges at hand.

Using Appreciative Inquiry, the congregation was able to focus on preparing for the next chapter of our church given the context that we found ourselves in. It helped us focus on the positive, engage in the process of risk taking to secure growth, and to reimagine our shared stories into a potential new future. We were going to need to spend some time healing by focusing on discipleship and from that we must engage our evangelistic mission and leadership development.

Framing the Research Question

In September 2017, I began conducting research for my doctoral portfolio on *The Journey to Multisite*. What follows is the opportunity to be examined from my original research proposal:

The opportunity to be examined is the shift that Discovery Church is going to make from being a church of one location to being a church of multiple locations. More specifically, the problem to be addressed lies with the emotional and social shifts that the members of Discovery Church are struggling to make as we move towards this goal of being a church with multiple locations. (Spoelstra 2017 C)

Discovery Church was actively growing from 2006 to 2016 and at the commencement of the research term there were approximately 140 people in the congregation on Sunday mornings. Between May and September 2017, about thirty people, including four staff, left our church, most of which were core members. The Elders of Discovery Church interviewed each one of the adults

who had left during the research term (September 2017-January 2018); two-thirds of them moved to a new city due to challenges in their lives which were beyond their control, while one-third left the church due to the change of direction to multisite. In most cases it seemed, from their conversations with the Elders, that these individuals would have moved regardless of Discovery Church's plan to become a multisite church. This created a leadership challenge as well as a financial challenge in completing the three-year journey toward multisite. The congregation could not emotionally sustain the journey to multisite in the middle of this crisis nor could we sustain it financially. In October 2017 I stood before the congregation and announced a day of fasting and prayer and said that we were going to *put multisite on the shelf*.

I decided to use Appreciative Inquiry, given the new reality, as a methodology for research so that Discovery Church could address the emotional and social shifts necessary so that they could move through this time of crisis towards a future that re-captures our vision for discipleship, leadership development and multiplication. It is my belief that this is what originally brought growth to our church and it was now needed again for new growth. Before we could move through to that growth phase again, we needed a time and place to process our feelings of grief and loss over the events of the summer of 2017. Since the Original research project was going to now need a revision, I had to redevelop the research question. The following represents the new research question given the new realities that we were facing as a church:

The opportunity to be examined through the use of Appreciative Inquiry would be to give the congregation a process to address emotional and

social shifts that the members of Discovery Church are struggling to make as we move through this time of crisis and a place to dream about a future that re-captures our vision for discipleship, leadership development and multiplication.

The methodology included one-on-one interviews and a two-day workshop. I also planned to conduct a survey to gauge the engagement of our congregation both before and after the Appreciative Inquiry process. With the assistance of some trained volunteers, I was able to conduct one-on-one interviews with a team at Discovery with thirty-three adults and a workshop that was attended by thirty-five adults.

One of the challenges in carrying out this research opportunity was to deal with a growing sense of disunity and grumbling from the church. We instituted 30 days of prayer and fasting so that the Lord could sort this out for us. The Lord answered both prayers within thirty days. A founding member of our congregation was primarily responsible for the disunity. They shared with me that they had been meeting with various members of our congregation and sowing the seeds of discontent. This had been going on for almost two years. They left my office unrepentant and, after several pastoral visits and Elder visits, left our church in December 2017. After this event, the Appreciative Inquiry was responsible for shifting the congregation toward unity through its dynamic of appreciation and dreaming about the future. The Lord also provided an answer to our financial situation in the form of a monetary gift in the month of November.

These events shifted the focus of the research project. Since multisite was no longer an option we decided to risk the hiring of an associate pastor based upon the results of the one-on-one interviews and the workshop. The one-on-one

interviews and the workshop suggested that the congregation was still thinking positively about our church and part of the underlying enthusiasm for Discovery Church was our willingness to be outwardly focused and willing to try new things. In November and December 2017, I approached the Elders with a plan to step back our journey toward multisite by proposing that we hire an associate pastor to develop a second service and test the waters to see if multisite was still an option. The second survey, that I conducted after the Appreciative Inquiry, included questions to gauge the interest of our members in developing a second service. This associate pastor's position was partly paid for from existing budget funds and the remainder through denominational grants. We hired the associate pastor in January 2018. While this may seem like a setback from the original plan of multisite, this second service could have led to a point in the future where multisite became an option again.

Unfortunately, this plan to start a second service also did not succeed as hoped. What ended up happening was that we needed to spend time setting the groundwork for a new ministry development plan and a new vision focus. The fact that the church was willing to try a second service after the Appreciative Inquiry and second survey was an indication to me that they were willing to risk and follow a process of re-engagement rather than disengagement. The provocative proposals (see glossary) that were formed during the Appreciative Inquiry helped to develop a strategic plan for the redevelopment and engagement in mission and vision for a rebuilding process.

This was probably one of the most difficult times in my ministry career and I would say that it was also one of the most formative. During those dark and difficult days, I began to question whether or not I was supposed to remain at Discovery Church and whether or not I was able to serve any longer for the kingdom of God in the current context. I recognized that, in a crisis, I would not be comfortable finding an escape by leaving and going to another church but would rather persevere and develop the tools and skills necessary to help the congregation through this journey.

Without the use of the surveys, interviews, and Appreciative Inquiry I don't believe that we, as a church, would have been on as good a footing as we ended up following those experiences. The Appreciative Inquiry gave us the opportunity to do some reflection as a church on what was most important, what we believed would be most important, and to dream about the future again. It allowed the congregation to remember, through shared stories, why we started Discovery Church. The interviews and the workshop helped bring back memories from some of the original members that were then shared as to why they started or came to Discovery Church to begin with and also allowed them to dream again about what the future could hold. The Appreciative Inquiry process was specific enough to address the ways in which individuals' contributions were connected to how they were blessed by the church. This was an interesting process to observe as a researcher but also as a participant. There were many days when I would have to stop and reflect on my own emotional journey through this material as other participants would through the process. This was the place where I grew as

a leader and some of the greatest blessings I have ever received in ministry have come from my time at Discovery Church. It was heartbreaking to go through this difficult time as there had been so many years of blessing and growth.

The intention all along was to bring the congregation through the emotional and social shifts necessary for multisite and then the plan shifted to potentially starting a second service. What it did for the individual congregants, and for me as a researcher, was to bring each person along in that journey by allowing us time to reflect on what God had done, how we had participated, how we had contributed, and what dreams we still had for the future.

My previously stated purpose for participating in a Doctor of Ministry program was to help our church move from a “one church model” to “a multisite church model”. I thought that a research project would help our members reflect on their past, present, and future hopes for our church—that it would move them emotionally and socially toward a favourable position with regards to the multisite approach that we were taking. Because of the change in our situation the research question had to change slightly, yet the primary purpose of the research question was still to help move the congregation emotionally and socially towards a different reality. The original idea was to move the congregation towards multisite but what happened was a movement of the congregation towards a new reality that reflected our smaller numbers and decreased budget and towards a new reality focusing again on disciple making, leadership development and multiplication. My desire in using the Appreciative Inquiry process was to provide an experience that would excite and motivate people about a new reality

and in the end it did just that. One of the core values in my leadership philosophy is that of multiplication and kingdom growth. What I recognized at this point, using the Appreciative Inquiry, was that there needed to be a time of discipleship and leadership development. These two things are crucial for any multiplication movement. I was once again, as a leader, at the point where a new emphasis on discipleship and leadership development needed to take place. The Appreciative Inquiry helped us dream about a future that would encapsulate those ideas.

Appreciative Inquiry and Methodology

Most organizational change begins with problem-solving. Churches try to identify a need or problem that needs fixing or needs to be changed. Typically, we think that by fixing the problem we should be able to create a new, reenergized way into the future. “Problem-solving dominates most discussions in what is called a deficit model” (Branson 2016, 23). According to Branson, the more common approaches to strategies and problem-solving have not served the church as well. Many organizations assume that the job of leaders is to find the problems and fix them. When a problem-solving approach is taken then the focus is on problems and inadequacies. This is called a deficit model. Appreciative Inquiry assumes that all organizations have life forces. The life forces are available in the stories and in the imagination of the members of the organization. When an organization has a chance to reflect on these stories and a collective imagination, they can enter into planning that can be implemented by discovering the best and most valuable stories and qualities of the organization. The participants construct

a new way of thinking that links it to the past but most importantly focuses on a new future with shared images (McChesney, Covey, and Huling 2012, 21).

Some basic assumptions of Appreciative Inquiry surround the idea that what we focus on becomes our reality. The reality of an organization is defined by whatever participants think about, talk about, work on, dream about, or plan.

Cooperrider and Whitney describe this as the positive core:

Human systems grow in the direction of what they persistently ask questions about, and this propensity is strongest and most sustainable when the means and ends of inquiry are positively correlated. The single most important action a group can take to liberate the human spirit and consciously construct a better future is to make the positive core the common and explicit property of all (Cooperrider and Whitney 2005).

Simply focusing attention, giving energy, and priority to positive narratives reshapes the future. That future is shaped by language and questions. By asking questions we can recall the memories, perceptions, thoughts, and visions of a

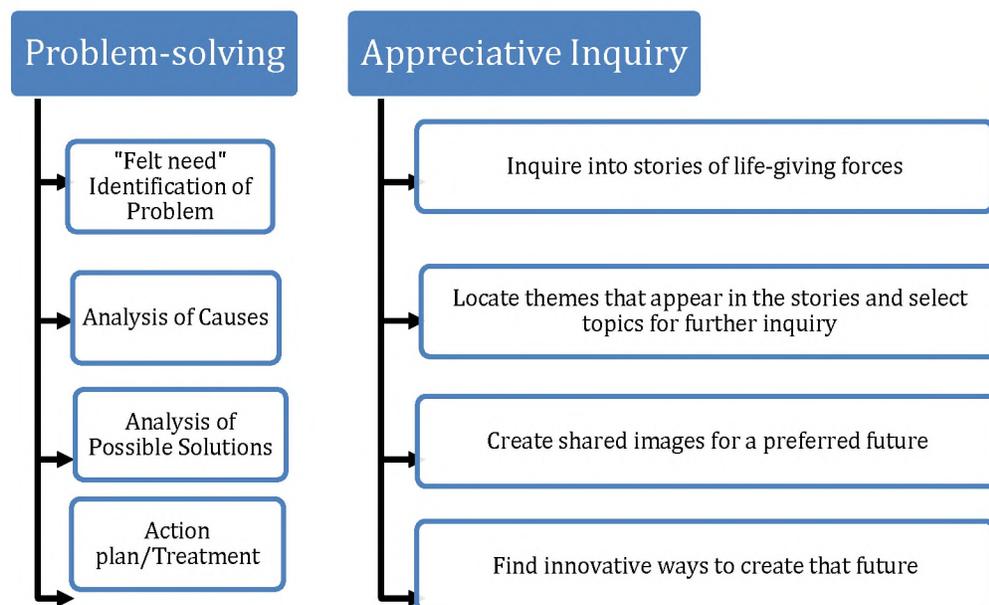


Figure 3. Problem solving vs. Appreciative Inquiry. From Branson, Mark A. 2016. *Memories, Hopes, and Conversations*. Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield. P. 24.

motivated and dynamic reality. Our words shape how we dream, converse, and act (Branson 2016, 9).

Branson points out that organizations are heliotropic. This is a botanical term describing a plant's orientation; most plants lean toward the sun. Similarly, churches and organizations lean toward the source of energy, especially if there is a hopeful, imaginative future (Branson 2016, 35). We have experienced in our own organizations that people have more confidence in the journey toward a future when they carry forward parts of the past; however, those should be what is best about the past. Appreciative Inquiry is a way to focus on the positive experiences of the people and gifts of God.

Five Core Processes of Appreciative Inquiry and the 4 – I Model

Appreciative Inquiry consists of five basic processes. These processes focus on the positive experiences of the people and the gifts of God. These are the generic processes that clarify the required movements of Appreciative Inquiry. These core processes and the phases of the *4 – I model* come from Mark Branson's book "Memories, Hopes, and Conversations; Appreciative Inquiry, Missional engagement, and Congregational Change."

The essential five generic processes for Appreciative Inquiry are ways to separate the actual steps of Appreciative Inquiry. The generic processes of the Appreciative Inquiry by Branson are as follows:

- 1 - Choose the positive as the focus of inquiry
- 2 - Inquiry into stories of life-giving forces
- 3 - Locate themes that appear in the stories and select topics for further inquiry
- 4 - Create shared images for a preferred future

5 - Find innovative ways to create that future (Branson 2016, 25)

The next part of the process is to provide four phases to prepare leaders and build structures for carrying out the research. These four phases are: Initiate, Inquire, Imagine, and Innovate. As described by Branson, Initiate is the process of introducing the leaders to the theory and practice of discovering the organization's best. Inquire is the process of asking the congregation about the best practices, narratives, and imagination for the future. Imagine is the process of interpreting the interviews and taking a risk towards building a consensus of what should be. Innovation is the process of discussing, equipping, and participating in the innovation (Branson 2016, 27). The Elders, design team, and staff used this book as a template for carrying out the Appreciative Inquiry (Branson 2016, 25-27). Using the outline found in Branson we believed that Appreciative Inquiry would move us to the new reality we needed.

We began by choosing the positive as the focus of inquiry. The financial and emotional challenge of losing thirty of Discovery Church's core members and financial stability could have kept us focused on the deficits. We instinctively want to focus on deficits but instead we need to be specific about positive narratives and images. It does not mean that we will not critique some things, however, the whole project must be framed in a positive way. We wanted to communicate that gratitude is the foundation for all that we do in the Appreciative Inquiry process. The design team was involved in creating a set of positively focused questions called *changing the conversation* (see Appendix 5).

We then began to inquire into the stories of life-giving forces. We based this on an assumption that Discovery Church has, in its history, generated stories that have a positive focus. By asking questions that surfaced these narratives, Appreciative Inquiry brings life-giving resources into the conversation. These life-giving stories were identified through one-on-one interviews using the *Changing the Conversation* questions.

Branson then recommended that we locate themes that appear in the stories and select topics for further inquiry. When themes begin to arise from the stories, biblical and theological reflection could be used to focus the imagination and then begin to imagine a new future for Discovery Church. To identify these themes, the design team and I then summarized and categorized the one-on-one interviews to be used during a one-day workshop. Participants in the workshop clarified these themes and begin to connect them to a possible future.

We created shared images for a preferred future by identifying the themes, with special attention to the wishes that were generated in the interviews and continuing to use biblical and theological reflection, lead to what are called *Provocative Proposals* (see Glossary). These are focused, imaginative scenarios that encapsulate and then stretch Discovery's greatest strengths and describe these images as potential futures. The one-day workshop was used to identify these provocative proposals.

And finally, we were to find innovative ways to create that future. The old structure of Discovery Church can easily mal-form the new images, Discovery needed to create an interplay between new imagination (provocative proposals),

and experiments. This is a phase for forming new partnerships, testing direction, and engaging the Holy Spirit's life-giving presence. In cooperation with the design team, participants in the one-day workshop were asked to volunteer to help implement these experiments (Branson 2016, 26)

The Appreciative Inquiry took place in four phases using the *4 – I model* outlined by Branson and working through the five processes above with these four phases: Initiate, Inquire, Imagine, and Innovate. This was especially useful as we trained leaders to carry out the research. This is how we interpreted each of the four phases of this model.

Initiate—the Elders and the design team were introduced to the process of Appreciative Inquiry by Branson. The initial stage finalized the one-on-one interview questions, developed an interview protocol, and assigned and prepared interviewers to conduct the interviews.

Inquire—using a set of questions that were approved by the design team and the Elders we conducted interviews with the congregation to inquire about our narratives, practices, and imagination for the future. Once the interviews were complete the data was collated and summarized by the design team and me for common themes.

Imagine—a workshop was planned to provide the context for the imagine phase. An introduction of the theory and practice of Appreciative Inquiry through a series of micro-lectures was presented to the participants. A summary of the collated data was provided to the participants at the workshop. The design team and staff who wanted to participate in the workshop were trained on Friday

evening as table group leaders for the important task of leading and listening to conversations during the Saturday session. The Saturday session included anyone from Discovery Church, eighteen years of age and older. There were thirty-five participants. During the Saturday sessions participants moved from the themes collected in the interview questions to presenting provocative proposals and possible experiments. Collection of this data took place during the Workshop. Participants were informed that there would be recorders (scribes) at each of the tables assigned to record discussion and insights. During the Workshop introduction the participants were informed that the group sessions would be audiotaped.

Innovate—members of the design team and myself assembled the provocative proposals and experiments into a document that was presented to the Elder Board and eventually the entire congregation. Participants from the workshop were recruited to plan and implement the experiments. With the supervision of the design team, a strategic plan was presented to the Elder Board along with a report outlining the potential missional engagement as identified during the Appreciative Inquiry process.

Documents, Records, and Reports

There were several reports that were used to provide some context and summaries during the research term. All three of these reports were written by me the senior pastor and researcher. Here is a list with descriptions of the documents that were used for this research project:

The Journey to Launch: Preparing for Organizational Change as We Plan for Multisite—This paper outlined the organizational change that Discovery

Church was to undergo during the period of November 2016 to September 2017. In May of 2015, the Elder board of Discovery Church agreed to develop a second site in the town of Newcastle. As a medium size church, this is a unique undertaking.

Appreciative Inquiry Update November 2017—This document was written to the Elders of Discovery Church as an update on the Appreciative Inquiry workshops and one-on-one interviews. This report outlined some of the conclusions made by the participants of the workshop on November 4, 2017.

Pastor's Report June 20, 2018—Part of this monthly pastor's report to the Elders of Discovery Church outlined a potential way forward with the information gathered from the two surveys, the one-on-one interviews, and the workshop. This report was intended to provide a roadmap for implementing provocative proposals and giving insights to the strategic planning and vision for Discovery Church.

Additionally, four spiral-bound loose-leaf notebooks that were handwritten by participants on the day of the workshop were collected. I asked the participants to gather themselves into three groups and elect a scribe from among themselves to take handwritten notes of their conversation. They were asked to review the questions in the one-on-one interview and organize them into categories and then narrow down those categories into smaller groups. A fourth spiral-bound notebook was used in the afternoon session as the entire group worked together to put together provocative proposals based upon the categories identified during the morning session. These documents were also coded using the evaluation coding outlined in the one-on-one interviews.

Discovery Church Survey One

To provide an online source for people to participate in the survey, I used the online resource SurveyMonkey. This survey was promoted through our Facebook page, church bulletin, E-bulletin, and verbally on Sunday morning during worship services. As a result of this promotion there were sixty-two

respondents to the survey from a potential 239 people that includes active and non-active members, regular attenders, and visitors. What follows is a general summary of the responses to the seven questions; this data will be examined in more detail in the analysis section of this paper.

The survey began with a question to discover how long the respondents had been attending Discovery Church.

Table 2 Question 1 (Sept. 2017) –How long have you been attending Discovery Church?

Answer Choices	Responses	
Less than one year	1.64%	1
1 to 3 years	14.75%	9
4 to 6 years	27.87%	17
7 to 9 years	34.43%	21
Since the beginning	21.31%	13
	Answered	61
	Skipped	1

The demographic information chosen did not include gender, age, or marital status. This information did not seem to be pertinent to the purpose of the survey which was to address the emotional and social shifts that were taking place. The only demographic information that was included was the time that each respondent had been attending Discovery Church.

Table 3 Question 2 (Sept. 2017) –Which of the following words would you use to describe how you feel about Discovery Church? Select all that apply.

Answer Choices	Responses	
Excited	30.65%	19
Encouraged	54.84%	34
Confident	25.81%	16
Satisfied	37.10%	23
Positive	62.90%	39
Optimistic	45.16%	28
Thankful	66.13%	41
Blessed	66.13%	41
Distrustful	3.23%	2
Powerless	1.61%	1
Concerned	32.26%	20
Anxious	1.61%	1
Fearful	1.61%	1
Skeptical	3.23%	2
Pessimistic	0.00%	0
Worried	14.52%	9
	Answered	62
	Skipped	0

The words that were used in this question were derived from an online resource for students and professionals in the psychology department of the Chicago school of professional psychology (Noilan 2017). This list was created to provide counselling students with words that describe positive and negative feelings. I chose eight from the positive feelings and eight from the negative feelings that I felt were applicable to the current situation at Discovery Church. When analysed, each word will be categorized into the percentage of respondents that choose each word. Over 62 percent responded that they felt blessed, thankful, and positive. One of the aspects of the survey was to find out from the congregation if there was an actual problem to be addressed. Leadership often

will assume that there is a problem. Clearly, from the respondents in this survey question, there is evidence of an emotional and social problem for evaluation and reflection. I observed that 32 percent of the respondents chose concerned and 14 percent chose worried as feeling words to describe Discovery Church. Another observation to me was that only 25 percent of the congregation felt confident and only 30 percent felt excited about Discovery Church. This was an indication to me that the emotional and social condition of the congregation, although positive and thankful and feeling blessed, was concerned and there were enough people worried to temper the excitement for the future.

Table 4 Question 3 (Sept. 2017) –How likely is it that you would recommend Discovery Church to a friend or colleague?

Answer Choices	Responses
Very likely	91.94% 57
Not very likely	8.06% 5
Comments	16
	Answered 62
	Skipped 0

Even though the congregation was going through a difficult period, 91 percent of the congregation felt that they would still recommend Discovery Church to a friend or colleague. From Table three we see that 32 percent were concerned and 14 percent were worried yet in table four they are still ‘very likely’ to recommend Discovery Church.

Table 5. Question 4 (Sept. 2017) –Overall, how satisfied, or dissatisfied are you with the direction of Discovery Church towards multisite?

Answer Choices	Responses	
Very satisfied	25.81%	16
Somewhat satisfied	20.97%	13
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	29.03%	18
Somewhat dissatisfied	16.13%	10
Very dissatisfied	8.06%	5
Comments		20
	Answered	62
	Skipped	0

Table 6. Question 5 (Sept. 2017) –Considering our desire to multisite, how excited are you about Discovery Church's future?

Answer Choices	Responses	
Extremely excited	16.13%	10
Very excited	17.74%	11
Somewhat excited	43.55%	27
Not so excited	14.52%	9
Not at all excited	8.06%	5
Comments		19
	Answered	62
	Skipped	0

Table 7. Question 6 (Sept 2017) –How responsive has the design team of Discovery Church been to your concerns about multisite?

Answer Choices	Responses	
Extremely responsive	6.56%	4
Very responsive	24.59%	15
Somewhat responsive	9.84%	6
Not so responsive	0.00%	0
Not at all responsive	3.28%	2
Not applicable	55.74%	34
	Answered	61
	Skipped	1

Table 8 Question 7 (Sept. 2017) –Are you currently in favour of Discovery Church's kingdom expansion plan (to become one church with two sites)?

Answer Choices	Responses
Yes	67.86% 38
No	32.14% 18
Comments	23
	Answered 56
	Skipped 6

All of these questions have generated many comments, but I will reserve some of my comments until later when I compare the two surveys in the Reflection and Analysis section. There are some reflections that I have observed that are important here. Given the context of the situation in September 2017; the loss of thirty members, a financial budget crisis, and drastic staff cutbacks, it is surprising to see that so many were still in favour of the kingdom expansion plan. My initial expectations were that the responses to the kingdom expansion plan would be substantially lower. Going into the Appreciative Inquiry this became a rallying cry for the participants and the congregation around taking a risk and being adventurous enough to expand the kingdom of God. When it came time to suggest an alternate course of action that was different then multisite this percentage was used to help the members consider moving towards hiring an associate pastor for the task of starting a second service.

Changing the Conversation

In October 2017, following the initial survey, we, as a congregation, had to step away from the original intention of multisite and focus on dealing with the crisis at hand. It would have been easy to focus on the deficits: the financial crisis, the loss of thirty members, and the drastic cutbacks in staff and salaries. In order

to inquire into the stories of life-giving forces at Discovery Church we began by developing a series of questions that would help to change the conversation. The subject matter of the initial questions was to dig into the life-giving stories of Discovery Church so that we could turn our focus to the positive. Most questions that are asked of a congregation tend to be deficit questions. They focus on fixing problems. Even neutral research tends to gather helpful information but is only truly positive if the congregation is hopeful and healthy. Appreciative Inquiry works with a different set of assumptions and expectations. Appreciative Inquiry chooses the positive as the focus of inquiry. Nevertheless, we did not ignore the negative during the interviews; we did not turn away from or ignore the financial situation, the decline in attendance, or the challenges brought on by this time of crisis. We did, however, approach the questions with a very particular framework. The questions were designed to seek information about the life-giving forces of the congregation.

Using the *4 – I model* from Branson the *Changing the Conversation* questions are part of the inquire process. This was our way of determining the best of the organization's narratives, practices, and imaginations. The design team used standard questions included in Branson's book (Branson 2016, 76) and adapted them to my research question. We entitled the interview questions, *Changing the Conversation*. These are the questions that were used for the one-on-one interviews:

- 1 - Remembering your entire experience with Discovery Church, when were you most alive, most motivated, and excited about your involvement in Discovery Church?

- 2 - What are the most valuable ways you have contributed to Discovery Church?
- 3 - What are the most important things (spiritual or personal) our church has contributed to your life?
- 4 - Make three wishes for the future shape of Discovery Church. (Branson 2016).

One-On-One Interviews

The interviews were conducted in October of 2017 but on September 14, 2017, I scheduled an interviewer training evening so that I could enlist the help of the design team, Elders, and staff to conduct the thirty-three one-on-one interviews. To initiate the Appreciative Inquiry, process the design team and I needed to conduct one-on-one interviews with as many of the key stakeholders at Discovery Church as we could manage. I recruited six interviewers to help with the process of interviewing these stakeholders and used the Appreciative Inquiry process to focus on the positive and appreciating strengths versus identifying where our problems were. Through a one-on-one interview process, we were able to engage thirty-three stakeholders in a collaborative process that I believed would shape the participation and engagement of our community in awareness, reflection, knowledge, imagination, and innovation.

The training was conducted so that the interviewers would understand the process of taking summary notes, recording the conversation, and provide them with information regarding nondisclosure and confidentiality. During the interviewer training they interviewed each other to provide a context for conducting an interview. Each of the interviewers were then brought back together for a debriefing and question-and-answer session.

Once the interviews were complete, the interviewers submitted a summary of each interview providing details of the conversation based upon the questions. The summary included quotations that they thought should be remembered, summarized key topics, and made personal observations about the interviewee. These interviews were audio recorded and reviewed by the researcher. All this information was coded using evaluation coding as the method that most applies to Appreciative Inquiry.

Evaluation coding is appropriate for policy, critical, action, organizational, and (of course) evaluation studies, particularly across multiple sites and extended periods of time. Appreciative Inquiry may also benefit from the utility of evaluation coding. Evaluation codes emerges from the evaluative perspective of the researcher or from the qualitative commentary provided by participants. Selected coding methods profiled in this manual can be applied to or supplement evaluation coding (e.g. magnitude coding, descriptive coding, values coding, and grounded theory coding methods), but evaluation coding is also customized for specific studies since ‘the coding system must also reflect the questions that initiated and structured the evaluation in the first place.’ (Saldana 2016, 141)

These interviews became extraordinarily helpful in reimagining the future for Discovery Church by going back and identifying some of the shared stories from those who had started Discovery Church and from when people began attending Discovery Church. One interviewee said, “Everything was new and shiny. Everything touched me personally and seem specific to my life. It was like every sermon was specific to me; like God put the words that Pastor Martin spoke in his mouth for me and my wife” (Spoelstra 2017A).

These interviews were used a month later during the workshop to orient the participants around the sentiments expressed in the questions. The interviews not only expressed some of the desires for the future but also reflected on what

was best from Discovery Church. The interviews were crucial in orienting the workshop participants toward putting together provocative proposals and experiments.

Workshop

In addition to the one-on-one interviews I conducted a two-day Appreciative Inquiry workshop on Nov 4, 2017 with the intended purpose of gathering as many members of the congregation as possible for a time of imagining a future for Discovery Church. Using the *4 – I model* from Branson the workshops were intended to encompass the third and fourth phase to carry out the research. Here again is a summary of these phases: imagining what might be by interpreting the interviews; taking the risk of imagination; and building towards consensus concerning what should be; and innovation what will be through discourse, commitment, and equipping, with the largest possible level of participation (Branson 2016, 27). The information from the interviews was collected and summarized into a packet that was distributed to the participants. The morning session was spent reviewing the answers to the four questions in the one-on-one interviews. This information was then discussed in smaller groups looking for key themes and deciding on which themes to focus on. The workshop participants located themes that appeared in the stories that were collected during the one-on-one interviews and together they created shared images for a preferred future. This workshop was supposed to provide clarity on themes that needed to be focused on for future development of Discovery Church. The afternoon session

was spent developing provocative proposals and experiments concerning possible futures (Branson 2016, 85-86).

The afternoon session helped to identify themes from all the questions and to put together provocative proposals that would build on the themes and provide a corporate imagination that would go beyond what was possible. There were seven overarching categories that grabbed the attention of the thirty-five participants at the workshop:

- 1 - Loving and glorifying God
- 2 - Love one another
- 3 - Bible reading
Be a praying church
- 4 - Serve inwardly and outwardly
- 5 - Spiritual growth
- 6 - Family (Spoelstra 2018)

These categories were then narrowed down into some themes by asking the participants of the workshop to place them into three categories for discussion in the afternoon session:

- 1 - Loving God and glorifying God.
- 2 - Loving one another, spiritual growth, and serving one another in the church and outside of the church keeping our family atmosphere.
- 3 - Relying on the Holy Spirit to maintain us, be a Bible reading and praying church (Participant 2017).

The last part of the workshop was to take these categories and create provocative proposals that would encapsulate the categories from the interviews and the conversations during the day. The proposals put forward are rough drafts of what a proposal might look like, yet they do have the structure of our conversations and are entirely the input of the thirty-five individuals who participated in the workshop.

According to Branson, a provocative proposal is an imaginative statement about the future crafted as if it were already experiential and generative. Provocative proposals build on the data and engage our corporate imagination (Branson 2016, 95). It was a time to be creative and to look at what our organization's greatest potential might be. The descriptions of provocative proposals that were presented during the workshop were intended to gather thematic statements and create lengthy statements regarding the future of Discovery Church. These could be included in strategic plans or vision statements. Provocative proposals are built on the data and engage the imagination of the entire group. To engage the dreaming and visioning is to invite organizational stakeholders to go beyond what they thought was possible. It is a time for them to push the creative edges of possibility and wonder about their organization's greatest potential (Watkins, McGruder, Mohr, and Kelly 2011, 215-218). Here are the proposals that were written out in the afternoon session of the workshop by the participants:

Proposal 1—Loving God, by growing in faith, to become a more compassionate church. To exhibiting a maturing faith, to be more Christ like through reading and growing in the Word. Therefore, we would be growing in love, and maturing more and more in keeping God's commandments. We would love God through the reliance on the Holy Spirit to guide and direct us as we reach out to each other and to a needy broken world. All the while becoming mature believers who never cease praying. All to the glory of God. And of course, we cannot emphasize enough the need to have the Word of God as a living, ever increasing, intimate part of our lives. (Duet 6:5, Matt 22:3, James 2:14-26, Eph 3:20)

Proposal 2—We are a family that chooses to love with words and actions. We foster a culture where individuals are comfortable communicating their needs. We have a system to communicate and fulfill needs, from the inside and outside the church, to the whole body. (John 15:13)

Proposal 3—As we are being transformed by the Holy Spirit personally and as a community. We worship God, study the Bible, and pray. We see a time where each person studies the Word and prays regularly, applies the Word of God through the Holy Spirit's empowerment. There is regular teaching about the gifts of the Holy Spirit and about learning to listen and discern God's voice. We experience sharing and prayer times where the Spirit moves. We do the hard things the Holy Spirit calls us to do; confess our sins, practice forgiveness, practice freedom, practice love (Romans 12:1-3; Ephesians 1:13-14) (Participant 2017).

Information collected during the workshop was used to provide the Elders of Discovery Church with guidance and direction for the formation of strategies and clarity to help our congregation move out of the crisis that it found itself in during this period. The workshop provided the congregation with an opportunity to remember the blessings of being part of Discovery Church, their contributions towards those blessings and to dream together about a possible future.

Collectively this allowed this group of people to continue investing in the future of Discovery Church when our finances and leadership were struggling.

These three proposals were intended to be starting points for further discussion and implementation. From each of these proposals we developed experiments that will prioritize learning some new things and discerning God's direction. These experiments will not cost us a lot of time, money, or changes in structure, they are not going to be complicated and the results are not going to be predetermined. One of the characteristics of experiments is that failure is an acceptable outcome and should create conversations of further dialogue about how to move towards this provocative proposal (Spoelstra 2017 b).

Discovery Church Survey Two

This second survey was initiated in January 2018 following the completion of the workshop on November 4, 2017. The second set of questions were designed to see if there was a desire to potentially turn our young adult ministry, The Hub, into a second service with the potential to move it toward a multisite in the future. The questions were designed to also gauge the shift in the emotional and social condition of the congregation after conducting the Appreciative Inquiry process. One question was omitted from the original survey regarding the work of the design team. I received enough information from the first survey to gauge the successful communication process and thought that the second survey did not require a similar question. Two additional questions were added to the second survey regarding the potential development of a second service.

- 1** - In your own words tell us about how you feel towards starting a second service?
- 2** - What are you most excited about, multisite or starting a second service? Please rank each answer, (1-most excited, 2-somewhat excited, 3 being least excited).
- 3** - Overall, how satisfied, or dissatisfied are you with the direction of Discovery Church to start a second service?

There were five questions that respondents could comment on.

- 1** - How likely is it that you would recommend Discovery Church to a friend or colleague? Please comment.
- 2** - Overall, how satisfied, or dissatisfied are you with the direction of Discovery Church towards multisite? Comments?
- 3** - Considering our desire to multisite, how excited are you about Discovery Church's future? Please explain.
- 4** - Are you currently in favour of Discovery Church's kingdom expansion plan (to become one church with two sites)? Please comment.
- 5** - In your own words tell us about how you feel towards starting a second service?

This survey was advertised to the congregation in an identical manner to the first survey so that we could get as many participants as possible through email, Facebook, and Sunday morning announcements. Both the first and the second survey were sent to identical groups based upon our membership and regular attenders. Each survey was sent to 180 email addresses in our database. What follows is a summary of the respondents' answers to the survey questions. As a general observation on the participation in the second survey, there were six individuals that opened the survey but did not complete any responses. In the summary of each question there is an indicator of how many people skipped the question and the reader should understand that for every question there are six people who were considered having skipped the question but, never completed the survey. Their comments and my observations will follow in the section on data analysis.

Phases and Timetable

In order to combine the use of the two surveys with the two Appreciative Inquiry stages, I created the following phases to outline the research process. A timetable of the phases and activities can be found in Appendix III.

Phase 1

Phase 1 was the introductory process for the research project. During this phase I conducted mini-lectures, presentations, and information sessions on Appreciative Inquiry. I also sent out the initial survey through SurveyMonkey and trained staff and the design team to do the “changing the conversation”

interviews. This phase was completed except for some of the interviews by the end of September 2017.

Phase 2

During phase 2 the emphasis was placed upon completing the “changing the conversation” interviews and running an Appreciative Inquiry workshop. Prior to the workshop I took some time to summarize and categorize the interview questions for use during the two-day Appreciative Inquiry workshop. These summaries were used for the morning session so that the participants of the workshop could have time to reflect on the answers from the one-on-one interviews. The Saturday session was recorded and there were scribes present at each table to collect data. These scribes helped summarize the conversations so that provocative proposals and experiments could be clearly articulated. During the workshop I invited attendees to consider participating in teams that will implement their suggestions for provocative proposals and experiments. The conversations, content, and data collected from the interviews and the workshop was analysed by the design team and myself and then I prepared a report outlining the provocative proposals and experiments for the Elders.

Phase 3

Phase 3 began by presenting a report at the November members meeting outlining the provocative proposals and experiments that were imagined during the two-day workshop. This report gave a summary of the first survey completed in September. The survey was analysed looking for areas of comparison and

contrast that indicated a shift in people's concerns, fears, and anxiety toward multisite and their overall feelings regarding the future of Discovery Church.

Ethics in Ministry-Based Research

As a minister of Discovery Church and now also student at Tyndale Seminary of Tyndale University there were some ethical considerations to be mindful of during this research. I examined the behaviours and reasons behind certain activities, and it is incumbent upon a minister to hold things in confidence.

As a researcher, however, some of this information needs to be included in the research project. Tim Sensing in his book *Qualitative Research* points out that,

as a researcher, you have an ethical obligation to your congregants and participants. You are examining and leading change in the social-religious lives of people. Your role as a minister is a sacred trust. Violations of this trust sometimes happen, and once the damage is done, it may take months or years to repair. (Sensing 2011, 31)

In order to safeguard the sacred trust of minister and to conduct research I gave every opportunity for individuals to decline to participate and ensure that confidentiality was paramount. Each participant was informed of the scope and purpose of the interviews. I chose to collect all the survey data anonymously unless the participant specifically requests to be identified. For the workshop, participants were asked to sign consent forms to be recorded during the two-day workshop and all data, conversations, and anecdotes during the workshop were collected (see Appendix I, II, III & IV). The conversations during the two-day workshop were not anonymous but individuals were given consent forms asking for permission to use conversation from the workshops. There was one participant during the workshop that chose not to participate when asked to sign a consent

form. The participant was given the opportunity to continue to participate during the workshop, but they chose to leave instead.

More specifically I attempted to minimize risk and power differentials between myself and the participants by asking a group of six people to help me conduct the one-on-one interviews. These interviews were collected, and the data collated separately from my own. In doing so, I would be able to potentially identify variances in the answers to questions that may relate to how I had impacted the one-on-one interviews. In the end, after all the interviews were done, I only conducted two one-on-one interviews. During the two-day workshop, I did not have conversations with the small groups during their discussions. Each small group had a trained leader so that my input would not create bias. By doing so, this may help to eliminate undue pressure or bias in answering questions when I am present for the discussion. It was my hope to include forty to eighty individuals in the interviews and workshops. The reality is that out of the one hundred or so adults attending Discovery Church on a Sunday morning, a group of thirty-five adult participants was more realistic. The actual number of participants for the one-on-one interviews was thirty-six and the thirty-three for the workshop.

This project followed the guidelines and restrictions of the Research and Ethics Board of Tyndale Seminary of Tyndale University and the Tri-Council Policy Statement on the Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans, of the Government of Canada. The following information was included in a consent

form (Appendix II) sought from all participants as they engaged in the research process:

- 1 - A restatement of the purpose of the action research and a description of study, tasks, and conditions for participation
- 2 - An encouragement to participants to ask questions before giving consent
- 3 - Information about their right to refuse to do anything they find uncomfortable and their right to leave the study at any time without penalty
- 4 - A statement indicating that by consenting, participants do not waive any legal rights
- 5 - Contact information for the researcher and the Research Ethics Board of Tyndale Seminary of Tyndale University (Canada 2014)

I used a survey instrument before and after the Appreciative Inquiry process

(Appendix V). Participation in the survey could also be done anonymously. I

asked staff members and design team members to participate as interviewers for part of the research. Training for the interviews included the following:

- 1 - How to Conduct interviews. Interviewers will interview each other using the questions from “changing the conversation”
- 2 - Instructions on how to take notes during the interview including information on how to collect biographical data and the overall tone of the interviewer during the interview
- 3 - Instructions on how to explain and collect consent forms
- 4 - Expectations regarding submission and of notes

All interviewers were given the same consent forms (Appendix II) as the participants indicating their desire to participate and allowing them to decline to participate without penalty or bias. Anyone participating in the interviews or the two-day workshop that was uncomfortable with comments made or being recorded could request that they opt out of the research data collection portion.

They were informed that they could still participate in the interviews and two-day workshop if they so choose. The board of Elders at Discovery Church has given permission for me to conduct this project with the congregation and was kept up

to date as to the progress. They were also included as much as possible in the actual research.

The potential benefits of the research project were to identify and understand the feelings associated with moving towards a church with multiple sites. It was also to allow groups to participate in the dreaming and imagination for what Discovery Church might become. This inclusive participation will allow individuals to feel and develop ownership in the future of Discovery Church (Appendix IV).

Gathering Data

To maximize the accuracy of this action research project there were several different kinds of data collected and several points of view in the reflection of the data collected. Between surveys, the workshop, and one-on-one interviews there 3 areas of data collection. With each kind of data there was an improvement of knowledge and clarity from the data.

In September 2015, I formed the design team, which was a strategic planning team intent on leading the congregation through the two-year change process of the multisite project. The design team was made up of six individuals who had extensive planning experience and were integral to the life of Discovery Church. Included there was a project manager for a major transportation company, an IT project manager for a bank who was also an Elder in our church, a caseworker, and a retired engineer. This group of people was extremely helpful in setting up project reports and planning flow sheets as well as change management outlines.

One of the key qualities of this design team was their credibility. The caseworker was our previous Elder board chair and a very well-respected person in our church community. The design team helped to guide the creation of the survey for the one-on-one interviews, participated in the interview process, and were themselves interviewers, helped with the implementation of strategic plans for the growth of Discovery Church once the research phase was completed and provided the Elder Board of Discovery Church with updates regarding the status of the various projects and our readiness to implement the provocative proposals and experiments.

To increase the rigour, I included several data sources and used different methods of data collection. Data was collected through questionnaires, individual interviews, and observations as well as the reflection from leaders and Elders in our congregation (Melrose 2001, 166). The timetable for the research can be found in Appendix III – Appreciative Inquiry Timetable

To assist with the interpretation of the data and to be faithful to the stories and observations therein, thirty-three adults participated in a workshop where they took time to reflect on the stories from the one-on-one interviews and the initial survey data. During the workshop, the participants also reflected on the initial survey and the one-on-one interviews and scribes were selected to record their observations and conclusions.

Over a period of four months, from September 2017 to January 2018, I collected information from five different sources: an initial survey in September, one-on-one interviews in September and October, a two-day workshop in the

beginning of November, and an adaptation of the original survey to include portions of the new research question. I also gathered information from documents prepared to communicate the journey to multisite and records such as excerpts from my pastor's report to the Elders and congregation.

One of the problems in research is to identify whether there is an actual problem. The researcher may perceive a problem that does not exist or overlook an obvious, existing problem. Many problems are determined by people in authority and defined in terms that either overstate or understate the central problem (Stringer 2014, 99). Using the initial survey, I needed to establish whether the congregation were truly emotionally and socially opposed to the multisite project.

Reflection and Analysis

The purpose of this section is to sift through and assess the information and data that was collected during the research. In this section I will look at the survey questions and compare them to see if there is a shift in the values, attitudes, and beliefs of the participants. This will include a reflection on the interviews and workshop to analyse the effectiveness of the Appreciative Inquiry. This reflection includes the comparison of the two surveys and observations, anecdotes and observations on the one-on-one interviews based upon the *Changing the Conversation* questions. The development of provocative proposals at the workshop and how they were used to develop SMART goals that were presented to the Elders and the congregation.

Survey Questions

The two surveys were intended to provide a comparison for a change in the congregation's emotional and social values, beliefs, and attitudes toward becoming a multisite church. There was a shift in the research question in between the two surveys and yet there are some questions that remained the same between surveys. In the first survey there were sixty-two respondents in the second survey there were thirty-four respondents. In trying to understand why there were fewer respondents in the second survey I have been unable to give an answer. The surveys were sent to the same number of people each time and each survey was given the same exposure through email, Facebook, and announcements at church on Sunday.

This question examines how people feel about Discovery Church. I was interested in whether I could see a shift in how people felt about Discovery Church after conducting the one-on-one interviews and the workshop.

Table 9 Comparison between surveys one and two. Question: which of the following words would you use to describe how you feel about Discovery Church? Select all that apply.

Answer Choices	Survey 1		Survey 2	
Excited	30.65%	19	44.12%	15
Encouraged	54.84%	34	44.12%	15
Confident	25.81%	16	38.24%	13
Satisfied	37.10%	23	41.18%	14
Positive	62.90%	39	47.06%	16
Optimistic	45.16%	28	67.65%	23
Thankful	66.13%	41	67.65%	23
Blessed	66.13%	41	70.59%	24
Distrustful	3.23%	2	14.71%	5
Powerless	1.61%	1	8.82%	3
Concerned	32.26%	20	35.29%	12
Anxious	1.61%	1	5.88%	2
Fearful	1.61%	1	0.00%	0

Skeptical	3.23%	2	11.76%	4
Pessimistic	0.00%	0	2.94%	1
Worried	14.52%	9	14.71%	5
	Answered	62	Answered	34
	Skipped	0	Skipped	0

Of interest to me here is the 15 percent rise in the percentage of total words of three of the positive feeling words: excited, confident, and optimistic. Although I am unable to determine if the same people participated in the second survey these three words specifically show a dramatic increase in the positive outlook of the participants towards Discovery Church in general. Six of the positive feeling words had increased during the second survey and six increased in the negative words in the second survey, two in particular are; sceptical, distrustful. Comparing these two questions allows us to see that there is a more positive use of the feeling words in the second survey than in the first. This represents a more positive attitude towards how people feel about Discovery Church.

Considering our desire to multisite, how excited are you about Discovery Church's future?

The purpose of this question was to gauge how excited people were about the future of Discovery Church given the uncertainties of moving toward a multisite church.

Table 10. Comparison between surveys one and two. Question: considering our desire to multisite, how excited are you about Discovery Church's future?

Answer Choices	Survey 1		Survey 2	
Extremely excited	16.13%	10	26.47%	9
Very excited	17.74%	11	17.65%	6

Somewhat excited	43.55%	27	29.41%	10
Not so excited	14.52%	9	17.65%	6
Not at all excited	8.06%	5	8.82%	3
Please explain		19		4
	Answered	62	Answered	34
	Skipped	0	Skipped	0

In the second survey there is a higher percentage of people extremely excited about the future of Discovery Church. This may be an indicator that the Appreciative Inquiry provided this group of respondents with a more positive outlook for Discovery Church’s future. There is the possibility that we had “weeded-out” those who felt less positive because of the lower number of respondents.

The comments from the first survey generally fell within two theme categories of values and attitudes. In the values theme the comments were split evenly between concern for doing multiplication given the challenges we were facing and belief in the values of Kingdom expansion and multiplication.

Now that the time for multisite is here its hard to garner excitement for the project due to coinciding issues in our church. Decline in average attendance and the failure of giving to match previous years' budgetary increases are concerning but not so much so that we should stop the multisite. The most concerning issue to me is the attrition of our core membership, the loss of many people who were integral to the church, in the years leading up to the project. This is to say that I have more concern than excitement. (Survey 1. Discovery Church. 2017)

Are you currently in favour of Discovery Church's kingdom expansion plan (to become one church with two sites)?

Even after all the crises that we went through in the fall of 2017: losing thirty people and four staff, a financial crisis, and a great deal of uncertainty there

was still relatively the same amount of people in favour of Discovery Church’s kingdom expansion plan.

Table 11 Comparison between surveys one and two. Question: are you currently in favour of Discovery Church's kingdom expansion plan (to become one church with two sites)?

Answer Choices	Survey 1		Survey 2	
Yes	67.86%	38	66.67%	22
No	32.14%	18	33.33%	11
Please comment		23		9
	Answered	56	Answered	33
	Skipped	6	Skipped	1

There were twenty-three comments in the first survey on the question about being in favour of Discovery Church’s kingdom expansion plan. Most of the responses were either neutral or against going forward and for the most part had a condition on their negative response. Prior to agreeing to move forward with multisite, the design team and the Elders provided benchmarks for the launch of a multisite. Due to the loss of members and our financial status those benchmarks could not be met. These responses are representative of this sentiment in the first survey:

When the criteria for moving ahead has been met. It may mean waiting. I’m undecided.

It seems we are lacking volunteers and some support at one church so not sure how it will be with two. But excited to be able to expand too (Survey 1. Discovery Church 2017).

There were nine comments in the second survey and here again most of the responses were neutral or against going forward and the respondents had conditions. The following responses are representative of the sentiment:

With conditions. We need to be in a much better financial situation first. And more people attending regularly.

I am cautiously supportive and do not want to rush the decision. I think healthy timelines and not rushing is a key to success. (Survey 2 Discovery Church 2018)

What are you most excited about, multisite, or starting a second service?

This question was included in the second survey only because of the change in the research question and the desire to understand from the congregation whether there was still a willingness to develop a strategy for kingdom expansion. In this question we outlined three options: multisite, a second service, or both.

Because of the shift in the research question due to shelving the multisite option we decided to ask the respondents if turning an existing young adult ministry into a second service would be a better option? Clearly the response was in favour of starting a second service over continuing with the multisite strategy. There should have been an option in this question to choose neither. This may have created a blind spot in the data where people may have been forced to choose between options, neither of which they liked. There may be a bias in this data.

Table 12. Question 8 (Jan. 2018) –What are you most excited about, multisite or starting a second service? Please rank each answer, (1–most excited, 2–somewhat excited, 3–least excited).

	1	2	3	Total	Score			
I'm excited about Multisite (one church with two sites).	7.14%	1	50.00%	7	42.86%	6	14	1.64
I'm excited about a second service (turn "The Hub" into a weekly service).	40.00%	8	35.00%	7	25.00%	5	20	2.15
I'm excited about both multisite and a second service.	30.43%	7	21.74%	5	47.83%	11	23	1.83
							Answered	29
							Skipped	5

In your own words tell us about how you feel towards starting a second service?

When asked their opinion on the development of a second site in the second survey, “In your own words tell us about how you feel towards starting a second service?” there were twenty-nine responses. There were only two negative responses about starting a second service. Fourteen responses were positive and nine were neutral. I believe that the neutral responses were due to not having any conversation with the leadership about this option and their reaction was mostly about not having enough information. There were also similar concerns or conditions in the responses to the development of multisite regarding capacity, both financial and volunteer:

Wonderful plan–will we have enough volunteers?

I think it is a fantastic idea. I think it will provide an opportunity for people with busy schedules to still be able to go to church. This way we can grow in our faith but have a bit more flexibility with our personal schedules.

Very excited because it will offer more every week which I believe will increase attendance and be more multi-generational (Survey 2. Discovery Church 2018).

The Interviews

The interviews were revisited during the workshop and the basic themes were gathered into a document that was reviewed by the participants. The interviews became the basis under which the workshop participants were able to put together some themes that appeared in all the stories. I followed the *4-I model*, outlined by Branson to conduct the Appreciative Inquiry (Branson 2016, 27). The Appreciative Inquiry was divided into four phases: initiate, inquire, imagine, and innovate. The interviews were the second phase, inquire, in the *4-I model* that Branson modified. Inquire is defined by Branson as, “the best of the organization’s narratives, practices, and imaginations” (Branson 2016, 27).

The first question, “Remembering your entire experience with Discovery Church, when were you most alive, most motivated, and excited about your involvement in Discovery Church?” was intended to find what made Discovery Church such a powerfully moving experience for the participants. Many of the interviewees commented on the newness of the experience, starting a new church and how Discovery Church was different than any other church that they had participated in. One participant stated, “Everything was new and shiny. Everything touched me personally and seemed specific to my life. It was like every sermon was specific to me; like God put the words that Pastor Martin spoke in his mouth for me and my wife” (Spoelstra 2017A). New churches attract new people and provide a level of excitement and engagement that they may not have

found in other church environments. It was our desire with the multisite to provide the same “new and shiny environment” in a second location. Many people commented that the church was exciting, accepting, nonjudgmental, and inspiring.

The purpose of the second question, “What are the most valuable ways you have contributed to Discovery Church?” was to have interviewees reflect on their contributions to the church and its development. The interviewees identified the ways in which they had contributed to Discovery Church, which helped them identify the value that they found in participating and contributing toward Discovery Church’s growth and development. Comments like, “I love committee work. My assessment skills are strong, and I enjoy looking at the inner working of problem-solving and social justice and human interaction” (Spoelstra 2017a)

The third question, “What are the most important things (either spiritual or personal) our church has contributed to your life?” once again, was designed to create a positive and appreciative response from the participants so that they would be able to identify the most important core values of Discovery Church. Specifically, this question elicited overwhelming responses around discipleship, mentoring, leadership development, and spiritual growth. The main catalysts for growth in the participants’ lives were preaching, teaching, caring for one another as a church family, and mentoring. This also reflects my personal philosophy of leadership in that disciples are the foundation and cornerstone of a multiplying ministry. The time and energy put into disciple making, mentoring, and coaching by our staff saw our church continue to grow for eleven straight years.

The last question asked the participants to make three wishes for the future shape of Discovery Church and explores the future by generating images. Instead of asking about “What we should do?” or “What you think we should change?” this question, which is consistent with Appreciative Inquiry, is about creating a future not about fixing a problem. For instance, there were thirteen occasions in this question where people dreamt about greater community engagement and outreach. Specifically, there were six mentions around a Sunday activity called “Take It to the Streets” where we together as a church on a Sunday morning collectively did several random acts of kindness in our community. One participant said,

At the last “Take It to the Streets” my child brought a friend and we went to a nursing home to give out flowers. I gave this girl a pink Bible and the girl yelled ‘This is the best day of my life.’ She went home and showed her mom. Next time she came over to our house she asked if we were going to church and if she could come. That girl came to Christ. (Spoelstra 2017A) Another theme from the responses to this question was the desire for greater spiritual growth and connection to the Holy Spirit. Comments around this theme were freedom to worship, being led by the Holy Spirit, and being filled with the Holy Spirit.

The concept of being uniquely better, a term coined by Andy Stanley at the 2017 Global Leadership Summit (Stanley 2017), was mentioned several times in the responses to this question. They mentioned this in the context of an organizational culture that recognizes that being unique is one thing but being uniquely better than others stands alone in the landscape of what is common.

Several of the participants talked about being forward focused and not being stuck. We should look for new ideas and include more people. One comment particularly encapsulates this idea, “Embrace the idea that we should be different. Jesus was different and we should continue to be different, adapt, and grow” (Spoelstra 2017A). Often one of the characteristics of an apostolic leader is that they go into areas and develop ministries that are outside of the norm for an area. It is not just that apostolic leaders go to new places, they also create new things. Church planting is one of the new things that attracts new people in an existing environment. This comment is also an encouragement to try new things and develop new ideas. It gets to the heart of the risk-taking nature of apostolic ministries.

The Workshop

The workshop was a time of reflection and consolidation of the themes present in the interviews. Each of the participants contributed to the identification of themes and the development of provocative proposals. The workshop represented the third phase of the *4 – I model*, imagine. Participants were asked to interpret the interviews and take the risk of imagination towards building a consensus of what should be (Branson 2016, 27). These themes and provocative proposals were recorded by a scribe at each one of the groups. These themes were consolidated then developed in the afternoon session into three provocative proposals. The provocative proposals were based upon the themes but were very general in nature.

All the participants were divided up into three groups. Each group elected a scribe that was given a notebook to record elements of the discussion. These notebooks were also included in the collated data that helped to form the provocative proposals and experiments. The information from the thirty-three one-on-one interviews and the information gathered from the notebooks by the thirty-five participants of the workshop that were provided to the researcher were coded using identifying themes and theme categories as outlined by Stringer (Stringer 2014, 142-144). Identifying themes were comments that were made in the one-on-one interviews and recorded in the notebooks from the workshop. Events like “Take It to the Streets”, worship nights, and outreach projects were talked about as being formative programs that impacted the spiritual life and perspective of the participants and sentiments about who we are as a church that were common across the stakeholder groups. These were identified by going over the interviews and placing these comments into categories. They were placed into three categories. The first category was called themes. Over the course of the interviews and the workshop 165 identifying themes were recorded (see Appendix – IV). Those identifying themes were divided into fourteen organizing themes and eventually it was narrowed down into these seven global themes:

Discipleship—personal spiritual growth, preaching and teaching, coaching, mentoring, pastoral care, and youth and children ministries (fifty-two identifying themes).

Servant evangelism—outreach, evangelism, numerical growth, Take It to the Streets, faith and action, and the Great Commission (forty-three identifying themes).

Relationships and church family—relationships in the congregation, hospitality, unity, and to feel like or be part of a church family (thirty-eight identifying themes).

Uniquely different—starting Discovery Church, taking risks, being different, being unique, and getting outside one’s comfort zone (twenty-one identifying themes).

Glory of God—experience more of the glory of God, more of the Holy Spirit in worship, congregation, and prayer (thirteen identifying themes).

Vision and mission—financial stability, tithing, leadership, management, operations, and agreement with mission and vision (twelve identifying themes).

Serving in areas of gifting (eight identifying themes).

These themes look forward, but they do have their origin in the days when Discovery Church felt most alive. Here you can see some of the results of the context we found ourselves in during the crisis in the summer of 2017 and the desires of our congregation that reach back into our past. The most often referred to global themes were discipleship, mission, and coaching. There is also a theme that articulates a desire for a deeper relationship with God that may be reminiscent of a time earlier in the life of Discovery Church. One of my core values is to disciple and develop leaders. I believe strongly in fanning into flame the gifts that God has given each member of the congregation. In chapter 3, I asserted my conviction that people need places to serve out of their giftings and many of the themes that came forward had references to gift-based ministry and the sentiment of having been a spiritual, not just financial, contributor.

To turn these global themes and provocative proposals into actionable experiments I presented the following recommendations in June 2018 to our board of Elders:

- 1 - Spend some time at an Elder meeting prioritizing the themes from the Appreciative Inquiry.
- 2 - Put together a subcommittee from the board, much like the design team, to come up with provocative proposals from the prioritized themes

mentioned above and turn them into experiments for recommendation to the board.

- 3 - This provocative proposal team would consist of myself, one board member, participants from the one-day workshop and possibly other staff members. I suggested using SMART goals as a process tool for the experiments. A SMART goal is used to help guide goal setting. SMART is an acronym that stands for Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, and Timely.
- 4 - The provocative proposal team will present to the board a list of experiments in the form of SMART goals.
- 5 - The board of Elders will then select one or two experiments for implementation (Spoelstra 2018).

Between the global themes identified and provocative proposals that were developed by the workshop participants and the collated data from the interviews and the notebooks from the workshop, I then stepped into the fourth phase of the Appreciative Inquiry model. It was unfortunate but shortly after January 2018 the design team that had been together since 2015 disbanded because the original intent and purpose of the design team was to implement a multisite strategy. This fourth phase of the 4 – I model was called Innovate. The innovation comes through the discourse we had during the one-on-one interviews and the workshops and from it we put together practices that helped equip and engage the largest number of participants. From this recommendation the Elder board and staff put together a proposal in the fall of 2018 to adopt SMART goals based upon the provocative proposals. This was presented to the congregation in November 2018 and included the input from Elders and staff.

The first SMART goal is related to the servant evangelism global theme from the coded data and led to the development of several community outreach projects to connect with people who do not attend Discovery Church. From November 2018 to June 2019 Discovery Church connected with over three times

the number of individuals than in the previous year, in the community through a Christmas program, an Easter egg hunt, and two events designed to bring friends and neighbours to a nonthreatening environment.

A second SMART goal adopted was to focus on the development of small groups and discipleship. This second SMART goal stems from the first provocative proposal presented by the workshop participants where they identified their desire to “exhibit a maturing faith, to be more like Christ through reading and growing in the Word.” It also comes from the global category identified during the coding of the data from the interviews and the workshop notebooks. This category included discipleship, spiritual growth, preaching, and teaching as a common theme. This goal also stems from the third provocative proposal suggested by the workshop participants stating, “We are being transformed by the Holy Spirit personally and as a community. We worship God, study the Bible, and pray. We see a time where each person studies the Word and prays regularly and applies the Word of God through the Holy Spirit’s empowerment.” In May 2018, a small group series on prayer was the basis for this SMART goal beginning in September. Three additional six to eight-week small group series were planned for September 2018, January 2019, and May 2019. In alignment with that goal the Fall sermon series was designed to be theologically reflective (nine weeks on the first eight chapters of the book of Romans) and the Winter sermon series was intended to be spiritually formative (eleven weeks on personal spiritual disciplines). By May of 2019, 70 percent of adults at Discovery

Church had attended a small group in the previous eight months. In the prior twelve months only 60 percent of the congregation participated in a small group.

A third SMART goal focused on developing clarity and detail around our vision and mission. The data analysis from the one-on-one interviews and the workshop notebooks revealed that vision and mission were one of the common themes identified. This was accomplished by detailing a discipleship process and setting priorities based upon our mission statement: discover God and all that he has for you; to grow disciples that make disciples; and to bless our family, church, and community.

Conclusions

Over the course of the research project the research question had to be modified due to the changes in the context surrounding the congregation. Those changes came with unique challenges to the overall health and strength of Discovery Church. This research project was fortunately timed in that Appreciative Inquiry became a remarkably effective strategy for the congregation to process its grief and concern and focus it on the honourable, the pure, the pleasing, and the commendable. The original research question was intended to help identify the emotional and social shifts necessary to become one church in two locations. What happened instead was that the Appreciative Inquiry helped the congregation with a shift in the emotional and social concerns for a congregation to withstand the challenges of a dramatic loss in attendance and a financial crisis. It also turned an internal focus towards what was possible for the future and reengaged the imagination.

Heliotropic Change Towards the Positive

The Appreciative Inquiry was primarily responsible for shifting the emotional and social condition of the participants towards a more positive outlook on the future of Discovery Church. The comparison of the words used in the two surveys that participants use to describe Discovery Church indicate an increase in the positive feeling words. From the second survey respondents indicated that there was still a 90 percent likelihood that members of the congregation would recommend Discovery Church to a friend or neighbour. The power of images to bring change was key in the Appreciative Inquiry process. This helped participants create images of the most desired future and one of the key functions of Appreciative Inquiry is the belief that human systems will show heliotropic tendency to move toward positive images. These images had a shaping power on the participants and in our congregation's goals, schedules, finances, and practices. We saw individuals give generously to help meet the financial need and an increase the respondents use of the positive words from survey 1 to survey 2, such as confident (25% to 38%), excited (30% to 44%), optimistic (45% to 67%) and satisfied (37% to 41%) used to describe Discovery Church. In both surveys the respondents used worried at the same percentage (14%) but some were more skeptical (3% to 11%) which is understandable given the difficult time the church was going through. This was accomplished while maintaining a generally favourable outlook on the kingdom expansion ideals outlined in the original vision that led to this research project (66% in favour in survey 1 and 67% in favour in survey 2). As the participants reflected on their contributions, the impact, and the imaginative future of Discovery Church, they stayed more

positive and committed. This was seen in their willingness to hire a full-time associate Pastor shortly after the congregation wide Appreciative Inquiry process.

Willingness to Risk, Discipleship, and a Recommitment Outreach

As the participants reflected upon the reason why they started Discovery Church many of them remembered their willingness to take risks. In the interview data, a theme of stepping outside of one's comfort zone and taking risks was strong enough, I believe, to help the congregation reach a tipping-point and try some new initiatives.

With the submission of the provocative proposals put together by the participants of the workshop I recognized that there was a hunger and a desire for deeper spiritual connection and engagement with an awareness of the Holy Spirit within our church context. This led to a year-long focus on discipleship and worship.

Repeatedly throughout the questions, the workshop, and the surveys there was a desire from the participants to reengage with outreach in our community; discipleship that would lead to conversion and engagement with our community. The surveys indicated that there was still a desire for kingdom expansion even in the face of a declining attendance and a financial crisis. The interviews, especially in question four, outlined the participants' desire for outreach and community projects like "Take It to the Streets." The Appreciative Inquiry helped us understand the imagined future of the participants.

General Conclusions

The use of Appreciative Inquiry at Discovery Church, during that difficult time from September 2017 until May 2018 became a turning point in the spiritual, emotional, and social health of Discovery Church. It allowed our congregation to see itself in a more positive light and to dare to risk once again in a new way. We began to understand though, that we needed to spend the next year developing in discipleship and spiritual formation before re-engaging in servant evangelism and mission. This led us to develop some specific and actionable goals over the past year that has allowed Discovery Church to begin to reengage once again in servant evangelism and mission. As we enter 2019 there is a renewed energy and emphasis on the role of the Holy Spirit among our members. We have been growing in our ability to study the word of God by participating more in small groups and by developing our understanding of the Lordship of Jesus Christ and of the glory of God through preaching and teaching.

Personally, I found it very difficult to step back into the thoughts and feelings of the congregation when I was examining the interviews and workshops almost a year later because I, along with many of the others, had already begun to focus on the future. Going through this process during that most difficult time was just as hard on the leadership of the design team, Elders, and staff as it was to the members. Leading this group of people through the Appreciative Inquiry helped the leadership as much as it helped our congregants.

CHAPTER V: CONCLUSION

In the introduction I shared an image from a friend of mine, David Beelan, who suggested that the purpose of an apple tree was not to produce apples but to produce more trees. It was always our intention, when planting Discovery Church, to get to a point where we would plant more churches. This whole project, and for that matter, enrollment in the Doctor of Ministry program was intended to provide a structured and educated approach to multiplying our growing church. I suggested that the apple tree metaphor could be expanded by stating that the apple tree had been struck by lightning and a large branch had been forcefully removed.

Much like the nature of living things, when there is an injury to a tree there must be a season of healing and during that initial period there was an enormous stress on the tree. We saw this very same scenario when we lost those thirty people and had to deal with the leadership and financial crisis. Our congregation was under a period of stress and, instead of launching the multisite, we spent six months trying to understand and heal from the crisis at hand. We needed to focus in on the emotional and social challenges that we were facing as a congregation. Some of that healing took place as we went through the Appreciative Inquiry, which allowed our congregation to focus again on the positive, move towards seeing ourselves in the light of who we are as a church,

and dream about a future that we can still create. This began the process of healing on a positive note.

Discipleship and Multiplication

One of my core, fundamental beliefs as a pastor and leader is that discipleship and multiplication are closely connected. Without a clear path for discipleship there would be no hope for missional engagement. The mission of the church is based upon the discipleship capacity that a congregation has within itself. When we went through the crisis in September and October 2017 one of the most important ways in which we dealt with that crisis was to focus on discipleship. Discipleship allowed our congregation a season of healing and renewal so that they would have the capacity for missional engagement. In the research conducted for the Appreciative Inquiry an emphasis on discipleship was one of the seven global themes that arose from the interviews. It was the most frequently mentioned themes with many of the individuals referencing personal spiritual growth, preaching, and teaching, coaching, mentoring, and pastoral care. Our season of healing needed to focus on the various aspects of discipleship; during 2018 not only was the preaching focus on spiritual disciplines but the selected themes for small groups and children's ministries would provide additional discipleship.

Also identified in the global themes was a willingness to take risks. Many of the participants in the workshop and the interviews were willing to continue a risk-taking approach to developing new ministries with new ideas. Much of the reflection of what was positive about Discovery Church and the participation in

the development of our church revolved around willingness to engage in activities that were outside of the norm for most churches. My personal desire to develop and multiply also reflects this desire and as we have journeyed through the last year since the Appreciative Inquiry there has been a growing sense of eagerness from our congregation to get back to the work of mission.

Outcomes

It is evident from the weaknesses and opportunities that there is a need to spend some time clarifying and reinforcing the vision and core values of Discovery Church. We are thirteen years into a church plant, and we need to spend some time refreshing our space and taking a hard look at our vision and direction. Furthermore, I think we need to simplify our structures so that we can focus, in a more meaningful way, on discipleship, follow-up, and hospitality.

I think the refresh conversation is forcing us to ask some bigger questions. These questions revolve around how to make things simpler and when you ask how to streamline and make things simpler you need definitions. Definitions require an answer to the question, “Why do we what we do?” The why can only be answered by going back to the vision of Discovery, Grow and Bless. This then forces us, once again, to put everything under the vision of Discovery Church, clearly define what that means for the next six months to three years, and then clarify definitions so that we can implement steps of execution.

As individuals are disciplined, there will be those who want to move into a place of becoming a disciple-maker or a leader. We will also have to encourage some to make this step because they need the encouragement and confidence that

we can provide. If they are to move into those places, they are going to need additional mentoring and coaching along that journey. We are going to require a different level of skill development and biblical knowledge. There is also a need for training in spiritual disciplines that will help carry them through the leadership challenges that they will face. All of this will require a structured leadership development process. After losing so many leaders during that summer crisis of 2017 we can see that the participants of the Appreciative Inquiry were looking for a deeper discipleship experience and since then there have been individuals who have wanted to go deeper and become disciple makers and leaders. When you add a spiritual convert and turn them into a biblical disciple the natural tendency is to move them to build capacity in the church. This capacity building should not end within the walls of Discovery Church but should be focused on kingdom growth beyond its walls. I believe that if we re-engage and develop our leadership pipeline, we will be able to see the growth and reproduction that we have been missing. Kingdom growth happens when leaders understand that being a disciple is developing someone so that they can disciple someone else. It is the same principle for leadership development, and the same principle that will lead us back to a multisite ministry.

Subsequent webinars/seminars would do some theological and practical teaching on the subjects listed. Participants would be gathered back together for these seminars four times in nine months. These seminars could form the basics of teaching requirements for certification or accreditation.

Mentoring cohort

This will be led by practitioners that are familiar with the three aspects listed above. These cohorts would consist of 6-8 individuals including the mentor. The role of these mentoring cohorts would be to focus each session on one subject using the information-imitation-action-reflection model identified above. Cohorts would meet three times in between each webinar/seminar for a total of nine cohort meetings in nine months.

Each cohort would have a theme based on the 3 sections above and from that theme:

- Communicate information on the topic,
- Share how Jesus imitated this and how it can be imitated using the experiences of the mentors,
- Outline action steps as assignments for mentees between cohorts
- Reflection on action steps at the beginning of the next cohort to bring learning for the group and innovation for future action.

Not everyone who would be interested in this process would want to have seminary accreditation but there may be one cohort that would be made up of individuals who are looking for Masters level credits and a syllabus would be developed to provide guidance for the mentor cohorts.

Lead/initiate a new missional ministry.

One of the key teaching aspects from the beginning will be that each leader is going to be responsible for *leading or initiating a new kingdom growth-focused missional activity*. It would be ideal if that activity were started during the

cohort process. This would allow the third component of multiplying to be used for action and reflection in the start-up of a new ministry project all the

We can also recognize throughout this portfolio that it is important from God's perspective that we reach out to our community and seek justice and mercy but also share the Gospel as our Lord commanded us in the Great Commission (Matthew 28:19-20). During the workshops there was a strong desire from the participants to reengage in community connections, random acts of kindness, and Gospel proclamation activities that are focused in our community. There is still a desire to engage in risk-taking behaviour. Many of the participants of the one-on-one interviews were able to identify spiritual risk-taking initiatives that they themselves benefited from or were involved in so that they could see the transformation in themselves and others. Reconnecting with our community is going to be a high priority.

APPENDICIES

**Appendix I – Nondisclosure & Data
Management Confidentiality Agreement**

This confidentiality agreement is being used for volunteers participating in the research project conducted by Martin Spoelstra at Discovery Church during the period of September 2017-May 2018. Nondisclosure of research conducted for this project and data management require a confidentiality agreement to be signed by volunteers. All volunteers must sign a confidentiality agreement before participating in the following: interviewing, recording or editing image or sound data, transcribing, interpreting, translating, entering data, destroying data.

Thank you for volunteering to help conduct this research. If you have any questions about the research, you can contact either myself or Mark Chapman at Tyndale Seminary of Tyndale University. You may contact either of us at any time if you have questions about this study.

Contact information:
Martin Spoelstra
martin@Discoverychurch.ca
905-259-3399

My professor is Dr. Mark Chapman,
Associate Professor of Research Methods at Tyndale Seminary of Tyndale
University.
mchapman@tyndale.ca,
416.226.6620 Ext. 2208.

Project title - The Journey to Multisite at Discovery Church

volunteered to

I agree to -

1. keep all the research information shared with me confidential by not discussing or sharing the research information in any form or format (e.g.,

disks, tapes, transcripts) with anyone other than Martin Spoelstra, the researcher or the Design Team.

2. keep confidential by not discussing or sharing all verbal or written information during the one-on-one interviews other than with Martin Spoelstra, the researcher or the Design Team.
3. keep confidential by not discussing or sharing all written information recorded during the one-day workshop other than with Martin Spoelstra, the researcher or the Design Team.
4. keep all research information in any form or format (e.g., disks, tapes, transcripts) secure while it is in my possession.
5. return all research information in any form or format (e.g., disks, tapes, transcripts) to the Martin Spoelstra, the researcher when I have completed the research tasks.
6. after consulting with Martin Spoelstra, the researcher, erase or destroy all research information in any form or format regarding this research project that is not returnable to Martin Spoelstra, the researcher (e.g., information stored on computer hard drive, paper notes, journals).

(Print Name)

(Signature)

(Date)

Martin Spoelstra

(Print Name)

(Signature)

(Date)

The plan for this study has been reviewed for its adherence to ethical guidelines and approved by Research Ethics Board of Tyndale Seminary of Tyndale University. For questions regarding participant rights and ethical conduct of research, contact the Research Ethics Board at REB@tyndale.ca.

Appendix II – Consent Form: Interviews

Introduction: My name is Martin Spoelstra and I am a student at Tyndale Seminary of Tyndale University conducting research for my Doctor of Ministry dissertation.

Contact information:

Martin Spoelstra

martin@Discoverychurch.ca

905-259-3399

My professor is Doctor Mark Chapman, Associate Professor of Research Methods at Tyndale Seminary of Tyndale University.

mchapman@tyndale.ca

416.226.6620 Ext. 2208.

You may contact either of us at any time if you have questions about this study.

Purpose: The purpose of this research is to understand the concerns, fears or anxiety produced because of the journey to multisite and engage the congregation in dialogue, solutions and experiments to understand these feelings and to work together towards continued growth at Discovery Church as a whole. These interviews will help understand your thoughts and desires for the future of Discovery Church.

Procedure: If you consent, you will be asked several questions in an oral interview by either myself, a staff member or member of the Design Team. The interviewer will make notes during the interview and make an audiotape recording of the interview.

Time required: The interview will take approximately 1 hour of your time.

Voluntary participation: Your participation in this study is completely voluntary. If you choose to participate, you may still refuse to answer any question that you do not wish to answer. You may also withdraw from the study at any time.

Risks: There are no known risks associated with this interview. However, it is possible that you might feel distress or extreme excitement in the course of the conversation. If this happens, please inform the interviewer promptly.

Benefits: While there is no guaranteed benefit, it is possible that you will enjoy sharing your answers to these questions or that you will find the conversation meaningful. This study is intended to benefit the congregation by understanding our shared history, your experience and insight that might lead to a better future for our church.

Confidentiality/ Anonymity: Your name will be kept confidential in all of the reporting and/ or writing related to this study. The interviewer will be the only person present for the interview and I will be the only person who listens to the audio or video tapes. When I write the ethnography (a written account of what I

learn), I will use pseudonyms (made up names) for all participants, unless you specify in writing that you wish to be identified by name. If you wish to choose your own pseudonym for the study, please indicate the first name you would like me to use for you here: _____.

Sharing the results: I plan to construct an ethnography (a written account of what I learn) based on these interviews together with my reading and historical research. This ethnography will be submitted to my professor. I also plan to share what I learn from this study with the congregation. Portions of the ethnography may be printed and made available to the members.

Publication: There is the possibility that I will publish this study or refer to it in published writing in the future. In this event, I will continue to use pseudonyms (as described above) and I may alter some identifying details in order to further protect your anonymity.

Before you sign: By signing below, you are agreeing to an audiotaped and/or videotaped interview for this research study. Be sure that any questions you may have are answered to your satisfaction. If you agree to participate in this study, a copy of this document will be given to you.

Participant's signature: _____ Date: _____

Print name: _____

Interviewers signature: _____ Date: _____

Print name: _____

Researcher's signature: _____ Date: _____

Print name: _____

(Sensing 2015, 236–37)

Source. Sensing, Tim. *Qualitative Research: A Multi-Methods Approach to Projects for Doctor of Ministry Theses* (pp. 236-237). Wipf & Stock, an Imprint of Wipf and Stock Publishers. Kindle Edition.

Appendix III – Appreciative Inquiry Timetable

Month	Phase I	Phase 2	Phase 3	Number of participants
September 2017	Introduce AI to Elders and Design Team	Schedule two-day workshop on Appreciative Inquiry for October		6 Elders and 5-member Design Team
	Trained 3 Staff and Design Team on conducting “Changing the Conversation” interviews			3 Staff and 5 Design Team
	Send out initial online survey.			There were 61 respondents
	Begin “Changing the Conversation” interviews			
October 2017	Continue “Changing the Conversation” interviews	Categorize questions and summarize the data from “Changing the Conversation” interviews		6 interviewers and I conducted 32 interviews.
		Run a two-day workshop on Appreciative Inquiry to develop provocative proposals and experiments	Day one of the workshop was a training evening	Training evening made up of staff and Design Team to lead the groups
			Day two of workshop attended by 35 participants.	Day two of workshop was attended by 35 participants.
			Scribes took notes at each table for the collection of themes and the development of provocative proposals and experiments	4 Scribes took notes at each table

November 2017		Formation of teams to implement provocative proposals and experiments	Present preliminary workshop findings at members meeting November 29	There were 41 members present at the members meeting making up 51% of the adult members.
		Prepare report outlining provocative proposals and experiments for Elders board.	Preliminary report on survey findings	
December 2017		Send out second online survey.	Review surveys comparing September survey with November survey	There were 34 respondents.
January- May 2018			Data collection and analysis	

Appendix IV - Data Collection

General Themes

The one-on-one interviews and workshops notes were coded using the following themes. Each theme was broken down into its various components based upon the comments in the interviews and workshop notes.

Values Theme - A value is the importance each participant attribute to Discovery Church, another person, thing, or Multisite. They are the principles, moral codes, and situational norms people live by (Daiute, 2014, p. 69).

Attitudes Theme - An attitude is the way the participant thinks and feels about Discovery Church, another person, thing, or Multisite. Attitudes are part of “a relatively enduring system of evaluative, affective reactions based upon and reflecting the evaluative concepts or beliefs, which have been learned” (Shaw & Wright, 1967, p. 3).

Beliefs Theme - A belief is part of a system that includes our values and attitudes, plus our personal knowledge, experiences, opinions, prejudices, morals, and other interpretive perceptions of our Christian Faith and social world. “Beliefs are embedded in the values attached to them” (Wolcott, 1999, p. 97) and can be considered “rules for action” (Stern & Porr, 2011, p. 28).

Themes

Code	Value	Code	Attitude	Code	Belief
V1	Great Commission	A1	Positive	B1	Prayer
V2	Unity	A2	Negative	B2	Holy Spirit
V3	Love	A3	Inspired	B3	God's plan
V4	Burn out	A4	Blessed	B4	Not God's plan
V5	Invite people	A5	Great Church	B5	Spiritually mature believers
V6	Multiplication	A6	Great Worship	B6	Spiritually immature believers
V7	Addition	A7	Great Sermons	B7	Good and Evil
V8	Kingdom Growth	A8	Feel Welcomed	B8	God's Wisdom
V9	Church Growth	A9	Excited	B9	God's Will

V10	Community	A10	Undecided	B10	Discerning God's will
V11	Friends	A11	Lack of confidence	B11	Commitment to biblical values
V12	Discover	A12	Inconsistency	B12	Bible Reading
V13	Grow	A13	Recommend	B13	Church Attendance
V14	Bless	A14	Invite friends	B14	Waiting
V14	Friendly	A15	Bad/poor Sermons	B15	Not God's time
v15	Consistency	A16	Bad/poor worship	B16	God's time
V16	Inconsistent	A17	Getting worse	B17	Leap of Faith
v17	Multisite	A18	Getting Better	B18	Trust
V18	Church Planting	A19	Growth not happening	B19	Grow my faith
V19	Stay as one church	A20	Not involved	B20	Lack of Faith
V20	Not enough Resources	A21	Lack of Volunteers	B21	Lack of Trust
V21	Young church	A22	Pastor/Staff Problems		
V22	conversion	A23	Lack of Clarity		
V23	Expansion	A24	Benchmarks for Launch		
V24	New Things	A25	Love Pastor/Staff		
V25	New People	A26	Want change		
		A27	Don't want change		
		A28	Wish this were happening		

Basic, Organizing, and Global Themes

Basic Themes by Participant

Each interview was coded into 167 different ideas/comments/statements using Values, Attitudes and Beliefs.

The themes were as follows

Value Theme

- V1 Great Commission
- V2 Unity
- V3 Love
- V4 Burn out
- V5 Invite people
- V6 Multiplication
- V7 Addition
- V8 Kingdom Growth
- V9 Church Growth
- V10 Community
- V11 Friends
- V12 Discover
- V13 Grow
- V14 Bless
- V14 Friendly
- v15 Consistency
- V16 Inconsistent
- v17 Multisite
- V18 Church Planting
- V19 Stay as one church
- V20 Not enough Resources
- V21 Young church
- V22 conversion

Organizing Themes by Colour

Basic themes were placed into organizing categories by colour to narrow down the coding into 14 categories

21 - Starting/Risk/Different/unique/out of comfort zone

20 - Relationships in the congregation/Hospitality/Unity

19 - Spiritual Growth - personal/congregation

Global Themes

These global themes were narrowed down to 7 themes based on organizing categories. Global themes are more general categories that combine several organizing themes.

52 - Discipleship
"Spiritual Growth - Personal/Congregation" & "Preaching/Teaching" & "Coaching/Mentoring/Pastoral Care" & Youth/Children's Ministry"

43 - Servant Evangelism
"Outreach/Evangelism/Numerical Growth" & "TTS" & "Faith in action/Mission"

38 - Relationships & Church family
"Relationships in the congregation/Hospitality/Unity" & "Church family/part of/feels like family"

V23 Expansion
 V24 New Things
 V25 New People

Attitude Themes

- A1 Positive
- A2 Negative
- A3 Inspired
- A4 Blessed
- A5 Great Church
- A6 Great Worship
- A7 Great Sermons
- A8 Feel Welcomed
- A9 Excited
- A10 Undecided
- A11 Lack of confidence
- A12 Inconsistency
- A13 Recommend
- A14 Invite friends
- A15 Bad/poor Sermons
- A16 Bad/poor worship
- A17 Getting worse
- A18 Getting Better
- A19 Growth not happening
- A20 Not involved
- A21 Lack of Volunteers
- A22 Pastor/Staff Problems
- A23 Lack of Clarity
- A24 Benchmarks for Launch
- A25 Love Pastor/Staff
- A26 Want change
- A27 Don't want change

18 - Church family/part of/feels like family

17 - Coaching/Mentoring/pastoral care

14 - More of/Likes 'Take it to the Streets'

21 - Uniquely Different "Starting/Risk/Different/unique/out of comfort zone"

13 - Glory of God. "Experience/More of the Holy Spirit in worship/congregation/prayer"

12 - Vision & Mission "Likes/more of Operations/management/leadership" & "Financial Stability/tithing"

A28 Wish this were happening

Belief Themes

- B1 Prayer
- B2 Holy Spirit
- B3 God's plan
- B4 Not God's plan
- B5 Spiritually mature believers
- B6 Spiritually immature believers
- B7 Good and Evil
- B8 God's Wisdom
- B9 God's Will
- B10 Discerning God's will
- B11 Commitment to biblical values
- B12 Bible Reading
- B13 Church Attendance
- B14 Waiting
- B15 Not God's time
- B16 God's time
- B17 Leap of Faith
- B18 Trust
- B19 Grow my faith
- B20 Lack of Faith
- B21 Lack of Trust



13 - Experience the Holy Spirit in worship/congregation/prayer

11 - Preaching/ Teaching

8 - Serving in areas of gifts

7 - Likes Operations/management/leadership

6 - Faith in action/ Mission/

5 - Financial Stability/tithing/

5 - Youth/Children's Ministry

8 - Serving in areas of gifts

Appendix V – Interview Questions Consolidated

This consolidation represents the summary of all the answers given to the changing the conversation questions. These summaries were handed out to the participants of the one-day workshop for them to read and review so that we could have a discussion based upon the actual answers from the one-on-one interviews.

Question 1: Remembering your entire experience with Discovery Church, when were you most alive, most motivated, and excited about your involvement in Discovery Church? (What made it exciting? Who else was involved? What happened? What was your part? Describe what you felt.)

Comments:

New experience, being involved, new ideas, clear calling, learning and applying new skills, prayers for hurts and needs, community help and involvement, TTS (Take It to the Streets), family atmosphere at the start, DC (Discovery Church) had a different worship, my “most” was when we first started-it was the people, full participation, everyone had a common goal, TTS, most excited at the beginning, church could make a difference beyond the body of believers, it was new and different, being challenged to do mission in the community, clearly felt God leading to help start DC, coffeehouse, someone from DC provided wisdom and insight for my life goals, being part of the KE (Kingdom Expansion) plan, DC taught me about Christ, DC reached out to me when I lost my job home and marriage, being small group coordinator, hosting a Bible study, attendance during small groups, the first five years because of community involvement and family atmosphere, made a lot of friends, being involved in sermon based small groups, we didn’t feel judged, The HUB’s more creative music set selections, seeing lots of non-members at the community Christmas service, TTS, having Sunday morning music in the middle with a semicircle of chairs, it’s seeing new people every week, participating in men’s life, knowing that you got to see the church grow, CR (Celebrate Recovery), coffeehouse, prayer support, KE, Fellowship, a family feel, the 10 year anniversary, leading a small group at my home, TTS, when leadership sees me, the first few years was the highlight: togetherness, drawing together, faith formation, simple worship style, CR, TTS, felt most alive when serving, participating in CR, helping launch new ministries, being coached by Martin, working with other people who are great givers, most excited when first attending, being on worship planning team, praise team, Saturday morning men’s fellowship, welcoming atmosphere, children and grandchildren attend, involved in CR, helped start celebration place, seeing the HS in action, Martin’s messages, meeting a need at different stages of my life, C4C, being there at the beginning, my kids love coming to DC, getting involved in anchor house and

nursery, being involved in leadership, at the birth of DC, working on sound systems, moving sermons and services, hearing the New Beginning stories and testimonies, strong connections and relationships within the church, involvement in worship and drama, once a month doing a dance or skit, I was the choreographer of a dance, when we did the cutting-edge things like edgy sermons and not getting caught up in the past of church but the future, when we first attended, I attended alpha, started two chapters of the Canadian Christian business Federation as a result of my experience at DC, being part of cowboy church, being able to lead prayer and share on Sunday morning, discipleship huddle, being a part of YWAM and supported by the church, youth group with Jackie D, Poppa John and Jen B,

Quotes:

“I found that I had the skills to grow the kingdom, and that my contributions were valued, and I can see the value I offer.” “I’m encouraged when leadership sees me!”

“We are a Matthew 28 church.”

“I’m feeling pushed and motivated towards praying for others.”

“The Spirit of acceptance has disappeared; leaders have begun to force the activities and interests of multisite.”

“I often find that my work follows the work of others”

“Exciting to be in the room to adopt the KE plan; it was filled with the Holy Spirit during the prayer, in that meeting everyone came to the consensus that the Holy Spirit touch them during prayer.”

“DC help me significantly in times of trouble.”

“DC is nonjudgmental, has helped me grow in being more open, honest and trusting others.”

“DC is willing to start new things regularly.”

“The new worship at the HUB is very uplifting.”

“I felt their absence when Janice and Steve were away for a wedding. I noticed how much amazing work they both do each week.”

“Everything was new and shiny. Everything touched me personally and seem specific to my life. It was like every sermon was specific to me; like God put the words that Pastor Martin spoke in his mouth for me and my wife.”

“Sundays were for recharging! I felt inspired, we felt inspired.”

Question 2: What are the most valuable ways you contributed to Discovery Church (EG your personality, your perspectives, your skills, or activities?)

Comments:

Worship leader, setup and takedown, learned new music, administration and communication, speaking in front of the congregation, putting together safe church policies, organizing, strategic planning, playing on a worship team, stewardship team, being willing to stick it out in good times and hard times, committed to tithing, being dependable and available to jump in and fill holes,

worship planning team, being in charge of Christmas services, CR step study leader, taking C4C helped me to share my faith and testimony, being part of the worship team, DC kids teacher, using my hospitality skills (cooking things for potlucks), giving my time, volunteering with kids/youth in the community, helping start Saturday men's group, saying yes to help DC get started, I'm an ideas person, I'm financially prudent, my work background in childcare, Using my university skills as an editor and communicator, teaching and helping out at DC kids, keeping my eyes open and noticing new people, I can push the boundaries in worship, serving on the board, giving my perspective on initiatives, DC kids teacher, welcoming new people, faithfully tithing, at CR, wanting to make things better, focus on children's ministry instead of administrative concerns, serving, volunteering in nursery, leadership, taking on responsibility, helping start small groups, being involved in tech stuff, leading a small group, community outreach stuff like Christmas and carnivals and the Halloween event, hospitality, pastoral care, a lot of gifting and skill development as worship leader, learning new music, worship leading, help with functions, being blessed with the gift of discernment, helping people present information in a more helpful way, I help wherever I can, taught freed up financial living, network course, men's breakfast, huddle, use my construction abilities, building a youth group Bible study, preaching, problem-solving, caring for others, supporting people in management, excellent at training and facilitating group discussions, cowboy church, helping in the nursery, videography, being able to do one job at a time and move on to the next, I love committee work and being on the board, being part of the pastoral care team, leading a small group, helping people through grief

Quotes:

"At DC I can push boundaries in worship without conflict"

"I wanted to build up one another in our faith in God."

"I didn't grow up in the church.... This gives me a unique perspective for first timers."

"We are family, it's not just about showing up and learning vertical 101"

"Add songs to the DC kids lessons so that children can learn children friendly songs."

"I went to church to please my parents when growing up, and there were always things going on Sundays, I didn't go to church for a long time, and now I miss it if

I don't go and I plan my weekends around being there on Sundays as much as I can."

"I think we have become more inward focused"

"People don't know about us, get back to the festivals so that we can let other people know."

"I love committee work. My assessment skills are strong, and I enjoy looking at the inner working of problem-solving and social justice and human interaction."

Question 3: What are the most important things (either Spiritual or personal) our church has contributed to your life? (Who or what made a difference? How did it affect you?)

Comments:

Friendships, being involved with the lives of others, spending time connecting with church people, growing in my faith, I like how DC pushes my comfort zone, faith, DC gives opportunities for growth like C4C, particularly growth in the area of prayer, being pushed outside of my comfort zone to grow spiritually, doing something different than traditional CRC, praying with other people, CR, met my wife, gained many leadership skills, become more comfortable and confident with responsibility, Martin's teaching challenges me spiritually, meeting other Christians and building relationships, DC has given me a great support system, people to pray with me, church family, Martin's sermons light a spark in us to want to learn more about Jesus, small groups to fuel that spark and learn, family and community where people come around you in grief and sorrow, practical tools like stewardship and communication and how to pray and tell others about Jesus, Sharing God's redemptive plan for our lives, our singing and praise time, helping people to love Jesus, discovering the strength of scripture, inspiring preaching, being challenged to live out my faith, put my faith in action, balance between outward service and inward support, came to know Christ, not spiritually alone, people genuinely care, made many of my closest friends/family through DC, made many dear friends at DC, DC is a praying church known for healing, hearing other people's stories, helping me financially, brought meals in my time of need, Elaine, a lot of people prayed for me, a safe place to be loved, connections with other members of the church, I'm becoming a very strong believer in the power of prayer, a focus on family and participation for all family members, being spiritually stretched, Martin's leadership, being out of my comfort zone with lots of support, Martin's preaching, the faithful presence of my friend Ben during my divorce, Pastor Martin married us, the marriage prep course, Martin help me develop leadership skills, Pastor Martin's personal connection and preaching, being part of the pastoral care team, we have a church family that makes a world of difference, worship, being given a task, being part of the vision team, I'm called to dig ditches... God brings the rain, I learned a lot about God and what it means to be a Christian and pursue him, hearing his voice, having community added meaning to my life and this help me to help others, even

though they knew my past history a lot of people welcomed me with open arms, we received a new vehicle, friends coming to church now,

Quotes:

“My heart was changed”

“I’m a pain avoider and introspective, DC pushes me towards others.”

“KE doesn’t excite me, but when I step out, I find I meet God. It’s like the kid standing on the diving board, painful but when they dive then there is growth, and we get to see how God shows up.”

“God is there for me”

“Martin just blows me away, because on some weeks I want to go home and check my house for video cameras and tape recorders because something he said in his sermon is right on the money.”

“At DC, everyone has a job and works busily for the kingdom.”

“At one time I was thinking about going to another church, and decided to give a \$10 Tim’s card to a gas attendant after filling my tank, later that day I received a first ever Christmas card from Martin and a \$10 gift card and I decided that was a sign to stay at DC”

“It took the soft heart of the people of DC to let me know that I would not get slapped if I were to reach out for help.”

“When I was a kid growing up, I didn’t want to go to church; my kids want to go to church!”

“I couldn’t trust anyone much less trust God before DC, so my church family has re-instilled faith in people.”

“It’s wonderful to be able to go to church with your spouse, family and friends.”

“I am moved by the music and I feel it is excellent, at times this moves me to be closer to God in my walk.”

“Learning that evangelism is a lifestyle, where I engage with people who are not Christians at work, I can invite them to church but I’m not responsible for salvation.”

“Without the DC community it was hard to grow, I felt God asking me to give things up and through my mentorship with Martin and Henry P, I had lots of support.”

“Pastor Martin has incredibly impacted my life and was supportive in the endeavour of starting a new ministry. He took the time to mentor me, it made me feel prepared and ready to start cowboy church.”

“When my husband got hurt and I was feeling overwhelmed, Elaine arranged for meals and grocery cards.”

Question 4: Make three wishes for the future shape of Discovery Church?

- Community outreach
- Contemporary worship music
- Keep the preaching
- Growth in numbers
- Growth in tithing
- More fellowship time outside of Sunday, or parties
- Strong commitment to the church community
- DC needs to work on building quality not quantity (core vision and doing things right)
- Build a community of quality (put our faith into action)
- Good preaching leads to revival, encouragement and reading the Bible makes a big difference
- Have a small church feel again
- More outreach
- Start a second site and never stop growing
- Come better at children's ministry
- People of DC can commit more fully to Christ
- More community-oriented ministries and a focus on internal community of DC
- Strong programs/activities for kids of all ages to build foundation in Christ
- Focus on real change in outreach and not on Band-Aid issues.
- Uphold the cause of the poor

- Advocate for societal/political change
- TTS: looks good from the outside and good for us as a congregation. DC could get more involved in planning and running events.
- To see more people come
- Retain core members
- More people coming to know Jesus
- Owning our own building
- More volunteers
- Increase our numbers and outgrow the gym until we get to 200 and then multisite
- Be more involved in Maple fest, Apple Fest, and rib-fest
- For DC to have its own worship space, one week in worship in, have weddings in, and rent out
- More people involved and contributing
- A God wish: that we would continue to become more real and relevant at DC.
- Expand and grow
- Stay with a diverse age spread, infant to elderly where everyone is respected and encouraged to be involved
- TTS-grow this ministry
- Grow our children's ministry
- To halt/stop multisite promotion until numbers are in place
- Simple sharing of the Good News
- Outreach to the community

- DC more involved in community.
- To see the KE plan accomplished
- Be a church that has relationships with each other throughout the week, not just Sunday
- Have more Bibles in church?
- More communication between leaders and volunteers
- That CR would explode and expand
- That DC would be HS filled and led
- Small groups that happen, that include meals
- More TTS
- More volunteers
- More updated decorations.
- To see where anchor house youth goes from here
- Somehow provide affordable housing
- Stay outreach oriented
- Continue to be different and unique
- Rent every school, one in every community for Sunday services
- That DC stay community focused (the atmosphere of community in the church)
- Forward focused-not being stuck, changes not bad, looking for new ideas and include more people
- Change the worship setting/atmosphere

- Embrace the idea that we should be different. Jesus was different and we should continue to be different, adapt and grow.
- Would like to see DC put together a 5-year business plan and structured accountability
- Start a fellowship/Bible study for 30-50-year-olds that allows you to bring your kids
- More people and more connection with the community
- Continued awesome leadership and developing of others
- More opportunity to contribute outside of the church, TTS, crucial conversations, and kingdom impact
- Being led by the Holy Spirit
- More God focused worship, more depth to worship
- An atmosphere of prayer and expectancy
- More Holy Spirit in our worship and a freedom to allow God to invade our lives
- Helping to restore the community thereby calling heaven down-to-earth
- More vulnerability as a church community which enables growth, walking in our true self
- A fire for God, selflessness, being filled with the Holy Spirit
- More community outreaches
- A passion for KE
- Home Bible studies
- Having a church family that cares for each other

- Invigorating our youth ministry
- TTS more often, random acts of kindness in the community
- Community and intimacy at church
- Re-establish a passion for church unity where all members are on the same page
- Move away from a consumer church mindset and towards a "what can I do for the church"
- To be outward focused
- Get back to the grassroots

Quotes:

"Don't change the teaching/preaching"

"the cycle of generosity, generosity brings generosity."

"I want to grow, however; I hope the interpersonal connections will always stay tight."

"I like having church in other people's homes, it's a good way to know others."

"To know each other's gifts, we must be known."

"I like how in DC we can have an idea and then we can do it."

"Recognizing the dream for multisite is a wonderful concept, but we need to be careful to wait for the numbers."

"I'm sad that the multisite project is delayed; small church feel is what originally drew me in and made me want to get involved."

"At the last TTS, my child brought a friend and we went to a nursing home to give out flowers.... I gave this girl a pink Bible and the girl yelled "this is the best day of my life". She went home and showed her mom. Next time she came over to our house she asked if we were going to church and if she could come... That girl came to Christ."

"I wish that we could address poverty in meaningful ways. For example: childcare costs are real issue, food drives are a Band-Aid issue."

"Update things like stage decorations... It seems like there aged. I've been finding lately the music is slow, personally to me I feel more empowered when the songs are a bit faster."

"I think church in a school, TTS and community outreach programs makes us unique and different"

"When you look at millennial's, they are hungry for God, they connect through music and the atmosphere created in worship. It's ridiculous how changing the

lighting helps change the atmosphere. Just changing the atmosphere will help bring in anticipation. Don't forget the power of atmosphere. What you see and feel creates atmosphere."

"Jesus was uniquely different, and our church has lost that uniquely different feel."

"Church should be a place where everybody knows your name."

Appendix VI - Survey Questions

Survey 1

1. How long have you been attending Discovery Church?
2. Which of the following words would you use to describe how you feel about Discovery Church? Select all that apply. (Excited, encouraged, confident, satisfied, positive, optimistic, thankful, Blessed, distrustful, powerless, concerned, anxious, fearful, sceptical, pessimistic, worried.)
3. How likely is it that you would recommend Discovery Church to a friend or colleague?
4. Overall, how satisfied, or dissatisfied are you with the direction of Discovery Church towards multisite? Comments?
5. Considering our desire to multisite, how excited are you about Discovery Church's future? Please explain.
6. How responsive has the design team of Discovery Church been to your concerns about multisite?
7. Are you currently in favour of Discovery Church's kingdom expansion plan (to become one church with two sites)?

Survey 2

1. How long have you been attending Discovery Church?
2. How likely is it that you would recommend Discovery Church to a friend or colleague? Please comment.
3. Overall, how satisfied, or dissatisfied are you with the direction of Discovery Church towards multisite? Comments?
4. Considering our desire to multisite, how excited are you about Discovery Church's future? Please explain.
5. Which of the following words would you use to describe how you feel about Discovery Church? Select all that apply. (Excited, encouraged, confident, satisfied, positive, optimistic, thankful, Blessed, distrustful, powerless, concerned, anxious, fearful, sceptical, pessimistic, worried.)
6. Are you currently in favour of Discovery Church's kingdom expansion plan (to become one church with two sites)? Please comment.
7. In your own words tell us about how you feel towards starting a second service?
8. What are you most excited about, multisite or starting a second service? Please rank each answer, (1-most excited, 2-somewhat excited, 3 being least excited).
9. Overall, how satisfied, or dissatisfied are you with the direction of Discovery Church to start a second service?

Appendix VII – Workshop Outline

Imagine	
Saturday 9 AM start	
5 min - Welcome, introduced day, sign consent forms (voice introduction and verbal consent) 20 min - Lectio Divina devotions – Acts 2:42-47 25 min - Mini-Lectures: Assumptions, 4-I model, Imagine 10 min - what happens after today?	This beginning session is to help people have a sense of anticipation of the work they are participating in today. All further sessions will take the participants through a review of the questions from “Changing the Conversation” to imagining provocative proposals and experiments.
Imagine	
Question 1-30 minutes 5 min - Individuals read data on question 1 from “Changing the Conversation” 10 min - Small groups of eight compile themes and write on newsprint 15 min - Whole group highlights, clarifies and combines themes	The focus of this session is on listening to the data from interviews, discerning what God might be doing, and inviting the congregation to participate. For most of us this is an unfamiliar experience. Pastor Martin will provide some examples and insights.
Break – 15 min	
Question 2 - 30 Minutes 5 min - Individuals read data on question 2 10 min - Small groups of 8 compile themes and write on newsprint 15 min - Whole group highlights, clarifies and combines themes Question 3-30 minutes 5 min - Individuals read data on question 3 10 min - Small groups of 8 compile themes and write on newsprint 15 min - Whole group highlights, clarifies and combines themes Question 4 - 30 minutes 5 min - Individuals read data on question 4 10 min - Small groups of 8 compile themes and write on newsprint 15 min - Whole group highlights, clarifies and combines themes	<u>Option 1:</u> Each table reviews one question at a time. (Each question will have 30 minutes discussion) <u>Option 2:</u> Half the tables will read the data for half the interviews, and the remaining tables will read the data for the other half of the interviews. (Each question will have 60 minutes discussion) Each table will have the data divided into sheets with 6-8 responses on each sheet. These sheets will be posted on the wall for viewing by the other groups.
Lunch Break - 45 minutes Each person is encouraged to walk around and look at the observations and notes on the large sheets of paper.	
<u>Common Themes in Data – 60 min</u> 10 min - Individuals read, pray, and reflect on all the notes and observations around the room written on newsprint	This is a continuation of the earlier sessions of listening to the data from the interviews, except the scope of the listening is now the whole body of data from today. So rather than listening to one question at a time, we

<p>15 min - Small groups of 8 compile themes and write on newsprint</p> <p>10 min - Table groups share with the room</p> <p>25 min - Large group reflects together and chooses three themes to take to imagine and innovate stage today. Others are saved for another day.</p>	<p>will listen to all the questions together. Is there a harmony that we hear, a melody line, rhythms that are unexpected?</p>
<p>Break – 15 min</p>	
<p>Innovate</p>	
<p><u>Divide into Theme Teams - 60 minutes</u></p> <p>1 min - choose your theme team</p> <p>2 min - audio introductions</p> <p>10 min - Mini-lecture: Provocative Proposals and Experiments</p> <p>25 min - Working in teams to create a provocative proposal and experiment</p> <p>20 min - Teams reporting to large group</p> <p>5 min - Next steps and conclude</p>	<p>The object here is to freely encourage people to draw outside the lines with one eye on the data and to get to a point of naming experiments. This is usually an exciting point as we will get to see that the process is leading to some exciting possibilities that have germinated from our own stories about God's presence among us.</p>
<p>Where do we go from here?</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Form teams around provocative proposals and experiments • Make recommendations to the Board • Report to November members meeting • Carry out approved experiments beginning January and February 2018 	<p>Most likely a decision will be made around which proposal and experiment has highest priority by the Board.</p>

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