DISSERTATION

SHARED LEADERSHIP AND MEMBER ENGAGEMENT IN WESTERN PROTESTANT HOUSE CHURCHES: A NATURALISTIC INQUIRY

Submitted by

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ABSTRACT

SHARED LEADERSHIP AND MEMBER ENGAGEMENT IN WESTERN PROTESTANT HOUSE CHURCHES: A NATURALISTIC INQUIRY

Western Protestant churches measure success through member engagement. Waning church member engagement has led some to argue that ineffective leadership structures are to blame. While the possibility of shared leadership has been advanced to this end, its use in Western Protestant Church settings has yet to be explored and understood. Thus, this study sought to inform and illuminate how member engagement occurred in Western Protestant house churches that practiced shared leadership. This study was conducted within the Naturalistic paradigm, utilizing the embedded methodologies of hermeneutic phenomenology and ethnography to (a) understand the lived experience and in situ culture of individuals who attend Western Protestant churches where shared leadership is practiced and its perceived effect on their resulting engagement as members of those churches and (b) based on these findings, offer thick description for deep understanding, informed action, and further study as to how shared leadership might be utilized within Western Protestant churches to foster member engagement. Findings indicated that he culture of the house churches selected could best be described through the practiced mediums of the house church including meeting in homes, fellowship time, the physical set up, the flexible structure, and the study of scripture. These mediums were indicative of the underlying beliefs, values, and assumptions of the house church culture. Additionally, the adaptive nature of the church has, in notable part, instigated this shift towards house churches. Some of the manifestations of this shift are seen through the enactment of shared leadership as visible through decision-making and the ways in which church members take initiative to be

involved. Additionally, the manifestation of church member engagement is visible through how these members construct, shared and individual, the experiences of participation in the weekly gatherings, interaction throughout the week, and an increased sense of ownership and responsibility. Finally, the themes that had emerged were predominantly confirmed via a final quantitative member checking survey and enabled me to develop contextualized definitions for shared leadership and engagement.

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

Imagine an organization in which only 10% of the employees fulfilled their role, an organization where one person was responsible for initiating and facilitating all activities. Now, one might assert that there are in fact organizations where this is the case and it is not so difficult to imagine. However, few would argue that this is an ideal or even desirable state from which an organization should function, and most organizational leaders and Human Resource Development (HRD) experts would work ardently to change this pattern if present in their organization. However, there exists a group of organizations nationwide, and even worldwide, in which this pattern of participation is quite frequently the norm. Many have worked persistently to change the tides but on a large scale it seems that these efforts have proved fruitless. The organization of which I speak is the church and more specifically the Western Protestant Church and its members.

Within the typical Western Protestant Church the pastor is often expected to juggle many different tasks (Hybels, 2004; Viola & Barna, 2008). A survey gathered from Protestant pastors revealed that most pastors participate in at least 16 major activities on a regular basis:

> casting vision, identifying and training leaders, preaching and teaching, raising money, serving the needy, providing strategy and planning, organizing church activities and programs, overseeing all administration, managing staff and volunteers, resolving conflicts, representing the congregation in the community, providing congregation care and counseling, and evangelizing the unsaved, administering the sacraments, and discipling individuals. (The Barna Group, 2001, p. 1)

Even at a cursory glance, the list of activities would denote a need for a wide array of skills and experience to successfully complete; however, this need is quite common. Hybels (2004) encapsulated the practices of the typical Western Protestant Church: “the church ends up with a few overworked professionals, paid by the tithes and offerings of the congregation to fulfill the whole gamut of priestly functions, while everybody else remains passive observers, their gifts

and talents atrophying from disuse" (p. 62). The mindset that has permeated the church is clergy-centric (Hybels, 2004); the pastor is often at the center of all service that comes out of the church. Not only is the pastor wrongly convinced that she must complete all the necessary duties, but capable, skilled individuals are left out of ministry because they are not a paid minister. Mallory (2001) explained,

> Pastors end up taking on all kind of roles and tasks, even if they're ill equipped to perform them, simply because they accept the understanding that, 'it's what they pay me for!' Meanwhile, laypeople sometimes shy away from ministry that they're well equipped to do simply because they're afraid they'll be stepping on the pastor's toes. (p. 41)

The underutilization of laypeople parallels waning church member engagement and, as might be expected, an overworked clergy. While the decrease in church member engagement is the primary focus of this study, a few notes about the overworked clergy will enlighten understanding about current problems in the Western Protestant Church. The average length of the pastoral career has declined from seven years to just over four in the last twenty years (Viola & Barna, 2008). Depression, burnout, stress and emotional breakdown occur at abnormally high rates among pastors (Viola & Barna, 2008). Peterson (2011), in his memoir entitled *The Pastor*, reflected on the enormous load he felt as senior pastor of a church. He tells a story about the moment when he realized he was doing too much: "One evening after supper, Karen—she was five years old at the time—asked me to read her a story. I said, 'I'm sorry, Karen, but I have a meeting tonight.' 'This is the twenty-seventh night in a row you have had a meeting.' She had been keeping track, counting" (p. 277). His experience is not uncommon. One youth pastor I know is regularly involved in strategy and vision planning, project administration, budgeting, counseling parents and teenagers, leading volunteers, public speaking, writing curriculum, training volunteer youth leaders, hospice visits, responding to benevolence requests, teaching

Sunday school, creative planning, and video production. The demand for a wide spectrum of skills, however, is quite normal for pastors in Western Protestant churches.

I acknowledge that the Western Protestant Church is a unique organization and some might argue that it is not relevant to compare standards in the church to those in business organizations. However, just as HRD is integral in managing and improving for-profit organizations, so is there a necessity for similar management and improvement in nonprofit organizations (Bradner, 1997). McLean and McLean's (2001) definition highlights the necessity for HRD within all types of organizations:

> HRD is any process or activity that, either initially or over the long term, has the potential to develop adults' work-based knowledge, expertise, productivity, and satisfaction, whether for personal or group/team gain, or for the benefit of an organization, community, nation, or ultimately, the whole of humanity. (p. 313)

Likewise, the church functions as an organizational system: "a set of components that work together to accomplish an overall objective and that possesses a sufficient boundary to distinguish it from its environment" (Lindgren & Shawchuck, 1984, p. 32). As such, standards for effective secular organizations, as outlined by Cummings and Worley (2009), can easily be applied to the church as an organization: "effective organizations are adaptable…have high technical and financial performance…and have satisfied and loyal customers or other external stakeholders and an engaged, satisfied, and learning workforce" (p. 3). The church, in order to be successful, must also adapt to changing culture and member needs, must perform well so that members continue to give monetarily (the primary means of financial performance), is responsible for satisfying the needs of the community and its members, and engaging members in learning activities and volunteer service.

As already indicated, one of the standards for effective organizations is an engaged workforce (Cummings & Worley, 2009). Concomitantly, one means for measuring church

effectiveness is member engagement (usually quantified via offerings and attendance) (Barna, 1998, 2005; Warren, 1995; Winseman, 2007), a necessary antecedent which is emblematic of other desired church outcomes (Perkins, 2004). For the purposes of this study, church member engagement is considered the active participation of individuals (who are not paid church staff) in the activities of the church (including volunteer service, decision-making, vision creation, and caring for others within the group) (Rutz, 2006; Viola, 2008).

Research has shown that church member engagement (in the forms of attendance and participation) in Western Protestant churches (includes churches that do not adhere to Roman Catholicism and Eastern Orthodoxy) is declining (Association of Religious Data Archives, 2008; Barna, 2005; The Barna Group, 2009; Winseman, 2007). According to the Association of Religion Data Archives (2008), those who attend church weekly have decreased from 28.5% of the US population to 19.3% and those who never attend church have increased from 9.3% to 20.7% (between the years of 1972 and 2008). The Barna Group (2009) reports that the number of mainline Protestant churches has declined since 1950 from 80,000 to about 72,000. Additionally, they report that volunteerism is down by 21% and adult Sunday school involvement has also declined by 17% since 1998. Winseman (2007) reported that only 29% of individuals attending Protestant and Catholic churches are actively engaged in the church, while 54% are not, and 17% are actively disengaged. Evidence of waning engagement on the part of members is prevalent in the research and in church leadership literature (Rutz, 2006; The Barna Group, 2009; Winseman, 2007). The Barna Group (2009) suggested that the quality of church leadership is directly connected to these trends of waning engagement.

Warren (1995) explained that church leadership is responsible for enabling institutional growth and removing any barriers or inhibitions to such growth. Furthermore, the development

of those in leadership and the leadership structure directly affects the ability of the church to pursue goals such as increased church member engagement, among others (Maxwell, 1995; Schwarz, 1996; Shenk & Stutzman, 1988; Westing, 1997). Thus, the dynamics surrounding the type of leadership employed can positively or negatively impact church member engagement, and in turn the effectiveness of the church (Schaller, 1980; Westing, 1985).

In the past decade, the concept of shared leadership has emerged as a desirable alternative to traditional hierarchical models (Pearce & Conger, 2003). Empirical research is growing in support of this type of leadership (Avolio, 1996; Bowers & Seashore, 1966; Pearce & Sims, 2000). Conger and Pearce (2003) noted that research opportunities exist and are needed in "exploring the outcomes associated with shared leadership settings" (p. 286). However, there is very limited research regarding shared leadership in the church setting and whether and how it might associate with church member engagement. Furthermore, there is no current research on this topic that examines the lived experience of church members, which might be accomplished through ethnographic and phenomenological approaches. Research from a combined ethnographic and phenomenological approach will allow increased understanding of the phenomenon of shared leadership within the particular context of the Western Protestant Church setting.

In order to establish the background and necessity for my study, brief discussion is now provided on the three bodies of informing literature that guide this study. Then, the problem statement, purpose of the study, overview of methodology employed, ethics, researcher's perspective, delimitations and ensuing limitations, operational definition of key terms, and significance of the study is discussed.

Background

The bodies of literature which enlighten this study are scholarship surrounding (a) Western Protestant Church leadership, (b) church member engagement, and (c) shared leadership. The Venn Diagram (Figure 1) below illustrates this interacting set of variables:

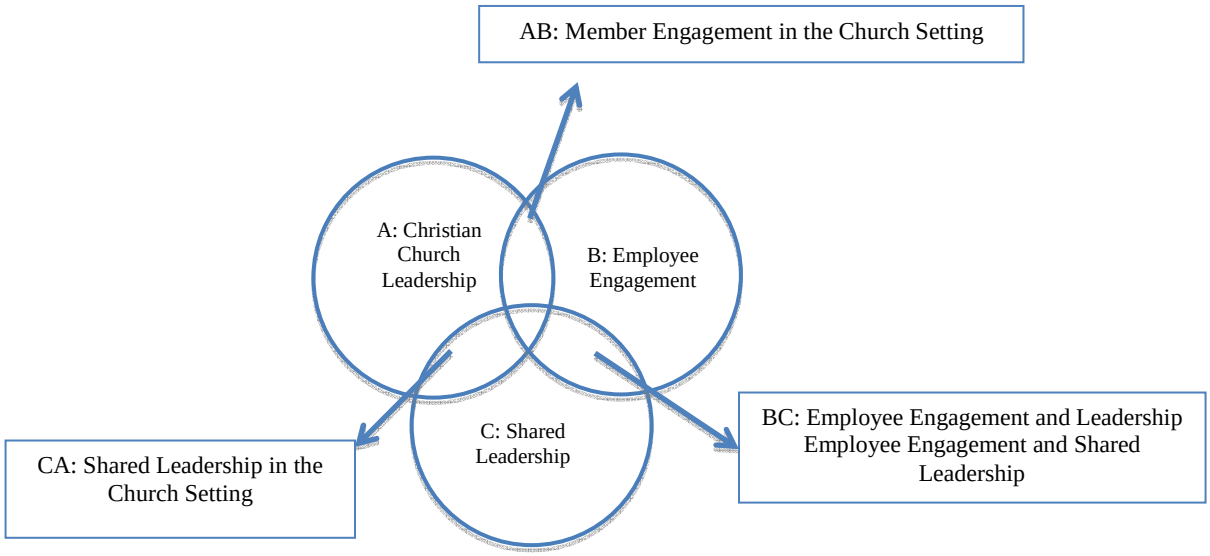

Figure 1. Venn diagram of the three informing bodies of literature for this study.

While my study resides in the small area of overlap where the three variables converge, literature in each area as well as the overlap between combinations of any two of the variables was used to inform my study. The ways in which these three bodies of knowledge were so used are briefly highlighted and discussed in the next three sub-sections, and Table 1 summarizes the key contributions to my study from each area.

Western Protestant Church Leadership

An exploration of Christian Church[1] history reveals that several key events shaped the practice of leadership within this context. Discussion of these events and the ensuing leadership practices will inform this study for two reasons. First, gathering a historical understanding of how leadership as an institutional structure has come to be practiced in the Western Protestant Church provides a deeper understanding and appreciation for the organizational context of this study, and, secondly, this understanding hopes to serve as a foundation for inquiry about how shared leadership might function in the church setting, and in turn interact with member engagement. While my literature review will provide a thorough review of these events, brief discussion is provided here regarding arguments surrounding hierarchy in the church and the typical forms of governance currently utilized in Western Protestant churches.

An examination of Christian Church history will quickly demonstrate that the church as an organization has been typically arranged and led hierarchically (Nichols, 2000). This structure is deeply connected for many to the idea of the Lordship of God and Christ (Nichols, 2000), and the apostolic authority discussed in the New Testament: "And God has placed in the church first of all apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then miracles, then gifts of healing, of helping, of guidance, and of different kinds of tongues" (1 Corinthians 12:28 New International Version). While this scripture affirms the shared role of ministry via different gifts within the "body" of the church, many have interpreted the chronologically ordering of the gifts to establish hierarchy (Nichols, 2000). This two thousand year tradition establishes a distinct context within the church that makes integration of alternative leadership structures far from simplistic.

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[1] While I am interested specifically in the Western Protestant Church, examination of its history necessitates looking at the Christian Church broadly which includes its roots in Judaism and Catholicism.

However, others argue rather that ancient cultures were hierarchical in their structure and the postapostolic Christians adopted and adapted these structures (Viola & Barna, 2008). Proponents of this viewpoint contend that up until the 2nd century, there was no official leadership in the Christian church (Banks, 1994). Elders were present but without a hierarchical structure and they suggest that the language of the New Testament instead depicts horizontal relationships (1 Corinthians 11:1, 2 Thessalonians 3:9, 1 Timothy 4:12, 1 Peter 5:3).

Current leadership structures in Western Protestant churches often take on one of four forms of governance: episcopal, presbyterian, congregational, or a form of nongovernment (Erickson, 1998). The form of governance to which a church adheres determines the question of where final authority lies and who is able to exercise this authority. Erickson (1998) summarized the basic differences amongst these forms of governance:

> While the episcopal and presbyterian forms both hold offices of authority within their structure, the offices differ in the number of persons holding that office. In a congregational church, the congregation is the authority of government. A nongovernment church claims the authority of the Holy Spirit as its form of government. (p. 1079)

These four forms of governance make up a spectrum (typically) from more structure and hierarchy to that of less (from episcopal to nongovernment) (Akin, 2004; Erickson, 1998; Garrett, 2004; Reymond, 2004). While shared leadership is not limited to nongovernment forms of church governance, the types of churches which will be under exploration in this study will likely fall into this category. One such type of church which often utilizes shared leadership is the house church: “for its everyday life, a house church does not need any higher level of organization, bureaucracy, or ceremony than any ordinary large family” (Simson, 2009, p. 32).

Although I am interested in how church member engagement occurs in the Western

Protestant Church setting, this study focused on a particular type of Western Protestant Church, namely, the house church. Figure 2 outlines the contextual framing of this study.

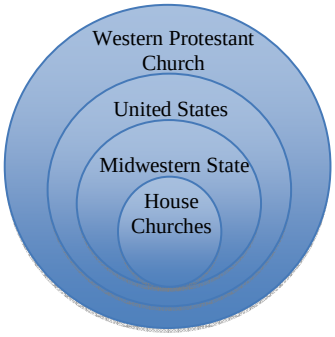

Figure 2. Contextual framing for the site of my study.

The particular site for this study was selected house churches in a Midwestern state in the United States that consider themselves part of the larger Western Protestant tradition. Following, discussion of employee engagement and how it informs my understanding of church member engagement is provided.

Employee Engagement

Engagement as a field of interest has that emerged in the last 20 years and only within the last five years in the HRD realm. The foundations of and definitions for engagement, outcomes and antecedents associated with engagement, and research surrounding the relationship between engagement and leadership inform this study.

Kahn's (1990) seminal work was the first to define engagement as a separate concept using research from an ethnographic study at a summer camp. To understand the development of engagement, he argued that there were three domains: meaningfulness, safety, and availability. More recently, work on employee engagement has drawn from Kahn's (1990) work to develop the idea that engagement is made of up three constructs: cognitive engagement, emotional engagement, and behavioral engagement (Macey & Schneider, 2008; Saks, 2006; Shuck & Reio,

2011). Shuck and Wollard (2010) offered the following definition of employee engagement for the HRD community: “an individual employee’s cognitive, emotional, and behavioral state directed toward desired organizational outcomes” (p. 103).

Research on employee engagement has measured several outcomes that seem to be related to its presence. Increased performance (higher revenues, competitive edge), increased customer-focus (Chalofsky & Krishna, 2009), increased production (Saks, 2006), increased communication skills (Shuck & Wollard, 2010), and a less likely occurrence of turnover (Harter, Schmidt, & Hayes, 2002) are among the suggested outcomes.

Shuck (2009) posited that the decision to engage is an internal one based on external factors outside an employee’s control but within the leader’s sphere of influence. The individual employee must make a decision to engage; however, the leader’s behaviors can produce a culture or environment where employees are more likely to engage (Mester, Visser, Roodt, & Kellerman, 2003). Wollard and Shuck (2011) provided a literature review, which summarizes the antecedents of employee engagement at both the individual and organizational level. Their summary acknowledged leadership specifically as one of the antecedents of employee engagement as well as many other organizational antecedents, which are often driven by leadership. Likewise, empirical research and conceptual models have looked at the convergence of employee engagement and leadership behaviors, surmising that certain leadership styles lend themselves towards fostering engagement more so than others (Arakawa & Greenberg, 2007; Babcock-Roberson & Strickland, 2010; Bezuijen et al., 2010; Bono & Judge, 2003; Ghafoor et al., 2011; Salanova et al., 2011; Zhang & Bartol, 2010).

While empirical support of the importance of engagement and the relationship between engagement and leadership is growing, limited scholarly research[2] exists on member engagement or its connection to leadership in the church setting and more specifically to that of shared leadership and Western Protestant church settings.

Shared Leadership

For years, western culture has viewed leadership as the position of unique individuals who possess certain skills and abilities (O'Toole, Galbraith, & Lawler, 2003). Likewise, organizations are often viewed as reflections of the CEO or person in charge and many hold to the belief that a single person must be held accountable for the company's actions and decisions (Locke, 2003; O'Toole et al., 2003). Shared leadership shifts this view to recognize that leadership can be distributed and interdependent. The emergence of shared leadership, definitions, driving forces, and outcomes are briefly discussed below.

Shared leadership, or concepts of shared leadership, have been making an appearance in organizational literature and practice for sometime, albeit in small and sometimes unnoticeable ways. Pearce and Sims (2000) formalized a definition and process for shared leadership and empirical research is growing in support of this shared notion of leadership (Avolio, 1996; Bowers & Seashore, 1966; Pearce & Sims, 2002).

Shared leadership includes concepts such as group influence which originates from all directions and all group members engaging in leadership at different points in time based on the tasks at hand (Bennett, 2003; Cox et al., 2003). In addition to believing that individuals have the

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[2] While there is minimal scholarly research, efforts have been made to examine church member engagement (i.e. Church Growth Movement and surveys gathered by places such as Willow Creek Community Church and Saddleback Church).

desire and willingness to contribute to the leadership, and in turn effectiveness of an organization the likes of the church, shared leadership requires the belief that individuals can make significant and meaningful contributions when given the opportunity (Day, 2000). As such, shared leadership is often viewed as counterintuitive and counter cultural (Maak & Pless, 2006; O'Toole et al., 2003).

The rise of the Information Age, the increasing complexity of the role of the CEO, increasing pressure to perform and do so quickly, and an increase in the use of teams in the organization are all significant forces which have driven the growth of and need for shared leadership in the past two decades (Chrispeels, 2004a; Kippenberger, 2002; Manz & Sims, 2001; McLagan, 2003; Mohrman, Cohen, & Mohrman, 1995; O'Toole et al., 2003; Pearce & Conger, 2003; Pearce, Manz, & Sims, 2009; Pearce & Sims, 2000; Plowman et al., 2007; Sims & Manz, 1996). However, the impact of shared leadership on organizational outcomes still needs to be examined, but research indicates that there are several positive outcomes (Hooker & Csikszentmihalyi, 2003; Mohrman et al., 1995) and hints at its connection to employee or member engagement: "shared leadership may improve the experience of work by offering an incremental measure of self-determination and opportunity for meaningful impact…by more evenly distributing opportunities for meaningful influence, shared leadership may provide a basis for full partnership" (Cox et al., 2003, p. 54). Employees that have "full partnership" and a "meaningful influence" would seem to align with principles of employee engagement. Shared leadership as it relates specifically to employee or member engagement has not been investigated.

Literature which examines shared leadership's emergence in recent years, the concepts and definitions that surround it, the driving forces that compel its emergence, and the suggested

and researched outcomes provided a foundation for this study which explored the relationship between shared leadership and member engagement in the Western Protestant Church setting. Table 1 summarizes the above-mentioned three bodies of literature that informed this study and the relationships between these three constructs. Having established the background for this study, the driving problem and thus need for the study is explained next.

Problem Statement

Due to evidence of declining Western Protestant Church member engagement, some suggest that researchers must continue to hypothesize and conduct studies to determine the best practices for church leadership (Easum, 1993; Hunter, 1992). In the secular sector, scholars have begun to propose that as organizations and the world grow more complex it is increasingly difficult for a single individual to lead (Pearce & Sims, 2002; Plowman et al., 2007). Traditional vertical models place too much pressure on CEOs (or in the case of churches, senior pastors) and thus research examining alternatives that facilitate and support employee engagement are increasing (Pearce & Conger, 2003). Likewise, the strain of leading a complex organization weighs on the pastor. Additionally, when an individual pastor is charged with the sole leadership of a church the reservoirs of talent that the members hold remain largely untapped (Ford, 2006; Hybels, 2004; Mallory, 2001; Rutz, 2006).

In the past decade, the concept of shared leadership has emerged as a desirable alternative to traditional hierarchical models (Pearce & Conger, 2003). Within the Western Protestant Church setting, shared leadership is utilized, particularly in house churches (Viola & Barna, 2008). However, there is very limited research regarding shared leadership in the Western Protestant Church setting and whether and how it might associate with church member

Table 1. *Summary of Informing Bodies of Literature*

	Informing Bodies of Literature		
	A: Christian Church Leadership	B: Employee Engagement	C: Shared Leadership
Foundations	History of the Christian Church reveals events that transformed leadership towards an increasingly hierarchical structure (Sewell, 2005)	Kahn's (1990) work was the first to define engagement as a separate construct.	Pearce and Sims (2000) formalized a definition and empirical research is growing.
Concepts	Leadership structures within the Western Protestant Church are typically hierarchical (Nichols, 2000). Some argue that this structure is in line with Biblical scriptures and most appropriate (Nichols, 2000) while others contend that New Testament scriptures suggest that leadership should be horizontal (Viola & Barna, 2008).	Engagement is made up of three constructs: cognitive engagement, emotional engagement, behavioral engagement, and these elements directed toward desired organizational outcomes define employee engagement (Macey & Schneider, 2008; Saks, 2006; Shuck & Reio, 2011; Shuck & Wollard, 2010).	Shared leadership includes concepts such as group influence which originates from all directions and all group members engaging in leadership at different points in time based on the task at hand (Bennett, 2003; Cox et al., 2003).
Current Forms and Research Findings	Church governance currently, typically takes on one of four forms: episcopal, presbyterian, congregational, and nongovernmental (Erickson, 1998).	Research on employee engagement has shown that engagement leads to increased performance, customer-focus, productions, communication skills, and less turnover (Chalofsky & Krishna, 2009; Harter et al., 2002; Shuck & Wollard, 2010) Research on the antecedents to employee engagement include leadership (Wollard & Shuck, 2011).	Shared leadership has emerged as a response to the rise of the information age, the complexity of the CEO's role, pressure to perform, and increased use of teams (Pearce & Conger, 2003). Shared leadership has been found to positively impact creativity and the experience of flow (Hooker & Csikszentmihalyi, 2003).
Relationship Between the Three Constructs	Some have suggested that the leadership structure of the church either supports or hinders performance goals, effectiveness, and in turn church member engagement (Maxwell, 1995; Schaller, 1980; Schwarz, 1996; Shenk & Stutzman, 1988; Warren, 1995; Westing, 1997).	Engagement is within the leader's sphere of influence (Shuck, 2009) and Shuck and Herd (2011) provided a conceptual convergence of transformational leadership and engagement. In addition, a positive relationship has been found between particular styles of leadership and employee engagement (Arakawa & Greenberg, 2007; Babcock-Roberson & Strickland, 2010; Bezuijen et al., 2010; Bono & Judge, 2003; Ghafoor et al., 2011; Salanova et al., 2011; Zhang & Bartol, 2010).	The direct relationship between shared leadership and employee engagement has not been studied; however shared leadership has been shown to lead to increased self-determination, opportunity for meaningful impact and influence, and full partnership (Cox et al., 2003) which seem to align with the principles of employee engagement.

engagement. Thus, these spaces (house churches) provide a context in which exploration of shared leadership might take place.

It becomes apparent that there is an opportunity to examine alternatives to current leadership structures in Western Protestant churches and to conduct research that supports viable options to this end. The senior pastor is most often the sole or primary source of this leadership in these churches (Ford, 2006). Thus, shared leadership is one such option which can be examined to determine what relationship, if any, this type of leadership would have with church member engagement.

Thus, the problem could be summarized as follows: Western Protestant churches measure success through member engagement. Waning church member engagement has led some to argue that ineffective leadership structures are to blame. While the possibility of shared leadership has been advanced to this end, its use in Western Protestant Church settings has yet to be explored and understood. Thus, research could help inform and illuminate how member engagement occurs in Western Protestant churches which practice shared leadership and more specifically, in house churches, which represent instances of such church settings.

Purpose of the Study/Research Objectives

The purpose of this study was to (a) understand the lived experience and in situ culture of individuals who attend Western Protestant churches where shared leadership is practiced and its perceived effect on their resulting engagement as members of those churches and (b) based on these findings, offer thick description for deep understanding, informed action, and further study as to how shared leadership might be utilized within Western Protestant churches to foster member engagement.

The following overarching research questions guided me in my ability to explore the phenomenon of shared leadership and its perceived relationship to member engagement in selected Western Protestant house churches in one Midwestern state. My study relied on naturalistic inquiry to guide my data collection and analysis, while drawing on hermeneutic phenomenology and ethnography to give particular focus to my research questions. An additional step utilized a quantitative strategy to gather different data kinds and extend member checking. This method choice will be discussed at length in chapter three. As such, my research questions reflect the two methodologies utilized.

1. How do participants describe the particular setting of Western Protestant house churches, and how does this setting facilitate the practices of shared leadership and member engagement? (a descriptive ethnographic question)
2. How do church members, in Western Protestant house church settings where shared leadership is practiced, describe their lived experience with shared leadership and member engagement? (a hermeneutic phenomenological question)
3. Can their descriptions of shared leadership and member engagement be used to inform tentative definitions for shared leadership and member engagement which might be confirmed by other members of the selected house churches? (a descriptive quantitative question)

Overview of the Methodology

My research approach was grounded in the Naturalistic perspective (also equated to interpretivism or constructivism) and as such was driven by the goal of gaining understanding through thick description of the phenomenon under investigation (Guba & Lincoln, 2005). Naturalistic inquiry acknowledges that “realities exist in the form of multiple mental

constructions, socially and experientially based, local and specific, dependent for their form and content on the persons who hold them"(Guba, 1990, p. 27). Knowledge is context specific and thus can be garnered best through field-based, inductive methods of inquiry (Guba, 1990). This approach seems particularly appropriate to my study as one could argue that shared leadership and member engagement are relevant variables in any organization; however, the Western Protestant Church context is unique in itself and thus necessitates particular attention to its idiosyncrasies. The naturalistic perspective is concerned with theory generation, rather than theory testing (Merriam, 1991). As such, insights and the ability to begin to theorize about the phenomenon of how shared leadership is perceived to affect member engagement in Western Protestant Church settings emerged as the inquiry proceeded. Thus, an emergent design was necessary for my intended inquiry. Table 2 provides an overview of the philosophical foundations and concomitant metaphysical traits of the naturalistic paradigm.

Based on these foundations, my initial approach followed the guidelines of naturalistic inquiry in three phases: 1) "orientation and overview," 2) "focused exploration," and 3) "member check[ing]" (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, pp. 235-236) and utilized phenomenological and ethnographic methodologies to this end. Both hermeneutic phenomenology and ethnography align with the axioms of naturalistic inquiry and provide an additional means to guide the particular focus of my methodology. Some of these axioms include the notions that research from the naturalist perspective should be preferably qualitative, grounded theory rather than a priori theory, and involve a dialectical and hermeneutic process (Lincoln, 1990; Merriam, 1991).

As such, hermeneutic phenomenology guided my exploration of the phenomenon of shared leadership and ethnography allowed me to acknowledge and assess the distinct culture of this phenomenon within the setting I chose to explore (i.e. house churches). The ways in which

Table 2. *Informing Philosophical Foundations of Naturalistic Inquiry*

Metaphysical Terms	Definition	Metaphysics of Naturalistic Inquiry
Ontology	What makes for reality? (Guba, 1990; Lynham, 2008)	-- realities exist in the form of multiple mental constructions, socially and experientially based, local and specific, dependent for their form and content on the persons who hold them" (Guba, 1990, p. 27).
Epistemology	What makes for knowledge of that reality? What is the relationship between the knower and the known? (Guba, 1990)	--Findings are literally the creation of the process of interaction between the two (Guba, 1990, p. 27). --"Interpretivist knowledge comprises the reconstruction of intersubjective meanings, the interpretive understanding of the meanings humans construct in a given context and how these meanings interrelate to form a whole… idiographic" (Greene, 1990, p. 235).
Methodology	How such knowledge is acquired and accumulated? How should the inquirer go about finding out knowledge? (Guba, 1990; Lynham, 2008)	--"naturalistic, field study, ethnographic, subjective, and grounded theory" (Merriam, 1991, p. 48). --Theory generating rather than theory-testing (Merriam, 1991). --Research is bound to its context (Mishler, 1979). --"Emphasis on qualitative methods, validity, holistic analysis, and process" (Mishler, 1979, p. 10).
Axiology	How we ought to act in acquiring, accumulating and applying such knowledge? What values guide the choices made by researchers in the selection, conduct and dissemination of inquiry and its outcomes? (Guba, 1990; Lynham, 2008)	--"generates working hypotheses that are connected not to a priori theory but to a context-specific, often emergent inquiry problem, which may or may not be informed by existing knowledge" (Greene, 1990, p. 236). --Looks at process rather than outcomes or products (Merriam, 1991, p. 49).
Teleology	To what end ought we apply such knowledge and who gets to say? (Guba, 1990; Lynham, 2008)	--"storytelling" (Greene, 1990, p. 228). --Formulate generalizations that "make explicit the context dependence of relationships" (Mishler, 1979, p. 9).

each of these methodological approaches guided my data collection is elaborated upon in chapter three.

My intent, in regards to my research processes, was to find at least one house church in which shared leadership seemed to be practiced as defined by theory on shared leadership and as identified by participants. I then spent time in the orientation and overview phase. Next, several participants were identified for focused exploration through in-depth, open-ended interviews. From these interviews, I developed tentative definitions of shared leadership and church member engagement from the participants' experiences and perspectives. Using these definitions, I then developed a quantitative survey whereby I facilitated a member check with a larger group of members from the selected house church(es) and gathered descriptive data on the perceived meanings of shared leadership and engagement in this setting. Phase one and two utilized a qualitative strategy which aligns with the axioms of naturalistic inquiry as already discussed. In addition a quantitative strategy was utilized for phase three and my third research question reflects this decision. A quantitative strategy is supported by Lincoln and Guba (1985) as a means to extend member checking and gather descriptive data only. This tentative plan was offered initially with the understanding that my design and methods may shift based on findings along the way (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Figure 3 provides an overview of my methods choices.

Ethics

As a researcher, I acknowledge that my first responsibility is to "respect the rights, needs, values, and desires of the informants" (Creswell, 2009, p. 198). As such, the following guidelines—suggested by Creswell (2009)—were followed.

1) Participants received a written and verbal explanation of the research objectives and how the collected data was to be used so that the process was clearly understood.

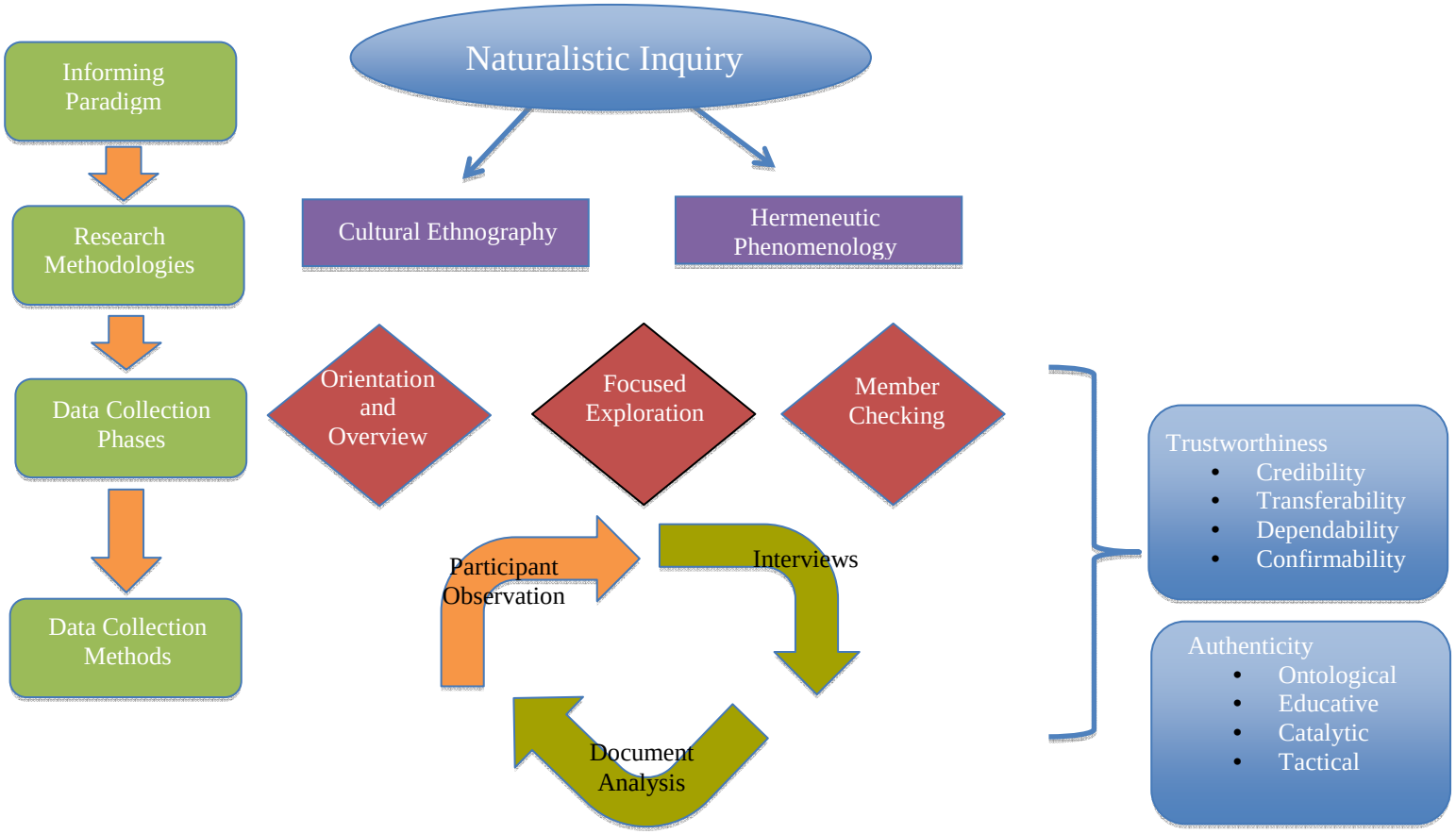

Figure 3. Overview of informing paradigm, research methodologies, data collection phases, and methods.

2) Participants provided their written permission before I could proceed with the study as it has been articulated

3) An application to the Institutional Review Board was filed and approved, prior to the beginning of the study.

4) Participants were given detailed descriptions of how data collection would be conducted.

5) Participants had full access to transcriptions and thematic reports were made available. Member-checking of study themes was an important step in the research process.

6) When determining how to report the data, I considered the participant's rights, interests, and wishes first.

7) Participants were assigned a pseudonym to promote anonymity and were given the opportunity to remove themselves from the study at any point if they so chose.

In addition, inquiry based in the naturalist paradigm, due to the axiological nature of relationships, must follow several ethical principles, three of which are offered by House (1990): mutual respect; noncoercion and nonmanipulation; and support for democratic values and institutions. Mutual respect encompasses "the age-old idea of doing unto others as you would have them do unto you" (Gregory, 1990, p. 166) Eliminating coercion and manipulation suggests that "the researcher and the researched maintain a continuing dialogue and negotiation. There should be a reciprocity of benefit in every study. When a researcher benefits, the participants should too"(Gregory, 1990, p. 166) . Finally, upholding democratic values and institutions

includes supporting values such as equality and liberty in the conduct of one's research (House, 1990).

Researcher's Perspective

My own interest in this topic has been percolating for 30 years. Having been raised regularly attending and participating in a Protestant Evangelical church, my first hand experiences began to shape my understandings of church leadership early on. As a teenager, I felt compelled to pursue a vocation of church leadership, and following high school I attended a Christian university where I earned a degree in Church Leadership. Immediately out of college, my husband was hired to work as a minister at a very large church. I, too, worked on staff for six years. Experiencing the Christian Church expressed on such a large scale enamored me, disillusioned me, and began to stir up questions for me about the most appropriate expressions of leadership in the church. While a large church can draw many people, it can conversely decrease the level of participation members experience and have. It becomes inefficient and seemingly impossible to involve members in leadership activities such as vision building, teaching, and decision-making. I also had the privilege of working closely with hundreds of volunteers who seemed to fully engage in this setting. However, I noticed that their engagement was limited when it came to most high-level leadership activities.

My own exploration of shared leadership began when one of the volunteers with whom I worked approached me and began pointing out the gross underutilization of the collective wisdom of the entire group. He suggested that we did not often enough involve the volunteers in decision-making or solicit their thoughts and opinions. His comments prompted me to begin to investigate shared leadership as a construct and examples of church leadership as depicted in the New Testament of the Bible. This catapulted a journey that I have been on to date. As my

husband and I plan to involve ourselves in the leadership of churches for some time, I am eager to gather a better understanding of alternative leadership structures and their implications, particularly for member engagement. So, I am far from being an unbiased researcher but rather should be thought of as a "passionate participant" (E. G. Guba & Lincoln, 1994) as such the findings of this study are very personally important to me and, I trust, will be to the larger community in which they are conducted.

Delimitations and Ensuing Limitations

Considering the value of context specific knowledge in the naturalist paradigm, my research was limited to Western Protestant churches and even more specifically to house churches in a Midwestern state in the United States. Narrowing my study to Western Protestant house churches allowed me to focus on one particular expression of the Christian church. Likewise, the distinction of Western was made because of the acknowledgement that certain cultural considerations impact the expression of church and leadership in the Western world. Additionally, narrowing my study to one Midwestern state in the United States allowed me to gather a rich, and local, understanding of a particular context and generate thick descriptions thereof. Finally, my study was limited to house churches as one example of a Western Protestant church practicing shared leadership and demonstrating member engagement.

Concomitantly, these delimitations also inform a number of ensuing limitations of note to this study. They included the inability to generate grand theory from this data and limitations surrounding the truthfulness and thoroughness of participant comments. First, since the study was limited in the accumulation of data (number of sites and time spent) generating grand, or even mid-range theory will be neither desirable nor possible (Lynham, 2005). Consistent with the naturalistic paradigm, this study offers thick description, which could generate local theory

and might later inform studies in other religious or secular settings and so could, in time, inform mid-range theory development. A second limitation had to do with a general assumption of the study: that church members would be honest and forthcoming in their answers to questions, and that they were able to identify and articulate their experiences with shared leadership and engagement in the Western Protestant house church setting. I recognized that not all participants would answer questions with complete divulgence because of possible perceptions of what they think they should say, and that not all participants would be aware of their related deeply held beliefs and attitudes. I hoped to minimize this limitation of the study by enacting the axiological component of this inquiry paradigm, that is, building rapport and ensuring anonymity in whatever ways possible.

Operational Definition of Key Terms

In accordance with the nature and purpose of my study, the following terms are delineated as foundational for a clear understanding of my research. Their operational definitions are provided.

Church Member- is for my purposes any individual who regularly attends a church and does not necessitate official membership as delineated by particular churches.

Employee Engagement - is "an individual employee's cognitive, emotional, and behavioral state directed toward desired organizational outcomes" (Shuck & Wollard, 2010, p. 103).

Church Member Engagement- is for the purposes of this study, the active participation of individuals in the activities of the church (including volunteer service, decision-making, vision creation, and caring for others within the group) (Viola, 2008).

Shared Leadership- is

> a dynamic, interactive influence process among individuals in groups for which the objective is to lead one another to the achievement of group or organizational goals or both. This influence process involves peer, or lateral, influence and at other times involves upward or downward hierarchical influence. (Pearce & Conger, 2003, p. 1)

Western Protestant Church- is one of the three major branches of Christianity, originating in the 16th-century Reformation. The term applies to the beliefs of Christians who do not adhere to Roman Catholicism or Eastern Orthodoxy (Shelley, 2008).

Traditional Church- A term frequently utilized by participants to describe their previous church experience—usually a typical, hierarchical Western Protestant church.

Hierarchical Leadership- a style of leadership that "employs a top-down, pyramid-shaped structure with a narrow center of power that trickles down to widening bases of subordinate levels" (Uhlig, 2012, p. 1).

Western Protestant House Churches- churches that model themselves after the examples provided in the New Testament in contrast to the highly structured, building centered, churches who are led by professional clergy (Viola, 2008).

Significance of the Study

The findings of this study add to scholarly research and literature in the fields of shared leadership, employee engagement, and church leadership. The lack of empirical research on shared leadership in all settings has been noted (Ardichvili & Manderscheid, 2008) and its relevance for organizations will hopefully become more apparent. Likewise, although employee engagement is a burgeoning field, this study will add to our understandings of engagement in a specific context: the Western Protestant Church as exemplified in selected house churches in a

Midwestern state in the United States. Finally, the literature on church leadership, which tends to be an area laden with anecdotal theory, will benefit from increased empirical research.

For practice, this study offers organizations one picture of the relationship between leadership structures and member engagement. For the church specifically, this study provides understanding about how shared leadership might be integrated into a traditionally hierarchical organization to affect increased member engagement.

Organization of the Dissertation

This dissertation is organized into five chapters, a reference section, and appendices. Chapter I: Introduction, provided a brief overview of the problem, background and purpose of the study, research questions, an overview of my methodology, ethics, researcher's perspective, delimitations and ensuing limitations, operational definition of key terms, and significance of the study. Chapter II: Literature Review, offers a review of literature on Western Protestant Church leadership, employee engagement, and shared leadership—the three constructs and informing bodies of knowledge germane to this study. Chapter III: Methodology, details the underlying theoretical paradigm of this study as well as the selected research methodologies and accompanying inquiry processes and strategies—participant and site selection, data collection and analysis, data findings, write up and dissemination, and trustworthiness and authenticity of the study. Next, Chapter IV: Data Analysis and Findings, presents and describes the ensuing study findings. Finally, Chapter V: Conclusions, Implications, and Recommendations, provides conclusions and implications of the results, and offers recommendations for future studies.

CHAPTER TWO: REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Considering the purpose of this study, namely, to gain an understanding of the lived experience and in site culture of individuals who attend churches where shared leadership is practiced and its perceived effect on their resulting engagement as members of those churches, three bodies of literature must necessarily inform my research. These three bodies of literature speak to the cultural context of my study, Western Protestant house churches in a Midwestern state in the US, and the phenomena under investigation—shared leadership and engagement. As such, this literature review will undertake summary and synthesis of the following three variables: Christian Church leadership (as it informs Western Protestant Church leadership specifically), employee engagement, and shared leadership. As discussed, the informing bodies of knowledge are represented in the diagram below and guide

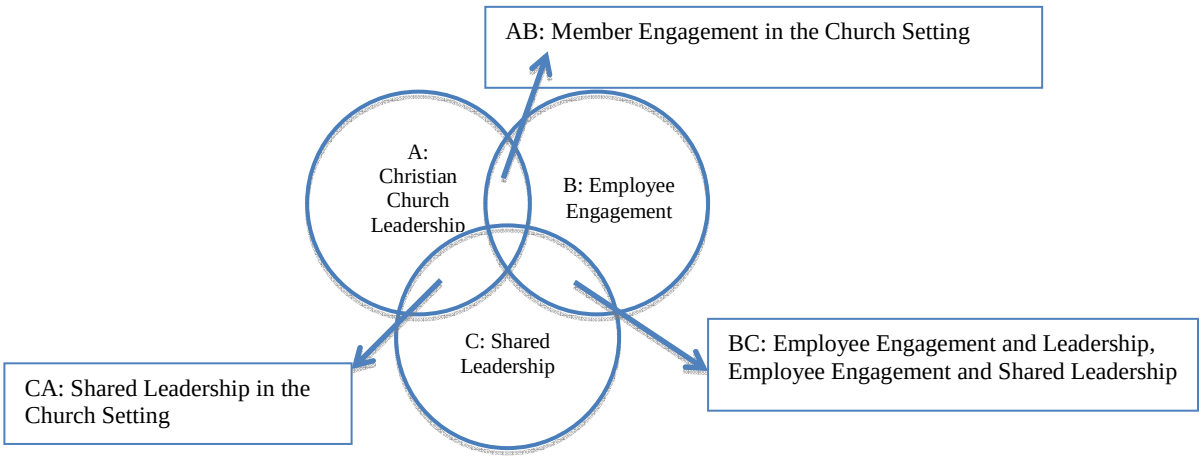

Figure 4. Venn diagram of the three informing bodies of literature for this study.

the organization of my review as follows. Part A will detail a brief history of leadership in the Christian Church emphasizing key events that shaped the practice of leadership, then summarize current forms of church governance, and finally provide discussion of the particular setting for my study, namely house churches. Part B will elaborate on employee engagement: how it's defined and its outcomes and antecedents. The section will begin to explore the connections

between my study variables by discussing the relationship between leadership, including shared leadership, and engagement (BC), and member engagement in the Church setting (AB), and more specifically the United States. Part C will discuss definitions of shared leadership, the emergence of shared leadership, characteristics and examples of such leadership, and finally explore its presence in church settings (CA) and connection to employee engagement (BC). Each section will also, first, include explanation of my review methodology and the informing theoretical frameworks for the variable under question.

Part A: Western Protestant Church Leadership

While difficult for any organization, careful study aimed at gaining an understanding of how institutional structures have come to be solidified is beneficial for two reasons. First, this understanding can inform a clear description of organizational identity (Callahan, 2010). A deep understanding of the historical underpinnings and significant developments of an organization offers a rich appreciation for the current enactment of structures and can serve to strengthen such identity. Second, purposeful, strategic change is given a context from which to start when an understanding of past developments is first gathered. This literature review is driven by both of these reasons. It, first, aims to gather a historical understanding of how leadership as an institutional structure has come to be practiced in the Western Protestant Church setting (which requires a brief but more broad examination the Christian Church) in an attempt to gain a deeper understanding and appreciation for its enactment, and, secondly, this understanding serves as a foundation for my inquiry about how a different leadership structure could function in the church setting. This literature review is unique in that it is not summarizing research and theory on a particular construct, but rather is attempting to examine a substantial history and draw out those pieces which are relevant to my study. As such, more time is devoted to describing the particular

research methodology utilized and analysis of the findings than will be found on the sections summarizing employee engagement and shared leadership (i.e. limitations and delimitations). The methodology utilized will first be discussed followed by the two informing theoretical frameworks. Then, I will detail a brief history of leadership in the Christian Church emphasizing key events that shaped the practice of leadership, then summarize current forms of church governance, and finally provide discussion of the particular setting for my study, namely house churches

Western Protestant Church Leadership Review Methodology

No single methodology thoroughly responded to the particular need for this inquiry. Thus, a hybridized methodology was devised for the purposes of this literature review. This approach included a synthesis of the integrative literature review (Torraco, 2005; Webster & Watson, 2002), the historical method (Lavin & Archdeacon, 1989; Shafer, 1980) and the historical manuscript (Callahan, 2010). Table 3 provides a table outlining the integration of the various informing sources. Each source was used to develop desired outputs, quality requirements, and indicators that should emerge in the review of literature.

In summary, the integrative literature review guided my effort to "review, critique, and synthesize representative literature on a topic in an integrated way such that new frameworks and perspectives on the topic [were] generated" (Torraco, 2005, p. 356). Historical method directed my consideration of the context of each event (Lavin & Archdeacon, 1989; Shafer, 1980). Callahan's (2010) call for historical manuscripts guided my development of a methodology that would "explain the past by accounting for continuity and change through the use of innovative conceptual frameworks as lenses" (p. 311).

Table 3. *Hybridization of Informing Sources which Guided the Review of Western Protestant Church Leadership Literature*

Informing Sources/ Dimensions	**Output**	**Quality Requirements** (The output will be considered excellent in the eyes of the customer/s//Stakeholder/s when…)	**Indicator/s/Methods** (How we will know that the output has been met with excellence, i.e. where we will find evidence to this effect)
Historical manuscript (Callahan, 2010)	1. Evidence	Evidence should be critically and effectively used	Secondary sources on key points will be examined to identify shaping forces on leadership. Literature will be coded by event first and then by force and outcome category. This process will be somewhat emergent as the process is inductive and I am generating a hybridized method
			Read literature to define key points, then read following literature for those points (circular process), determine how many for saturation.
	2. Conceptual Framework	Reflectively use conceptual frameworks to serve as lenses for the evidence	Describe theoretical/conceptual framework. Demonstrate its application in the description of findings.
	3. Narrative	Should craft a compelling narrative about the meaning of the evidence	The article will propose a framework to identify and encapsulate critical events that occurred in Church history to improve our understanding of hierarchical church leadership and trace the early development of some of its foundational concepts. I intend to use the tabular format (as used by Alagaraja & Dooley, 2003) as a way of linking historical events and new perspectives on leadership that developed as a consequence and study the impact and influence of these events on church leadership. The results will be presented in narrative format with tables delineating the event, the forces that impacted leadership, and the implications/outcomes.
Integrated Literature Review (Toracco, 2005)	1. Method	Provide a method for how the literature was identified, analyzed, synthesized, and reported.	Clear problem statement, detailed methods section, and compelling description of the findings.

Table 3. *Continued*

Informing Sources/ Dimensions	**Output**	**Quality Requirements** (The output will be considered excellent in the eyes of the customer/s//Stakeholder/s when…)	**Indicator/s/Methods** (How we will know that the output has been met with excellence, i.e. where we will find evidence to this effect)
Integrated Literature Review Continued (Toracco, 2005)	2. Justification	Provide justification for why the literature review is appropriate	Discuss justification for why this method is most appropriate in methods section
	3. Valid and Authentic	Identify steps to verify the validity and authenticity of key ideas and themes that emerge	Develop criteria for crisis points based on literature and have church historian confirm my identification of crisis points
			Peer-checking for themes/findings- will be limited due to time constraints.
			Coding system for literature
			Consulting with experts
Historiographic Method/ Historical Method (Lavin & Archdeacon, 1989; Shafer, 1980, p. 23)	1. Context-Specific	The historian cannot understand an historical figure except in the context of that figure's own culture…	Recognizing the contextual weight on leadership at each crisis point, seek to define leadership at each point within a contextual backdrop.
	2. Dialectic	History is interactive, but with the power of the individual much inhibited by the organized and established strength of the ideas and interests of men grouped in institutions;	Identify the dialectical interaction between specific individuals and institutions in the history of the church—identify institutional forces that shaped leadership.
	3. Reflexive	Acknowledge time bound intellectual biases and the ways in which concerns of the present will impact my insight into the past. Historians are products of their own times—that is, of the institutions of their specific cultures, even if their culture encourages them to study others	Identify the current values, and my own personal or cultural biases that influence my interpretation

As such, I chose to explain the historical developments of leadership in the Christian Church setting using the tabular format (Alagaraja & Dooley, 2003) and O'Malley's (1983) categorization of levels of change: developments, reforms, and reformations.

Data collection. Data collection occurred through two avenues: keyword searches and interviews with content experts. For the literature review a keyword search of scholarly, refereed journal articles including "Church" and "Hierarch*" in all fields and "Leadership OR History" in the subject was made in Academic Search Premier, Alta Religion, ERIC, Philosopher's Index, Proquest, PsycARTICLES, PsycINFO, and Religious and Theological Abstracts. Following this keyword search, an additional search of scholarly, refereed journal articles including "Church" and "Organization OR Structure" in all fields and "History" in the subject line was made in the same databases. In addition, the references from articles retrieved were examined for additional relevant literature. Once key events were determined, searches were made for relevant literature on each key event and comprehensive history books were consulted to augment my understanding of each event. Because the scope of Christian Church history is immense, it was determined that guidance from content experts could help refine and narrow my data collection. Six content experts were identified (two historians, one Catholic theologian, one Protestant theologian, one Church historian, and one church leadership expert) and contacted to set up interviews. The interviews were not recorded but detailed notes were taken during each meeting. The first experts interviewed were asked to identify how leadership in the church setting had been structured across history. As I gathered more information and was able to refine my focus, the proceeding experts were asked to identify specific key events in church history that impacted the way leadership was practiced in the Christian church setting. Saturation was determined when the literature searches and interviews with experts revealed no new key events.

Data analysis. Data analysis was an ongoing and cyclical process—as data were collected my analysis guided further data collection. Likewise, data analysis became more focused and specific as initial data analysis began to reveal themes and categories. Eventually data came to be coded in two phases: 1) key event/time period and 2) level of change (development, reform, reformation). The interviews with experts proved to be the most beneficial means of identifying the six key events that would be the focus of this study. Interview notes were coded for key events/time period. Table 4 below identifies the key events/time periods that were decided upon. The key events/time periods that surfaced in the interviews were combined with the key events/time periods that began to emerge in the literature. Once the key events/time periods were narrowed down to those listed in Table 4, the relevant literature was also coded by general time period. The term "event" will be used somewhat loosely as the events described often include a series of events and while I have assigned a specific date, the series of events occurred across a span of time. The second phase of coding was guided by O'Malley's (1983) categorization of changes throughout church history.

Table 4. *Significant Key Events and Time Periods Impacting the Development of Leadership in the Christian Church*

Key Event	Time Period
The Death and Ascension of Christ	AD 33
The Death of the Apostles	AD 100
The Christianization of the Empire (Constantine)	AD 313
The Investiture Controversy (Gregorian Reform)	AD 1054
Martin Luther's Thesis (Protestant Reformation)	AD 1517
The Colonization of America	AD 1600

Table 5 provides a definition for these categories.

Table 5. *Categorization of Changes in Church History*

Categorization	Definition
Development	"changes that have occurred in the Church without being deliberately and self-consciously initiated by Church leadership for the good of the Church" (p. 375).
Reform	"changes enacted within the Church that take place within a given frame of reference…changes within a system" (p. 376).
Reformation	"self-consciously induced change in ecclesiastical life or consciousness that is based on principles that tend to dislodge old ones… a paradigm shift… the displacement of one inclusive model or even world view for another" (p. 377).

Adapted from (O'Malley, 1983)

Delimitations and ensuing limitations. In approaching a substantial body of literature on centuries of history, a series of delimitations were put into place to manage the volume of data. As such, history books were not examined at large, but rather consulted as secondary sources to compliment the knowledge garnered from articles. Likewise, I limited my discussion of leadership changes to those, which were substantial, noticeable, and marked by an event, or series of events. It was also determined that my study of leadership's development in church history would end with the colonization of America. As Protestant Christianity progressed the number of unique denominational expressions increased and thus tracing the development of leadership became difficult as the leadership enactments varied significantly from denomination to denomination. This final event (the colonization of America) is significant as it begins to speak to the Western expressions of Protestant Christian leadership. A thorough history of each event is not provided, rather the context is briefly described so that the resulting leadership changes can be identified. While not entirely possibly, I tried to avoid theological or doctrinal debates.

Thus, there are several limitations to my study. It is possible that I may have excluded substantial events or shifts in leadership that others would consider important. Events were chosen based on their confirmation from multiple sources, however, several events surfaced that were ultimately excluded (the monastic orders, Anabaptist traditions of the 16th century, Quaker movements of the 17th century). Likewise, others might interpret the events that I have included differently. And, finally, much more analysis could be provided on the cultural, sociological, and historical influence of each event but is not within the scope of this review.

The Two Informing Theoretical Frameworks on Western Protestant Church Leadership

Two theoretical frameworks guided my sense-making about the development of leadership in the history of the Christian Church, namely Giddens' (1984) Structuration Theory and Sewell's (2005) theory of Events as Transformation. The first, Structuration Theory acknowledges the complex process of organizational development as practices, culture, and behaviors are the product of the ongoing interaction between agents (individuals) and the institution (Giddens, 1984). The second, and complementary theory, Sewell's (2005) theory of Events as Transformation supports Structuration Theory while offering a means for understanding particular events that shape organizational structures. A descriptive overview of both theories and their relevance to the study is provided.

Giddens' structuration theory. Structuration Theory identifies the simultaneous and reciprocal influence of the agent (individuals) and structure on each other (Giddens, 1990). Each operates as a resource for and a product of the other (Boden, 1994), generating institutionalized practices. Agents are enabled and constrained by structures; however, the structures are a product of previous actions on the part of agents (Sarason, 1995). This duality is described by Poole and McPhee (2005) :

> …every action, every episode of interaction has two aspects: It 'produces' the practices of which it is a part and it 'reproduces' the system and its structure, usually in a small way, as changed or stable. Structuration theory thus explains the system itself as the product of human actions operating through a duality in which structures are both the medium and the outcome of actions. (p. 175)

This interplay constitutes the development of institutionalized practices as they come to be established over time. Figure 5 demonstrates this interaction. A thorough articulation of Structuration Theory will not be provided here but can be found in Giddens' (1984), The Constitution of Society: Outline of the Theory of Structuration. For the purposes of this review, Structuration Theory serves simply as a foundation for understanding the developing and changing nature of structures and thus, institutionalized practices, such as leadership. While this foundation is necessary, the focus of this inquiry will be on particular events that have participated in the transformation of the practice of leadership in the Christian Church.

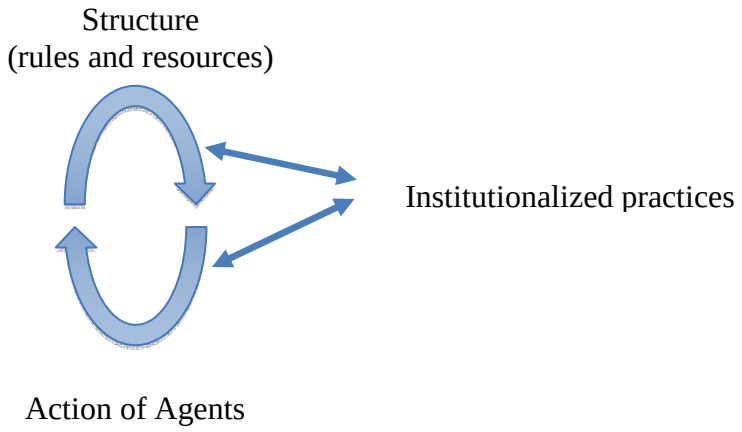

Figure 5. The interplay between structure and action generating institutionalized practices in social systems. Adapted from "Structuration Theory and Sociological Analysis," by A. Giddens, 1990, In J. Clark, C. Modgil, & S. Modgil (Eds.) Anthony Giddens: Consensus and controversy, p. 301.

Horell (1997) articulated the need to examine events that have served as transformation in the history of the Christian Church:

> While it would be inappropriate therefore to mount a thesis arguing for a radical or disjunctional change at a point in the development of early Christianity, it is vitally important for historians of early Christianity to attend to and seek to explain the patterns of transformation which are revealed even in our limited sources. (p.338)

Thus, an additional theoretical framework is necessary to inform this study of Western Protestant Church leadership, namely, Sewell's (2005) theory of Events as Transformation.

Sewell's events as transformation theory. Sewell's (2005) theory of Events as Transformation acknowledged that most social practices "tend to be reproduced with considerable consistency over relatively extended periods of time" (p. 226) commensurate with Structuration Theory. However, he explained that when changes do take place they are rarely "smooth and linear in character" (p. 226); instead change occurs in clusters or intense bursts, as the accumulation of small changes build up. He suggested that, "these moments of accelerated change…are initiated and carried forward by historical events" (p. 226). Historical events serve as "dislocations" and "transformative articulations of structure" (p. 245). In order to be considered a historical event, as Sewell (2005) conceptualized them, the event must be: "(1) a ramified sequence of occurrences that (2) recognizable as notable by contemporaries, and (3) result in a durable transformation of structures" (p.228). So to this end, I looked for events that "durably" transformed leadership structures and practices in the history of the Christian Church.

Relevance of theoretical frameworks to review. For the purposes of this study, Structuration Theory provided a necessary foundation to understanding the developing and changing nature of structures and thus, institutionalized practices, such as leadership within the Western Protestant Church. Acknowledging that leadership, as currently practiced, represents the accumulated interaction between structures and agents across history, affirms the need to examine this history thoroughly. Likewise, the theory of Events as Transformation provides a specific means for doing so, by examining particular events that have shaped leadership in the

history of the Christian Church. As such, Sewell's (2005) theory informed the following questions which guided my review of the literature:

1) What are key events in Christian Church history that have shaped the practice of leadership in the Christian Church?

2) What was the context surrounding the key event that shaped the practice of leadership in the Christian Church?

3) What was the resulting leadership practice?

Western Protestant Church Leadership Review Findings

My literature review revealed six events that triggered significant transformation in the practice of leadership in the history of the Christian church. Before presenting the findings, a few comments on the results of my research are helpful. Several scholars have offered insight on leadership shifts in the Christian church throughout history (Guenther & Heidebrecht, 1999; Thorne, 1993; Viola & Barna, 2008) although none have done a thorough treatment of the topic from the angle suggested by this review. However, I did find many articles that addressed leadership history particular to a denomination of Christianity (Dueck, 1990; Frank, 2003; O'Malley, 1983).

Each of the events identified below has been determined to meet Sewell's (2005) criteria for an event: "(1) a ramified sequence of occurrences that (2) is recognizable as notable by contemporaries, and that (3) results in a durable transformation of structures" (p.228). A historical timeline is provided in Figure 6 and then discussion of each event follows including a description of the event and the context leading up to or surrounding the event, the resulting leadership changes, and the level of change based on O'Malleys (1983) categorization.

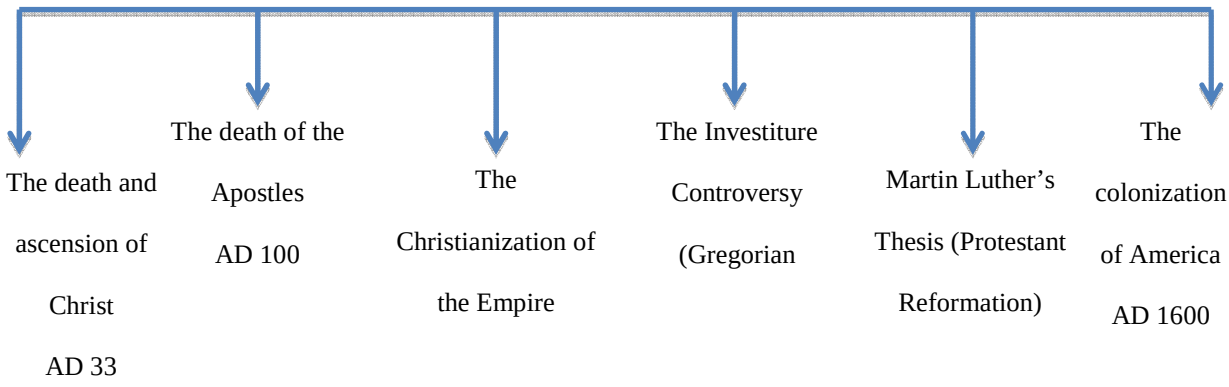

Figure 6. *Events that served as transformative in the practice of leadership in the history of the Christian church.*

The death and ascension of Christ AD 33. In order to fully understand the developments and changes in leadership in the Christian Church we must first establish the leadership setting in which the early Christian churches began. While there is not an event, per say, that changed leadership, I am identifying the death and ascension of Christ as the starting point for the development of the early Christian churches. The physical absence of Christ ushered in a need for new leadership under the apostles and initiated the development of house churches.

Biblical scholars and church leaders are able to gather information on the activities of the early Church from Paul's writings in the New Testament. While there is plenty of debate and disagreement about the correct interpretation of Paul's writing, literature surrounding leadership in the early Christian churches points to three means by which leadership occurred. Overall, the early Christian Church did not appear to have a fixed or ideal form of church government or structure (Noll, 1997; Siggelkow, 2004) however, scholars identify leadership taking place charismatically, through the apostles, and through the owner of the house in which the church gatherings took place (Guenther & Heidebrecht, 1999; Sumney, 2002; van Zyl, 1998; Zhekov, 2005).

Paul's writings to the early churches stress "the participation of all by the diversity of

their functions as gifts and ministries in conducting the liturgy and sacramental rites" (Zhekov, 2005, p. 22). Ecclesiastical leadership was not present, rather leadership occurred charismatically (van Zyl, 1998) on the basis of a bestowed spiritual gift. Leadership was not an office to which one was elected or humanly appointed (Johnston, 2006). Responsibility was in the hands of several people and was a relationship of function (Birkey, 2001). Thus, different individuals might lead throughout the church's gathering based on their gifts. Elders were present but with no hierarchical structure, rather the language of the New Testament depicts horizontal relationships (1 Corinthians 11:1, 2, 2 Thessalonians 3:9, 1 Timothy 4:12, 1 Peter 5:3) (Viola & Barna, 2008). In addition, the terms elders, overseers and shepherds were used interchangeably in the New Testament indicating that there was not a clear hierarchy of leadership but rather a set of functions that church members carried out (Guenther & Heidebrecht, 1999).

Leadership, in terms of authority, was provided to the churches through the apostles themselves (Guenther & Heidebrecht, 1999). Likewise, governmental structure and administration arose as it was needed. The 6th chapter of Acts recounts that appointment of seven men to relieve the apostles in taking care of the needs of the Hellenist widows (Boer, 1986; Weir, 1993), the first sign of administration being established in the local church (Johnston, 2006).

Scholars have noted that some leadership probably fell to those who owned the house where the church gathered (Guenther & Heidebrecht, 1999; Sumney, 2002). This structure would have been in line with the Greco-Roman society in which the early church existed and there is evidence that the churches did begin to model their organization and structure accordingly (Zhekov, 2005).

In regards to O'Malley's (1983) categorization of the levels of change in church history, I

would identify this event and ensuing leadership structures as a development because it was not initiated by anyone within the early Christian churches but was rather a response to the death and ascension of Christ. The early Christian churches developed and adapted as necessary to establish themselves as a group of believers without the physical presence of their Messiah.

The death of the apostles AD 100. Up until the 2nd century, the early Christian Church functioned predominantly without official leadership (Banks, 1994). However, an event, or rather a series of events, nudged the early Christian churches towards developing more established leadership structures. The deaths of the itinerant apostolic workers left a vacuum of leadership and created the opportunity for heresy or false teachers to influence the local churches. In addition, as the Christian community grew, a need for resident leadership began to emerge and the churches looked to the surrounding culture as a model for the development of an established hierarchy (Horrell, 1997; Rorem, 1990; Viola & Barna, 2008). Just decades after the death of the apostles, "a threefold order of ministry emerged in the form of deacon (minister), presbyter (elder), and bishop (overseer) who were elected from local assemblies of believers" (Guenther & Heidebrecht, 1999, p. 156). This new structure instigated what is referred to as the Monoepiscopate or Monarchical Episcopacy (Viola & Barna, 2008).

While many scholars find connections to this leadership structure in the New Testament and some suggest that the three fold ministry is directly rooted in New Testament teachings (Papadopoulos, 1993; Weir, 1993), others acknowledge that it is not clear how the system of one leader (bishop) assisted by elders and deacons came into being (Boer, 1986; Shelley, 2008). However, several writings from the time period seem to establish and/or confirm what was already being practiced (Noll, 1997). Ignatius of Antioch, as early as 112, in his writings, elevated one of the elders in each church above the others and called them a bishop. The bishop

assumed the responsibility for the practices of the church (Noll, 1997; Viola & Barna, 2008; Zhekov, 2005). As a remedy for dispelling false doctrine and establishing church unity, Ignatius advocates this structure as a means to establish unity in the church.

The term bishop had initially been shared by multiple members of the governing body and had reference to financial and administrative functions rather than a position (Hatch, 1918). However, the bishop was now given an established position and authority. Ignatius, in illuminating the centrality of the bishop, explained that the bishop cannot be understood apart from the Church and the Church cannot be understood apart from the bishop (Frank, 2003). Thus, church gatherings were now invalid unless a bishop was present (Frank, 2003).

As mentioned, several reasons supported this leadership development in the early Christian churches. First, the danger of false prophets began to threaten the churches (Johnston, 2006; Rorem, 1990). In the absence of apostolic leaders, many argued that the bishops were the direct successors of the apostles designated to carry on their authority and protect the Church from heresy (Noll, 1997; Siggelkow, 2004; Zhekov, 2005). Second, ancient cultures were hierarchical in their structure and the postapostolic Christians adopted and adapted these structures (Viola & Barna, 2008).

By the turn of the century the new leadership structure had been established. The three offices grew in stature which lead to the distinction between clergy and laity, which in turn contributed to the establishment of the monarchical episcopate of the bishop of Rome (van Zyl, 1998). During the third century, there was a consolidation of authority in the office of the bishop such that he became a regional supervisor rather than overseeing just one church. This consolidation facilitated the rapid growth of Christianity (Rorem, 1990). As cities grew to have multiple congregations, bishops developed larger roles as overseers in a specific geographical

area (Guenther & Heidebrecht, 1999). By the fourth century many of the titles of leadership positions in the Catholic and Orthodox churches of today were in place (Siggelkow, 2004). There was now an established hierarchy: God to bishop to college of presbyters (priests) to deacons to laity (Viola & Barna, 2008).

This change in the practice of leadership in the Christian Church is categorized as a reform. While the early Church was responding to external forces, this change was a purposeful and strategic, instigated by the church fathers/leaders. It was a change within the system of the Christian Church towards an official leadership structure that was hierarchical in nature.

The christianization of the empire (Constantine) AD 313. Christianity entered the 4th century as a movement made up of the persecuted minority. However persecution quickly diminished when Constantine became emperor and declared Christianity to be the established religion of the empire (Shelley, 2008). This sanctioning of Christianity as the state religion ushered in the age of the Christian empire (313-590) and as such significantly impacted the roles of church leaders at the time.

Under Constantine, "clergymen received the same honors as the highest officials of the Roman Empire and even the emperor himself" (Viola & Barna, 2008, p. 120). Bishops of Rome had more power than Roman governors and the clergy received a fixed annual allowance. Clergy were given a special class status in many ways: "the clergy had the prestige of church office bearers, the privileges of a favored class, and the power of a wealthy elite. They had become an isolated class with a separate civil status and way of life" (Viola & Barna, 2008, p. 121). Instead of facing persecution, church leaders now acquired privilege and power. Rorem (1990) explained:

> The emperor's fortunes and tax breaks made the office a full-time and often well paid profession sought by many and sometimes filled by imperial appointment…in certain

> respects, the bishops became civil servants empowered to adjudicate some legal matters…gradually bishops adopted some of the ceremony and the vestments of the Roman governors. (p. 19)

Gradually, the office of the bishop began to perform administrative functions for the state and leadership structures within the church began to mirror those of the state. Thus as the clergy began to gain more power and position the gap between clergy and laity widened and the role of the laity was diminished (Guenther & Heidebrecht, 1999).

Clergymen were now the "trained leaders of the church—the guardians of orthodoxy—the rulers and teachers of the people. They possessed gifts and graces not available to lesser mortals" (Viola & Barna, 2008, p. 122). This differentiation created a dichotomy between the sacred professions and ordinary professions (Beinert, 1988). The church entered a time of professionalism where leadership became the province of the elite and special institutions were created for training its leaders (Thorne, 1993).

Along with heightened levels of power, the role of the clergy was also now accompanied with a certain amount of corruption. Constantine ruled the Christian bishops as he did his civil servants and demanded unconditional obedience to official pronouncements (Shelley, 2008). The use of religion for political purposes was not uncommon.

The explosive growth of the church, which was now the only legal religion, encouraged increasingly hierarchical leadership structures. Most congregations no longer had their own bishop. Instead, the bishop served in the main congregation in a regional capital (Rorem, 1990). By the sixth century the hierarchical order of the church on earth came to be considered the "counterpart of the celestial hierarchy among the angels in heaven" (Guenther & Heidebrecht, 1999, p. 156). Armstrong (1993) summarized: " The church had evolved as an efficient organization that made it almost a microcosm of the empire itself: it was multiracial, catholic,

international, ecumenical, and administered by efficient bureaucrats" (p. 105).

These changes to church leadership were not instigated from within the system but rather occurred as a response (possibly against the desires of many Christians) to Constantine's leadership in the empire. Likewise, as suggested above, the sheer size of the church necessitated changes in the forms of leadership. Thus, this change is categorized as a development.

The investiture controversy (Gregorian Reform) AD 1054. By the 11th century, the role of the clergy had been elevated to such a level that bishops helped to run the government, they served many public roles, they assisted in legislation, and they were well endowed with land. As such, they served as a support to the king or emperor, "they held lands and castles in trust to ensure the well-being of monarch and commonwealth" (Johnson, 1976, p. 193). But, this arrangement also meant that the king or emperor appointed them and thus maintained a certain level of control over them. The foundation of the king or emperor's power was his control over the church (Shelley, 2008). As such, the ruler was, in effect, the head of the church, he was a priest-king and the office of the pope had fallen into decay (Johnson, 1976). The monastic orders had developed as an attempt to reform the church but until the Investiture Controversy and Gregorian Reform took place, the unhealthy marriage between church and state continued (Sterk, 1998).

Those who instigated the Investiture Controversy were opposed to lay investiture, "the practice of kings or other great lords investing bishops and abbots with the symbols of their office" (Cantor, 1993, p. 243). The practice of investiture symbolized for the Gregorians lay control of episcopal nominations (Demerouti, Mostert, & Bakker, 2010) and they complained about the domination of the church by laymen and the involvement of the church in feudal obligations: "this system had led to severe abuses, especially that of simony, which came to be

defined in its most general sense as the interference of the laymen with the right ordering of church offices and sacraments" (Cantor, 1993, p. 244).

The reformers demanded that there be a clearer distinction between the functions of clergy and laity (O'Malley, 1983). They were working towards the "complete freedom of the church from control by the state, the negation of the sacramental character of kingship, and the domination of the papacy over secular rulers" (Cantor, 1993, p. 245). In order for the church to focus its attention on spiritual and ecclesiastical matters they would have to remove themselves from the political realm and demonstrate an independent authority in governing the church (Noll, 1997).

As a result of the reform, the church did gain significant freedom from secular control and some suggest that the office of the clergy was less corrupt (Beinert, 1988; Cantor, 1993). The Church regained the right to elect the holder of an ecclesiastical office, but only in the presence of the emperor (Shelley, 2008). From this point, the Church began to compete successfully with kings and emperors for wealth and power, arguing that the Church was the highest power in society (Cantor, 1993). According to the popes, Christian society was organized under the pope, its visible head, and spiritual power was supreme over the temporal: "the pope was guarded against all possibility of error by the presence of Peter perpetually present in his successors, the bishops of Rome" (Cantor, 1993, p. 245). The church itself became a great superstate that was governed by the papal administration.

The Investiture Controversy and resulting Gregorian Reform, upset the order of the early Middle Ages and readjusted the balance of power between the church and state. It was instigated and led by those who saw the corruption and danger of government holding such power in the church. Thus, the Gregorian Reform is considered a Reformation in O'Malley's (1983)

categorization of changes. In fact, O'Malley (1983) labeled it as such and Cantor (1993) suggested that it was a revolution in that it was the "emergence of a new ideology that rejects the results of several centuries of development organized into the prevailing system and calls for a new right order in the world" (p. 244).

Martin Luther's thesis (Protestant Reformation) AD 1517. By the 15th century the Christian Church embodied a substantial hierarchy and some were beginning to question its focus on the mission of the Church (Dueck, 1990). The event that catapulted the next significant change in leadership in the Christian church was Martin Luther's thesis. His thesis, and the ensuing reformation, called to attention the faults of those in leadership and challenged the church to redirect its attention (Viola & Barna, 2008).

The Reformation questioned the great divide that had grown between the clergy and the laity in the church. The laity were second class members of the church, while the clergy held special powers: "they had presumed to be the essence of the church. The masses, by and large, were blind followers" (Dueck, 1990, p. 20). The Reformers opposed such notions that the priest had special powers and they did away with the office of the bishop, returning the priest back to presbyter. In addition, they aimed to give the congregation more participation through revisions to the liturgy (Viola & Barna, 2008). The Reformers rejected the supreme authority that had been given to the pope: "The Protestant Reformation represented a major revolt against the authority claims of the clerical hierarchy of the Roman Catholic Church. They taught that the clergy were to be ministers of the Word, not 'priests' who mediated the sacraments to a subservient laity" (Guenther & Heidebrecht, 1999, p. 157).

As a result, there was an emphasis on the priesthood of all believers: "what started as an attempt to reform the corrupt and often abusive Catholic clergy set in motion changes in the

authority structures of church and society" (Guenther & Heidebrecht, 1999, p. 157). The Bible was more accessible to the people and the church became more the church of the people. In addition, multiple variations in church organizational structures emerged within Protestantism. Despite these changes, the Reformers did carry the Roman Catholic clergy/laity distinction into the Protestant movement: "they restored the doctrine of the priesthood of all believers soteriologically—i.e., as it related to salvation. But they failed to restore it ecclesiologically—i.e., as it related to the church" (Viola & Barna, 2008, p. 128). While the Reformers were in opposition to the pope and his religious hierarchy, they still maintained a narrow view of ministry. Ministry was an vocation that was confined to those who were called and ordained (Viola & Barna, 2008). Emphasis on the preaching of the Word, training for the ministry, and on the sacraments remained the role of the clergy (Viola & Barna, 2008). There was more of a role for laity but it was still limited by the official leadership (Thorne, 1993).

As the name Protestant Reformation suggests, this event is considered a Reformation in O'Malley's (1983) categorization. It was a purposefully instigated revolt from those who acknowledged the corruption and misguided mission of the church and its clergy at the time. While it was a dramatic readjustment of the church order and ushered in the development of Protestant variations of the Christian church, as suggested above, the character of leadership did not change so dramatically. Thus, while the Protestant church did away with some of the machinery of the Catholic church, they maintained the hierarchy.

The colonization of America AD 1600. Following the Protestant Reformation, the variety of denominational expressions of the Christian Church expanded to such an extant that it would be difficult to describe the various leadership changes in each branch, or even name them

here. However, one additional event significantly impacted leadership in the Christian Church as it pertains specifically to the Western Protestant Church as I am interested in it.

The colonization of America by the first European settlers established new ground, with new opportunities for Christianity to establish itself: "the first American settlers were like the ancient Israelites. They saw themselves as active agents of divine providence…the birth of Protestant America was a deliberate and self-conscious act of church-state perfectionism" (Johnson, 1995, p. 25). There were several characteristics of the new geographical location and the nature of the settlers that impacted the development of Christianity and thus the practice of leadership.

The colonists themselves were independent-minded, unruly, and somewhat divided thus they were not interested in becoming docile citizens of a theocracy:

> the same individualism which resented all absentee control in political and economic life and which prompted the Westerner to seek a personal religion in the immediacy of experience caused him to look with suspicion upon all administration of religion by superior powers ordained of God or men. (Niebuhr, 1975, p. 142)

In addition to the values of religious freedom and separation of church and state, the settlers introduced the practice of religious competition. If at any point, an individual became discontent or disagreed with the practices of his colony or his church, he could easily leave and begin his own community, illustrating the "central geographical fact of American religious history: the country was too big to enable any form of orthodoxy to triumph—its very vastness made heterodoxy possible" (Johnson, 1995, p. 28).

In addition, diversity, religious liberty, and the noninterference of the state in religious matters were encouraged by economic factors. The colonization of America, Niebuhr (1975) explained:

> brought forth a typical culture of its own…it produced its own type of economic life and theory, its own kind of practice and doctrine and created its own typical religious experience and expression. The result was the formation of peculiarly Western denominationalism…truly indigenous outgrowths of the American environment. (pp.136-137)

The American ideal of democracy influenced the shape and structure of churches as well: "not only is democracy important for government, but pressures to democratize permeate most organizational forms in American society" (White, 1972, p. 98).

Thus, the clergy did not hold the same power to impose a theocracy. Their authority was limited to determining church membership and laymen managed the churches. This new structure was the foundation of the distinctive American religious tradition: "there was never any sense of division in law between lay-privileges and those without—no jealous juxtaposition…Christianity now became a voluntary movement or series of movements, rather than a compulsory framework" (Johnson, 1995, p. 29). As a voluntary organization, the Church lost its power to tax and to assume compulsory membership (White, 1972).

In regards to O'Malley's (1983) categorization of changes in Church history, this event is difficult to label. While the move, on the part of the settlers, to establish a new colony with new freedoms was purposeful and as such a reform, several of the changes to the form of the Christian church and the practice of leadership seemed to have been unanticipated by the settlers. For that reason, they seemed to be simply responding to the new geographical and governmental structures of the new colony, making this event a development rather than reform. Thus, it seems relevant to identify both the reform and the developmental changes that took place during the colonization of America.

Summary analysis of key events in Western Protestant Church history. In considering the six above described events and the theoretical frameworks on which the study

stands, several insights arise. Table 6 provides a summary of the events, surrounding context, and level of change.

Table 6. *Summary of the Events that Shaped the Practice of Leadership in Christian Church History*

Event	Resulting Leadership Change	Categorization
Death and Ascension of Christ AD 33	Leadership took place charismatically, through the apostles, and through the owner of the house in which the church gatherings took place (Guenther & Heidebrecht, 1999).	Development
Death of the Apostles AD 100	A threefold order of ministry was established in the form of deacon (minister), presbyter (elder), and bishop (overseer) who were elected from local assemblies of believers (Guenther & Heidebrecht, 1999) instigating what is referred to as the Monoepiscopate or Monarchical Episcopacy (Viola & Barna, 2008).	Reform
Christianization of the Empire AD 313	Clergy were given a special class status in many ways: "the clergy had the prestige of church office bearers, the privileges of a favored class, and the power of a wealthy elite. They had become an isolated class with a separate civil status and way of life" (Viola & Barna, 2008, p. 121), creating a dichotomy between the sacred professions and ordinary professions (Beinert, 1988).	Development
Investiture Controversy (Gregorian Reform) AD 1054	There was clearer distinction between the functions of clergy and laity (O'Malley, 1983). The church gained freedom from control by the state, the negation of the sacramental character of kingship, and the domination of the papacy over secular rulers" (Cantor, 1993, p. 245). The church itself became a great superstate that was governed by the papal administration (Cantor, 1993).	Reformation
Martin Luther's Thesis (Protestant Reformation) AD 1517	The congregation was given more participation through a revised liturgy. The Reformers did away with the office of the bishop, returning the priest back to presbyter (Viola & Barna, 2008). There was an increased emphasis on the priesthood of all believers and more of a role for laity although the role was still limited by the official leadership (Thorne, 1993).	Reformation
Colonization of America AD 1600	The clergy's authority was limited to determining church membership and laymen managed the churches. "Christianity now became a voluntary movement or series of movements, rather than a compulsory framework" (Johnson, 1995, p. 29).	Reform & Development

While likely an obvious recognition, it is interesting to note the overall trajectory of the Christian Church towards hierarchy and the ensuing responses to pull back from this form. As

organizations grow in size, the tendency is often to centralize leadership and increase internal organization (Brafman & Beckstrom, 2006). White (1972) noted that increased membership and the desire for efficiency will force churches toward greater centralization. While the church of the New Testament appears to be void of such substantial hierarchy, there is much debate as to whether the development of hierarchy was a natural and necessary response to the growth of the church or whether it was a rejection of principles of church leadership established in the New Testament that should be maintained.

A second observation surfaces in reflecting on the six events mentioned above. The dynamic nature of the relationship between the church and its surrounding culture warrants further investigation. At several points (the New Testament church, the three-fold episcopal structure, the Christian empire, etc.) we see the Christian church responding to and reflecting the surrounding culture. Some suggest that every leadership model that has been adopted by the church has been motivated by a "practical function within a specific cultural and philosophical framework" (Guenther & Heidebrecht, 1999, p. 163). Leadership within the church seemed to reflect the leadership of the culture at the time whether that be governmental leadership, Jewish synagogue leadership, or household/familial leadership. Likewise, we see the Christian church significantly influencing the surrounding culture (Christianization of the empire, Gregorian Reform). This observation raises some question as to the interaction between organizations and culture and thus appropriate leadership structures in relation to the cultural context.

Finally, the complicated relationship between the Church and state has been an ongoing story in the history of the Christian Church. Competing for power, influence, and wealth has at times muddied the mission of the Church, misguided the efforts of the clergy and laity, and left several scars on the history of Christianity. History quickly reveals the dangers of too much

power and too much freedom given to the leadership of the Church. From the first development of leadership structures in the early Christian Church, leadership roles have come with status, power, and authority that have at times enabled individuals to faithfully guide and improve the Church, but at others times have allowed leaders to abuse and derail the Church. Several of the events described above occurred in reaction to the acknowledgment that the leadership of the Church had become misguided. This observation, may suggest that house churches, which do not have a substantial leadership structure, may be able to avoid these sorts of power struggles.

It is also helpful to reflect on the types of changes that occurred throughout Christian Church history and note that the first major leadership shifts occurred as developments or reforms and later as the Church grew more substantial, developed more hierarchy, and more structure, reformations occurred. One might suggest that as structures become increasingly sedimented and substantial, reformations, often instigated by individuals or groups of individuals, are necessary to dislodge the current order in pursuit of a new order, commensurate with the principles of Structuration Theory. This observation might allow for some reflection on house churches as they represent yet another leadership shift. While house churches seem to reverse the hierarchical trajectory, reverting back to structures similar to that of the first century Christians, analysis might reveal whether this shift is a development, reform, or reformation.

This portion of the review on Christian Church Leadership described six events that triggered significant transformation in the practice of leadership in the history of the Christian Church. Doing so, provides a historical context for my study which is interested in a particular style of leadership within Western Protestant churches, namely house churches in a Midwestern state in the United States. As my review concluded at the colonization of America, discussion regarding current leadership practices will now be necessary to inform my study.

Current forms of church governance. Discussion of current leadership practices can be organized around the different means of governance that are typically utilized in Western Protestant churches. Church governance can be understood on a spectrum from more hierarchical to less hierarchical, the four ensuing forms of church government or polity being, respectively: "Episcopal (Roman Catholics, Anglicans/Episcopalians, Methodists), Presbyterian, Congregational (Baptists, Congregationalists, some Lutherans), and minimalist or nongovernmental (Quakers, Plymouth Brethren) (Akin, 2004, p. 26; Erickson, 1998). Each term is briefly discussed followed by discussion of house churches, the specific situated context of my study.

Episcopal. Within the episcopal system, authority resides in a particular office, that of the bishop (Erickson, 1998). Depending on the denomination the number of levels of bishop varies (Erickson, 1998). There may be local clergy within the church who can perform basic duties but beyond that level, the bishop holds certain special powers such as the ability to ordain (Erickson, 1998). The bishop is seen as key to the functioning of the church and his role is to exercise the power of God that has been vested in him (Erickson, 1998). This system of governance is that which is utilized in the Roman Catholic Church but is also present in simpler forms in organizations such as the Methodist Church (Erickson, 1998).

Presbyterian. For churches that function as a Presbyterian government, authority resides in an office as well, but there is less emphasis on the individual office and officeholder (Erickson, 1998). There is only one level of clergy elected by the body and authority belongs to the electing body:

> Presbyterians believe that Christ is the king and head of his church and that he, as the king of his church, has determined to rule his church through a system of spiritual and connectional assemblies or 'courts' comprised of pluralities of elders/overseers with assistance from deacons at the local church level. (Reymond, 2004, p. 116)

The key officer is the elder who functions on behalf of or in the place of the individual believers and "the authority of Christ is to be understood as dispensed to individual believers and delegated by them to the elders who represent them" (Erickson, 1998, p. 1086).

Congregational. In the congregational form of governance, the role of the individual Christian is stressed (Erickson, 1998). The local congregation is the seat of authority and "no person or organization is above or over it except the Lord Jesus Christ alone as its head" (Akin, 2004, p. 27). Autonomy and democracy are important components of the local church (Erickson, 1998).

The local congregation is independent and self-governing and members can vote, making decisions about membership, leadership, doctrine, worship, conduct, missions, finances, property, relationships, and the like (Garrett, 2004). Although emphasis is upon democratic structure, this structure does not:

> preclude ministers elected in recognition of their divine gifts to serve as leaders, but their authority rests in their relation to the congregation and is generally less extensive in practice than either the Episcopal or Presbyterian ministers, In the ultimate sense, officers have no more ecclesiastical authority than any other member. Each has but one vote on any issue. (Saucy, 1927, p. 114)

The major denominations that practice this form of government are Baptists, Congregationalists, and Lutherans (Erickson, 1998).

Minimalist or Nongovernmental. The final form of governance is practiced by churches who actually do not advocate any particular type of government (Erickson, 1998). Instead, these churches "stress [the] inner working of the Holy Spirit, who exerts his influence upon and guides individual believers in a direct fashion rather than through organizations or institutions" (Erickson, 1998, p. 1093). There may be elders or overseers in local groups who have certain

responsibilities, but meetings are held to make decisions where mutual agreement is sought. The Quakers and the Plymouth Brethren practice this form of governance (Erickson, 1998).

The house church. House Church Resource (2012) claimed that 11 million adult Christians are meeting outside of the institutional church in the United States, indicating that this is a substantial and growing population. These Christians are attending house churches or other similar settings. House churches are not a particular form of governance per say and can function under several of the organizing forms already mentioned. However, the house churches I am interested in examining for this study are those that would most likely fall under the nongovernmental structure as they would probably practice a form of shared leadership where most members would be highly involved in the activities of the church. The Barna Group (2010) defined the house church as a gathering of those who "meet regularly in a home or place other than church building" and "groups that are not part of a typical church, meet independently, are self-governed and consider themselves to be a complete church on their own" (p. 1). Viola (2008) described these churches as those that model themselves after the examples provided in the New Testament in contrast to the highly structured, building centered, churches who are lead by professional clergy (Viola, 2008). The design of the church gathering time is different. Rather than a pastor-led gathering featuring worship from the front and a message prepared by the pastor, all members are welcome to participate by leading in song, sharing an experience or insight, or leading in a prayer (Viola, 2008). They emphasize, based on their interpretation of New Testament scripture, collective involvement, the absence of leadership based on charisma or position, and minimizing hierarchical structures that might limit the growth of the church ("Tidal wave: An exploration of simple church", 2006).

Summary of Western Protestant Church Leadership Review Findings

Part A of my literature review serves to establish the context in which my study will take place. A review of Christian Church history is necessary to enlighten the ways in which leadership has changed over time as a result of particular events. This brief history provides a framework for understanding the tradition that Western Protestant house churches in the United States emerge from. As mentioned, this review aims to offer a deep understanding of the historical underpinnings and significant developments in the enactment of leadership in the Christian Church and serves as a foundation for my inquiry about how a different leadership structure could function in the church setting. The trajectory of leadership within the Christian Church has tended toward increased hierarchy, although the Gregorian Reform, Protestant Reformation, and colonization of America, diminished the hierarchy to some degree in Western Protestant churches. House churches, which utilize shared leadership, seem to move away from traditional hierarchical church leadership models and look similar to the churches of the first century Christians. Likewise, current expressions of polity or leadership were presented to establish the current context. And, finally some discussion was offered on the specific context of my study, house churches in the United States, which tend to utilize a nongovernmental or minimalist governance structure. Figure 7 provides a different means of summarizing this review by offering a visual of the historical and current context of my study location, house churches.

This first part of the review of the informing literature has presented and analyzed Christian Church history, identifying key events that have shaped the enactment of leadership in the Christian Church context over time. The research methods utilized as well as the theoretical

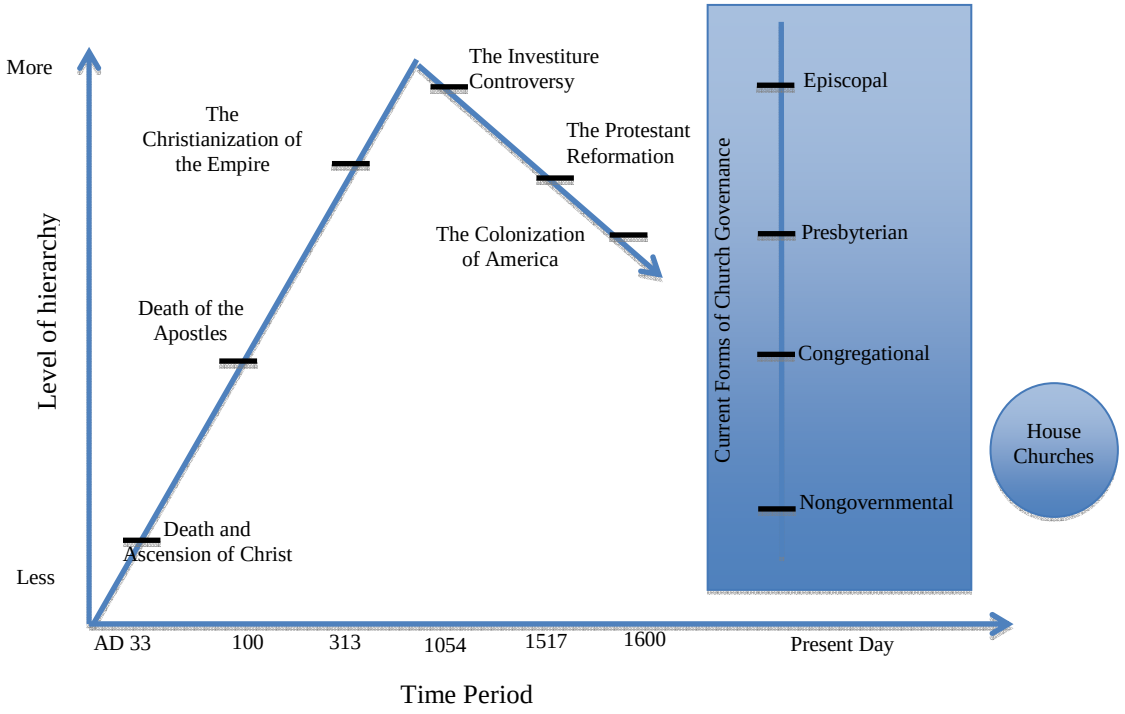

Figure 7. The historical and current context for a study of shared leadership and engagement in Western Protestant house churches in a Midwestern state in the United States.

frameworks that guided this process (structuration theory and events as transformation) were discussed. Finally, current forms of church governance (episcopal, presbyterian, congregational, and nongovernmental) were described and the setting for my particular study, house churches, was briefly detailed. Now, in part B, literature on employee engagement, which informs my particular interest in church member engagement will be reviewed.

Part B: Employee Engagement

As mentioned, waning church member engagement in the Western Protestant Church compels the need for this study. Thus, looking at engagement, as a construct, is one means for exploring the experience of church members who attend churches where shared leadership is

utilized. As such, literature on employee engagement, provides a foundation for understanding church member engagement.

Employee engagement as a field of interest for HRD professionals has emerged in the last 20 years, beginning with Kahn's (1990) ethnographic study of engagement at a summer camp. Since this point, much research has taken place around three main concepts: (1) definitions or constructs of employee engagement, (2) antecedents and outcomes of employee engagement, and (3) the relationship between leadership and employee engagement. The literature in each of these areas is summarized below, however as engagement is a burgeoning area in HRD, several scholars have recently provided summaries of the literature. Thus, there is not significant need to recreate these summaries, so I will refer to their work and comment on extant literature that has not been included. In addition, I examine the first intersection between my study variables, summarizing the literature on member engagement in the Western Protestant Church setting, albeit limited. First, the literature review methodology is described as well as a theoretical framework, which may guide my understanding of the relationship between engagement and leadership.

Employee Engagement Review Methodology

For this literature review, I gathered research on engagement by using the key term "engagement" searching within Academic Search Premier, Alta Religion, ERIC, Philosopher's Index, Proquest, PsycARTICLES, PsycINFO, and Web of Science. Results were screened to retain only those that included organizational settings. Additionally, within the Human Resource Development field, engagement has been surfacing as a key issue in the last 10 years. I used pieces written by Brad Shuck (the most prolific author on the topic currently) to locate other seminal pieces on engagement. All article reference lists were examined to identify other

relevant pieces on engagement. Since my study is particularly interested in the intersection between leadership and engagement, I additionally searched EBSCO and Web of Science for articles that included “engagement” and “leadership” in the title and found two more relevant articles.

Informing Theoretical Framework for Employee Engagement

Shuck and Herd (2011) offered a conceptual convergence of leadership and engagement which specifically discussed the link between transformational leadership and employee engagement. Their model serves as a framework upon which I hope to be able to make some suggestions about the relationship between shared leadership and church member engagement. Figure 8 below is that which was created by Shuck and Herd (2011) and may serve as template for a possible outcome of this study. Their conceptual model acknowledged the relationship between employee needs being met and engagement and suggests that Transformational leadership is one means to meet employee needs and thus foster engagement.

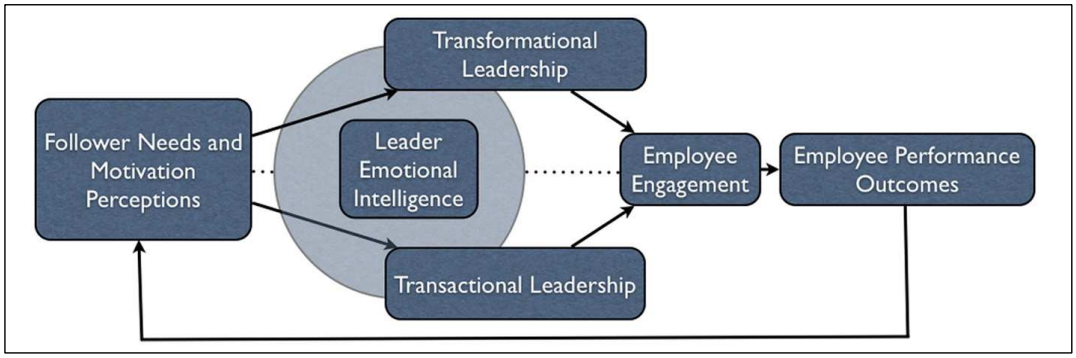

Figure 8. Conceptual model of employee engagement and leadership behaviors. Adapted from Shuck and Herd (2011).

Employee Engagement Review Findings

The review findings on employee engagement include definitions or constructs of employee engagement, outcomes and antecedents of employee engagement, and (3) the relationship between leadership and employee engagement, and finally member engagement in the church setting. Discussion on each of these findings is now provided.

Employee engagement definitions. The earliest published work on engagement and definition comes from Kahn (1990). To understand the development of engagement, he argued that there were three domains: meaningfulness, safety, and availability. Meaningfulness is defined as the positive "sense of return on investments of self in role performance" (Kahn, 1990, p. 705), safety as the ability to show one's self "without fear or negative consequences to self image, status, or career" (Kahn, 1990, p. 705), and availability as the "sense of possessing the physical, emotional, and psychological resources necessary" (Kahn, 1990, p. 705) to complete one's work. Kahn (1990) defined engagement on a personal level as "the simultaneous employment and expression of a person's 'preferred self' in task behaviors that promote connections to work and to others, personal presence, and active role performances" (p. 700).

Shuck and Wollard (2010) argued that since Kahn's work, empirical research, consistent definition, and clear interpretation of engagement have been lacking. They provided a thorough summary of the literature on engagement since Kahn's seminal work, which will not be duplicated here. After reviewing work and research on engagement, they offered this definition: "an individual employee's cognitive, emotional, and behavioral state directed toward desired organizational outcomes" (Shuck & Wollard, 2010, p. 103). A summary, however, of other definitions of engagement in the literature is adapted from their (2010) work and provided below in Table 7.

Table 7. *Definitions of Engagement in the Literature*

Author(s)	Employee Engagement Definitions
Kahn (1990)	"the harnessing of organization members' selves to their work roles by which they employ and express themselves physically, cognitively, and emotionally during role performances" (p. 694).
Maslach, Schaufeli, & Leiter (2001)	"a persistent, positive affective-motivational state of fulfillment in employees that is characterized by high levels of activation and pleasure" (p. 417).
Schaufeli, Salanova, Gonzalez-Roma, & Bakker (2002)	"positive, fulfilling, work-related state of mind characterized by vigor, dedication, and absorption" (p. 74).
Harter, Schmidt, & Hayes (2002)	"the individuals involvement and satisfaction with as well as enthusiasm for work" (p. 269).
Britt (1999)	"feeling responsible for and committed to superior job performance" (p. 700).
May, Gilson, & Harter (2004)	has three components: the physical component—energy used to perform the job, the emotional component—putting one's heart in to one's job, and the cognitive component—being absorbed in a job so much that everything else is forgotten.
Saks (2006)	"A distinct and unique construct that consists of cognitive, emotional, and behavioral components that are associated with individual role performance" (p. 602).
Gebauer (2008)	"a deep and broad connection that employees have with a company that results in a willingness to go above and beyond what's expected of them to help their company succeed" (p. 9).
Czarnowsky (2008)	"employees who are mentally and emotionally invested in their work and in contributing to their employer's success" (p. 6).
Macey & Schneider (2008)	"a broad construct consisting of state, trait, and behavioral forms that connote a blend of affective energy and discretionary effort directed to one's work and organization" (p. 6).
Zhang & Bartol (2010)	"creative process engagement is defined as employee involvement in creativity-relevant methods or processes, including (1) problem identification, (2) information searching and encoding, and (3) idea and alternative generation" (p. 108).
Shuck & Wollard (2010)	"an individual employee's cognitive, emotional, and behavioral state directed toward desired organizational outcomes" (p. 103).

Definitions of engagement found in the literature seem to highlight the three types of engagement that were introduced by Kahn (1990): physical, cognitive, and emotional and

address the inputs from employees as well as the presumed results or outcomes. Engaged employees are ones who are deeply connected with their work, are invested, committed, and contributing to the success of the organization (Britt, 1999; Czarnowsky, 2008; Gebauer & Lowman, 2008; Macey & Schneider, 2008; Schaufeli et al., 2002; Shuck & Wollard, 2010). Engaged employees are also ones who find their work fulfilling, are satisfied, and enthusiastic (Harter et al., 2002; Maslach et al., 2001; Schaufeli et al., 2002) While each of these definitions provides a unique understanding of this construct, for the purposes of this study, Shuck and Wollard's (2010) definition is adopted. However, the various definitions offered may provide a means for continued conceptualization of church member engagement and how this construct differs or is similar to employee engagement. The particular nuances of church member engagement, will be teased out later.

Outcomes of employee engagement. In addition to understanding how engagement is defined, scholars have also been interested in what elements within an organization and individual characteristics seem to contribute to engagement and what seem to be the outcomes when engagement is present. While the outcomes associated with employee engagement are not the focus of this study, a brief summary of the outcomes found to be associated with employee engagement emphasizes its importance as a desired organizational outcome. Research seems to suggest that an engaged workforce is desirable as engagement has been found to be positively related to increased performance (higher revenues, competitive edge) (Harter et al., 2002; Kim, Kolb, & Kim, 2012; Rich, Lepine, & Crawford, 2010; Xanthopoulou, Bakker, Demerouti, & Schaufeli, 2009), increased customer-focus (Chalofsky & Krishna, 2009; Salanova, Agut, & Peiró, 2005), increased production (Saks, 2006), increased communication skills (Shuck & Wollard, 2010), enhanced task performance, organizational citizenship behaviors, discretionary

effort, affective commitment, continuance commitment, and levels of psychological climate (Christian, Garza, & Slaughter, 2011; Fleming & Asplund, 2007; Rich et al., 2010; Richman, 2006) and a less likely occurrence of turnover (Harter et al., 2002; Maslach et al., 2001; Shuck, Reio, & Rocco, 2011). In addition to this substantial list of claimed outcomes for engagement, several antecedents have been suggested.

Antecedents of employee engagement. Antecedents are defined as "constructs, strategies, or conditions that precede the development of employee engagement and that come before an organization or manager reaps the benefits of engagement-related outputs" (Wollard & Shuck, 2011, p. 432). Work has been done in HRD to summarize the findings (both empirical and non-empirical) in this area. Wollard and Shuck (2011) completed a review of the literature and categorized findings on antecedents based on those that were individual antecedents and those that were organizational antecedents. Figure 9 summarizes their work.

Individual Antecedents to Employee Engagement	Organizational Antecedents to Employee Engagement
Absorption[a]	Authentic corporate culture[a]
Available to engage	Clear expectations[a]
Coping style	Corporate social responsibility[a]
Curiosity	Encouragement
Dedication[a]	Feedback
Emotional fit	Hygiene factors
Employee motivation	Job characteristics[a]
Employee/work/family status	Job control
Feelings of choice & control	Job fit[a]
Higher levels of corporate citizenship[a]	Leadership
Involvement in meaningful work[a]	Level of task challenge[a]
Link individual and organizational goals[a]	Manager expectations[a]
Optimism	Manager self-efficacy[a]
Perceived organizational support[a]	Mission and vision
Self-esteem, self efficacy	Opportunities for learning
Vigor[a]	Perception of workplace safety[a]
Willingness to direct personal energies	Positive workplace climate[a]
Work/life balance[a]	Rewards[a]
Core self evaluation[a]	Supportive organizational culture[a]
Value Congruence[a]	Talent management
Perceived Organizational Support[a]	Use of strengths[a]

Figure 9. *Individual-level and organizational-level antecedents of employee engagement.*
a. denotes antecedent with empirical evidence (Wollard & Shuck, 2011).

It should be noted that leadership is listed as one of the organizational antecedents to employee engagement and Macy and Schneider (2008) identified leadership as one of the predictors of engagement. In addition, one might also suggest that many of the organizational antecedents included in the previous figure might be products of or dependent on a particular style of leadership. Although Wollard and Shuck (2011) note leadership as an antecedent without empirical evidence several studies, which are reviewed below, examine the relationship between a particular leadership style and engagement.

Employee engagement and leadership. Shuck (2009) posited that the decision to engage is an internal one based on external factors outside an employee's control but within the leader's sphere of influence. The individual employee must make a decision to engage; however, the leader's behaviors can produce a culture or environment where employees are more likely to engage (Mester et al., 2003). Research has been completed regarding the relationship between employee engagement and charismatic leadership, transformational leadership, empowering leadership, optimistic leadership, and leader-member exchange (LMX).

The research examining the relationship between leadership and employee engagement was predominantly quantitative as such I conducted a thorough review of the quantitative rigor of the research and included extensive details to this nature in Appendix A, including research question, sampling, internal validity, external validity, findings, and measurement reliability and validity. However, an overview of the findings is summarized here in Table 8.

As evidenced by the table, initial quantitative research has found a positive relationship between certain types of leadership and employee engagement. Charismatic leadership can affect the meaningfulness of employees' work as measured by work engagement and is significantly positively related to work engagement (Babcock-Roberson & Strickland, 2010). Followers of

Table 8. *Quantitative Research on the Relationship between Leadership and Employee Engagement*

Authors	Research Question/Hypotheses	Findings
Arakawa, D. & Greenberg, M., 2007	Are teams more engaged and productive when led by an optimistic manager?	Positive leadership is significantly positively correlated with employee engagement (r=.63, .64, p<.01)
Babcock-Roberson, M. E. & Strickland, O. J., 2010	Hypothesis: Charismatic leadership will be positively related to employee's work engagement	Charismatic leadership is significantly positively related to work engagement (r=.40, p<.01), the regression for charismatic leadership and work engagement was significant (B=.40, p,.01, R^2=.16).Work engagement was positively related to OCB (B=.41, p,.01, R^2= .16). The regression analysis for charismatic The relationship between leadership and OCB was significant (B=.26, ,p<.05, R^2=.07). Results also indicate a full mediation of leadership's effects on OCB via work engagement.
Bezuijen, X. M., et al., 2010	How are leader-member exchange (LMX), goal setting, and feedback related to employee engagement in learning activities?	There were significant, positive relationships between LMX and both employee and leader ratings of engagement in learning activities when gender, age, and education were controlled. Goal difficulty was positively related to engagement in learning activities (employees z=5.52 (p<.001), leaders z=4.63 (p<.001)) Goal specificity was significantly and positively related to employee engagement (employees z=8.78 (p<.001), leaders z=2.26 (p<.001))
Ghafoor, A., et al., 2011	H1a: Employee engagement is positively related to employee performance. H1b: Transformational leadership is positively related to employee performance. H2a: Psychological Ownership mediates the relationship between transformational leadership and employee performance. H2b: Psychological ownership mediates the relationship between employee engagement and employee performance.	Employee performance is significantly, positively related to independent variables, employee engagement (mean = 5.10, p < 0.01) and transformational leadership (mean = 5.40, p < 0.01). Employee performance is also significantly, positively related to mediating variable, psychological ownership (mean = 5.09, p < 0.01). Employee engagement and psychological ownership (mean = 5.09, p < 0.01) are also positively, significantly related. Transformational leadership and psychological ownership is also positively, significantly related to psychological ownership (mean = 5.09, p < 0.01).
Salanova, M., et al., 2011	Hypothesis: The relationship between transformational leadership and nurses' extra-role performance is mediated by self-efficacy and work engagement.	The influence of transformational leadership and self-efficacy on extra-role performance was fully mediated by work engagement. The model explained 12% of the variance of self-efficacy, 19% of work engagement and 2% of extra-role performance.
Zhang, X., & Bartol, K. M., 2010	Hypothesis 1. Empowering leadership is positively related to employee psychological empowerment. Hypothesis 4. Psychological empowerment is positively related to creative process engagement.	Empowerment is positively related to creative process engagement (B= .19, p < .05). Results also supported the hypothesis that intrinsic motivation is positively related to creative process engagement (B= .71, p < .05). Finally, results support the contention that creative process engagement is positively related to employee creativity (B=.55, p < .05).

transformational leaders reported more engagement in their work (Bono & Judge, 2003; Ghafoor et al., 2011). In addition, the influence of transformational leadership and self-efficacy on extra-role performance was fully mediated by work engagement (Salanova et al., 2011). Empowering leadership was found to positively affect psychological empowerment, which in turn influences both intrinsic motivation and creative process engagement (Zhang & Bartol, 2010). There were significant, positive relationships between LMX and both employee and leader ratings of engagement in learning activities (Bezuijen et al., 2010). And, positive leadership was significantly positively correlated with employee engagement (Arakawa & Greenberg, 2007). Although research has not been conducted specifically on the relationship between shared leadership and employee engagement, these findings on other forms of leadership and employee engagement hint at the potential for a positive relationship.

Member engagement in the church setting. As mentioned, church member engagement is slightly different than employee engagement. However, understanding the construct of employee engagement has enlightened my understanding about engagement in general. Many of the organizational outcomes (increased performance and communication, reduced turnover) identified as related with engaged employees, might also be desirable in church settings. Likewise, discussion of the antecedents of employee engagement, reveals that a significant relationship might exist between the type of leadership employed and the engagement of employees, and thus supports exploration of whether this relationship might also exist between leadership and church member engagement. Now, some discussion regarding church member engagement in terms of its definition, its growing importance, and its relevance to house churches specifically is necessary.

For the purposes of this study church member engagement is defined as the active participation of individuals in the activities of the church (including volunteer service, decision-making, vision creation, and caring for others within the group). However, a few other definitions exist in the literature.

Winseman (2007) explained that engaged members are "those who feel a strong heart connection to their church… they tend to be more spiritually committed than those who are not engaged…They worship more frequently, invite others to worship, events or activities, serve more in their own unique and creative ways, and give selflessly of time and resources" (p. 67). Engagement is identified as a necessary and important outcome of healthy churches (Winseman, 2007).

Churches have begun to recognize waning engagement and the ensuing need to direct efforts toward improving church member engagement. Gallup Consulting (2008) has developed a means for churches to measure the engagement of church members. They explained:

> Engaged faith community members are nearly three times as likely to be extremely satisfied with their lives, are more than ten times as likely to invite friends to their faith community events, volunteer more than two hours per week in their communities, [and] give up to three times more money to their faith communities. (p. 1)

Other churches have also made substantial efforts to measure the engagement of their attendees and members (Willow Creek Community Church Reveal Study) and to improve the ways in which they integrate individuals into volunteer roles (gifts tests, placement systems such as those at Saddleback Church and St. Andrew United Methodist Church) (Hawkins & Parkinson, 2007; Mallory, 2001; Rees, 2006). As such, it is apparent that church member engagement is being recognized as a significant and important construct for churches to consider.

As discussed in chapter one, research has shown that church member engagement (in the forms of attendance and participation) in Western Protestant churches (includes churches that do

not adhere to Roman Catholicism and Eastern Orthodoxy) is declining (Association of Religious Data Archives, 2008; Barna, 2005; The Barna Group, 2009; Winseman, 2007). According to the Association of Religion Data Archives (2008), those who attend church weekly have decreased from 28.5% of the US population to 19.3% and those who never attend church have increased from 9.3% to 20.7% (between the years of 1972 and 2008). The Barna Group (2009) reported that the number of mainline Protestant churches has declined since 1950 from 80,000 to about 72,000. Additionally, they reported that volunteerism is down by 21% and adult Sunday school involvement has also declined by 17% since 1998. Winseman (2007) reported that only 29% of individuals attending Protestant and Catholic churches are engaged, while 54% are not engaged and 17% are actively disengaged. Evidence of waning engagement on the part of members is prevalent in the research and in church leadership literature (Rutz, 2006; The Barna Group, 2009; Winseman, 2007).

In regards to house churches specifically, while no research has examined engagement specifically, some work has been done to examine the satisfaction of those who attend. The Barna Group (2007) found the following:

> Two-thirds of house church attenders (68%) were 'completely satisfied with the leadership of their church, compared to only half of those attending a conventional church (49%). Two-thirds of the house church adherents (66%) were 'completely satisfied' with the faith commitment of the people involved in their gathering. In contrast, only four out of ten people attending a conventional church (40%) were similarly satisfied...Three out of five house church adults (61%) were 'completely satisfied' with the level of community and personal connectedness they experience, compared to only two out of five adults…in a conventional church (41%). A majority of those in a house (59%) said they were 'completely satisfied' with the spiritual depth they experience in their house church setting. In contrast, a minority of the adults involved in a conventional church were 'completely satisfied' (46%). (p. 1)

While this research does not examine engagement specifically, it does speak positively to the experience of those who attend house churches and compels further research regarding their engagement.

Summary of Employee Engagement Review Findings

As mentioned, waning church member engagement in the Western Protestant Church compels the need for this study. Thus, looking at engagement, as a construct, is one means for exploring the experience of church members who attend churches where shared leadership is utilized. As such, review of the literature on employee engagement, provides a foundation for understanding church member engagement. Employee engagement as a construct has become a burgeoning field of interest in the HRD realm, and research is beginning to validate that leadership might be an antecedent to the presence of engagement. Likewise, a growing interest in responding to waning church member engagement has created the opportunity for increased exploration of how churches might improve engagement. Shuck and Herd's (2011) conceptualization of the relationship between leadership behaviors and employee engagement provides one framework upon which this study might begin to develop local theory about the relationship between shared leadership and church member engagement.

This review of the literature on employee engagement has provided discussion surrounding the definitions of engagement, the antecedents and outcomes of engagement, and the relationship between leadership and engagement. In addition, the literature on member engagement in the Western Protestant Church setting was summarized. Now, literature surrounding shared leadership will be reviewed.

Part C: Shared Leadership

Shared leadership, as a theory, is still in its infancy (Conger & Pearce, 2003). However, despite its newness, a growing number of scholars have been seeking to expand the field through theoretical contributions and empirical research. Some argue that the values and theoretical underpinnings of shared leadership have been bubbling up for many years, but due to skepticism or a lack of terminology they have not been identified as such (O'Toole et al., 2003). The term "shared leadership" began emerging in the 1990s but predominantly in the practitioner literature. Research began emerging around 2000 (Seers, Keller, & Wilkerson, 2003). Despite expansion in the field, shared leadership is often ignored in the research literature (O'Toole et al., 2003). A review of emerging practices in leadership development by Ardichvili and Manderscheid (2008) intentionally omits shared leadership as one of the theories foundational to leadership development, citing a "lack of scholarly reports on evaluation of these frameworks" (p. 621).

However, increased empirical research and use of shared leadership theory, warrant acknowledgement. Additionally, theory and research around shared leadership provides a framework for exploring the type of leadership, which tends to be utilized within house churches. The following review illuminates the presence and bearing of shared leadership as a burgeoning theory and areas for future expansion. This review is accomplished through discussion of the review methodology first, then the informing theoretical framework, and the review findings which include: a brief history of the emergence of shared leadership and the driving forces that impelled its arrival, a synthesis of definitions and parallel leadership concepts, characteristics and examples of shared leadership, shared leadership in relation to engagement, and shared leadership in the church setting.

Shared Leadership Review Methodology

For this literature review a keyword search of scholarly, refereed journal articles including *"Shared Leadership"* was made, then *"Shared Leadership OR Team Leadership OR Distributed Leadership AND Church OR Religion Or Non-profit"* in all fields. This search was conducted in Business Source Premier, Academic Search Premier, PsychArticles, PsychInfo, Proquest, Social Sciences Direct, and Google Scholar. In addition, the references from articles retrieved were examined for additional relevant literature.

Informing Theoretical Framework for Shared Leadership

Pearce and Sims (2000) offered a conceptual framework for shared leadership emphasizing the antecedents and group outcomes of shared leadership. Figure 10 below outlines their conceptualization which highlights the factors likely to impact shared leadership and the factors that shared leadership is likely to impact. Shared leadership is conceptualized as the mediating causal variable between three broad categories of antecedent characteristics and three broad categories of outcome variables. This conceptualization may be informed by this research which could speak more specifically to the outcomes of shared leadership, assuming that engagement would likely be a group behavior outcome.

Shared Leadership Review Findings

The findings from this review include the definitions of shared leadership and parallel concepts, discussion surrounding the emergence of shared leadership (including history and driving forces), and characteristics and examples of shared leadership (including values, attitudes, skills, and behaviors). Finally, the intersections between my study variables are

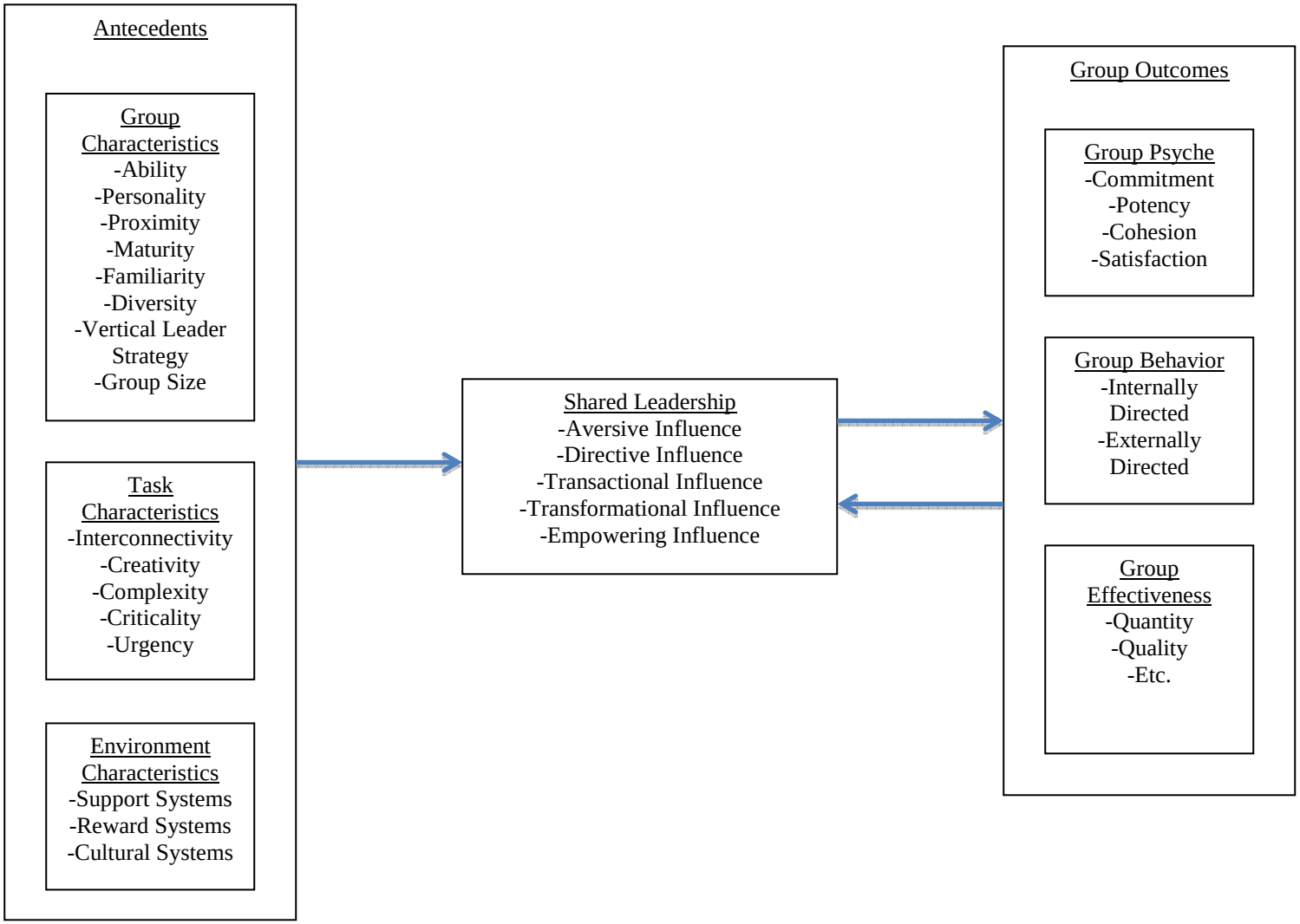

Figure 10. Conceptual framework for shared leadership (Pearce & Sims, 2000).

explored through discussion of shared leadership and engagement and shared leadership in church settings.

Shared leadership definitions. There is little debate, at this time, regarding the definition of "shared leadership." Since it is relatively new as a theory, most definitions center around similar concepts. These concepts include such notions as group influence, which originates from all directions and all group members participating in leadership at different points in time based on the task. Pearce and Sims (2000) formalized a theory of shared leadership and, although the degree to which shared leadership is extended in organizations varies, subsequent theory and research in organizational realms seems to coincide. However, there is some literature on the concept of shared leadership in other realms, such as education and small group communication, which offer various nuances to the term (Chrispeels, 2004b; Faris & Outcalt, 2001; Lumdsen & Lumdsen, 1997; Rogers, 1996).

Likewise, there is a multiplicity of terms, predominantly in the practitioner literature, that parallel the notion of shared leadership. Although the sentiment is the same, this style of leadership has taken on several different terms each of which emphasize different faucets (Gill, 2006). A few of the predominant terms are participative leadership, institutionalized leadership, distributed leadership, non-hierarchical leadership, and team leadership (Faris & Outcalt, 2001; Gill, 2006; Northouse, 2004; O'Toole et al., 2003; Yukl, 2002).

The following discussion elaborates on the definition and extension of shared leadership in various settings and overviews parallel terms in the literature, which coincide with shared leadership. Finally, table 9 is provided summarizing the various terms, definitions, and contributing authors.

Pearce and Conger (2003) edited a compilation of works on shared leadership. In their introductory chapter they defined shared leadership as:

> a dynamic, interactive influence process among individuals in groups for which the objective is to lead one another to the achievement of group or organizational goals or both. This influence process involves peer, or lateral, influence and at other times involves upward or downward hierarchical influence. The distinction between shared leadership and traditional models of leadership is that the influence process involves more than just downward influence on subordinates by an appointed or elected leader. Rather, leadership is broadly distributed among a set of individuals instead of centralized in the hands of a single individual who acts in the role of a superior. (p. 1)

Other works on shared leadership tend to draw on this definition with little disagreement (Faris & Outcalt, 2001; Gill, 2006; Northouse, 2004; O'Toole et al., 2003; Yukl, 2002).

However, there seems to be varying degrees of the extension and encompassment of shared leadership. Some authors seem to argue for a complete removal of hierarchy, where all individuals equally participate and take various leadership roles based on the situation (Bligh, Pearce, & Kohles, 2006; Hooker & Csikszentmihalyi, 2003; Pearce, Manz, & Sims, 2008; Shamir & Lapidot, 2003; Steinheider & Wuestewald, 2008). While others, suggest that shared leadership should take place within teams throughout the organization including top executive teams, maintaining the overall hierarchy (Fletcher & Kaufer, 2003; Hamel, 2007; McMahon, 2001). Finally, some contend that there must be a sole leader at the top of the organization who employs shared leadership principles only with certain tasks and only under certain conditions (O'Toole et al., 2003). These various conceptions of the degree to which shared leadership should be practiced do alter the definition slightly but the basic principles remain the same.

Outside of organizational development literature, the most significant presence of shared leadership is found in the educational realm. Literature here emphasizes shared decision-making, collaboration, and collective action (Chrispeels, 2004; Faris & Outcalt,

2001; Rogers, 1996). While the concept varies little from that in organizational literature, the notion often refers to the dynamics between teachers and principles or that between teachers/administration and students.

Within group communication, shared leadership is "the ability and right of each individual to think and to make choices…In a team situation, mutual respect and influence among members transform individual responses into team choices and actions" (Lumdsen & Lumdsen, 1997, p. 31). Group communication acknowledges the impossibility of one leader managing everything and places value on interdependence among group members in accomplishing goals (Gouran, 1982; Lumdsen & Lumdsen, 1997).

In addition to the various nuances of the term "shared leadership," there are numerous parallel concepts that are termed differently. While each notion of leadership described emphasizes different aspects, each one provides a deviant path from traditional models of top-down or hierarchical leadership and in doing so complements the focus of shared leadership. Specific definitions of the described terms are included in Table 9.

As is apparent by the provided table, various terms and definitions provide different ways of conceptualizing a shared-type of leadership. Extended discussion is provided on some of the more frequently used parallel concepts: these include participative leadership, non-hierarchical leadership, institutionalized leadership, distributed leadership, self-leadership, and team leadership, which are detailed below.

Participative leadership involves delegation, empowering, and the use of various decision procedures that allow other people some influence over the leader's decisions. This style is also known as consultation, joint decision-making, power sharing, decentralization, and democratic management. The benefits of participation are cited to be high decision

Table 9. *Shared Leadership and Parallel Concept Definitions*

Parallel Concept	Definition	Authors
Distributed leadership	"group activity that works through and within relationships, rather than individual action. It emerges from a variety of sources depending on the issue and who has the relevant expertise or creativity" (p. 3).	Bennett, Wise, Woods & Harvey (2003)
Institutionalized leadership	Characterized by empowerment, such that participants feel like owners rather than hired help.	Gill (2006)
Lattice leadership	"A lattice implies multiple nodes on the same level; a dense network of interpersonal connections where information can flow in all directions, unfiltered by an intermediary. In a lattice, you serve your peers, rather than a boss, and you don't have to work 'through channels' to collaborate with your colleagues" (p. 87).	Hamel (2007)
Leadership development	"one conceptualization of leadership is that it emerges as people rely on their mutual commitments, trust, and respect to create new meaning that replaces what has been traditionally provided by formal structure, planning, and control" (p. 606).	Day (2001)
Non-hierarchical leadership	" a collective effort of persons who care about an issue, a situation, who feel passionate about it, and who work together toward change, change that benefits everyone, change for the common good" (p. 3).	McMahon (2001)
Non-hierarchical leadership	"Leadership is now understood by many to imply collective action, orchestrated in such a way as to bring about significant change while raising the competencies and motivation of all those involved—that is, action where more than one individual influences the process" (p. 281).	Bornstein & Smith (Locke, 2003)
Participative leadership	Involves delegation, empowering, and the use of various decision procedures that allow other people some influence over the leader's decisions.	Yukl (2002)
Self-leadership	Individuals who have knowledge about organizational needs, appropriate skills, and motivation can often function well without direct supervision and control	Pearce & Conger (2003)
Shared leadership (communication in groups and teams)	"verbal and nonverbal communication that facilitates a team's transactional and task processes in achieving members' and team's needs and goals…thus each person on the team has the responsibility to share leadership, to affect actively the thinking of others and to have an impact on the team's processes and outcomes" (p. 31).	Lumdsen & Lumdsen (1997)
Shared leadership	"shared leadership is a collaborative, emergent process of group interaction in which members engage in peer leadership while working together" (p. 53).	Cox, Pearce, & Perry (2003)
Shared leadership	"A set of practices that can and should be enacted by people at all levels rather than a set of personal characteristics and attributes located in people at the top" (p. 22).	Fletcher & Kaufer (2003)

Table 9. *Continued*

Parallel Concept	Definition	Authors
Shared leadership	" a dynamic, interactive influence process among individuals in groups for which the objective is to lead one another to the achievement of group or organizational goals or both. This influence process involves peer, or lateral, influence and at other times involves upward or downward hierarchical influence. The distinction between shared leadership and traditional models of leadership is that the influence process involves more than just downward influence on subordinates by an appointed or elected leader. Rather, leadership is broadly distributed among a set of individuals instead of centralized in the hands of a single individual who acts in the role of a superior" (p. 1).	Pearce & Conger (2003)
Shared leadership (education context)	"principals, teachers, support staff, and in some cases community members and students who come together in leadership teams, governing bodies, or committees to jointly make decisions required to manage the school and improve the learning environment. This opportunity to share decision making, closely aligned with the idea of democratic leadership, is usually supported through board policies or legislative requirements" (p. 5).	Chrispeels (2004)
Shared leadership	"occurs when all members are fully engaged in the leadership of the team. It includes ongoing and mutual leadership from both official and unofficial leaders" (p. 6).	Pearce & Manz (2004)
Shared leadership	"The process of leadership cannot be described simply in terms of the behavior of an individual: rather, leadership involves collaborative relationships that lead to collective action grounded in the shared values of people who work together to effect positive change" (p. 29).	Gill (2006)
Team leadership	Still involves the presence of one leader, but group collaboration is emphasized.	Northouse (2004)

quality, high decision acceptance, high satisfaction, and more skill development (Yukl, 2002).

Non-hierarchical leadership emphasizes collective action towards the common good (McMahon, 2001). In order for collective action to take place there must be a flattened hierarchy and the acknowledgement that everyone has the mutual responsibility of leadership (Bornstein & Smith, 1996; Faris & Outcalt, 2001; Rost, 1991).

Institutionalized leadership is characterized by empowerment, such that participants feel like owners rather than hired help. This buy-in fosters the drive to take initiative, accept accountability, and contribute to the organization's systems. Individuals are much more likely to abide by and honor company practices because they have been involved in their creation (Gill, 2006; O'Toole, et al., 2003).

Distributed leadership is very similar and is characterized by two elements: interdependence and coordination. There is an overlapping and complementarity of leadership responsibilities (Gill, 2006). It is defined as a group activity that emerges out of relationship, and is dependent on who has the relevant expertise or creativity for the task at hand (1996).

Self-leadership propagates the idea that individuals who have knowledge about organizational needs, appropriate skills, and motivation can often function well without direct supervision and control (Pearce & Conger, 2003). The leader in this setting encourages individuals to take responsibility rather than giving orders with the hope that they will develop their own self-leadership skills (Manz & Sims, 2001). The leader's role is described as:

> the ability to maximize the contributions of others by helping them to effectively guide their own destinies, rather than the ability to bend the will of others… superleaders marshal the strength of the many, for their strength does no lie solely in their own abilities but in the vast, multiple talents of those who surround them. (Manz & Sims, 2001, p. 4)

Team leadership, which still focuses on one leader directing the team, does however emphasize the necessity of a collaborative climate. This climate emerges when trust develops from the presence of honesty, openness, consistency, and respect. The result is that group

members are more likely to listen to each other, take risks, and compensate for one another when needed (Northouse, 2004).

Emergence of shared leadership. Extant scholarship includes a few summaries of influencing theories and the emergence of shared leadership (Bennett, 2003; Chrispeels, 2004a). However, there is still opportunity for a comprehensive summary, which captures a more holistic view, of shared leadership's emergence and includes previous summaries. Since 'shared leadership' is a fairly new term, it is necessary to examine leadership history for complementary or parallel theories that have influenced its emergence or places where it has emerged under a different guise. This summary is augmented by discussion regarding the driving forces (cultural, social, organizational) that have created the context for shared leadership's emergence.

This portion of the review provides a comprehensive summary of shared leadership's history with influencing theories and a corresponding table, and finally, discussion regarding four driving forces, which have ushered in shared leadership.

Shared leadership history. Pearce and Conger (Faris & Outcalt, 2001; Pearce & Conger, 2003) provide the most thorough summary of the emergence of shared leadership. For the purpose of this review, their summary has been adapted with several additions based on existing literature on shared leadership and on related leadership concepts. Table 10 summarizes the historical bases of shared leadership by highlighting influencing theory and research, the key issues, and representative authors.

While shared leadership is a fairly new construct, this table demonstrates the ways in which related concepts have been surfacing since as early as 1924. While lengthy discussion

Table 10. *Historical Basis of Shared Leadership*

Theory/Research	Key Issues	Representative Authors
Law of the Situation	Follow the lead of the person with the most knowledge about the situation at hand.	Follett (2003)
Human relations and social systems perspective	One should pay attention to the social and psychological needs of employees.	Turner (1924) Mayo (1933, June) Barnard (1960)
Role differentiation in groups	Members of groups typically assume different types of roles.	Benne & Sheats (1968)
T-Groups	Learning can happen in groups when there is a trusting, empathetic environment.	Lippit (1948)
Co-leadership	Concerns the division of the leadership role between two people—primarily research examines mentor and protégé relationships.	Solomon, Loeffer, & Frank (1949) Heenan & Bennis (1953)
Social exchange theory	People exchange punishments and rewards in their social interactions.	Festinger (1999) Homans (1954)
Management by objectives and participative goal setting	Subordinates and superiors jointly set performance expectations.	Drucker (1958) Erez & Arad (1954) Locke & Latham (1986)
Theory Y	Motivation, potential for development, and capacity to assume responsibility are all within people.	McGregor (1990)
Emergent leadership	Leaders can “emerge” from a leaderless group.	Hollander (1960)
Mutual leadership	Leadership can come from peers.	Bowers & Seashore (1978)
Expectation states Theory and team member exchange	Team members develop models of status differential between various team members.	Berger, Cohen, & Zelditch (1966) Seers (1972)
Participative decision making	Under certain circumstances, it is advisable to elicit more involvement by subordinates in the decision-making process.	Vroom & Yetton (1989)
Group communication	Effective group communication is the systematic, purposeful exchange by individuals who share in the group’s leadership.	Potter & Anderson (1973)
Vertical dyad linkage/leader member exchange	Examines the process between leaders and followers and the creation of in-groups and out-groups.	Graen (1976)
Servant leadership	The follower is placed before the leader. Listening, understanding, language, imagination, acceptance, and empathy are central tenets.	Greenleaf (1976)
Transformational leadership	Leaders who seek to understand the needs and motives of followers and challenge them at a higher level will have higher performing followers.	Burns (1977)

Table 10. *Continued*

Theory/Research	Key Issues	Representative Authors
Substitutes for leadership	Situation characteristics diminish the need for leadership.	Kerr & Jermier (1978)
Self-leadership	Employees, given certain conditions, are capable of leading themselves.	Manz & Sims (1978)
Team leadership	Many individuals must provide leadership to counteract problems that block a group as it works towards its goal.	Gouran (1980)
Absence of leadership	Individuals lead when they help the group adapt to shifts in demands, group composition, and developmental trends.	Fisher (1982)
Self-managing work teams	Team members can take on roles that were formerly reserved for managers.	Manz & Sims (1986)
Empowerment	Examines power sharing with subordinates.	Conger and Kanungo (2001; 1987)
Leaderless groups	Group leadership behavior does aid the group in achieving their goals rather than an individual leader's behavior.	Barge (1988)
Shared cognition	Examines the extent to which team members hold similar mental models about key internal and external environmental issues.	Klimoski & Mohammed (1989) Cannon-Bowers & Salas (1994) Ensley & Pearce (1993)
Connective leadership	Examines how well leaders are able to make connections to others both inside and outside the team.	Lipman-Blumen (2001)
Social change model of leadership	Non-hierarchical leadership exists in three domains (the individual, group, and societal) and is oriented towards change for the common good.	Higher Education Research Institute (1996)
Post-industrial leadership	Leadership is a relationship, not the property of an individual. Leadership is inclusive and collaborative.	Rost (1996) Rogers (1991) Northouse (2004)
Distributed leadership	Leadership should not be limited to a small number of people with formal senior roles. Many people are involved in leadership.	Bennett, Wise, Woods, & Harvey (2004)
Complexity theory	Organizations take on properties and structures that are unexpected because people and groups interact and the results of those interactions produce perpetual novelty.	Plowman, Solansky, Beck, Baker, Kulkarni, & Villarreal (2003)

will not be provided regarding each of the theories mentioned in Table 10, a few comments will be made on the general progression of the theories.

The first theories that aligned with principles of shared leadership were those which began to recognize the relevance of varied roles or allowed for different leaders in different situations (law of the situation, role differentiation, co-leadership). The movement away from Great Man Theory also initiated a shift from person-centered leadership theories to those that took into consideration the interactions and abilities of the whole group (T-groups, social exchange theory, Theory Y). In addition, leadership theory and practice began to encompass large group involvement and/or the absence of official leadership (emergent leadership, participative decision making, self-leadership). A few theories still emphasize the role of leadership as held by one person, but suggest that the leader's primary focus should be that of responding to the needs of the followers (servant leadership, transformational leadership). And finally, several of the most recent theories acknowledge the complexity of organizations in the post-industrial age and thus the need for adaptive and responsive leadership styles which tend to be less hierarchical (post-industrial leadership, distributed leadership, complexity theory). As such, it becomes apparent that shared leadership or concepts of shared leadership have been making an appearance in organizational literature and practice for some time, albeit in small and sometimes unnoticeable ways. However, current contextual forces have recently compelled its emergence as an independent construct.

Driving forces of shared leadership. The following four forces have been synthesized from the extant literature: the rise of the information age, the increasing complexity of the role of the CEO, increasing pressure to perform and do so quickly, and an increase in the use of teams in the organization (2007).

The information age has brought with it several significant changes to the work force. Most significantly, it has changed employees' access to information, decreased the likelihood

of the CEO staying on top of current info, and begun shifting U.S. culture towards collectivism (Chrispeels, 2004a; Kippenberger, 2002; Manz & Sims, 2001; McLagan, 2003; Mohrman et al., 1995; O'Toole et al., 2003; Pearce & Conger, 2003; Pearce et al., 2009; Pearce & Sims, 2000; Plowman et al., 2007; Sims & Manz, 1996).

Increased access to information and co-workers through technological advances alters the dynamics of the workplace. Information technology can now widely distribute information that was once vertically aggregated to inform strategic and operational decision-making (Kippenberger, 2002). The resource possibilities available are too vast to try to control through traditional hierarchical methods and employees are more readily available to actively participate in information gathering, decision-making, and improving the organization (Mohrman et al., 1995). Thus, organizational success is increasingly dependent on talented and empowered employees who have access to the information resources available (McLagan, 2003).

In addition, given the rapid change, complexity, and new high-tech autonomous work roles of the information age it becomes difficult for any one CEO to maintain a current grasp of the data (Manz & Sims, 2001). Pearce and Conger (Pearce et al., 2009) explained, "the seniormost leaders may not possess sufficient and relevant information to make highly effective decisions in a fast-changing and complex world" (p. 2). Employees' easy access to information increases their ability to become an expert on any given subject and supplement the knowledge of the CEO.

The emergence of the internet has also instigated a shift in U.S. culture (2003). U.S. culture has been predominantly an autonomous culture, where individuality is celebrated. Collectivist cultures, on the other hand, consider individuals part of the whole and thus find

meaning and direction by participating in groups and identifying with group goals (Kippenberger, 2002). A desire for innovation and increasing use of the internet have begun pushing U.S. culture towards collectivism (Den Hartog & Dickson, 2004). Manz and Sims (Kippenberger, 2002) described the culture shift as such:

> The essence of this cultural change is the investment in and emphasis on knowledge work, the way people process and transform information. This emerging culture places high value on mentorship, learning, initiative and creativity. To be truly effective, the knowledge worker needs to be empowered at an advanced level (p. 7).

The information age has compelled the emergence of shared leadership as it provides increased access to information, limits the CEO's ability to stay on top of rapidly changing information, and impacts cultural collectivism.

The second driving force is the increasing complexity of the CEO's role, which is in part due to the complexity of organizations. Organizational theorists have begun to acknowledge that organizations exist in conditions of instability and are capable of highly complex behavior (2001). This heightened complexity makes it difficult for a solo leader to manage the organization (Plowman et al., 2007). Pearce and Conger (Chrispeels, 2004a; O'Toole et al., 2003) elaborated, "the leader is hard-pressed to possess all the leadership skills and knowledge necessary to guide complex organizations in a dynamic and global marketplace" (p. 2). Shared leadership provides an opportunity for multiple individuals to bring a diversity of skills and talents to the table.

The third driving force is heightened pressure for organizations to perform and to do so in a timely manner. Mohrman, et al. (2003) elaborated, "many organizations, especially those that are highly complex, have found that traditional hierarchical and functional approaches are inadequate to address their coordination needs in a timely and cost-effective manner" (p. 5). A flatter, more lateral organization reduces the financial costs associated with

hierarchy (i.e. managerial and control roles, delays in decision making) and allows the organization to respond quickly to performance demands. Additionally, the quality of performance can increase. Research has shown that the process of innovation and learning is improved in teams (1995). Likewise when different perspectives and knowledge bases are joined, problems and solutions are reframed in ways that would not have been likely or possible from within one perspective.

Finally, the sheer increase in the use of teams in organizations compels a need for leadership models that increase their performance and productivity (Hooker & Csikszentmihalyi, 2003; Mohrman et al., 1995). Thus, there is a strong need for a better understanding of team functioning and team leadership in a wide variety of contexts (Mohrman et al., 1995). Sims and Manz (Pearce & Sims, 2000) (1996) explained:

> Organizations have increasingly experimented with innovative work designs. Widespread introduction of modern management techniques such as quality circles, self-managed work teams, Japanese business practices, and flatter organization structures have led to the inherent dilemma of how to lead employees who are increasingly encouraged and required to become self-managed. The result is a major knowledge gap about appropriate leader behavior under conditions of increasing employee participation. Indeed, its time for a true paradigm shift in our thinking about leadership. (pp. xxi-xiii)

As organizations utilize teams more, they will need leadership models that improve team facilitation. Shared leadership provides one option for empowering and managing teams.

These driving forces (the rise of the information age, the increasing complexity of the role of the CEO, increasing pressure to perform and do so quickly, and an increase in the use of teams in the organization) along with the emergence of contributing theories throughout the last century have created a verdant organizational landscape for shared leadership. With an understanding of how shared leadership has developed, discussion regarding characteristics of shared leadership and examples of its use will now be helpful.

Characteristics and examples of shared leadership. While much has been detailed in the previous sections regarding shared leadership, it is helpful to highlight the characteristics (i.e. values, attitudes, skills, and behaviors) which mark shared leadership. In addition examples of organizations that have employed these characteristics will be provided.

Values and attitude necessary for shared leadership. Several value and attitude shifts must take place in order for shared leadership to function effectively. These shifts include reconsidering how human nature is viewed, how individuals are valued, and what is believed about leadership. Shared leadership beckons back to what we consider true about human nature. Do we believe as McGregor (1960) suggested with Theory Y that, individual workers have the capacity and potential to make good contributions without pressure from a managing force? In addition to believing that individuals have the desire and willingness to contribute, shared leadership requires the belief that individuals can make significant and meaningful contributions when given the opportunity. Two theories offer a means for reconceptualizing individuals' contributions to the organization: multiple intelligence theory and invitational rhetoric theory.

Multiple intelligence theory posits that there are numerous types of intelligence (beyond commonly measured and valued skills) that provide value in various settings (1996). While not formally recognized in the shared leadership literature, this theory seems to inform a foundational belief; every individual has intelligence in one area or another and something significant to contribute.

Invitational rhetoric is another theory that is helpful in considering the value shifts that must take place with shared leadership. Invitational rhetoric is built upon the principles of equality, immanent value, and self-determination. Foss and Griffin (Gardner & Hatch,

1989) explained the principle of equality, “Primary among the feminist principles on which our proposed rhetoric is based is a commitment to the creation of relationships of equality and to the elimination of the dominance and elitism that characterize most human relationships” (p. 4).

The principle of equality ensures that leaders functioning within this framework respect the perspective and opinions of followers as equal in value to their own. This recognition of equality allows interactions where both parties can learn from each other or even be influenced by each other. The assumption that only the leader influences the follower is eliminated.

The second principle that characterizes invitational rhetoric is the recognition of imminent value. Foss and Griffin elaborated, “The essence of this principle is that every being is a unique and necessary part of the pattern of the universe and thus has value” (p. 4). This principle reiterates the attitude that everyone can contribute something valuable to the group.

The final principle is self-determination;

> Grounded in a respect for others, self-determination allows individuals to make their own decisions about how they wish to live their lives. Self-determination involves the recognition that audience members are the authorities on their own lives and accords respect to others’ capacity and right to constitute their worlds as they choose. (Foss & Griffin, 1985, p. 4)

While this principle might, at first glance, seem out of place in the organizational realm, the principle of self-determination affirms that employees do not need to be directed like mindless followers. They have the potential to participate in directional decisions and make good decisions on their own about their contributions to the group.

Shared leadership is counterintuitive and counter cultural. For years, western culture has viewed leadership as the position of unique individuals who possess certain skills and abilities (O'Toole, et al., 2003). Likewise, organizations are often viewed as reflections of the CEO or person in charge and many hold to the belief that a single person must be held accountable for the company's actions and decisions (Locke, 2003; O'Toole, et al., 2003) Shared leadership shifts this view to recognize that leadership can be distributed and interdependent. Fletcher and Kaufer (2003) explained that shared leadership "implicitly acknowledges the interdependent nature of leadership and signals a significant shift away from individual achievement and meritocracy toward a focus on collective achievement, shared responsibility, and the importance of teamwork" (p. 23). Without this shift in perspective, individuals and organization will struggle to conceptualize how shared leadership can work. In addition to these value and attitude shifts there is a set of skills and behaviors which must be adopted.

Skills and behaviors necessary for shared leadership. The skills and behaviors necessary to facilitate shared leadership could be identified as increased social interaction, a new approach to leadership development, and a dynamic exchange of lateral influence. Cox, et al. (2003) synthesized the skills and behaviors of shared leadership as follows:

> A series of conditions must hold for shared leadership to emerge over time. First, team members must understand that constructive lateral influences is a standing performance expectation. Second, members must accept responsibility for providing and responding appropriately to constructive leadership from their peers. Third, the team members must develop skills as effective leaders and followers. Shared leadership, then, is fully expressed only when team members are prepared to function as savvy agents and targets of lateral influence. (p. 53)

A new social dynamic exists as traditional leader-follower relationships are altered. Individuals must become skilled at negotiating this new social form. Fletcher and Kaufer

(2003) described this form as a "dynamic, multidirectional, collective activity that, like all human action and cognitive sense-making, is embedded in the context in which it occurs. Social interactions are key in this concept, as leadership is seen as something that occurs in and through relationships and networks of influence" (p.23). Gill (2006) added that workplace interactions in a shared leadership setting are among people rather than position in a hierarchy and characterized as "conversation rather than instructions, shared values and beliefs, honesty and a desire for the common good rather than self-interest" (p. 30).

The language and meaning of leadership also changes in shared leadership settings altering the approach to leadership development. Rather than leadership existing within one person at the top of the organization, leadership is reframed as an ongoing, dynamic process happening in and through all individuals. Day (2001) explained:

> Traditional conceptualizations of leadership as an individual-level skill ignore almost 50 years of research showing leadership to be a complex interaction between the designated leader and the social and organizational environment. Leadership should be viewed as a social process that engages everyone in the community. In this way, each person is considered a leader, and leadership is conceptualized as an effect rather than a cause. (p. 583)

This view of leadership compels learning for the individuals involved as well as the organization and outcomes are different: "mutual learning, greater shared understanding, and positive action" (Fletcher & Kaufer, 2003, p. 23).

Finally, the negotiation of lateral influence becomes important in shared leadership. Cox, et al. (2003) explained that shared leadership "relies on a dynamic exchange of lateral influence among peers rather than simply relying on a vertical, downward influence by an appointed leader" (p. 48). The social interaction and relational bent of the team allows for teams to collectively exert influence. They added:

> Shared leadership might emerge as a sort of behavioral mechanism through an unfolding series of fluid, situationally appropriate exchanges of lateral influence. In parallel, shared leadership might also emerge as team members negotiate shared understandings about how to navigate decision and exercise authority. At a minimum, shared leadership implies that team members have significant authority to chart the team's forward path. As such, shared leadership is consistent with familiar tenets of team empowerment such as power sharing and selective devolution of decision-making authority from management to employees. (p. 53)

Learning to receive influence from individuals in all directions and developing the willingness to exert influence over others are necessary skills for the successful actuation of shared leadership.

These skills and behaviors (increased social interaction, a new approach to leadership development, and a dynamic exchange of lateral influence) along with the aforementioned value and attitude shifts undergird the successful implementation of shared leadership.

Examples of shared leadership in organizations. Several companies have become successful examples of embodying shared leadership. For the purposes of this review one company has been identified within each of the three varying degrees discussed previously: a complete removal of hierarchy, loose hierarchy with shared leadership teams at all levels, and a solo CEO with shared leadership in certain settings.

W. L. Gore & Associates is one of the strongest examples of a successful company that actively utilizes shared leadership at all levels of the organization in place of a traditional hierarchy. Gore has annual revenues of more than two billion and has been on the list of "100 Best Companies to Work for in America" every year since 1984 (1985). Their success is in part because of the use of shared leadership. Manz, Shipper, & Stewart (2009) explained, "formal authority is not vested in any one person…associates step forward to lead when they have the expertise to do so…in Gore's highly egalitarian culture, the emphasis is not on title or authority, but on making valuable contributions to the business" (pp. 239-240).

Leaders are established based on the situation at hand and emerge as they build credibility and naturally develop followers. Those who have the most knowledge make decisions rather than the person in “charge” (Hamel, 2007).

Hamel (2007) discussed the Whole Foods model as an example of a company with a loose hierarchy that utilizes shared leadership principles in teams throughout the organization. Their flatter style of leadership balances freedom and accountability, democracy with discipline, and community with competition. Small teams throughout the organization are responsible for making decisions regarding their own staffing among others, however a headquarters still exists and there is a high level of accountability for employees. Teams are highly autonomous but since rewards are based on team profit, employees have a heightened level of ownership. In addition, equity is enhanced throughout the organization by shrinking the gap between executive pay and all other employees (Hamel, 2007).

Google, Inc. is an example of a company that has a hierarchy, direct supervision, and a sole CEO, but provides many opportunities for shared leadership to take place. Teams assist in hiring and innovation design. Most projects are designed around teams and management is kept at a minimum. However, in addition to the CEO, there is an executive management group that guides the direction and focus of the organization. Shared leadership is used in various settings depending on the project but it does not permeate the organization at all times (Hamel, 2007; Manz, Shipper, & Stewart, 2009).

These three companies provide examples of organizations that are utilizing shared leadership at varying levels, from complete adaptation to selected use. Their use of shared leadership has demonstrated ways in which shared leadership can be implemented and how it can significantly contribute to the success of the organization.

Through discussion of shared leadership's definitions and parallel leadership concepts, history, driving forces, and characteristics and examples, it becomes apparent that, although shared leadership is in its infancy, there is much to consider already. Having established the foundational elements, discussion regarding outcomes connected to engagement and within church contexts, will now be helpful.

Shared leadership and engagement. To date, there has been no research which examines the relationship between shared leadership specifically and engagement, but there are several positive outcomes associated with shared leadership cited in the literature (Hamel, 2007; Hill & Stecker, 2010). As suggested previously, research hints at shared leadership's connection to employee or member engagement: "shared leadership may improve the experience of work by offering an incremental measure of self-determination and opportunity for meaningful impact…by more evenly distributing opportunities for meaningful influence, shared leadership may provide a basis for full partnership" (Carson, Tesluk, & Marrone, 2007; Hooker & Csikszentmihalyi, 2003; Mohrman et al., 1995). Employees that have "full partnership" and a "meaningful influence" would seem to align with principles of employee engagement.

Shared leadership in church settings. Research on shared leadership in the church setting is limited. However, four dissertations have examined leadership in the church setting in a means that is relevant to my own study. Two studies have examined the relationship between leadership and outcomes within the church. Scholl (Cox et al., 2003, p. 54) looked at pastoral management style and church effectiveness and found that a relationship did exist. Perkins (2009) examined the relationship between top management teams and church

performance and found that churches who utilized leader-member exchange in their TMTs had higher performance (financially).

Three studies have looked specifically at shared leadership or a form of shared leadership in the church setting. Two studies looked at collaborative leadership in the Roman Catholic Church following Vatican II and found that collaborative leadership was recommended in order to strengthen the Catholic Church (2004). Finally, Wood (D'Souza, 1998; Nwachukwu, 2005) looked specifically at shared leadership in the church setting, examining its effects along with empowering team behaviors, and horizontal team structure on stress and satisfaction outcomes. Findings revealed that shared leadership negatively related with stress outcomes and positively related with job satisfaction. This study also indicated that a positive relationship existed between empowering team behaviors and shared leadership and that these team behaviors related positively with satisfaction and negatively with certain stress outcomes.

These dissertations point to the relevance of examining the relationship of leadership with desired church outcomes and a few have even looked at the results of shared leadership (in one form or another). However, none have examined shared leadership's relationship with church member engagement, highlighting, again, the opportunity for my study to provide a contribution to our understanding and the literature.

Summary of Shared Leadership Review Findings

This review of the shared leadership literature has summarized scholarship regarding the theory of shared leadership, definitions and parallel leadership concepts, history of the emergence of shared leadership and the driving forces that impelled its arrival, characteristics

and examples of shared leadership, shared leadership in relation to engagement, and shared leadership in the church setting.

As such, this part of the review serves to provide a picture of the status of shared leadership in regards to its definitions, historical background, and manifestations in organizations. Establishing a formal definition for shared leadership and understanding how its enactment might look, allows me to establish a means for identifying house churches where shared leadership seems to be present.

In addition, while significant research has been accomplished surrounding shared leadership, the need for increased understanding regarding its presence in organizations reinforces the need for my study. Likewise, while there seems to be alignment in the values and principles of shared leadership and engagement, no research specifically examines this relationship, providing the opportunity for an inquiry, which would do so.

Conclusion

This chapter aimed to examine the three informing bodies of literature that speak to the study at hand. This review included scholarship surrounding Western Protestant Church leadership, employee engagement, and shared leadership. Part A detailed the history of leadership in the Christian Church, then summarized current church leadership models, and finally provides discussion of the particular setting for my study, house churches. Part B elaborated on employee engagement: how it's defined, its antecedents and outcomes, the relationship between leadership and engagement, and finally member engagement in the Western Protestant Church setting. Part C discussed shared leadership definitions, the emergence and driving forces of shared leadership, its characteristics and examples, and the outcomes of shared leadership including its presence in church settings and its connection to

engagement. Figures 11 and 12 provide a visual summary of the three informing bodies of literature and the intersection of the variables using the Venn diagram previously provided.

Review of these three informing bodies of literature provides a contextual understanding for where the site of my study, house churches in a Midwestern state in the United States, rests. The trajectory of leadership within the Christian Church has tended toward increased hierarchy, although the Gregorian Reform, Protestant Reformation, and colonization of America, diminished the hierarchy to some degree in Western Protestant churches. House churches, which utilize shared leadership, seem to move away from traditional hierarchical church leadership models and look similar to the churches of the first century Christians. On the spectrum of church governance models (episcopal, presbyterian, congregational, and nongovernmental) house churches seem to align most closely with those that are nongovernmental.

In addition, this review illuminates the presences of employee engagement as a separate construct, which is gaining interest in the HRD realm. Likewise, church member engagement is emerging as a significant consideration in the Western Protestant Church realm. Discussion of the outcomes and antecedents, particularly leadership as an antecedent, provides a foundation upon which this study might offer a localized definition for church member engagement and begin to speculate about the relationship between shared leadership, particularly, and church member engagement in house churches.

And finally, growing interest in shared leadership as an alternative to other styles of leadership provides definitions and initial research which aid in conceptualizing the type of leadership which is taking place in house churches. This serves as a foundation for generating localized definitions of shared leadership, which may come out of this study.

Now, that the bodies of literature that inform this study have been reviewed, the chosen methods for the inquiry, to be conducted, will be detailed.

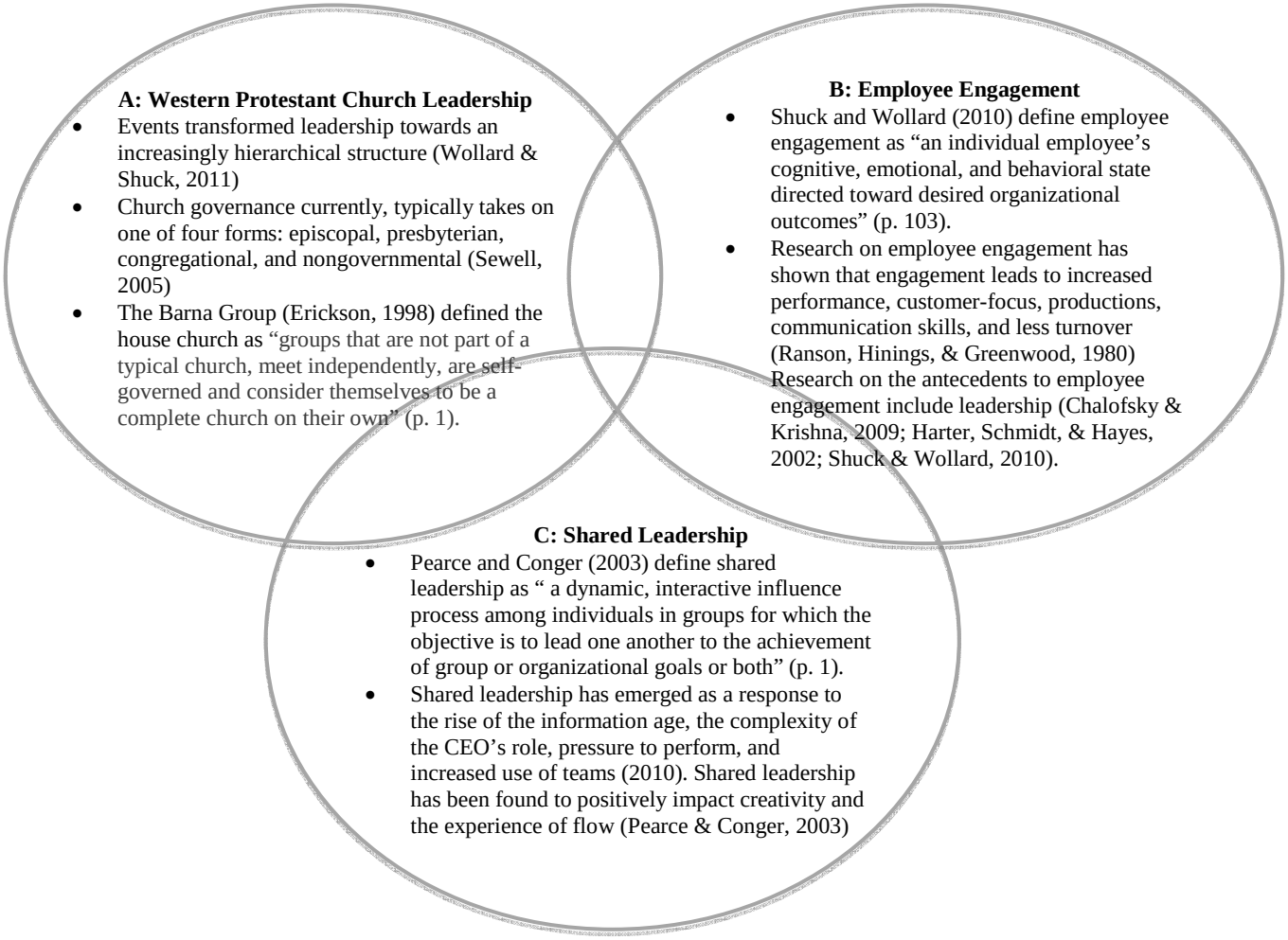

Figure 11. Venn diagram summary of informing bodies of literature: Christian Church leadership, employee engagement, and shared leadership.

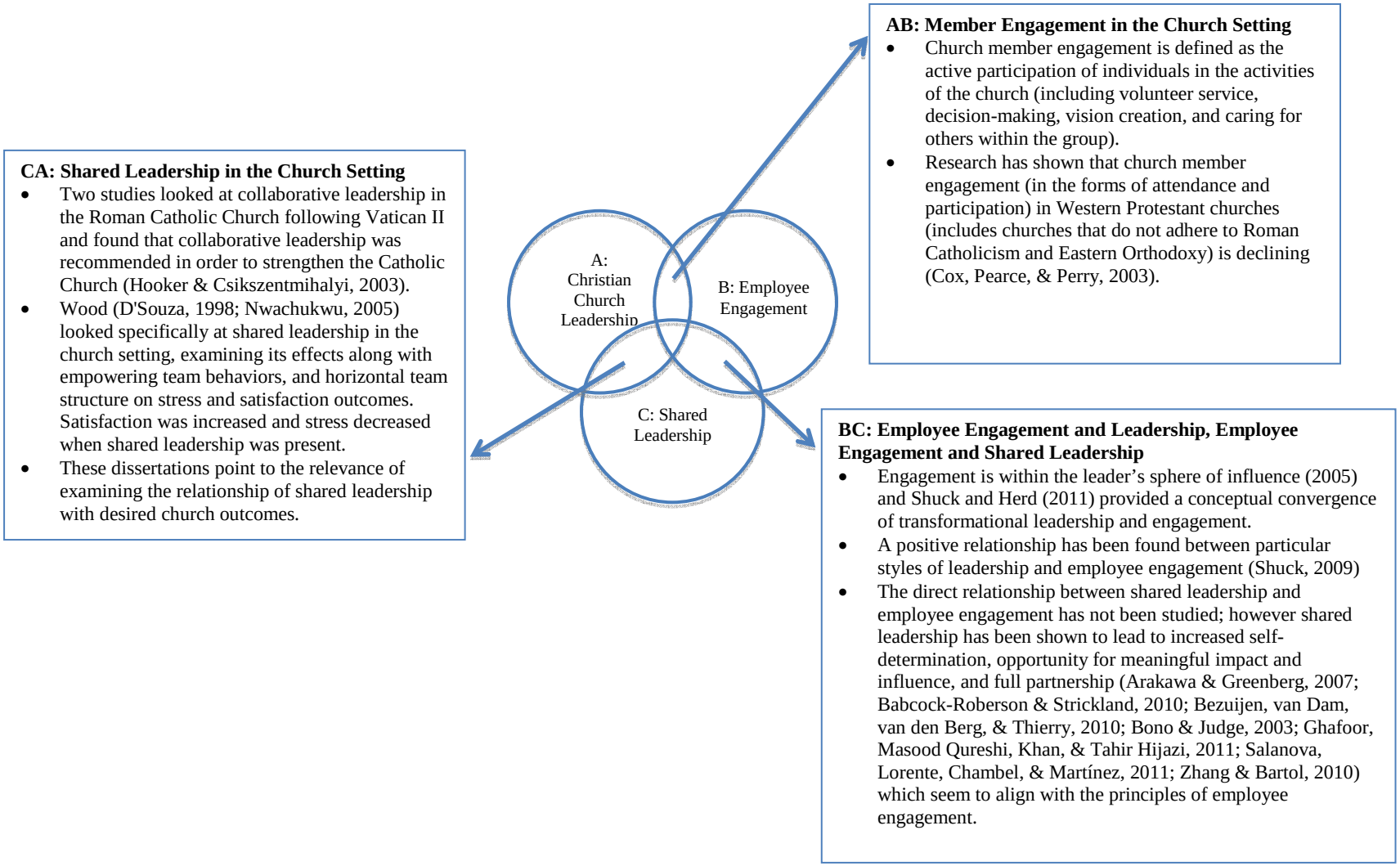

Figure 12. Venn diagram summary of the intersections between study variables Christian Church leadership, employee engagement, and shared leadership.

CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY AND METHODS

This third chapter justifies and describes the methodology selected for this study and its consistency with the guidelines presented by Lincoln and Guba (2005) for naturalistic inquiry, the paradigm in which the study is located. First, my problem and research questions are briefly restated. Then an overview of the naturalistic paradigm of research, the need for this type of inquiry, and its appropriateness for this study are presented, followed by a description of the methodologies that are embedded in naturalistic inquiry, and the accompanying methods choices, in the form of participant selection, data collection and analysis, and study findings, write-up and dissemination. Finally, these methods choices are framed by issues of quality or 'goodness' of the study—in the form of criteria of trustworthiness and authenticity; a brief description of how they were addressed and satisfied in this study is provided.

Research Problem and Questions

Due to evidence of declining church member engagement, some suggest that researchers must continue to hypothesize and conduct studies to determine the best practices for church performance (1985). In the secular sector, scholars have begun to propose that as organizations and the world grow more complex it is increasingly difficult for a single individual to lead (Easum, 1993; Hunter, 1992). Traditional vertical models place too much pressure on CEOs (or in the case of churches, senior pastors) and thus research examining alternatives that facilitate and support employee engagement are increasing (Lynham, 1998; Lynham, Taylor, & Naidoo, 2012; Pearce & Sims, 2002; Plowman et al., 2007). Likewise, the strain of leading a complex organization such as a church weighs on the pastor.

Additionally, when an individual pastor is charged with the sole leadership of a church the reservoirs of talent that the members hold remain largely untapped (Pearce & Conger, 2003).

In the past decade, the concept of shared leadership has emerged as a desirable alternative to traditional hierarchical models (Ford, 2006; Rutz, 2006). However, there is very limited research regarding shared leadership in the Western Protestant Church setting and whether and how it might associate with church member engagement. Conger and Pearce (Pearce & Conger, 2003) noted that research opportunities exist and are needed in "exploring the outcomes associated with shared leadership settings" (p. 286).

Thus, it becomes apparent that there is an opportunity to consider alternatives to current leadership structures in Western Protestant churches and conduct research that supports viable options to this end. The senior pastor is most often the sole or primary source of this leadership in these churches (2003). Thus, shared leadership is one such option which can be examined to determine what relationship, if any, the model would have with church member engagement, and thus organizational effectiveness of the church.

The problem could be summarized as follows: Western Protestant churches measure success through member engagement. Waning church member engagement has led some to argue that ineffective leadership structures are to blame. While the possibility of shared leadership has been advanced to this end, its use in Western Protestant Church settings has yet to be explored and understood. Thus research could help inform and illuminate how member engagement occurs in Western Protestant churches which practice shared leadership, and more specifically, in house churches, which represent instances of such church settings.

The following research questions guided my inquiry in selected Western Protestant house churches in one Midwestern state[3] to this end:

1. How do participants describe the particular setting of Western Protestant house churches, and how does this setting facilitate the practices of shared leadership and member engagement? (a descriptive ethnographic question)
2. How do church members, in Western Protestant house church settings where shared leadership is practiced, describe their lived experience with shared leadership and member engagement? (a hermeneutic phenomenological question)
3. Can their descriptions of shared leadership and member engagement be used to inform tentative definitions for shared leadership and member engagement which might be confirmed by other by other members of the selected house churches? (a descriptive quantitative question)

The inquiry paradigm in which the study was located, and the accompanying methodologies used to guide inquiry in response to these research questions are described next.

Inquiry Paradigm

All research, whether acknowledged directly or otherwise, is generated from a particular research tradition (paradigm), which likewise and in turn shapes the researcher's understanding of reality, truth, attainable knowledge, and appropriate research goals and methods (Ford, 2006). Research within the social sciences draws from scientific tradition that is heavily rooted in the post-positivistic paradigm (Merriam, 1991; Pallas, 2001). Likewise, predominant approaches to research and theory within the HRD discipline are often grounded

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[3] This very localized context should be assumed when I refer to the house churches examined in this inquiry.

in post-positivist philosophies (Corman, 2005). These approaches provide a particular perspective in which observable data are the foundation of knowledge (Lincoln & Lynham, 2011; Valentin, 2006) and results typically suggest generalizable and predictable outcomes (Guba, 1990). While these conventional approaches have provided valuable insights, they also underscore voids in our knowledge. Alternative approaches "can provide new frameworks with which to analyze organizations and stimulate creativity—not only new ways of doing things but also new ways of thinking about things" (Popper, 1972). As a result, scholars should ask not which paradigm is best, but rather which resonates best with the situation or will allow for different explanations and understandings of, for example, organizational life (Valentin, 2006, p. 27). As such, this study is aligned with the foundations and axioms of the naturalistic paradigm (also frequently and equivocally referred to as the constructivist and/or interpretivist paradigm). For purposes of further illustration and description, these axioms are defined and contrasted with those of the positivist paradigm (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). First, Table 11, by Lincoln and Guba (1985, p. 37), provides a contrasting overview of the governing axioms of the positivist and naturalist paradigms. It should be noted that the axioms identified (particularly for the positivist paradigm) are not indicative of behaviors of those who practice from this paradigm, but rather of the initial foundational principles that guided the development of research, and what constituted disciplined inquiry from this perspective (Pozzebon & Pinsonneault, 2005).

The naturalist paradigm acknowledges that "realities exist in the form of multiple mental constructions, socially and experientially based, local and specific, dependent for their form and content on the persons who hold them" (Kuhn, 2012). Knowledge is context

Table 11. *Contrasting Positivist and Naturalist Axioms*

Axioms About	Naturalist Paradigm	Positivist Paradigm
The nature of reality	Realities are multiple, constructed, and holistic.	Reality is single, tangible, and fragmentable.
The relationship of knower to the known	Knower and known are interactive, inseparable.	Knower and known are independent, a dualism.
The possibility of generalization	Only time- and context-bound working hypotheses (idiographic statements are possible).	Time-and context-free generalizations (nomothetic statements) are possible.
The possibility of causal linkages	All entities are in a state of mutual simultaneous shaping, so that it is impossible to distinguish causes from effects.	There are real causes, temporally precedent to or simultaneous with their effects.
The role of values	Inquiry is value-bound.	Inquiry is value-free.

specific and thus can be garnered best through field-based, inductive methods of inquiry (Guba, 1990, p. 27). This approach seems particularly appropriate to my study as one could argue that shared leadership and member engagement are relevant variables in any organization; however, Western Protestant house churches in a Midwestern state in the United States are a unique context and thus necessitate particular attention to their idiosyncrasies.

In addition, the questions I was raising were not interested in measuring engagement in shared leadership settings or comparing the impact of shared leadership versus other forms of leadership on engagement. Rather, because of the acknowledgement that leadership is context specific (Guba, 1990), I was more interested in the experiences and culture of individuals who were participating in Western Protestant house churches where shared leadership was practiced. I assumed that participants would reveal multiple constructed

realities regarding their perceptions of church member engagement in these Western Protestant church settings. This assumption was buttressed additionally as perceptions, beliefs, and values regarding leadership and church member engagement in the Western Protestant church setting can be deeply embedded in one's interpretation of the Bible, religious upbringing, and church experience. Thus, identifying one generalizable description of church member engagement in Western Protestant churches was not desirable—at least not at this stage of inquiry, and not in this particular study. Rather, I hoped to provide enough thick description of the participant experiences that transferability to similar contexts of practice might be possible—if not immediately, then with accumulation of further studies (Kezar, 2009; Lynham et al., 2012).

The naturalistic perspective is concerned with process rather than outcomes, and theory generation rather than theory testing (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Insights and the ability to theorize about the phenomenon of how shared leadership is perceived to affect member engagement in Western Protestant church settings emerged as the inquiry proceeded. My approach was initially be guided by the principles and processes of naturalistic inquiry as provided by Lincoln and Guba (1985). However two particular research methodologies, couched within this paradigm, provided additional guidance for exploring shared leadership and member engagement in the Western Protestant house church setting. These methodologies are described below and Table 12 outlines the ways in which hermeneutic phenomenology and ethnography are commensurate with and embedded in the axioms of naturalistic inquiry.

Table 12. *The Embedding of Hermeneutic Phenomenology and Cultural Ethnography in the Axioms of Naturalistic Inquiry*

	Informing Paradigm	Embedded Methodologies	
Paradigmatic Axioms	Naturalist Paradigm	Hermeneutic Phenomenology	Ethnography
The nature of reality	Realities are multiple, constructed, and holistic.	"knowledge of our everyday existence is intersubjective, temporal, and relational"(1985).	"Knowledge comes in patterned symbolic structure [and] works in constant interdependence with context, emotion, embodiment, and many other aspects of being human" (Vandermause & Fleming, 2011, p. 369). The researcher must set aside naïve realism (Heath & Street, 2008, p. 11).
The relationship of knower to the known	Knower and known are interactive, inseparable.	"Conversational dialogue… and exchange of language emerges/evolves as the narrative text is co-created between the researcher and the participant" (Spradley, 1980).	"The central aim of ethnography is to understand another way of life from the native's point of view…rather than studying people, ethnography means learning from people" (Vandermause & Fleming, 2011, p. 369).
The possibility of generalization	Only time- and context-bound working hypotheses (idiographic statements are possible).	"It is illuminated through careful, comprehensive descriptions, vivid and accurate renderings of the experience, rather than measurements, ratings, or scores" (Spradley, 1980, p. 3).	"Hypotheses should develop out of ethnographic work, rather than provide restrictions and distortions from its inceptions" (Moustakas, 1994, p. 105).
The possibility of causal linkages	All entities are in a state of mutual simultaneous shaping, so that it is impossible to distinguish causes from effects.	"It does not seek to predict or to determine causal relationships" (Humphreys, 1970, p. 22).	"Rather than determining cause and effect relationships, ethnography is concerned "with the meaning of actions and events to the people we seek to understand" (Moustakas, 1994, p. 105).
The role of values	Inquiry is value-bound.	Knowledge cannot be known apart from values (Spradley, 1980, p. 5).	The ethnographer makes inferences about the culture based on their own values and culture (Moustakas, 1994).

Adapted from Lincoln & Guba (1985)

Research Methodologies

The embedded research methodologies that guided this study were hermeneutic phenomenology and ethnography. A hybridization of two informing methodologies was needed because I was interested in exploring the lived experience of church members of the phenomenon of shared leadership, which draws from the principles of hermeneutic phenomenology. I was, concurrently, interested in acknowledging and assessing the distinct culture of the setting I was choosing to explore which was best informed by an ethnographic perspective that allowed me to observe and experience from my own perspective as a participant. Denzin and Lincoln (Spradley, 1980) refer to this combination of methodological techniques as bricolage:

> the qualitative researcher as bricoleur or maker of quilts uses the aesthetic and material tools of his or her craft, deploying whatever strategies, methods, or empirical materials are at hand. If new tools or techniques have to be invented, or pieced together, then the researcher will do this. (p. 4)

Each of the embedded methodologies utilized are briefly described, elaborating on my rationale for their use. Their application to my study is explicated thereafter.

Hermeneutic Phenomenology

Hermeneutic phenomenology "aims at gaining a deeper understanding of the nature or meaning of our everyday experiences" (2011). It is a systematic methodology for unveiling and describing "the internal meaning structures of lived experience" (p.10). It thus, focuses on meaning rather than statistical relationships among variables or frequency and its intent is to explicate meanings as we live them in our everyday existence, our "lifeworld" (p. 10). This approach was appropriate for my study as I was interested in understanding the phenomenon of shared leadership as it was experienced by Western Protestant house church

members and its perceived and experienced relationship with the engagement of these individuals. As already underscored, the contextualized nature of leadership lends itself to a localized exploration of its enactment in particular settings (Van Manen, 1990, p. 9). Hermeneutic phenomenology guided such an exploration that was interested in understanding how individuals and church members as a group experienced and gave meaning to shared leadership and enabled me to answer my second research question, namely: How do church members, in Western Protestant house church settings where shared leadership is practiced, describe their lived experience with shared leadership and member engagement?

Ethnography

While phenomenology was the best suited methodology for getting at the lived experience of individuals, it does not always allow for the researcher to "observe activities and infer meanings not in the awareness of participants" (Kezar, 2009). Ethnography, however, with its emphasis on participant observation, provides a means for doing so and provides the researcher an opportunity to better understand the context and culture in which the individuals are participating (Moustakas, 1994, p. 3).

Culture for the purposes of this study was defined as, "the knowledge people use to generate and interpret social behavior. This knowledge is learned and, to a degree, shared" (Moustakas, 1994). Spradley (Spradley & McCurdy, 1988, p. 12) identifies the church and its leaders as a particular cultural scene or setting that holds its own shared knowledge set. In the previous chapter, I described the development of the shared knowledge set regarding leadership throughout church history. Thus, it seemed appropriate to utilize an approach that would guide my exploration of the house church as an instance of the cultural setting of the

Western Protestant Church and the practice of shared leadership, and its relationship with member engagement therein. Ethnography is a methodology that would facilitate such study, as it is "the work of describing a culture" (1979). This approach shifts the focus from the researcher as an outside observer to one of discovering the insider's point of view. The use of cultural ethnography shaped this study as a "systematic attempt to understand the knowledge a group of people have learned and are using to organize their behavior" (Spradley, 1979, p. 3) and enabled me to address my first research question, namely: How do participants describe the particular setting of Western Protestant house churches, and how does this setting facilitate the practices of shared leadership and member engagement?.

Inquiry Procedures and Methods Choices

Discussion on ensuing methods choices, in the form of participant selection, data collection and analysis, and study findings, write-up and dissemination follow and continue to reflect the embeddedness of these two methodologies within the paradigm chosen. Finally, these methods choices are framed by issues of quality or 'goodness' of the study—in the form of criteria of trustworthiness and authenticity; a brief description of how they were addressed and satisfied in this study is provided.

Site Selection

Initially it was not yet clear how many sites would be necessary to illuminate thick description and an understanding of the phenomenon of shared leadership in the particular setting of Western Protestant house churches in a Midwestern state in the United States. I determined to begin with two sites. However, upon exploration of the two sites I discovered that these sites seemed to have very different expressions of shared leadership and engagement. Thus, I decided to explore a third site in order to inform a richer picture of the

various expressions in house churches. Sites were selected based on their use of shared leadership as defined by Pearce and Conger (Spradley, 1979, p. 3):

> a dynamic, interactive influence process among individuals in groups for which the objective is to lead one another to the achievement of group or organizational goals or both. This influence process involves peer, or lateral, influence and at other times involves upward or downward hierarchical influence. (p. 1)

In order to find churches which were practicing shared leadership to this extent, I began by looking for house churches which tended to utilize shared leadership (2003). In order to identify house churches that might serve as potential sites, I first looked for local networks of house churches via the internet. Several networks were readily available so I identified house churches within proximity to my location. I contacted several house churches and received two phone calls back initially. One church was very hesitant to let me attend under the premise of my research; the other was very welcoming and open. Thus, I started attending the church that was receptive. Soon after I was invited to a prayer meeting that included several house churches in the area. This inclusion introduced me to other possible sites from which I chose my next two sites. In order to be included, sites had to meet three criteria (1) Shared leadership must be the leadership style practiced. Based on the definition above, shared leadership was identified by the involvement of multiple individuals in the activities of the church characterized by “dynamic, interactive influence” (Viola, 2008). Examples of criterion included: every member having the freedom to share, pray, or suggest songs in gatherings as they felt led, and give suggestions about future activities that the church would participate in. Church members were asked to confirm that they believed shared leadership was the leadership style utilized in the church. House churches might have an individual or multiple individuals who facilitated gatherings or host the gatherings in their home. This practice did not exclude them from the study. Rather the presence of shared leadership was

predominantly gaged by whether shared leadership was that which facilitated the gatherings and was acknowledged as such by the church members. (2) The house church must have at least 5 adult members, to allow for extended member checking. And (3), the house church must have had regular gatherings, at least once a week, to illustrate an embedded, enacted culture reflective of the Western Protestant Church and leadership practices within this setting.

Once the practice of shared leadership had been confirmed in the setting, I discussed my project with the group or an identified gatekeeper. In all sites, I was then given the opportunity to present my project to the group and request permission to use the site. Signed permission was gained prior to any participant selection (please see Appendix B).

Participant Selection

Participant selection emerged following my initial orientation and overview of the site. The plan was to first immerse myself in the church by attending their weekly gatherings and familiarizing myself with the setting. This experience informed participant selection. I kept detailed field notes and compiled research memos to inform and keep record of my decisions throughout the process. It was not clear initially how participants would be selected or how many would be selected. However, selection was guided by the following principles of naturalistic inquiry as suggested by Lincoln and Guba (Pearce & Conger, 2003, p. 1):

> Sample in a way that maximizes the scope and range of information obtained; hence sampling is not representative but contingent and serial—each element sampled depending on the characteristics of all the preceding elements, and no element being identified until its predecessor elements have been identified and, so far as possible, tapped. (p. 224)

Additionally, sampling was expanded until saturation was reached as evidenced by redundancy of information in observation notes and interview transcripts. This emergent process of participant selection is described below.

After some time in the orientation phase, it became clear that it would be beneficial to interview the couple who seemed to be the founders/catalysts for site one and to interview them together. This approach was decided for several reasons: 1) It seemed that building and facilitating as house church was a joint adventure for the two of them; 2) Because of the importance on family and fellowship in the house church setting, I decided to invite them over for dinner and then interview them; and 3) I thought that there would be more rapport and openness if I interviewed this way and included my husband. Including my husband allowed for significant peer checking, as he has worked as a pastor for 10 years. His experience and insight enabled important dialogue and reflection between the two of us. I checked with the Institutional Review Board and found that I did not need to make any changes to my protocol in order to conduct interviews in this way. This first interview conducted in this manner was successful and encouraged me to do likewise in site two.

Within site one, the interview with the founding couple helped me gain an understanding of their background and the foundational principles of a house church from their perspective. As such, I decided that I wanted to interview another participant to see how her perspective diverged/converged. I thus chose another individual because she was what I would consider a middle-of-the-road participant—she participated some but not excessively during the weekly gatherings. She had, however, been involved for a longtime and was very close to the founders. I next decided it would be interesting to get a perspective from someone who was not as close, and as a result I chose another couple in the same house

church because of their involvement in house churches before and their mention that they might be interested in starting their own; I assumed they would have some developed experiences and opinions.

I approached interviews in site two with the same pattern as site one. I had already decided to ask an individual to be a participant because she was a teenager who was very participative and I thought she would provide a different lived perspective considering her age. I also interviewed the couple whom it seemed facilitated the gathering, as in site one. This couple asked if they could bring their teenage son along for the interview which I welcomed since this would allow me to gain another perspective, and one from a young person. The final participant from site three was chosen because she was new to the house church all together. She had only attended site two a handful of times, and then stopped attending. I hoped that she would be able to provide a divergent perspective since she seemed dissatisfied or uncomfortable with the house church, and had thus stopped attending.

In site three, I interviewed the founder, but decided to interview him alone because by this point, I was approaching saturation and felt it would be more valuable to go deeper with him. While I had found the interviews with couples very insightful—because of their shared journey—I also noticed that interviewing more than one person at a time could limit the depth of the interview. In listening to interview recordings, I noticed points where one participant was almost cut off by the other, which limited depth of discussion. Thus, for site three, at which stage I was beginning to find the edges of the phenomena and culture under study, interviewing individuals seemed more beneficial. My final interview participant was selected because she was newer to this group, which otherwise seemed to be pretty established. Overall, I conducted eight interviews with twelve participants. This provided me

with a substantial amount of data to analyze and compare with my observation and interview field notes, and artifacts.

Data Collection Procedures

Data collection occurred in three phases as guided by naturalistic inquiry: (1)“orientation and overview,” (2)“focused exploration,” and (3)“member check” (1985). Additionally, four methods of data collection were used: (a) in depth interviews; (b) participant observations; (c) document analyses; and (d) a quantitative survey. First, some discussion is provided regarding the four types of data collection methods, which draw from naturalistic inquiry and the embedded methodologies of hermeneutic phenomenology and ethnography. Then, the three phases of data collection are outlined with detailed explanation of the methods I used. Table 13 provides an overview of the data collection methods and phases that were utilized and the corresponding methodological perspectives that drive each.

Table 13. *Matrix Depicting the Data Collection Methods and Phases Utilized in this Study and the Corresponding Driving Methodological Perspectives*

		The Four Data Collection Methods				
		In-Depth Interviews	Participant Observation	Document Analysis	Quantitative Survey	
The Three Data Collection Phases	Phase 1: Orientation and Overview		X (NI, E)	X (NI, HP, E)		Key: NI= Naturalistic Inquiry
	Phase 2: Focused Exploration	X (NI, HP)	X (NI, E)	X (NI, HP, E)		HP= Hermeneutic Phenomenology
	Phase 3: Member Checking	X (NI, HP)			X (NI)	E= Ethnography

Data collection methods. While all three qualitative methods of data collection that were utilized (in depth interviews, participant observation, and document analysis) were guided by principles from hermeneutic phenomenology (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, pp. 235-236) and ethnographic inquiry (Van Manen, 1990), the interview process predominantly drew from phenomenology and participant observations from ethnography. In the interview process, hermeneutic phenomenology emphasizes gathering personal life stories with a limited number of unstructured questions (Spradley, 1979; Spradley & McCurdy, 1988). The goal is to come to know meaning and to make sense of experience: "the interviewer seeks to understand what it means *to be* as it shows up or reveals itself through story" (Van Manen, 1990). The researcher attempts to gather:

> here-and-now constructions of persons, events, activities, organizations, feelings, motivations, claims, concerns, and other entities; reconstructions of such entities as experienced in the past; [and] projections of such entities as they are expected to be experienced in the future. (Vandermause & Fleming, 2011, p. 369)

Thus the data collection interview becomes a conversational dialogue that is open, unstructured, and flexible (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 268).

Participant observation is the process of engaging in the activities of a social situation and in addition observing the activities, people, and physical aspects of the situation (Vandermause & Fleming, 2011). This data collection method serves to give the researcher the opportunity to "learn firsthand how the actions of research participants correspond to their words; see patterns of behavior; experience the unexpected, as well as the expected; and develop a quality of trust with your others that motivates them to tell you what otherwise they might not" (Spradley, 1980).

The emphasis in ethnographic participant observation is also placed on the importance of remaining close to the situation while simultaneously maintaining the ability to

hermeneutically reflect on the meanings of the situation (Glesne, 1999, p. 43). Cultural ethnography embraces a dualistic approach in its notion of understanding: "Because culture is about meaning, ethnography requires eliciting the insiders' views…However, because insiders cannot articulate the tacit levels of culture, the ethnographer must also observe from an outsiders' perspective to make visible the invisible" (Van Manen, 1990).

Documents are an available, stable, and rich source of information (Anderson-Levitt, 2006, p. 285). This method of data collection involves obtaining documents and records appropriate for a study and analyzing and interpreting the data obtained from them (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 277). Documents potentially provide "historical, demographic, and sometimes personal information" that might otherwise be unavailable (Schwandt, 2001). The main source of artifacts available to me was email communications shared amongst house church members at each site. They included me on their email lists so I was privy to their communication about upcoming gatherings, planning, or requests for prayer. There were also some handouts given at the gatherings that I was able to collect. I catalogued each artifact, unitized them, and created a spreadsheet of artifact themes for each site (please see Appendix C).

In order to extend member checking and accumulate different data kinds for a more informed and fuller picture, it was determined that a multiple methods strategy would be beneficial. Thus, a quantitative survey was designed for use as a member checking device. The survey's utility to my study is illuminated by Lincoln and Guba (1985):

> If the human instrument has been used extensively in earlier stages of inquiry, so that an instrument can be constructed that is grounded in data that the human instrument has produced…such an instrument might have utility: to provide an easy way to obtain member checks from a fairly large sample of respondents. (p. 239)

As such, the survey served to be descriptive and information-verifying, and was generated from the findings from the other qualitative data collection methods. The survey utilized will be discussed in more detail, when I describe Phase III of my data collection, below.

The four data collection methods described above provided a holistic picture of the experience of shared leadership in the particular cultural setting of a house church. The three phases of naturalistic inquiry as described below guided the use of these selected data collection methods.

Data collection phases. Once permission from the church was obtained, the orientation and overview phase (Phase I) commenced. Familiarity with the site was attained through participant observations—attending and participating in the weekly gatherings of the church, and informal conversations with church members. Detailed field notes were gathered based on these observations (Glesne, 1999, p. 58). It was anticipated that I would function predominantly as a participant during the church gatherings and would have to compile field notes following the gathering, as it might be inappropriate to take notes during the meeting. This proved true and as Spradley (1980) suggested, I generated condensed notes as soon as possible, then shortly after expanded these condensed notes to include details that I may have not been able to record in the moment. Finally, a detailed reflexive journal was kept throughout the process capturing my thoughts and feelings in regards to methodological decisions and personal reflections. Lincoln and Guba (1985) suggested that the journal have three sections: (1) “the daily schedule and logistics of the study,” (2) “a personal diary,” and (3)”a methodological log” (p. 327). I kept a reflexive journal detailing my thoughts and processes on shaping this study and continued to do so once I began the data collection. Some document analyses also took place during this phase.

Phase I (orientation and overview) informed the direction, focus, and subsequent design of the proceeding inquiry. In accordance with naturalistic inquiry (1985) and ethnographic methodology (Lincoln & Guba, 1985), the structure of interviews and future observations emerged from this phase. Likewise, this process was intended to help me determine which participants and how many participants would be appropriate for focused exploration through in-depth interviews. I completed approximately 70 hours of observation between April and December 2013 amongst the three sites.

Phase II, focused exploration, was enacted through in-depth interviews with participants who were identified and selected based on the observations of Phase I and continued participant observations. As participants were selected for interviews they were asked to give their consent by completing the informed consent letter included in Appendix B and were told that the focus of the research was shared leadership and church member engagement, allowing them time to think about the experience more deeply (Spradley, 1980). Giving participants the opportunity beforehand to think about the study topic allowed for increased description and detail in their responses. Interview protocols were informed from my observations and principles of hermeneutic phenomenological interviewing—meaning that questions were asked in a way that "draws out the story without leading the participant into a set answer" (Vandermause & Fleming, 2011). Questions included:

1) Based on your experience, how would you describe what it means to be a member in a house church where shared leadership is practiced? And why?
2) Based on your experience, how would you describe what it means to be an engaged member in a house church? And why?

Following the first few interviews, I added questions which would allow me to follow up on

some themes that began to surface such as family, giving in the house church, perceived competition with the traditional church, and the Bible as guide for house church form.

The principles of open-ended, unstructured interviews in accordance with naturalistic inquiry were also followed (Vandermause & Fleming, 2011, p. 371). Throughout interviews, I sought to gain assent from participants by questioning my own understanding periodically which was accomplished by gently summarizing the participant's comments to test my own interpretation. This assent is important as my understanding should be "plausible because it honors an experience that is genuinely told because of its meaningful representation of human experience" (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). This process represents the initial stage of member checking, explained more thoroughly in Phase III below. The interviews were audio recorded to ensure that I had accurately captured the conversation and to allow for further analysis. Interviews took place in homes and coffee shops and ranged from 45 minutes to two hours in length.

Following Phase II, a provisional list of themes from each interview, ascertained through the content analysis method described in the next sub-section, was emailed to the appropriate participant(s) with the intent of obtaining confirmation that I had accurately represented the data as constructed by the participants. All but two participants responded, confirming the themes. I sent two follow-up emails to the participants that had not responded, seeking their confirmation, without success.

As underscored, in order to extend member checking and accumulate different data kinds for a more informed and fuller picture, it was determined that a multiple methods strategy would be beneficial. Thus, to facilitate the member checking process, a quantitative survey was designed to gather perceptions from as many members in the selected house

churches as possible which enabled me to answer my third research question, namely: Can their (interview participants') descriptions of shared leadership and member engagement be used to inform tentative definitions for shared leadership and member engagement which might be confirmed by other house church members?

Once interviews and field notes were analyzed as described below, a survey was generated with the hopes of checking and confirming member perceptions of their shared leadership and church member engagement experience in the Western Protestant house church setting. The survey was a 15 question, Likert based, attitudinal scale with questions that I designed based on analysis of observations and in-depth interviews. Appendix D includes the full survey.

The survey was distributed in one weekend when I attended all three sites. Each site gave me permission to introduce the survey and distribute it during the regular gathering. This enabled a high response rate. Following the weekend, I emailed the survey to individuals who had been absent and received several more completed surveys back. Overall, 31 surveys were completed. Attendance between the three sites was around 40 different people in a given month so my response rate was strong.

The measurement reliability of the survey was tested using Cronbach's alpha (Vandermause & Fleming, 2011, p. 373). The measurement validity of the instrument was tested through peer-checking ensuring that I had attempted to accurately capture the essence of shared leadership and church member engagement as expressed by the participants and through exploratory factor analysis. The results of these two tests are included in chapter four. Having outlined the methods choices for this study in regards to site and participant

selection, and data collection methods and phases, the next sub section does the same on methods choices for data analysis.

Data Analysis

Data analysis, an ongoing process, began from the very first collection of data and was open-ended and inductive to inform additional inquiry. This choice facilitated "emergent design, grounding of theory, and emergent structure of later data collection phases" (Gliner, Morgan, & Leech, 2009).

From the onset, field notes were reviewed and a reflexive journal was kept to augment data collection. As soon as the first interview was completed, the transcription process began. Upon completing transcription, I went through each transcript, reviewing, commenting, and identifying initial themes. Then I removed any names and identifiers and began the unitizing process. This process was repeated for each interview transcript in the appropriate sequence. Field notes and artifacts were simultaneously reviewed, as described below, to identify emergent themes for each site.

Field notes, interview transcripts, and documents were analyzed using the content analysis technique as described in Lincoln and Guba (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 242) which is based on an adaptation of the constant comparative method originally developed by Glaser & Strauss (1985). This analysis method entails four broad steps: (a) unitizing the interview data, or, identifying the individual units that subsequently are grouped into themes; (b) identifying the categories of similar units; (c) noting the emerging themes; and (d) subdividing the themes into subthemes.

Units were determined based on two characteristics. First, each unit should be heuristic, that is, "aimed at some understanding or some action that the inquirer needs to have

or to take" (1967). Secondly, units should be the smallest piece of datum that can stand by itself. Once unitized, datum segments were transferred to note cards that included a designation of the particular source, the type of respondent, the site, and the particular data collection episode (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 345). The cards were then used to generate preliminary categories of cards that related to the same content. This process serves to

> devise rules that describe category properties and that can, ultimately, be used to justify the inclusion of each card that remains assigned to the category as well as to provide a basis for later tests of replicability; and to render the category set internally consistent. (p. 347)

Detailed operational steps for this process of content analysis are provided in Lincoln and Guba (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Appendix E includes a detailed explanation of the specific steps I went through to analyze each interview as well the process utilized to triangulate data from my three sources. This process was emergent and was updated at two points throughout my data analysis. Appendix F includes a list of initial themes and Appendix G includes a sample of the triangulation utilized in my analysis.

Throughout the three phases of data collection and data analysis, I engaged in peer debriefing and external auditing. Peer debriefing is the process of "exposing oneself to a disinterested professional peer to 'keep the inquirer honest,' assist in developing working hypotheses, develop and test the emerging design, and obtain emotional catharsis" (Lincoln & Guba, 1986, p. 77). External auditing, which requires both the "establishment of an audit trail and the carrying out of an audit by a competent external, disinterested auditor" (Lincoln & Guba, 1986, p. 77) took place using my field notes, reflexive journal, and interview transcripts to establish an audit trail verifiable by my advisor as an expert researcher.

Write-up and Dissemination

Since the teleology of the naturalistic paradigm calls for the application of knowledge gained to "storytelling" (Greene, 1990, p. 228) and descriptions that "make explicit the context dependence of relationships" (Mishler, 1979, p. 9), write-up and dissemination is anticipated to occur in the following ways. Using the findings of this study, I hope to prepare and submit several manuscripts to peer-reviewed journals. One manuscript will focus on the construction of leadership throughout church history, identifying the key points and people that influenced leadership's enactment in the Western Protestant Church. Additional manuscripts may present an emergent theory of the relationship between shared leadership and engagement, informed by a summary of the findings of this study. If published, my findings may serve as a vehicle for change or action by Western Protestant church members.

Table 14 below provides an overview summary and review of the metaphysics, paradigm positions, and research design and related strategy choices highlighted in the preceding discussion. It is within these contextual considerations, methodological traditions, and inquiry choices that this study is located, informed and directed. Following this table is a discussion of the ensuing quality criteria—in the form of trustworthiness and authenticity—and how they were met in the conduct of this study.

Quality Indicators

Lincoln and Guba's parallel methodologic and authenticity/ethical criteria were adopted as the authenticity and trustworthiness criteria necessary to ensure quality in my study. Trustworthiness is defined as "how…an inquirer persuade[s] his or her audiences (including self) that the findings of an inquiry are worth paying attention to, worth taking account of?" (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 290). Authenticity, according to

Table 14. *Overview of the Metaphysics, Paradigm Positions, Research Design and Strategy Choices Informing this Inquiry*

Guiding Metaphysical System and Components of the Naturalistic Paradigm	
Metaphysical Positions and Traditions of the Guiding Paradigm of Inquiry (Naturalistic)	Supporting Literature
Ontology- What makes for reality (Guba, 1990; Lynham, 2008).	• "Realities are multiple, constructed, and holistic" (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 37). • " realities exist in the form of multiple mental constructions, socially and experientially based, local and specific, dependent for their form and content on the persons who hold them"(Guba, 1990, p. 27).
Epistemology- What makes for knowledge of that reality? What is the relationship between the knower and the known? (Guba, 1990)	• " Knower and known are interactive, inseparable" (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 37). • Findings are literally the creation of the process of interaction between the two. • (Guba, 1990, p. 27) • "Interpretivist knowledge comprises the reconstruction of intersubjective meanings, the interpretive understanding of the meanings humans construct in a given context and how these meanings interrelate to form a whole… idiographic" (Greene, 1990, p. 235).
Methodology- How such knowledge is acquired and accumulated? How should the inquirer go about finding out knowledge? (Guba, 1990; Lynham, 2008)	• The human instrument using qualitative methods engages in purposive sampling, inductive data analysis, grounded theory, and emergent design. (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). • Hermeneutic, dialectic – individual constructions are elicited and refined hermeneutically, and compared and contrasted dialectically, with aim of generating one/or a few constructions on which there is substantial consensus. • (Guba, 1990, p. 27) • "naturalistic, field study, ethnographic, subjective, and grounded theory" (Merriam, 1991, p. 48).
Axiology- How we ought to act in acquiring, accumulating and applying such knowledge? What values guide the choices made by researchers in the selection, conduct and dissemination of inquiry and its outcomes? (Guba, 1990; Lynham, 2008)	• Inquiry is influenced by the inquirer, the choice of paradigm, the substantive theory, values of the context, and should demonstrate congruence (value-resonance) (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). • "generates working hypotheses that are connected not to a priori theory but to a context-specific, often emergent inquiry problem, which may or may not be informed by existing knowledge" (Greene, 1990, p. 236). • Looks at process rather than outcomes or products (Merriam, 1991, p. 49).
Teleology- To what end ought we apply such knowledge and who gets to say? (Guba, 1990; Lynham, 2008)	• "storytelling" (Greene, 1990, p. 228). • Formulate generalizations that "make explicit the context dependence of relationships" (Mishler, 1979, p. 9).

Table 14. *Continued*

Guiding Metaphysical System and Components of the Naturalistic Paradigm	
Inquiry Characteristics and Definition	Necessary Practices to Enact Characteristics
Inquiry Aim- What are the goals of the knowledge we seek? (Lynham, 2008)	• Consensus; recovery of integrative values (Deetz, 2001) • Understanding; reconstruction (Guba & Lincoln, 2005)
Goodness/Quality Criteria- What are the requirements of goodness/quality of the inquiry, and what must be done to ensure that they are met? (Lynham, 2008)	• Trustworthiness and authenticity including catalyst for action (Guba & Lincoln, 2005) • Transferability (Greene, 1990)
Voice- Whose 'voice' constitutes the narration of the discoveries of inquiry? (Lynham, 2008)	• Stakeholders as collaborators (Greene, 1990)
Training- What expertise is necessary to conduct the inquiry and prepare the researcher? (Lynham, 2008)	• Resocialization; qualitative and quantitative; history; values of altruism, empowerment and liberation (Guba & Lincoln, 2005)
Inquirer Posture- How ought the researcher approach the inquiry process? (Lynham, 2008)	• Knower and known are interactive, inseparable (Greene, 1990, p. 234). "Conversational dialogue… and exchange of language emerges/evolves as the narrative text is co-created between the researcher and the participant" (1985). "The central aim of ethnography is to understand another way of life from the native's point of view…rather than studying people, ethnography means learning from people" (Vandermause & Fleming, 2011, p. 369). • "Passionate participant" as facilitator of multivoice reconstruction (Guba & Lincoln, 1994, p.113)
Ethics- guidelines followed to "respect the rights, needs, values, and desires of the informants" (Spradley, 1980, p. 3).	• Mutual respect, noncoercion and nonmanipulation, and support for democratic values and institutions (House, 1990). • "the researcher and the researched maintain a continuing dialogue and negotiation. There should be a reciprocity of benefit in every study. When a researcher benefits, the participants should too"(Creswell, 2009, p. 198) .

Table 14. *Continued*

<table>
<tr><td colspan="6">Guiding Metaphysical System and Components of the Naturalistic Paradigm</td></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="2">Research Design: How the research study will be designed in order to most elegantly study the phenomenon/a being studied (Lynham, 2008).</td><td colspan="2">Research Questions- The questions asked during the inquiry process and which focus and guide the study in terms of design, conduct, and subsequent action (Lynham, 2008).</td><td colspan="3">Two qualitative questions and one quantitative question (as noted below) guided this study. However, the one qualitative question is derived from a hermeneutic phenomenology lens and the other from an ethnography lens which guided data collection and analysis for these two questions.</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">Research Procedure- A definitive and complete statement of the plan, structure, and strategy of investigation necessary to conduct/carry and meet the inquiry aim/s and ideals (Lynham, 2008).</td><td colspan="3">Data collection occurred in three phases as guided by naturalistic inquiry: (1)“orientation and overview,” (2)“focused exploration,” and (3)“member check” (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 166). The methodological traditions of hermeneutic phenomenology and ethnography were embedded in these inquiry procedures. Doing so enabled the thorough address of the particular inquiry genre of each research question.</td></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="2">Research Strategies: the inquiry methods to be used (Lynham, 2008).</td><td>Qualitative</td><td>Data Collection
Data Analysis
Write-up, Dissemination, and Evaluation</td><td>1.(a) in depth interviews, (b) participant observations, and (c) document analyses.
2. Constant comparative method by Glaser & Strauss (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, pp. 235-236), adapted for naturalistic paradigm by Lincoln and Guba (1985)
3. Publication of findings in hope of generating catalytic and tactical authenticity.</td><td>Research Question 1 (an ethnographic question): How do participants describe the particular setting of Western Protestant house churches, and how does this setting facilitate the practices of shared leadership and engagement?</td><td>Research Question 2 (a hermeneutic phenomenological question): How do church members, in Western Protestant house church settings where shared leadership is practiced, describe their lived experience with shared leadership and engagement?</td></tr>
<tr><td>Quantitative</td><td>Data Collection
Data Analysis
Write-up, Dissemination, and Evaluation</td><td>1.To facilitate the member checking process, a quantitative survey was designed to gather perceptions from members in the church.
2.Was emergent based on findings.
3. Publication of findings in hope of generating catalytic and tactical authenticity.</td><td colspan="2">Research Question 3 (a descriptive quantitative question): Can their descriptions form tentative definitions for shared leadership and engagement, which might be confirmed by other house church members?</td></tr>
</table>

Adapted from: EDRM 702, 2011, Susan A. Lynham; The Paradigm Dialogue by E. G. Guba, 1990; Handbook of Qualitative Research, 3rd ed. by N. K. Denzin and Y. S. Lincoln, 2005, pp. 191-215; Paradigmatic Controversies, Contradictions, and Emerging Confluences, Revisited by Y. S. Lincoln, S. A. Lynham & E. G. Guba, (2011), pp. 97-128; The Foundations of Social Research by M. Crotty, 2003. (1967).

Lincoln (1990, p. 72), relates to:

> the desired 'states of being' among respondents, participants, and stakeholders…demonstrating levels of understanding and sophistication, enhanced ability of above to take action during and after inquiry, and to negotiate on behalf of themselves and their own interests in the public arena.

Categories of quality criteria are expanded upon below.

The trustworthiness of a study is demonstrated through adherence to the following four criteria: credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. Credibility is demonstrated through two tasks: "first, carry out the inquiry in such a way that the probability that the findings will be found to be credible is enhanced and, second demonstrate the credibility of the findings by having them approved by the constructors of the multiple realities being studied" (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 296). Techniques for ensuring credibility include: prolonged engagement, persistent observation, peer debriefing, negative case analysis, and member checks.

Transferability is demonstrated by providing significant descriptive data so that future inquirers might accumulate empirical evidence about contextual similarity. This criterion is satisfied through thick descriptions and narrative developed out of the context.

The final two criteria, dependability and confirmability, rely on one another. Dependability is the process of seeking "means for taking into account both factors of instability and factors of phenomenal or design induced change" (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 299). In regards to confirmability, it is not relevant that the investigator be objective, rather the emphasis is on the characteristics of the data. Both, dependability and confirmability, are accomplished through an external auditor. The external auditor "examine[s] the process of the inquiry, and in determining its acceptability the auditor attests to the dependability of the inquiry. The inquiry auditor also examines the product—the data, findings, interpretations,

and recommendations—and attests that it's supported by data and is internally coherent" (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 318) thereby attesting to confirmability. Table 15 shows how the applicable trustworthiness criteria were met in this study.

Authenticity ensures that the practices engaged in and the design and conduct of the study and subsequent use of methods limn with the metaphysics of the paradigm. Four such criteria need to be satisfied to this end: ontological authenticity, educative authenticity, catalytic authenticity, and tactical authenticity. Table 16 provides an overview of these authenticity criteria, and how they were satisfied in my study.

Summary of Methodology

The emergent nature of naturalistic inquiry, and of this study, is underscored by the "bricolage" approach encouraged by Denzin and Lincoln (2011). The investigator utilizing the naturalist paradigm must adapt and integrate the tools or techniques at their disposal to respond most appropriately to the inquiry at hand. And, as new data are collected and analyzed, they must be assessed and evaluated to inform proceeding inquiry. The design and development of this inquiry was emergent. The combination of the methodologies (hermeneutic phenomenology and ethnography) embedded in the paradigm of naturalist inquiry seemed to be that best suited to exploring the lived experience of Western Protestant church members with the phenomenon of shared leadership and member engagement, while acknowledging and assessing the distinct culture of the particular setting I was choosing to explore, namely, house churches. This approach continued to be updated and refined, as my immersion in the study informed my inquiry process.

In addition, the emergent nature of this research was driven by the desire to find the shared constructions of the lived phenomenon in the context of Western Protestant house

Table 15. *Research Strategies, Corresponding Research Questions, Methods Choices and the Meeting of Trustworthiness Criteria*

	Corresponding Research Questions	Methods Choices	Applicable Criteria of Trustworthiness	Defined Techniques for Meeting Applicable Criteria	How this Study will Utilize Techniques and Therefore Meet Applicable Criteria
Qualitative	Research Question 2 (a hermeneutic phenomenological question): How do church members, in Western Protestant church settings where shared leadership is practiced, describe their lived experience with shared leadership and member engagement?	Interviews & document analysis	Credibility	Member checks-"continuous, informal testing of information by soliciting reactions of respondents to the investigators reconstruction of what he or she has been told" (Lincoln & Guba, 1986, p. 77).	Throughout interviews, I gained assent by gently summarizing the participant's comments to test my interpretation
				Prolonged engagement- "lengthy and intensive contact with the phenomena (or respondents in the field)" (Lincoln & Guba, 1986, p. 77).	Interviews were lengthy
				Negative case analysis-Actively searching for "negative instances relating to developing insights and adjusting the latter continuously until no further negative instances are found" (Lincoln & Guba, 1986, p. 77).	I reviewed interview transcripts and documents to inform insights and update proceeding interview questions as needed.
	Research Question 1 (an ethnographic question): How do participants describe the particular setting of Western Protestant house churches, and how does this setting facilitate the practices of shared leadership and member engagement?	Participant observation & document analysis	Credibility	Negative case analysis	I reviewed field notes and documents to inform insights and update proceeding exploration.
				Persistent observation- "in-depth pursuit of those elements found to be especially salient through prolonged engagement" (Lincoln & Guba, 1986, p. 77).	Ongoing participation in and observation (70+ hours of observation) of the house church gatherings was informed by other data collection sources.
Quantitative	Research Question 3 (a quantitative question): Can their descriptions form tentative definitions for shared leadership and member engagement, which might be confirmed by other church members?	Grounded survey, generating descriptive statistics	Credibility	Member checks	Survey served as a means to check with an extended group the perceptions gathered and interpretation generated through participant observation, interviews, and document analysis.

Table 15. *Continued*

	Corresponding Research Questions	Methods Choices	Applicable Criteria of Trustworthiness	Defined Techniques for Meeting Applicable Criteria	How this Study Utilized Techniques and Therefore Met Applicable Criteria
	All three research questions	All three methods	Credibility	Triangulation – "mode of improving the probability that findings and interpretations will be found credible" by comparing findings with findings from other sources, methods, investigators, or theories (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 305).	Triangulation occurred through methods (participant observation, interviews, document analysis), and sources (multiple individuals, myself as a participant, and documents). Information gathered through each method or source was assessed and informed in comparison to the other methods and source.
				Peer debriefing- "exposing oneself to a disinterested professional peer to 'keep the inquirer honest,' assist in developing working hypotheses, develop and test the emerging design, and obtain emotional catharsis" (Lincoln & Guba, 1986, p. 77).	This happened through conversations with my advisor and with another colleague who is in the same dissertation process.
			Transferability	Thick Description- narrative developed out of the context so that judgments about the degree of fit or similarity may be made by others who may wish to apply all or part of the findings elsewhere (Lincoln & Guba, 1986, p. 77).	Thick description was gathered from participant observations and document analyses. I strove to take notes with great detail.
			Dependability	External audit- requires both the "establishment of an audit trail and the carrying out of an audit by a competent external, disinterested auditor" (Lincoln & Guba, 1986, p. 77).	My advisor served as the external auditor ensuring that the process I was following was appropriate
			Confirmability	External audit	My advisor served as the external auditor ensuring that the product (data and reconstructions) were appropriate
				Triangulation	Triangulation of my methods and sources, as mentioned, served as confirmation that my findings are legitimate
				Reflexive journal	A detailed reflexive journal was kept throughout the process capturing my thoughts and feelings in regards to methodological decisions and personal reflections.

Table 16. *Integration of Metaphysical Characteristics of Naturalist Inquiry with Necessary Authenticity Criteria and How They Will Be Met in this Study*

Metaphysical Characteristics of Inquiry	Metaphysics of Naturalistic Inquiry	Corresponding Authenticity Criteria	How this Study Met these Criteria
Ontology- What makes for reality? (Guba, 1990; Lynham, 2008)	" realities exist in the form of multiple mental constructions, socially and experientially based, local and specific, dependent for their form and content on the persons who hold them"(Guba, 1990, p. 27). .	Ontological authenticity- "heightened awareness of one's own constructions and assumptions, manifest and unspoken" (Lincoln, 1990, p. 72). Educative authenticity- "increased awareness and appreciation of constructions of other stakeholders" (Lincoln, 1990, p. 72).	Allowing participants to read and review the study findings and possible publications served and will serve to heighten their awareness about their own and others' constructions and assumptions. Likewise, the dialectical process of going back and forth in conversation with participants and possible multiple interviews adided in the creation of a shared understanding.
Axiology- How we ought to act in acquiring, accumulating and applying such knowledge? What values guide the choices made by researchers in the selection, conduct and dissemination of inquiry and its outcomes? (Guba, 1990; Lynham, 2008)	Inquiry is influenced by the inquirer, the choice of paradigm, the substantive theory, values of the context, and should demonstrate congruence (value-resonance) (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).	Catalytic authenticity- "the prompt to action generated by inquiry efforts" (Lincoln, 1990, p. 72). Tactical authenticity- "the ability to take action, to engage the political arena on behalf of oneself or referent stakeholder/participant group" (Lincoln, 1990, p. 72).	Write-up of the findings in the following anticipated ways: one manuscript will focus on the construction of leadership throughout church history, identifying the key points and people that influenced leadership's enactment in the Western Protestant Church. Additional manuscripts may present a theory of the relationship between shared leadership and engagement and summarize the findings of this study. If published, my findings may serve as a vehicle for change or action by Western Protestant Church members.
Teleology- To what end ought we apply such knowledge and who gets to say? (Guba, 1990; Lynham, 2008)	"storytelling" (Greene, 1990, p. 228). Formulate generalizations that "make explicit the context dependence of relationships" (Mishler, 1979, p. 9).		

churches that became evident over time. Guba and Lincoln (1985, 1986) explained: “those who inhabit a particular context, come to a consensus about its nature” (p. 9). However this consensus is not a finalized construction at any point in time, instead divergent information is sought from participants and “the immediate and continual interplay of information” (p. 244) is used to construct emergent concepts and inform reconstructions. I was in a continual process of exploration, seeking clarification of consensual (convergent) and divergent thinking, using each new piece of information to inform subsequent redesign and enable further exploration and understanding.

This chapter has described the methodology (in this case the embedded methodologies of hermeneutic phenomenology and ethnography) that were utilized for this study consistent with the guidelines presented by Lincoln and Guba (1989) for locating the study within the naturalistic paradigm. It has also provided clarification of and justification for the subsequent methods choices and why they were considered most appropriate to this study. Details on such choices—including participant selection, site selection, data collection and analysis, write-up and dissemination—were also provided. Finally, these design and implementation choices were considered against the two categories of quality criteria—trustworthiness and authenticity—and a brief description of how each set was satisfied in this study was provided.

CHAPTER FOUR: REPORT ON FINDINGS

This study aimed to undertake an exploration of both the culture and the phenomenon of selected Western Protestant house churches in one Midwestern state[4] in hopes of unearthing how shared leadership and member engagement manifested themselves. What emerged was a rich picture of small groups of individuals participating in purposeful expressions of their faith. In order to convey my findings to the reader, this chapter will address my research questions as follows.

4. How do participants describe the particular setting, where shared leadership is practiced, and how does this setting seem to interact with their engagement as house church members? (a descriptive ethnographic question)
5. How do church members, in Western Protestant house church settings where shared leadership is practiced, describe their lived experience with shared leadership and member engagement? (a hermeneutic phenomenological question)
6. Can their descriptions of shared leadership and member engagement be used to inform tentative definitions for shared leadership and member engagement which might be confirmed by other members of the selected house churches? (a descriptive quantitative question)

My first research question was aimed at gathering an understanding of the particular culture of house churches. Richly describing the culture to the reader establishes a framework upon which to answer my other two questions. Thus, Part A of this chapter will include discussion of those cultural pieces that were similar across all three sites and the ensuing relationships with

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[4] Again, this very localized context should be assumed when I refer to the house churches or the selected house churches examined in this inquiry

member engagement and shared leadership. While the culture of the selected house churches will be explored separately, it should be noted as seen in figure 13 below that the culture is one manifestations of the phenomenon of the selected house churches. As such, the ways in which the culture illuminates the essence of the phenomenon will be discussed in the summary of Part A. Then, Part B will address my second question and the manifestations (of the essence) of the phenomenon of the selected house churches. This part will draw on structuration theory and engagement theory provided in chapter two. Next, my third research question in Part C will facilitate reporting of the quantitative survey administered. Finally, the qualitative (research question one and two) and quantitative (research question three) data will be cumulated to provide a modified version of the theory of shared leadership as applicable to this particular context. Figure 13 is provided as a visual summary of this chapter showing that the phenomenon of the selected Western Protestant house churches is illuminated via the culture and the manifestations (of the essence) of this phenomenon.

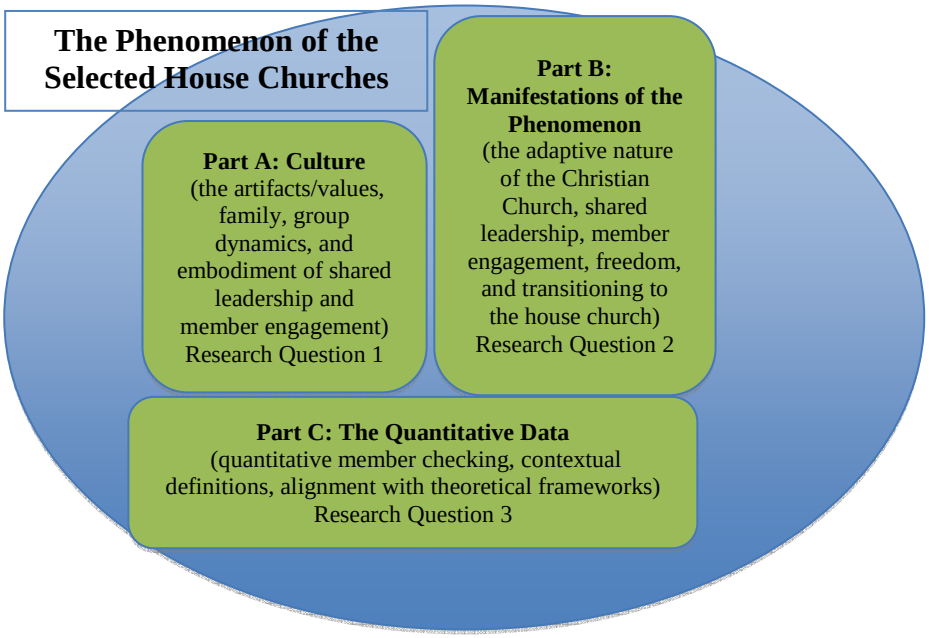

Figure 13. *Visual summary of the findings regarding the phenomenon of the selected Western Protestant house churches.*

Finally, the phenomenon is elucidated via the quantitative member checking and cumulated data.

Part A: The Culture of the Selected House Churches

As mentioned in chapter three, while phenomenology is the best suited methodology for getting at the lived experience of individuals, this approach does not always allow the researcher to "observe activities and infer meanings not in the awareness of participants" (1985). Ethnography, however, with its emphasis on participant observation, provides a means for doing so and allows the researcher an opportunity to better understand the context and culture in which the individuals are participating (Moustakas, 1994, p. 3). This approach shifted the focus from the researcher as an outside observer (the etic perspective) to one of discovering the insider's point of view (emic perspective). The use of ethnography shaped this study as a "systematic attempt to understand the knowledge a group of people have learned and are using to organize their behavior" (Moustakas, 1994) and enabled me to address my first research question, namely: How do participants describe the particular setting, where shared leadership is practiced, and how does this setting seem to interact with their engagement as house church members?.

Utilizing an ethnographic methodology allowed me to blend the etic and emic perspectives. The emic perspective is that perspective which is "locally held…of an individual, group, or institution" (Spradley, 1979, p. 3). The etic perspective, on the other hand, is generally afforded through an outsider's perspective which enables one to "uncover rule-governed behaviors, norms of interaction, and complex skills for groups or activities previously unacknowledged, unsanctioned, or thought of in entirely different ways" (Heath & Street, 2008, p. 44). So while my second research question (drawing from hermeneutic phenomenology) directed me to gather the perspectives of house church "insiders," the addition of the ethnographic perspective allowed me to identify patterns, norms or behaviors that might not be

visible to those who have been deeply involved in the group for some time. Thus, the analysis that emerges from this portion of my research could be considered a blend of "assumptions about perceptions or intent on the part of group members as well as the ethnographer's [my] background knowledge of related literatures and past research" (Heath & Street, 2008, p. 43). As such, while this section does draw from participant interviews, it draws most heavily from my participant observations.

This section will answer my first, and ethnographic, research question by providing rich description of the culture of house churches. Schein's (Heath & Street, 2008) work on organizational culture and McLuhan's (1964) introduction of the medium as the message will enable my analysis, seeking to identify the underlying values and beliefs that are present in the house church culture. First, the visible pieces of the culture (the mediums, artifacts, form) will be discussed along with the values (beliefs or messages) these pieces reveal. Then, the culture of the house church as a family will be discussed along with the ensuing group dynamics. Finally, the way in which the culture embodies shared leadership and member engagement will be elucidated. Part A of figure 13 above has been expanded below in figure 14 to provide a visual summary for this section.

The Artifacts of the Selected House Churches

In form and function, all three sites exemplified a culture that would be considered quite foreign to what one might expect in a typical church setting. Most Western Protestant churches gather weekly in a formal building designed particularly for the purpose of religious gatherings. A typical church would have rows of pews or chairs facing the front of the room where a few individuals lead songs, readings or prayers, and provide teachings. All three sites where I

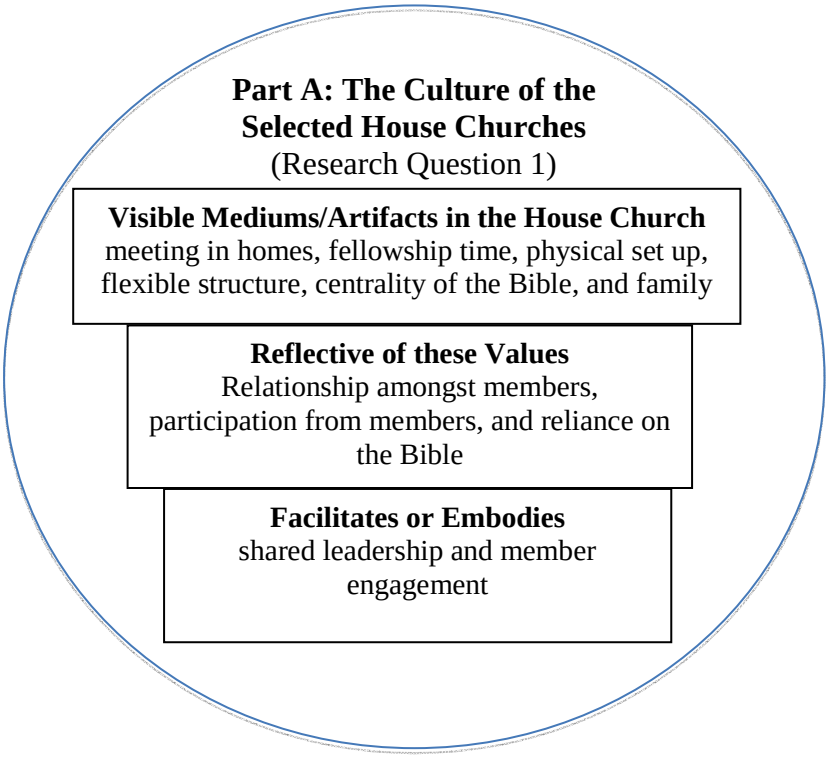

Figure 14. *Visual summary of the culture of the selected house churches.*

attended gathered in homes where the physical set up, as well as the activities that took place, were quite different from a traditional church. As I began to review my field notes and analyze my findings, what became apparent was the role that the chosen church form plays in the culture that is created or espoused. House church members had made purposeful choices or possibly unconscious choices to create or participate in a church form that was very different than that of the traditional church. And these changes in form impacted the way their faith was experienced and expressed. One participant explained,

> I always go back to what we talked about early on in the early years that its life before form instead of the other way around. Its not form and then you try to bring life into it. Its life and then you bring some form to that life and when you think about that, that's the total difference. To me, that's the difference in a nutshell. (IP2, 2012, #4, p. 1)

Particularly, when I contrasted the form of the traditional church to the house church, I began to see how the form changed, and resultant culture, which were representative of the theological or

philosophical values the members held. This observation prompted me to explore McLuhan's (1964) assertion that the medium (or the form) is the message and Schein's (2004) work on organizational culture.

Schein (2004) explained that there are three levels of culture,

> these levels range form the very tangible overt manifestations that one can see and feel to the deeply embedded, unconscious, basic assumptions…in between these layers are various espoused beliefs, values, norms, and rules of behavior that members of the culture use as a way of depicting the culture to themselves and to others. (p. 25)

Thus, examining the visible artifacts of house church culture along with interview data and extant literature seemed beneficial in order to draw some conclusions about the beliefs, values, and assumptions that these artifacts represented.

Likewise, McLuhan's (1964) work supported and informed this analysis. Veliquette (2012) utilized McLuhan's theories to analyze the phenomenon of video venue churches with the specific aim of determining how, if at all, the medium of the video impacted the message that was being communicated. His use of McLuhan's (1964) theories and his findings resonated significantly with what I thought I might be seeing in the house church.

Commonly in Western Protestant Evangelical circles, one might hear the axiom that the message stays the same, but the way (medium) we get the message out must always change in response to a changing culture. However, McLuhan (1964) would argue that when you change the medium, you necessarily and inevitably change the message as well. He asserted that the medium is the message, hearkening back to the familiar saying "actions speak louder than words." McLuhan (2004) asserted that, "It is the medium that shapes and controls the scale and form of human association and action. Indeed, it is only too typical that the 'content' of any medium blinds us to the character of the medium" (p. 9). In other words, individuals (or in this case, churches) are focused on the content and unaware of the underlying effects of any given

medium or technology. McLuhan (1964) suggested that focusing on the content (message) rather than the effects of the medium are common in the western mindset.

Veliquette (2012) found that the use of the video in churches was not a neutral medium and it did in fact impact the reception and interpretation of the message in regards to church attendees. He found that the use of video impacted the level of engagement from church members, the quality of the teaching, and the perception of the paid pastoral staff, to name a few. His findings, along with McLuhan's work, suggest that we could and possibly should take into consideration how any utilized medium in the church alters the message. In light of this discussion, it will be beneficial to reflect on the mediums (or in Schein's (2004) language, the artifacts) used in the house church and provide some analysis about how they impacted or reflected the messages (or values, beliefs, and assumptions) in the house church and thus, created a particular culture. First, though, some brief discussion about the biblical basis for the house church form will be discussed. Then, the following mediums of the house church will be discussed: meeting in homes, fellowship time, the physical set up, the flexible structure, and the study of scripture. I, at times, use form and medium interchangeably although in both cases I am referring to the tangible expression or activity the house church utilized versus the meaning or message it connoted. This discussion will draw from my observations in all three sites.

The Bible as a guide for form. Several participants explained that the particular culture they aimed to develop in house churches was a reflection of their understanding of the Bible's guidelines for the Christian church. While biblical interpretation leaves much room for debate, especially in regards to whether and how the Bible offers guidelines for church structure, participants suggested that they were trying to build their house church after the examples provided in the New Testament. One participant explained:

> You read Colossians there were house churches and that's what it was in the beginning …I took out of Colossians 2:2 about how Paul was praying for them to be woven together in love and that they would really know the Word and care for each other. I think that's a good model… the Bible is number one, that's our guide we don't want to get away from that when you look at the end of Colossians it talks about greet so and so in the church that meets in their home. (IP5, 2012, #454-455, 457, p. 12)

These descriptions align with some of the house church literature, which also suggests that this model aligns more appropriately with Biblical guidelines given (Viola, 2008).

While many participants connected their chosen form of church to guidelines or examples offered in the New Testament, some participants noted the trouble with the lack of guidelines offered:

> Therein lies a problem. There isn't a systematic way to do church in the Bible. You can search scripture and it doesn't say, 'meet at this time, meet on this day' we could argue about the Sabbath and Sunday, but the thing is that, in Acts chapter 2 and 4 at the end of each it kind of gives out what they were doing at the beginning of the church. But that's also what they did at the beginning. (IP8, 2012, #543-544, p. 3)

As such, connections and justifications for house churches from the Bible were neither clear nor indisputable. However, their decisions about the mediums (or forms) used in the house church were purposeful and thus reflected and perpetuated particular messages as will be demonstrated next.

Meeting in homes. House church members from all three sites gathered in a home belonging to one of the church members. Occasional gatherings took them to other locations (like a neighborhood clubhouse or a park) but the site was never an owned or rented building. Conversations with participants and literature suggest that meeting in homes is not merely a convenient or inexpensive choice, but rather a purposeful one. Many suggest that this choice aligns with the examples provided in the New Testament (Atkinson, 1996). This set up necessitates small fellowships, fosters comfort physically and socially, as well as a high level of intimacy: "When you start meeting in people's homes, people are welcoming you into their

homes, it's very intimate, very social… a lie wouldn't get very far in a place like that. It's very one-on-one" (IP 8, 2012, #548, p. 3). Another participant added, "I love how we meet in people's homes because it sheds light on who we are" (IP12, 2012, #1156, p. 9). The choice to meet in homes seemed to be reflective of the value on low overhead cost for house churches and ultimately on the importance of relationship amongst house church members, which was further facilitated by the next two mediums.

Fellowship. At the beginning of each gathering some level of informal fellowship or greetings took place. This inclusion is not uncommon to what one might find in a traditional church. However, because of the size of house churches, it was possible for everyone to greet each other and for meaningful conversations to erupt even in this short time because church members knew each other well. This piece reflected the commitment to share life with one another and experience deep relationship. When one participant was asked why this time was included, he explained "because of the desire to be intensely relational and to share that and allow opportunity for that" (IP11, 2012, #1028, p. 11). House church members felt that this fellowship was an integral part of the church experience: "I think there's always a longing and a desire inside of people to belong and to really be close to people and some people don't realize that that is a desire of theirs and they're afraid of it, but it's there" (IP12, 2012, #1161, p. 10). The same participant added,

> And then there are the other things, the question of life as to how this is going on, I have this question, I have this doubt, I have this curiosity, and we should have both of those, we should have things that are systematic and things that are reactive. (IP12, 2012, #988, p. 8)

Another participant credited this practice to scripture saying fellowship was an obvious and necessary piece to their gatherings,

> And it just seemed like scripturally you couldn't just come at it from the structured systematic thing that there were things that would not be accounted for if we didn't have the life on life stuff as well and that was part of the relationship as well. It seemed obvious to all of us when we get into it that it was necessary. (IP11, 2012, #1038, p. 11)

This level of fellowship was also connected to the presence of genuine relationships amongst house church members, and was a prime reason individuals chose to attend this type of church, "It's more like real relationships with real people. So I think that is the most attractive aspect of the home church" (IP8, 2012, #552, p. 3). Another participant added, "I think the biggest [draw] is how genuine the relationships are" (IP9, 2012, #549, p. 3). The house church size and style facilitated this level of relationship: "I like the house church because they're people I have gotten to know very well. And even when you have new people come in you get to know them faster because there is less people" (IP4, 2012, #237, p. 4). Another participant added, "in house church and simple church you can't hide, you can't hide" (IP6, 2012, #443, p. 11).

In addition to the initial greeting time, each site had some means for extended fellowship and sharing. One site dedicated the first half hour specifically to fellowship and then had a specific time during the more formal gathering for sharing updates, needs, and prayer requests with the whole group. Another site assigned the second half of their meeting times for open sharing including any observations or insights someone might have had during the week about scripture as well as needs and prayer requests. And another site always made time for this discussion informally during the gathering although it may have happened at the beginning or the end. This emphasis on time and structure reflected the value and importance that house church members placed on fellowship and relationship.

Participants contrasted this experience with traditional churches where size seemed to limit fellowship:

> When you meet in a church there are saved people and there are unsaved people and we don't know, there's just a bunch of people in a congregation listening to a teacher teaching what he knows to be true, while the questions are kind of… not… able to be asked at that time. It's more of a closed environment; it's not as personal. (IP8, 2012, #547, p. 3)

Another participant added, "In Kansas there were fifty different people, and it was hard to get in because I was from out of state and they were related in one way or another and I was the Presbyterian heathen" (IP10, 2012, #717, p. 9). Experiences in larger churches where individuals had not developed deep relationships may have contributed to the belief that this level of relationship should be present in the house church. As such, house church members incorporated fellowship during their initial greetings, during the gathering through purposeful conversations, and acknowledged that this level of closeness was a draw for them to the house church.

Physical set-up. When the formal portion of the gathering began in each house church, everyone sat in a circle in chairs or on couches. There was no "front" of the room or point where everyone must turn their attention and thus, no individual who positionally held more power than others. The circle denoted a sense of equity amongst participants and the expectation that everyone can and should participate. The circle also fostered the above-mentioned sense of community and fellowship because you were, throughout the whole gathering, looking at each others' faces. As such, you could see the emotion, passion, or struggle in the faces of those who might be sharing at any given time. One participant contrasted this set up with her experience at a traditional church,

> A couple of times when we've visited churches I thought, man I don't like sitting here and looking at the backs of people's heads. And that is one thing that is very important to me. And when I talk to friends and I hear them say something when a bunch of people are talking and somebody will say, 'oh I go to this church,' and they say, 'oh you do!? So do I!' You don't know who goes to your church? From my mindset that doesn't work, I have a really hard time with that. That's my mindset. (IP6, 2012, #413-414, p. 8)

The physical set up was a reflection of the type of gathering house church members desired: one where multiple people could participate and get to know deeply the others around the circle. The organic and inclusive nature of this setup along with its contrast to the often hierarchical and exclusive structure in the traditional church will be discussed more in chapter five.

Flexibility. House churches seemed to demonstrate a high level of purposeful flexibility in several areas: meeting times, meeting structure, and in the variety visible between sites. This flexibility, from my estimation, was representative of the focus on people and relationship over structure and programs.

Each site met at a different time, one on Saturday evenings, one Sunday mornings, and one Sunday evenings. The simple fact that some sites strayed from the common Sunday morning meeting time reflected the flexibility of the gatherings as well as the ability to respond to the needs of the individuals or families involved. One site moved its meeting time during my data collection because of the needs of the group. They were able to have a discussion and come to an agreement about what suited the group best. Likewise, on a given weekend that group could move or cancel the gathering if needed.

Every site also demonstrated some flexibility in terms of the type and order of activities that took place during the gathering. “We just sit down and talk about verses. There’s no one set sermon usually, it’s just like, you have questions that guide the discussion but I come out with a better understanding of a certain verse or parable” (IP4, 2012, #248, p. 5). Other participants described this flexibility in structure,

> We had dinner together and then we would kind of talk and then let the kids go to bed and after that we would talk… it was pretty open and free. People could express or share a testimony or bring in a theological debate. (IP8, 2012, #532 & 534, p. 1)

The flexibility was also linked to a level of casualness in the environment, “and it’s more flexible. You don’t have to stay on a schedule…This isn’t like that, it’s more relaxed” (IP12, 2012, #1089, p. 2). This flexibility was a reflection of the open and shared leadership style but also of the desire to be responsive to the needs of church members:

> But what I really want to do… is to be… It’s kind of like planned spontaneity. If there’s someone hurting there or there’s something that someone wants to deal with, yeah we have our bible reading that we want to do and so forth but that may not happen that morning. It may be something that has really be laid on someone’s heart that they really want to share… and what I’m trying to do is to try to develop that amongst people. (IP1, 2012, #85 & 87, p. 20)

Another participant relayed the importance of focusing on the needs of church members:

> We’ve had situations where something was going on, like, we had a family that attended for a while and something was going on with the daughter and that entire night was about talking and praying and you know, looking up verses and allowing the Spirit to work and speak through us. And it wasn’t so much as us speaking at them and the daughter, it was like a dialogue and it applied to all of us. (IP4, 2012, #295, p. 12)

Yet another participant affirmed this sentiment,

> It’s not been really rigid in that like the book we’re doing now about gospels and harmony or in stereo or whatever that if we came on a Sunday and we got together and somebody had something pressing I mean, all of that would get put to the side, it would be somebody needed to be prayed for or with or something going on in their life or whatever, then that would always take a priority. (IP3, 2012, #163, p. 5)

This practice of remaining flexible in order to respond to the needs of members was visible to me as well through my observations. In a particular gathering at one site I attended, following a few songs the discussion opened to how the church members were doing. After a few prodding questions, it became clear that one couple in the gathering was really struggling with their work and financial situation and thus even their marriage. The group focused then for some time on talking, encouraging, and praying with them in lieu of the pre-planned discussion. Tears were shared and scripture was incorporated but the emphasis was clearly on aiding this couple rather than following the usual format of the gathering.

Another principle that emerged in my interviews with participants in regards to the form of the house church was that there wasn't any one right way of doing house church. One participant explained, "every house church is different and every church is different and there's no perfect way it should be done and there's no perfect model and I think that's not how God really works, He doesn't give us wrote rules and regulations, He's very dynamic" (IP12, 2012, #1152, p. 9). Another participant echoed this idea:

> When we were looking around at different simple churches, they were all similar but not exactly the same, they had different styles, but like with us it changes, its different. I wouldn't give them any, 'this is what a good simple church does,' it doesn't really, they can do it their own way. Figure out what works best for themselves. (IP7, 2012, #373, p. 4)

This emphasis on a changing and customizable style was, again, connected to the importance of the people and relationships in the house church.

> So I think one of the things that we are discovering is that you have to deal with people. It's important to listen. And we can't shrink wrap everything and say this is the way to do it. And so in doing that you have to find out where people are, you have to see what your struggles are and you have to meet them where they are and deal with that and that's going to look different in a lot of different situations and actually have to do that, to think that you can capture all of this and say this is shrink wrapped for posterity sake, I think there is some value in that but you can only take it so far. (IP11, 2012, #984, p. 7)

The flexible style as well as the small size common to house churches enabled this customization to occur.

The centrality of the Bible. A final commonality observed in all three sites was the way in which the Bible was central to the teaching or content of the gatherings. When a teaching was provided or discussion was initiated, it was always based on scripture. Now this focus might seem obvious but the distinction I noticed was that content of the gatherings wasn't decorated with any fancy communication techniques or thematic lessons. In every gathering, they simply read the scripture and then discussed its meaning. Often, someone would provide contextual

information or refer to biblical commentaries, but that was usually the extent. This focus is notable because in many Western Protestant churches (particularly evangelical churches) the minister will provide teaching around themes, scripture is always drawn upon, but the focus can be less exegetical. In addition, many churches now utilize videos, lights, music or other technologies to enhance the experience of the message. One participant explained this focus in the house church, "just studying the Word of God and not, that's a core value we have too, not getting off on thematic things or you know, just study the Word of God and how can I apply it to my life?" (IP6, 2012, #434, p. 10). Another participant added, about his experience in traditional churches, "I think from the few times that I have been in a youth group situation it wasn't really based on the Word as much as it was based on having fun and entertainment. The simple church setting, it's more, it's not about entertainment, it's about the Word and God instead of about the life here, it's more about the life up there" (IP7, 2012, #368-369, p. 4).

House church members read the same portion of scripture throughout the week and came prepared to discuss and digest the meaning together. When teaching was offered, as mentioned, it was often directed at providing background and contextual information or prompting questions. At times the individual facilitating the teaching would distribute a handout, and in all three sites, these handouts reflected the focus on scripture. Handouts would provide additional Bible verses for reflection, information about historical context, and at times questions for thought. Appendix H shows a sample of a handout from one site.

The above-mentioned mediums (meeting in homes, fellowship time, the physical set up, the flexible structure, and the study of scripture) were indicative of underlying beliefs, values, and assumptions of the house church members. As indicated, these mediums (or artifacts of culture) reflected the value placed on relationship with one another, relying heavily on scripture

and the desire to see everyone participate to name a few. Next, an additional piece of the house church culture, which does not readily fit as a medium, will be discussed.

Family as House Church Culture

Family was likely the most pervasive descriptor and metaphor for the house church that surfaced during my data collection. In establishing contact with my first two sites, I had phone conversations with one of the house church members from each site. In both of these initial conversations, they told me that coming to the house church gathering was like coming to a "family reunion." They connected this image to the sense of informality and comfort they hoped I would feel. One participant explained, "With the house church it's just on a more intimate level, and so it feels like you're getting together with relatives and just talking" (IP4, 2012, #286, p. 11). Throughout interviews, participants offered the family as a description of the house church unsolicited and when I asked a few participants for a metaphor that would describe the house church, family was the first descriptor offered.

This emphasis on creating a family was coupled with scripture for some house church members:

> I went through the New Testament and I highlighted the word 'brethren' and 'sister' and it's all over. And so we are to treat each other, when it talks about relationships between the males in the church and to treat the females in the body as sisters so there's this sense of family and there's this relationship of the elder and the younger and to me that is a very good metaphor. (IP11, 2012, #1059, p.13)

The same participant added,

> In Acts when they came together and shared their resources and the apostles distributed it as needed and that spirit is there and we're not doing that and collecting it and giving it equal allotments but the sense of caring for each other and that level is there. (IP11, 2012, #1066, p. 13)

When I asked participants to describe why and how functioning as a family was present in the house church, they talked about the tangible ways they cared for and shared their lives with each other. One participant explained that the sense of family was connected to the investment that the house church members had put into her and her fiancé's lives:

> I feel a connection with them because they prayed for Tyler and I and saw our relationship develop and they've encouraged that and they were at my wedding showers and they helped with our wedding and we've gone through some stuff together and it would be very hard to just up and leave. Like, we have roots there. (IP12, 2012, #1155, p. 10)

Another participant added that functioning as a family included the willingness to offer help and ask for help from one another:

> We feel like we can ask each other for help, Ron needed help with his computer and I was more than happy to go and he felt like he could ask me that, we treat each other like family in the sense that we aren't so reserved with asking for help. We feel like we can ask our family. (IP11, 2012, #1064, p. 13)

I asked one participant if she could explain to me what she had experienced in her seven years in a house church that made her feel as if it was a family. She relayed the following story to me, through her tears:

> Well over three years ago, my brother, who didn't know the Lord, was diagnosed with IPF, idiopathic pulmonary fibrosis, and it's basically your lungs turn to cement and they have no idea why, there's no cure, the only hope is a lung transplant. So, I flew up to Montana, my kids bought my ticket so I could be with my brother when he went to the doctor and started going through all these tests when they were trying to figure out what was going wrong. That was in November. Then, in January of the following year, he got the official diagnosis, and they told him, 'you need to be thinking and getting your name on the lung transplant list'. Well, he was scheduled to come down to Jewish Hospital in Denver, cause they have a big pulmonary section, and do some studies and learn how to cope with his disease. But, February 28th, my sister-in-law called and said 'they are life-flighting my brother down to University hospital in Denver cause he's that bad.' So we went and met her, but through the whole thing, I mean, our church family was there, praying with us and him. Walt and Nancy came up to the room a couple of times just to be with the family, if there was anything cause they don't go to church, they had nothing, so just to be a support 'if you want someone to pray with you, we're here' and when they put my brother at the top of the transplant list and it was really strange because we went through St. Patrick's day, and all the doctors and nurses were all saying 'we're hopeful

> this weekend' and we were like 'why?' they were like, 'well, as hard as it may be, it's St. Patrick's day, people drink and drive and they get killed, and if ever there's a chance for a lung, it's this weekend.' But no lung came, and they kept him on the transplant list a week to ten days longer than they would, they put him on a ventilator 'cause it got so hard for him to breathe. But before they did that, when we could still talk to him and he could talk to us, I mean, Paul one day, and then my nephew who lives back east, they flew out to see my brother, but they had both at separate times had went to talk to my brother about the Lord. And you know, just to hear my brother say, 'I can't do it on my own anymore' you know? So, to know that he gave his life to the Lord, just weeks before he died, but the day they took him off the ventilator, Walt and Nancy were at the hospital with us the whole day. Aaron and Cary had flown in, because they were on vacation and they heard we were at the hospital, they came right from DIA and stayed with us until two o'clock in the morning when he finally died. To me that's family. (IP3, 182, p. 9-10).

This deep level of involvement and care for one another was visible to me during the gatherings I attended. Time was always taken both informally and formally to share what was going on in one another's lives. House church members who had extra food or resources would share willing. While attending I received fruit (plums, pears, and peaches) from one member's garden, meat from one member's freezer, and gift cards for grocery stores. One family shared a car with another family who was having car problems. House church members planned baby showers, made meals for each, had each other over for meals, recreated together (football games, bike rides), and consistently made an effort to be a part of each other's lives beyond the weekly gathering. The effort or desire to share life together as a family was also talked about openly during the gatherings as house church members struggled with how to make time for this level of involvement when everyone was increasingly busy.

Commonly house church members would email or call each other throughout the week with needs. I was included in these emails during my participation. I have included the text from one email below to demonstrate the level of closeness between house church members:

> All,
> Thank you for your prayers and am asking for continued prayer. Sunday evening I received a text from my immediate supervisor letting me know my services were needed in Ann Arbor, MI for the next eight months. Monday morning I accepted the offer and all

> was in order for me to leave this morning (Wednesday). Monday evening Cindy and I were asked to reconsider what was about to transpire. After many hours of seeking out godly council and prayer, I called my immediate supervisor back yesterday to let him know I was no longer available for Ann Arbor. I also offered up my resignation if need be. Ann Arbor is no longer on the docket for me, and my resignation has not been asked for yet. I am waiting to hear back from my immediate supervisor as to another possible position within the company or my resignation.
> I have just completed updating my resume for delivery to a modular manufacturing plant where a dear brother in Christ is currently employed. Please be in prayer for both situations. God has brought us to this point; he will deliver us through and beyond.
> As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord (Joshua 24:15)

In the weekly gathering following this email, we were told that this house church member was asked to resign and was thus unemployed. He and his wife had been struggling for some time with his job and the intense hourly and travel requirements. Thus, this email came to house church members with an understanding of the struggle they felt and the possible implications. The other house church members were able to support them through prayer and care. At the time of this write-up their situation had not yet been resolved but it is likely that this house church will care for them as needed, financially or otherwise.

Group Dynamics in the Selected House Churches

While house church participants readily compared themselves to a family, the close-knit nature of the group created a group culture, which impacted the integration of new members. I noticed this dynamic when I entered site two. I was new, as was another individual that night, but there was never any chance for us to introduce ourselves to the group or talk about our story or hear the story of the group. I wondered if they just didn't want to put us on the spot but it felt awkward to me that introductions weren't done, especially if the goal was that we should feel like family. I observed that having a group that was very close perpetuated a struggle with determining how to integrate new members. This dynamic served as a countercase, per say, to the notion of the house church as a family.

When I first noticed this dynamic, I asked participants if they had a means for integrating new members. What I found was that there was no formal means for assimilating new members, which seems to fit with the otherwise informal nature of the house church. Participants explained that integration of new members happened predominantly via relationship with others in the house church and this process seemed to work well when the visitor already had relationship with someone who attended the house church. One participant explained, “that sort of thing, it’s happened kind of informally so far and you know, but relationships that have kind of brought those people have kind of allowed that to happen pretty naturally, so we haven’t had any collisions of that, we haven’t needed to formalize it” (IP11, 2012, #1044, p. 12). Another participant from the same site who had first visited with her fiancé (who was already a member) confirmed that this informal process had aided her assimilation with the group.

However, the individual I mentioned before, Lucy, who was also new to site two, stopped attending after three weeks. I was able to follow up with her for an interview and what I found was that she too would readily describe the house church as a family, however it was not her family. She explained, “I just kind of felt like I was walking in on a family that I didn’t belong to” (IP10, 2012, #647, p. 1). One evening, in site two, the group planned to spend some time praying for a member, Sandy, who was about to head off to college. I asked Lucy if she had attended that night. Her response, “no, and I didn’t go specifically that night because I didn’t feel like I was a part of that. I don’t know Sandy so it felt like a family thing” (IP10, 2012, #694, p. 4). She explained to me that she just hadn’t connected with anyone in the group and had thus stopped attending. Although the house church culture fostered a family-feel, it seemed that this dynamic could make it potentially difficult for new members to get “in.”

In considering group culture in organizations, I looked at Hofstede, Hofstede, and Minkov's (2012) work on the dimensions of group culture to aid my understanding of this dynamic in house churches. Hofstede, et al. (2010) identified six dimensions of group culture, one of which is open systems versus closed systems. They explain this dimension,

> In open systems, members consider both the organization and its people open to newcomers and outsiders; almost anyone would fit into the organization. In closed systems, the organization and its people are felt to be closed and secretive, even among insiders. (p. 357)

While, the house church may not be on the extreme end of the spectrum as a closed system, it seemed that as groups became closer and shared a longer history together, the integration of new members became difficult. The members of site three had been together the longest and during my time participating in their gatherings, I did not see anyone new come or hear about anyone who was working towards inviting someone new. Although, it would be fair to note that I only participated for about three months. I followed up on this observation during an interview with a participant from site three. He explained their values in regards to inviting new people to attend:

> One of the things is we've come from different places where the focus was very seeker-oriented and the priorities were to bring people to the meeting and have greeters and do all these things and some of those were not great experiences. We felt that, that was some of the reasons why some of the intimate relationships weren't happening because everything was focused on bringing in people to the church meeting and not so much focusing on what do believers do when we got together. (IP11, 2012, #1045-1046, p. 12)

He added that they had decided to encourage house church members to develop relationships with others in their workplaces and neighborhoods and then invite them to the house church when it seemed fitting. His comments reveal the desire, in this site at least, to maintain a group that has intimate relationships. This dynamic reflects in some ways the closed system Hofstede et al. (2010) referred to as it becomes difficult or unlikely for new members to infiltrate the group easily.

The level of openness is connected to the practices of communication in the organization according to Hofstede et al. (2010). In the first site I attended I noticed that the weekly discussions included quite a bit of discussion about the purpose or focus of the house church. I'm not sure if this was for my benefit solely, but whatever the case, this communication helped me more quickly feel a part of this group. In site two, there was an absence of conversation about what was important or valued by the group. In looking at my reflexive journal, I noted that it took me longer to feel welcome and truly a part of the group at site two. And this feeling seemed to be true for Lucy as well, who has yet to return to the house church. Now, that the culture of the house church has been discussed in terms of the chosen mediums, the nature of family, and group dynamics, the resultant expression of shared leadership and member engagement will be examined.

Shared Leadership in Culture of the Selected House Churches

While shared leadership as a manifestation of the house church phenomenon will be discussed in detail in the next portion of this chapter, some time will be spent reflecting on how the culture of the house church facilitated or embodied shared leadership. As might be ascertained from the above descriptions, the medium of the house church was such that shared leadership was a natural style for this setting. A few of the aforementioned mediums, which particularly facilitated shared leadership, will be discussed: the physical set up and the flexibility.

If one were to simply compare the physical set-up amongst churches (Catholic, Protestant, and house) one might be able to easily draw conclusions about the style of leadership utilized. Most traditional churches use a set-up which denotes where the attention and authority is placed. Pews or chairs face a central point where one or a few people deliver the teaching or lead the music. In the house church, however, there is no front of the room; instead everyone sits

in a circle. No one sits or stands on a stage above the others. Thus, the immediate impression for those who attend is that everyone is on an equal playing field and should participate thusly.

The presence of shared leadership was also visible via the medium of flexibility in the house church. Because meeting times and meeting content were not formalized nor set by any one person, there were opportunities for anyone who desired to contribute. During my participation, I received emails from various house church members suggesting activities, moving the meeting location and even canceling the meeting. Likewise, during the gathering, individuals would chime in guiding the discussion, asking for prayer, requesting the group sing a song, or posing a question for the group. The flexible and informal environment allowed for this involvement. As such, shared leadership was enabled (although not always consciously promoted as will be discussed later).

No participant directly acknowledged the relationship between the physical set up and shared leadership or between the flexible form and shared leadership although some referenced the impact of meeting in homes or of the flexible form (as discussed previously). However, in applying the theories of Schein (2004) and McLuhan (1964) one could assume that these physical manifestations (the set up within house churches and flexible form) were representative of deeply held beliefs albeit unknown to participants. I suggest that the physical set up and flexible form was representative of their desire to include everyone in the leadership of the house church.

Member Engagement in the Culture of the Selected House Churches

The ways in which house church members engaged with one another will be discussed in more detail in the following section as well, however some comment can be made here about member engagement as facilitated through the culture of house churches. Due to the

aforementioned mediums of the house church as well as the functioning of the house church as a family, one might guess that the level of engagement for house church members was impacted. The culture of house churches compelled a high level of engagement that extended beyond participation in a gathering once a week. In my first conversation with a member from site one, he explained to me that to really get to know and understand the house church, I should not rely solely on what I saw during the weekly gathering. He explained that it would be a mistake to try to do so because participating in a house church was about sharing your life with others. His comment resonated with what I saw and heard from participants throughout my data collection. One of the ways that house church members talked about their experience in the house church was by referring to it as a lifestyle rather than an isolated weekly event. One participant explained, "it's just part of your day and stuff. If it's just getting together with someone for dinner or just ministering to somebody, it just kind of happens naturally" (IP5, 2012, #522, p. 20). The same participant added, "I just love it. It's so relational, it's so easy, it's easier to make Christ part of your lifestyle for me than to separate it and so okay now were going to church, it's easier for it to be part of my lifestyle" (IP5, 2012, #488, p. 16). Another participant added, when talking about the purpose of the house church, "it's like, 'what should we be doing?' and it's like… we're doing it. That's the beauty of it, we're not doing something, we are living" (IP8, 2012, #604, p. 10).

House church members connected this level of engagement with the means for growth and change to happen in their lives, "Life change happens, I think it happens in relationship, in close trusting relationships where you go deep with people. Where you can pray and share honestly and openly" (IP12, 2012, #1140, p. 8). The same participant added:

> I think the ideal way to do house church would be to live all really close to each other and to be able to interact with each other on a day-to-day basis and see each other. Because

> it's a little bit the same as a traditional church because you go on Sundays and you have this air that you put on because it's Sunday. So I think that it'd be really cool if house church happened in a more local setting, and you actually did life together. (IP12, 2012, #1143-1144, p. 8)

During a discussion in one site's gathering, a participant explained that house church members need to go through things together and have involvement in each other's lives. He added that house church members shouldn't settle for a religious experience. He asserted that it is in the context of life every day, not in the special moments we set aside on the weekend, that spiritual growth would happen.

While this level of engagement seemed to be the desired practice of the house church, participants acknowledged that this level did not always happen, "And I totally understand with our house church because everyone has their own separate struggles and there's weddings going on, there's job stuff going on so it's really hard to do life together" (IP12, 2012, #1146, p. 8). Although it seemed that engaging at this level was at times a struggle, it was an underlying value representative of and facilitated by the culture of the house church.

Summary of the Culture of the Selected House Churches

This part of my data analysis aimed to reflect on the mediums (or in Schein's (2004) language, the artifacts) used in the house church and provide some analysis about how they impacted or reflected the messages (or values, beliefs, and assumptions) in the house church and thus, created a particular culture. The biblical basis for the house church along with the mediums of meeting in homes, fellowship time, the physical set up, the flexible structure, and the study of scripture were discussed highlighting the value on relationship, participation from members and reliance on the Bible. In addition, the notion of family as representative of house church culture was explored along with the corresponding dynamics of closed and open group cultures. Finally,

some reflection was provided on the ways in which this culture embodied and facilitated shared leadership and member engagement. Shared leadership and member engagement are the "particular manifestations of the essence" (vanManen, 1990, p. 10) of the phenomenon of the selected house churches explored in this study and will next be discussed in much detail in response to my second research question. However, some reflection will first be offered here about how the culture of the selected house churches manifested the essence of the phenomenon as depicted in figure 13 at the outset of this chapter. The selected house churches demonstrated a shared sense about beingness which included sharing their lives with one another on a daily basis, a sense of responsibility to engage with one another, and a deep level of ownership in the success of the group. Their togetherness was viewed as a lifestyle rather than a weekly event and reflected who they were as a group rather than simply what they did. These findings shed light on the phenomenon of the selected house church and inform the upcoming discussion which will explore in depth the manifestations of the phenomenon via shared leadership and member engagement.

Part B: Manifestations of the Phenomenon of the Selected House Churches

As I drive south to visit site one on a Sunday morning, I notice a sign for Vintage City Church, a recent church plant currently meeting in a school. Their sign indicates savvy marketing and cutting edge design. A few miles more and I see a simple sign in a strip mall for the Poudre Valley Church of Christ where two women are entering wearing long skirts and hair that extends below their waists. I arrive at site one where no sign indicating the name of the church greets me. I park in a cul de sac and walk to the front door of a small home. I'm met by a handful of people who offer hugs and warm greetings. We sit on couches and chairs in a circle for the next two hours talking, singing, and praying. This is the locale in which, over the course of eight months, I

participated, observed, and explored the ways in which shared leadership and member engagement manifested themselves.

What struck me throughout the research process was recognition of the various ways in which groups strive to create a church gathering that most adequately accomplishes desired goals and aligns with the Bible as they interpret it and why they do so. In placing this reflection alongside my work on the history of leadership in the Christian church, the ways in which church leadership and the ensuing gatherings have taken shape seem to be connected to purposeful shifts and changes (often away from the more hierarchical and exclusive models) made by individuals or groups in response to their previous experiences and the current cultural context.

Although I set out to study, describe, and thereby understand how shared leadership and member engagement as the essence of the phenomenon of Western Protestant house churches were present and reflected in the culture, what I discovered was that shared leadership and member engagement were derivatives of something else which was taking place. The individuals and groups participating in house churches were not primarily seeking a church environment where shared leadership and engagement was practiced; rather they desired something different from their traditional church altogether. Shared leadership and member engagement seem to be the consequential byproducts, desired by some, but not the driving force which catapulted them into this form of church. Their desire for something different, I believe, is connected to a larger shift which may be taking place in the Western Protestant Christian Church and has been suggested as such by others, too (2010). This manifestation along with my findings regarding shared leadership and member engagement will be presented in this section in an effort to answer my second research question utilizing the methodology of hermeneutic phenomenology.

My second research question (How do church members, in Western Protestant house church settings where shared leadership is practiced, describe their lived experience with shared leadership and member engagement?) and hermeneutic phenomenological methodology will guide presentation of the “particular manifestations of the essence” (vanManen, 1990, p. 10) of the phenomenon of the selected house churches that became apparent in my observations, interviews and the artifacts examined. As mentioned in chapter three, hermeneutic phenomenology is appropriate for my study as I am interested in understanding the manifestation of shared leadership as it is experienced by Western Protestant house church members and its perceived and experienced relationship with the engagement of these individuals. The contextualized nature of leadership lends itself to a localized exploration of its enactment in particular settings (Tickle, 2008). Hermeneutic phenomenology guides such an exploration that is interested in understanding, through co-constructed description of lived experience, how individuals and church members as a group experience and give meaning to shared leadership.

As noted, phenomenology is the “study of the structure that governs the instances or particular manifestations of the essence of that phenomenon" (van Manen, 1990, p.10). As such, this section will address three primary manifestations of the essences of the phenomenon of Western Protestant house churches: 1) the adaptive nature of the Christian Church, 2) shared leadership, and 3) engagement. Finally, some additional manifestations that emerged will also be addressed. Lastly, the link between shared leadership and member engagement will be discussed along with the alignment with the literature and theoretical frameworks previously presented in chapter two. Part B of figure 13 has been expanded below in figure 15 to provide a visual summary of the phenomenon of the selected Western Protestant house churches.

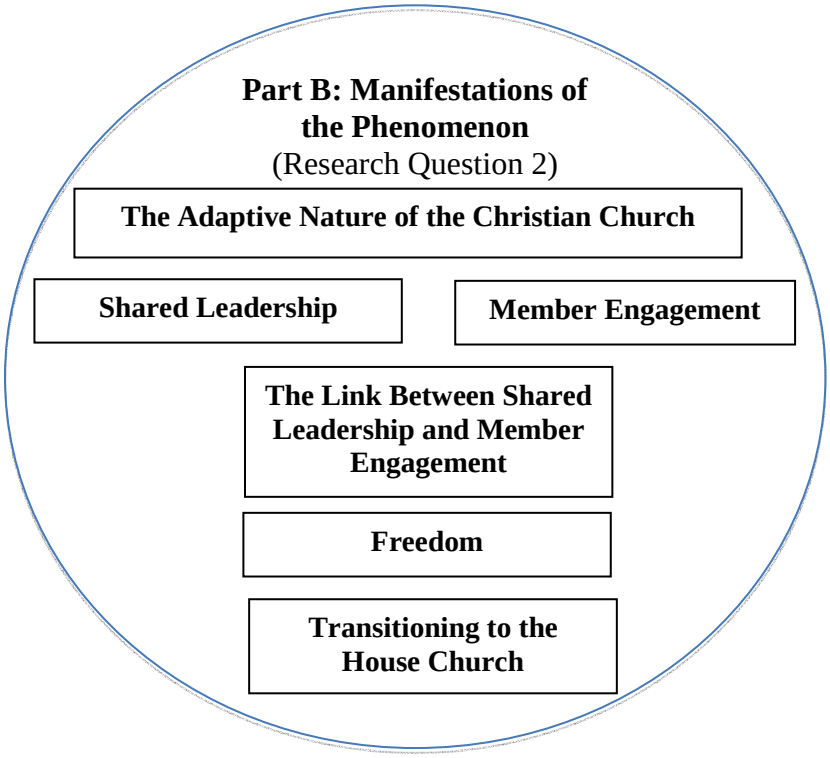

Figure 15. *Visual summary of the manifestation the phenomenon of the selected house churches.*

The Adaptive Nature of the Christian Church

Throughout my data collection and analysis, I came to realize that the main driver, which compelled house church members to seek out a house church, was the desire for a different expression and enactment of the Western Protestant Church. This observation allowed me to see comparisons that participants made between the Western Protestant traditional church (referred to as the traditional church hereafter) and their house church, the use of the traditional church as the "other," and how structuration theory informs the development and understanding of the selected Western Protestant house churches in a Midwestern state. Each of these observations is discussed in more detail below. Although, I was exploring particular instances of Western Protestant house churches, I have entitled this manifestation the adaptive nature of the Christian Church broadly. This manifestation aligns with and adds to my literature review findings which highlighted the ways in which the Christian Church (long before the Western Protestant Church

ever existed) began to demonstrate an adaptive nature. This observation will be discussed in more detail below when structuration theory is applied to my findings.

Comparing the traditional and house church. In analyzing my findings, I realized that many of the participant's descriptions or explanations contrasted the house church to the traditional church. They often did not make this comparison knowingly. Instead, in examining their interviews as a whole, I was able to draw out their comparative constructions. One participant described the setting of the traditional church as follows,

> And this could be my personal opinion, but I just feel that there's more of a lecture type atmosphere and it is a little bit more like entertainment centered… it doesn't feel as community friendly. You don't get to hear and see all the different personalities and ways that God is working in different people's lives, it's all from one perspective. (IP12, 2012, #1101-1102, p. 3)

While, earlier in her interview she made this statement about her preferences for church: "I am always a small group kind of person. I connect better with people in smaller settings and I feel more intimate or more safe with people. I like having conversations one-on-one with people" (IP12, 2012, #1080, p. 1). When I asked one participant what she liked about the house church each of her responses was phrased as a comparison to what she had previously experienced in the traditional church: "it was nice having a smaller group, I didn't feel like I was being preached at as much, it was more of a conversation which was nice. I got more out of it" (IP10, 2012, #652-655, p. 2). Later she directly said, "I like it much better than a regular church because you don't feel, it's not as governmental, it seems more like a group working together rather than just people telling me what to do next" (IP10, 2012, 665, p. 3). One participant made a direct comparison about the ways in which families experience church in the house church and the traditional church:

> And I have always, and we both feel this way, have always felt like we always ship our kids off. We go to church and everybody scatters. We're doing this ministry, you're doing

> nursery, you're in Sunday school, you're in youth group, and we just splinter. You don't see families worshiping together. You don't see families studying the Word together, and that's always really bothered me. So that's one thing we really like about the simple church, we're all together, there's nothing like, oh we need somebody to teach our kids. You're supposed to be teaching your kids. (IP6, 2012, #359-361, p. 3)

Comparisons like these, made directly or indirectly, throughout interviews or during the weekend gatherings made it apparent that house church members desired and were working intentionally towards developing a different expression of church.

Although the aforementioned comparisons weren't always explicitly presented by participants, some did express a general discontent with the direction in which the traditional church was headed,

> part of it was restlessness, there were things that bothered us. We didn't like what it was becoming. We didn't know what to do, I mean, it was like this was what we were building… We didn't' like what it was becoming, but it was like, that was what churches were becoming. That's what churches are, that's what you do. (IP1 & 2, 2012, #22 & 23, p. 5)

Another participant explained, "we went to Sunnyvale Presbyterian in Fremont, that's where I grew up. My mom worked in the office and seeing the things that went on behind the scenes really left a bad taste in my mouth" (IP10, 2012, #681, p. 5). Whatever the case, participants in the house churches I visited were compelled to seek out alternative forms of church that differed from their previous, and traditional church going and membership, experience.

The traditional church as the "other." The shift made by house church members towards an alternative form of church is, by nature, in response to the system or structure that currently exists. Thus, what quickly became apparent, and will be visible in my presentation of their lived story, is that while house church members are the first to say that they are not in competition with the traditional church, the traditional church is the "other." This organization stands in contrast to the house church and as such lends greater understanding to the identity and defining

characteristics of the house church. This contrast may simply occur because we have no way to describe that which is new without contrasting it to that which exists.

Because of previous experiences in the traditional church (good and bad), house church members were motivated to start house churches or seek out house churches already in existence. This pattern in respondents indicated a desire for something different, a change from the church they were used to. This juxtaposition of the house church to the traditional church will provide richness to the following descriptions of the manifestations of the essence of the phenomenon of Western Protestant house churches. Although, in an effort to honor the experiences participants shared with me, I must emphasize that this juxtaposition is not one of contradiction or competition, but rather one that allows for a clearer understanding of the house church's identity and character. One participant succinctly said, "It's not about anti-traditional church, it's not about pro-house church" (IP1, 2012, #42, p. 9).

Despite a general discontent with the traditional church, every participant was very quick to avoid criticizing the traditional church or claiming that it was wholly bad. They were careful to explain that they did not leave the traditional church on bad terms, solely because of hurt, or in anger: "I think a lot of people are leery of the house church people, they think that we are bitter and people who can't get along with anybody. And I was leery of that in the beginning, in our first Northern Lights meeting I was really watching for that, and I didn't see it at all" (IP 5, 2012, #409, p. 8). Another participant explained,

> What came to the surface was that I always thought that people in house churches were those that didn't want to submit to authority, or those that were really wounded by the church and therefore they are rebellious and hurt and therefore they go in to house churches. Well that might have been true thirty/forty years ago, but that ain't true anymore. (IP1, 2012, #49, p. 11)

Another participant acknowledged some hurt from the traditional church but was quick to explain that this hurt was not the only driver towards joining the house church, “When you listen to this, you’ll hear a lot of hurt, and that’s our experience, and it’s undeniable, that we were hurt. That is one of the reasons we were seeking a house church, but it’s not the only reason” (IP8, 2012, #628, p. 13). The same participant warned of the danger of house churches forming simply in reaction or opposition to the traditional church: “I think that the problem with some house churches is that they want to be so broken, they don’t want to do anything religious, they will back themselves into a corner… they won’t give to anybody, they won’t know what to do, they don’t want to give to any religious organization of any kind that they end up not even spreading the gospel. Not being a part of the help (IP8, 2012, #602, p .9). Another participant added, “I think there’s a lot of groups that form and are sort of like, well we’re reacting against this, and so we are not going to basically do anything and anything flies” (IP11, 2012, #941, p. 4).

Likewise, they were eager to affirm the value and strength of various forms of church. Their sentiment often was that there is a place and need for different types of churches. Along with this sentiment, they suggested that house churches were a fit for certain people but not necessarily for everyone. In one weekend gathering, we talked at length about the different types of Christian churches and whether or not they could coexist. One participant talked about the need for large churches and house churches explaining that both have weaknesses and need the other. He said that one of the biggest criticisms against the house church was that they could become isolated and that they do not have all of the gifts of the Spirit. He said that large churches don’t have all the gifts either and thus house and traditional churches need each other. Participants also referred to the house church as a fit for some,

> it’s not the kind of thing that’s for everybody. Because some people can’t deal with that ... and that’s okay. It’s not like we put down people who need things to be more

> structured and more order.. okay! I mean some people are just like that. And we're just not like that. (IP2, 2012, #82, p. 19)

And others emphasized this distinction as a calling,

> I think the biggest thing is that not everyone is called to it. You know? And to say that you can't say that house church is better than traditional church because God calls people to both. I'm not a huge fan of ginormous churches, like mega churches just because I don't get much from it but God calls some people there, you know? God calls people to churches. (IP4, 2012, #328, p. 19)

So, while participants identified reasons why they were drawn to the alternative form of the house church, they avoided the assumption that this move was best for everyone.

Structuration theory and the house church. Commensurate with my review of the history of the Christian Church through the lens of Structuration Theory, Tickle (2008) suggested that the church at large is due for another shift. While Tickle (2008) was not originally included in my literature review, her work aligns well with my history of leadership in the Christian Church and affirms the observation that some Christians are eager for a new expression of the Christian Church. She refers to Anglican Bishop Mark Dyer, who stated that "every 500 years the Church feels compelled to hold a giant rummage sale" (p. 16). She goes on to add "about every five hundred years the empowered structures of institutionalized Christianity, whatever they may be at the time, become an intolerable carapace that must be shattered in order that renewal and new growth may occur" (p. 16). She affirmed that we are once again at a moment in history where the Christian Church is beginning to shake off the trappings of its current structure and embrace a new form of expression. I would suggest that house churches are one expression of this occurring shift.

As mentioned, Structuration Theory identifies the simultaneous and reciprocal influence of the agent (individuals) and structure on each other (Kezar, 2009). Each operates as a resource for and a product of the other (Giddens, 1990), generating institutionalized practices. Agents are

enabled and constrained by structures; however, the structures are a product of previous actions on the part of agents (Boden, 1994). My literature review of the history of leadership in the Christian Church enlightened the ways in which leadership and structures in the Christian Church have developed over time. What became apparent through my research in house churches (in the particular setting in which I studied them) was that, although in smaller, more subtle ways, house church members are active agents in the structuration process of church history and leadership. They have been profoundly impacted by the institution (the traditional church) and as such are making purposeful choices to change or shift the structure or expression of the church. They are functioning as agents who are, in turn, changing the institution that has reciprocally changed them.

This change/shift is even more subtle (to this point) than those shifts highlighted previously in chapter two. Rather than one significant event serving as the catalyst for change, this change is slow, subtle, and underground. It is a very small movement on the part of individuals and groups. One participant said, "It is spontaneously happening. It's not someone going around, well there are people going around who are promoting it, but it's very not in the lime light. Very behind the scenes… very grass roots… it's not something that is… showy. It's just not" (IP1, 2012, #51, p. 11). However, as mentioned in chapter two, these small movements are coupling together such that 11 million adults are participating in house churches throughout the United States (House Church Resource, 2012). The same participant added,

> George Barna, he's really on board with the whole house church thing. One of the statistics he came up with…The percentages of the late nineteen-nineties there was something like… five percent or something of people in the visible church professing Christians to be meeting in house churches. In the last ten years, that's grown to like twenty/twenty-five. That's a huge jump. His prediction is that in ten to fifteen years he expects that to be at least fifty percent, at least fifty percent of Christians meeting in house churches. (IP1, 2012, #54, p. 13)

While I initially had trouble locating a house church in which I could conduct my study, once I found one, I was quickly introduced to an established network of hundreds of house churches in the state. So, while this shift in church leadership might look very different than the aforementioned "events," it could potentially be just as impactful. And some suggest more so because it is under the radar and free from bureaucratic limitations and governmental control.

The trajectory of the traditional church was another factor that emerged in support of the notion that the Christian Church at large is amidst or due for a shift. Several participants referred to this trajectory, suggesting that many of the privileges enjoyed (such as tax exemption) will not continue uninterrupted: "I think that churches are going to lose their 501c3 exemption status and the church is going to be taxed and there's going to be an upheaval in a lot of institutional churches that's going to be 'well what do we do, cut staff? Cut expenses? We can't pay our mortgage anymore' all that kind of stuff so I foresee a lot of that" (IP11, 2012, #929, p. 3). The same participant added, "eventually I think it's going to be a rub. So I don't know how far down the road, the culture turns radically anti-Christian at some point those institutions aren't going to be viable anymore. How long that takes I don't know" (IP11, 2012, #963, p. 5). Another participant confirmed the projection that the house church will likely withstand coming challenges for the Church:

> I think that it's coming. In fact, I also believe that the Church has been very protected and blessed to be in this country and I don't know if it's going to last especially if people take a stand for righteousness. And I do think that part of that is going to very dramatically affect the traditional church. I don't think it's going to affect the house church near as dramatically. (IP1, 2012, #47-48, p. 11)

Thus, the house church stands a good chance at instigating and manifesting a substantial change in church structures as it evades the limitations and roadblocks that traditional churches may face. Brafman and Beckstrom (2006), briefly mentioned in chapter two, confirm the unstoppable

power of organizations which are decentralized because there is no central head that can be attacked which in turns enables them to easily adapt.

The shift/structuration process for house church members was often instigated or accompanied by individuals questioning the habits and traditions of traditional churches. One participant explained,

> I began to realize more and more how much that of what we do in church is really not biblical, it's just traditional. It's cultural. We are more influenced by American or Western culture than we are by the Bible in many, many things. And so it's like, oh, then we really shouldn't be dependent upon those things. (IP1, 2012, #34, p. 8)

Participants began to question why the traditional church did things a certain way. They called into question the building, "And just really causing me to really think about why I am going to church in the first place and why does a building matter? Cause it's not about the building" (IP3, 2012, #138, p. 3). Another participant questioned the basis for paying clergy,

> if someone could give me a biblical basis for paying a pastor a wage, or ten pastors for one church in a locality... and I'm not talking about one verse, I'm talking about give me biblical founded evidence, then I probably couldn't object. But I have yet to see that. (IP8, 2012, #625, p. 12)

While another participant called into question the distinctions made between clergy and laity:

> And so in a lot of ways the church in America has gotten conditioned in a way that you have to have the institutional church to do that [baptisms, weddings]. And so it seemed a little strange at first to go off and do some of those things yourself. So you know, I think there is a pretty significant clergy- laity mindset around a lot of churches and I don't find that distinction in the Bible. (IP11, 2012, #965-966, p. 6)

Participants acknowledged that many church practices were not necessarily biblical, but rather traditions built over time. Traditions that had established habits and patterns that could, in turn, be changed. Attempting to conceptualize how this new shift in Christian Church history could be demonstrated, I have modified figure 5 (the structuration process) from chapter two as seen below.

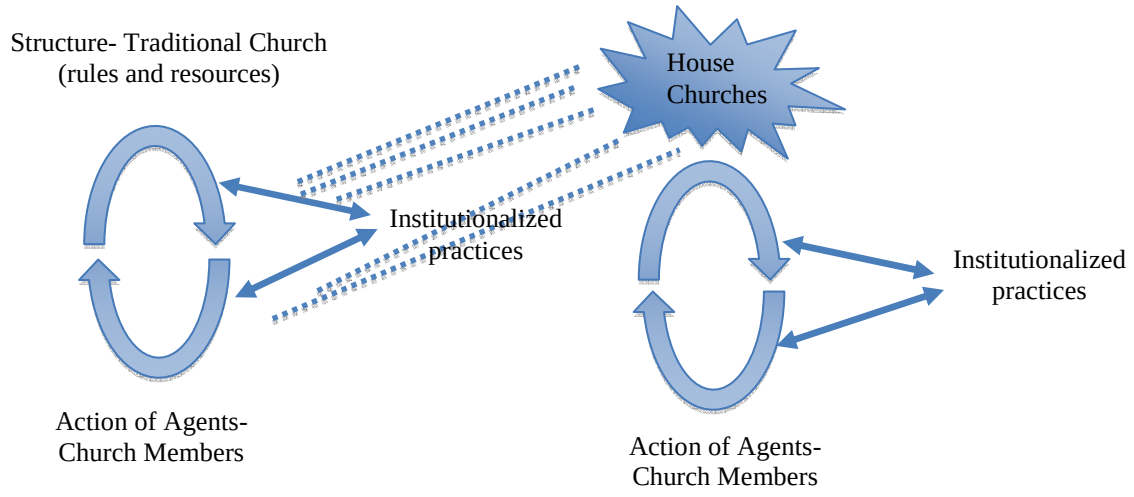

Figure 16. *The structuration process creating a new structure with institutionalized practices of its own. Adapted from "Structuration Theory and Sociological Analysis," by A. Giddens, 1990, In J. Clark, C. Modgil, & S. Modgil (Eds.) Anthony Giddens: Consensus and controversy, p. 301.*

Sewell (2005), in his theory of events as transformation, explained that when changes do take place they are rarely "smooth and linear in character" (p. 226); instead change occurs in clusters or intense bursts, as the accumulation of small changes build up. He suggested that, "these moments of accelerated change…are initiated and carried forward by historical events" (p. 226). The result is another form of the institution, which in turn interacts with agents (church members) to generate institutionalized practices. The figure aims to demonstrate the accumulation of small changes (the dotted lines) resulting in a burst or cluster, which is the house church movement.

Summary of the adaptive nature of the Christian church. The adaptive nature of the church as a manifestation of the phenomenon in this study became apparent to me through the comparisons participants drew between the traditional church and house church. Their descriptions, which established the traditional church as 'the other,' revealed the ways in which structuration theory is in motion, shifting the form of the traditional church. As mentioned, my observation is that shared leadership and member engagement are some of the resulting

manifestations that have emerged out of this shift in the expression of the Christian Church. In some cases shared leadership and member engagement were happenstance; in others they were purposeful decisions that aligned with the biblical interpretation of house church members. However, their presence was substantial in all three sites and is detailed below.

Shared Leadership in the Selected House Churches

In order to understand the experience of participants with shared leadership, one must first understand how and why these house churches practice this style of leadership. The decision, in the house churches I visited, was not a determination to practice shared leadership for the sake of shared leadership and most might not even acknowledge or recognize that shared leadership was the type of leadership utilized. Instead, the style of leadership in most cases had theological roots and for many, as mentioned, was a reflection of their previous (often negative) experiences with leadership in the traditional church. Thus, in order to address the manifestation of shared leadership in the house church, I will first tell the story, as gathered from my experience with house church members, about why and how they decided to start or be a part of a church whose leadership style was so very different from the traditional church. Then, the meaning and enactment of shared leadership in this setting is discussed.

Seeking a different form of church. Some discontent, in particular with leadership, in the traditional church served as a driving factor for those who sought out a different experience in the house church. Some mentioned disillusionment with church leaders who claimed to practice a shared-type of leadership while others who had participated in leadership in the traditional church recalled feeling alone in a leadership role where others wouldn’t share or support. One former traditional church pastor recalled her experience of feeling alone and unsupported by board members:

> I don't know how many people were there when we got there, but quite a few left the day we got there. Then the councilman came up to Stan that day and said, after he preached his first sermon, new church, first church that he was actually official pastor, and handed him the church keys and said, "we're done!" A month later the next one comes up, "we're done!" "okay, thanks for the support! (IP6, 2012, #346, p. 2)

Another participant detailed an experience with a traditional church pastor who claimed to want to involve others in leadership decisions but in reality acted very differently:

> There was a pastor kind of put in charge of the church plant and he subscribed to shared leadership, a year into that we had little mini churches and so forth from that group and several of us were elected as elders and so forth and shortly after that happened this pastor took control, asked two of the elders to resign out of his own, this is threatening and this is divisive and you guys need to resign. It was an excruciating experience to see that happen, yes, we superficially subscribed to shared leadership but when something comes along that I feel threatened by, you're out of here, I call the shots. And that was, I was accused of being divisive and all these sorts of things and that was a real struggle and tried to make peace with that and it was interesting because we had to separate ourselves from that group as "I am not a divisive person, I will not be accused of that" and so we left that group. (IP11, 2012, #1074, p. 16)

These negative experiences were among some of the reasons participants gravitated toward a church where leadership would be practiced differently. In addition, several other factors affected their decision to join a house church, namely, the role of the pastor, viewing leadership as informal or based on gifts, recognizing the danger of having only one leader and likewise of paying that one leader. Each is elaborated on below.

The role of the pastor. As mentioned, the presence or reasoning for shared leadership in the house churches studied has theological roots. For many, their view of how leadership should function within the church is connected to their understanding of the role of the pastor. The traditional church pastor is revered as particularly qualified to take on the responsibility for the spiritual development of parishioners. In some cases this qualification comes by means of education or experiences; other times it is attributed based on a sense of calling that the individual feels to be a pastor. However, in a traditional church the pastor ends of up taking on a

gamut of tasks, which can have nothing to do with pastoring such as administration, accounting, and management. House church members lamented the misuse of pastor as a title, the overloading of pastors in the traditional church, and the pressure to produce sermons that were pleasing to the parishioners.

While many of the house church members still felt that pastoring per say is a gift or a calling, they did not believe that it should be an official position. One participant explained,

> Pastoring is more of a calling than it is an office. It has nothing really to do with an office. It has everything to do with just wanting to care for people and you can pastor people whether they ever call you pastor or not. You can encourage them, you can love them, you can pray for them, what is a pastor supposed to do with people? Feed them, encourage them, pray for them, lead and model for them. (IP1, 2012, #18, p. 3)

They noted that the Bible lists pastor as one gift among many (Ephesians 4:11), and the word pastor is sparsely used, instead deacon, elder, or shepherd are more common terms used when referring to the leadership of the church.

Most house church members who participated in this study agreed that pastoring was not a skill or task limited to the church building, a title, or to someone that receives a salary. Two participants shared stories of using the gift of pastoring outside of the church:

> part of our journey we lived for a year in Indianapolis and I had to support, some way of making a living. And so I went down and got a job…for a company called PraxAir Service Technologies…it gave me a great opportunity to sit there an memorize scripture and I could interact with the other guys, they'd say "you're a pastor for how many years? 20, 30 years? Why are you here?" And you know, but I tell you, God blessed that year, God blessed it by the time it was over, the guys we literally wept about leaving one another. We used to get together for bible studies in a room of PraxAir, praying for one another, just to pray for each other and before we left there we had a footwashing time with one another and it was really cool and I wasn't ever their pastor. Not in an office or official way, I just loved on the guys. That's when the Lord really drove that home to me. You don't really have to have a title or office and it's not a career. You don't make a career out of serving people, it's a life. (IP1, 2012, #20, p. 4)

> I had started a, where I work, a book study on a Christian book but some of the people weren't Christian in the group, and we were basically having our own church service at work. (IP5, 2012, #341, p. 1).

Their experiences resonate well with Peterson (2011) who underscored the trouble with talking about the pastoral vocation as "full time Christian work." He argued that this distinction "drives a wedge of misunderstanding between the way we pray and the way we work, between the way we worship and they way we make a living" (p. 280). Pastoring as a gift or ministering to others becomes a task for a few who are paid.

Likewise, as mentioned in the justification for this study, individuals who have the calling or gift of being a pastor often end up responsible for a multitude of tasks within the church, tasks that have nothing to do with pastoring per say.

> It used to be very frustrating, when we went through the north west, my dream when I went through bible college and seminary was that I just love teaching the word of God, I just love working with people who are hungry to know the Lord. And encourage them. And the idea too was 'wow! I get to get paid for this. And go out there and work with people and disciple people and just full time just teaching the word and discipling people.' Then I got there and I realized that probably eighty percent of my time and energy was spent doing administrative kinds of things. When you start up a church you have to have somebody, nobody in the church knows about setting up a system of books. Well someone's gotta do it. So guess what? You do. And if you don't have anybody who knows how to go out and share the gospel, you gotta do it. If you don't have somebody who knows how to usher, you have to teach people how to do these things. Most of my time wasn't on teaching the Word of God. It was doing those other things: Planning programs, scheduling retreats, counseling, more and more people wanting counseling. (IP1, 2012, #59-60, p. 16)

Additionally, a primary task of the pastor becomes writing and delivering sermons that are pleasing and enjoyable to the parishioners. The approval of the parishioners can become a driving force and a distraction for the pastor. One participant pointed this focus out while noting that his role had shifted now. He studies the word of God and prepares teachings for personal benefit and illumination. He then shares his insights with others in the house church but

preparing a consumable and pleasing message for others does not drive his study of the word of God.

Leadership as informal or based on gifts. Although participants didn't feel comfortable with associating the title of pastor with an official role, they were not opposed to the idea of there being one or a few people who took on leadership roles per say. They talked about individuals naturally having leadership tendencies or leadership gifts, "In the body of Christ you have different gifts and different people, Chris is naturally more of a leader, I tend to follow. Everybody has their tendencies. So the people that are born to lead, the others will follow them" (IP9, 2012, #584, p. 7). One participant thought that leadership should naturally fall with those who were elder and thus wiser.

Rather than seeing teaching or pastoring as a role, participants described them as gifts that various individuals could hold and should be encouraged to utilize, "One of the ideas was to allow people who have the teaching skills and a passion for something to take that and invest themselves in it" (IP11, 2012, #989, p. 8). Another participant added, "I love the idea of taking gifts testing. And identifying each person's strengths and abilities and skills and being able to plug them in or release them so that they are using what God is giving them" (IP12, 2012, #1147, p. 8). This mindset was, as above, connected to their understanding of scripture regarding the gift of pastoring:

> We went through the study of the church and we were all given gifts from the Holy Spirit, some people have service function, some people have teaching some administration and so on and that kind of, have we pigeon holed people and given them specific titles? No, but one of the things that we really wanted to do was to treat people to be themselves and do what God has gifted them to do, whether it's musical or discernment or whatever, service and those sorts of things. So, I think what we have tried to do is empower people is to use the gifting they have for mutual benefit. (IP11, 2012, #1010-1012, p. 10)

The house church members who participated in the study did not seem to limit the use of pastoral gifts or functions to any one person because of title or role.

The danger of one leader. In addition to understanding the role of pastor differently, many house church participants were weary of the power assigned to one person in a traditional pastoral role. They lamented the free reign that seemed to be given to pastors: "once you make it an automatic, they do become… untouchable. And people stop questioning, I think, to a certain extent, and power will go to anybody's head" (IP9, 2012, #616, p. 11). The danger or the limitations of hearing from only one person was also referenced:

> to appoint one man in charge, they always create their vision and you're following one man's vision… and I think they can get sidetracked onto just what they are doing and have blinders separating everything else... they ignore helping these people or I think a vision can become a problem. When they are in charge there is nobody else telling them. (IP9, 2012, #622, p. 12)

Participants explained how a sole leader could also change the environment of the group limiting the number of perspectives shared, "it doesn't feel as community friendly. You don't get to hear and see all the different personalities and ways that God is working in different people's lives, it's all from one perspective" (IP12, 2012, #1098, p. 3). Likewise, participants had experienced being cut out of a church because they did not agree with the decisions or direction of the pastor: "If you're following one man's vision and you don't necessarily agree with it… if you don't follow their vision, they would rather you leave, does that make sense?" (IP9, 2012, #624, p. 12). Another participant confirmed this sentiment:

> I had a pastor who told me that basically that I don't go to a church, I go to a house church, and that I'm a rebel, and that I don't feel like I need to be overseen by anybody… and basically I was out-casted. And he said, "brother, just to let you know, I'll terminate your membership," and I was thinking, how can you terminate a membership... to a body that I already belonged to before I joined your church? (IP8, 2012, #621, p. 11)

Because of experiences like these, participants were uncomfortable with the notion of giving one person too much power or authority.

The problems with paying a pastor. Along with the danger of too much power attributed to one person, participants spoke of the trouble with paying someone to fill this role. They noted that money could get in the way of real relationship, put unnecessary pressure on the pastor, and create an incorrect mindset that it was solely the pastor's job to do ministry:

> I was involved in the youth ministry and it was an internship and I experienced getting paid to do ministry with youth and that was extremely hard for me…because if I was feeling like I wasn't doing a good job with kids and reaching them or making an impact I felt really guilty and like almost a little shameful like I should be doing more and this weight was just on me and so in our gatherings and stuff I was just hardly being natural because I just felt like "I gotta get out of the I've got to do something." (IP12, 2012, #1114, p. 4)

Another participant emphasized the mindset that only those paid should do work of the church, "There's a mindset that instead of, you know like that one guy, I'm Joe and I'm an ordained plumber. Everybody should have a ministry and I think that there is a mindset in America that that person is paid to do it so that person needs to do it" (IP5, 2012, #484, p. 16). This mindset, some felt, was fostered by paying some individuals to do the work of the church. Now that explanation has been provided for why house church members view the function of leadership differently, discussion is next provided on how leadership, particularly shared leadership manifests itself and is constructed in the house church study setting.

Shared leadership in practice. While I want to avoid spending too much time defining shared leadership here, since the definition will be expounded later when reporting on the descriptive survey, a few comments from participants during interviews and my observations will provide a sense of what shared leadership 'looked like' (was lived) in the three sites visited. A few quotes from participants will be offered to provide a general foundation of how shared

leadership was individually and collectively constructed in this setting, followed by the idea that leadership is naturally assigned or based on gifting. Specific examples of how shared leadership manifested itself through described decision-making and member involvement will follow.

The predominant factor that participants acknowledged when describing the type of leadership utilized in their house church was the simple absence of one person who was doing all of the teaching and decision-making. Participants explained, " I don't think its ever supposed to be about one man or one leader" (IP3, 2012, #160, p. 5) and "we said by definition, there should be teachers, multiple, in the body" (IP11, 2012, #987, p. 8). Although each site had one or a few people who tended to facilitate, the emphasis was consistently put on involving others.

> I'm not the only one; I shouldn't be the only one that's coming prepared to try to build people up… Everyone should come with the same mindset that you were just talking about… you know? Listen, and if the Lord has really laid it upon my heart or there's a real burden that I want to share. Then well, you should feel like this is the safest place for you to come and you should really want to do that for everyone's sake. (IP1, 2012, #90, p. 21)

This emphasis aligns well with Pearce and Conger's (2003) definition of shared leadership as a "dynamic, interactive influence process among individuals in groups for which the objective is to lead one another to the achievement of group or organizational goals or both" (p. 1). The emphasis, in both their definition and the house churches examined, is placed on multiple individuals within a group leading one another. Another participant echoed this sentiment, describing the kind of leadership that they experienced in their house church as "having more than one person responsible for different aspects of what needs to go on" (IP10, 2012, #743, p. 13). Participants also highlighted the notion of the group working together as descriptive of the type of leadership utilized in their house church: "It seems more like a group working together rather than just people telling me what to do next. It felt like the group as a whole was leading,

because Stan gave us opportunities to interject so it wasn't one-sided" (IP10, 2012, #665-666, p. 3).

A central concept to the idea of shared leadership in the house churches studied was the belief that each person present had something valuable to contribute and was considered a teacher: "anyone who is in the house church can offer guidance or make a suggestion" (IP4, 2012, #271, p. 9). This concept aligns with the theory of invitational rhetoric (Foss & Griffin, 1985), discussed in chapter two, which emphasizes equality within groups. Participants explained that everyone can learn from each other and be influenced by one another:

> With the house church it's all equalized, because the person who is leading it kind of guides the discussion but everyone is talking about it so it's like everyone is giving the sermon, so everyone is on an equal plane which makes things less intimidating I think. (IP4, 2012, #280, p. 10)

The assumption that only the leader influenced the follower was eliminated, "we all kind of teach each other because we all learn from each other" (IP7, 2012, #379, p. 5).

These observations from participants were affirmed through my observations and analysis of artifacts. In one site, there was a regular rotation of individuals who took the lead in providing the teaching for the gathering. The most literal example of shared leadership, this handful of individuals, would take turns preparing a teaching and would give a teaching that was designed and intended to draw out feedback, questions, and input from the rest of the group. In another site, although one person typically facilitated the discussions, there were regular efforts to have others lead and during one meeting an eight-year-old boy was given the opportunity to lead songs for the children instead of the usual adult leader. Participants told me about a time when an individual had expressed a desire to lead a particular study and thus did so, "well that's how David taught on Ephesians. He said, I would really like to do a teaching on Ephesians. We said, just fly with it, just go" (IP6, 2012, #507, p. 18). In addition, email communication

throughout the week demonstrated leadership from multiple individuals within each site. By way of example, communication was initiated by various individuals making suggestions about meeting times, requesting prayer, or asking for feedback regarding an idea.

Decision-making as shared leadership. Another significant result of the presence of shared leadership in house churches was the way in which decision-making occurred. Rather than one or a few individuals setting the vision for the church or having some decisions offered to voting members, house church members had the opportunity to participate in most, if not all, decision-making within the group. One participant explained in detail the different means of making decisions within his house church:

> And what we found is we would come up, address the issues, and we wrestled with some issues like women's roles in scriptures and we wrestled with things like pagan holidays and all kinds of things and we worked through those on a more random basis, we reached consensus on those things without dotting the 'I's and crossing the 'T's and saying here is the policy. So it became more of a persuasion and more of a shared way, I don't think we have come across anything that is like, well here is what we as a leadership has decided and if you don't like it, tough, we never landed there at all. And in some ways it took us maybe longer to work through an issue, you know what was the Christian responsibility to government and how involved in politics would you be and those sorts of things and so we were able to incorporate through discussion and questioning back and forth wrestling with the issues and have found this very effective instead of having somebody go away really hostile with this "you're pushing this and you know I can't follow that." Decisions are made via influence and persuasion as opposed to dictate. (IP11, 2012, #976-979, p. 7)

Email communication was another common way to involve church members in decisions. "They also present the ideas that they are considering talking about. We could go through Luke, Zachariah, Isaiah… yeah, and they send it out e-mail form and say 'what do you guys think about this?' and they gather opinions" (IP12, 2012, #1091, p. 2). During my involvement with each site, I received emails asking for ideas about giving projects, asking input about how a designed website should look and be used for the house church, and one site distributed a survey asking for very specific feedback about the future direction and purpose of the house church.

Finally, one site had an additional meeting, to which everyone was invited, to discuss future direction and purpose.

Now I should acknowledge at this point that many traditional churches do make efforts to involve church members, particularly churches which utilize the Congregational form of governance discussed in chapter two. So, what is the distinction between these churches that allow members to vote, may distribute surveys, and hold forums for members to provide feedback, and the house churches I visited? Based on data collected and interpreted I think that the key differences reside simply in the size of the church and the extent to which member feedback and input can be considered and utilized. Within the traditional church, members are given opportunity to be involved in decision-making, however they are not often involved in the ground-level brainstorming, research, or discussions that lead to the creation of a list of choices which can be voted on. And while they may offer feedback and input, what happens with this feedback and input is often left up to the discretion of one or a few paid leaders. As demonstrated above, a high level of involvement from all church members is a time-consuming endeavor even if the group is small. Large traditional churches, simply because of size, must limit member involvement as a matter of efficiency. This aligns with literature on teams that suggests that there are organizational limiters that hinder team productivity once the team reaches a certain size (Sarason, 1995). In addition, many church members and leaders place a high level of authority and precedence on the church leaders, attributing a certain amount of value on their ultimate decision-making because they are ordained or chosen by God.

Taking initiative as shared leadership. A final way in which shared leadership was demonstrated in the house churches was through the ability of members to participate via making suggestions, taking initiative to lead at times, and just general participation throughout the

gatherings. This expression of shared leadership was at times pre-planned involvement: “I’ve helped with the music sometimes and I’ve been able to lead like Lectio Divina and I’ve been able to participate in the talking and sharing time during the messages” (IP12, 2012, #1087, p. 2). Another example of planned opportunities included seeking feedback from members about topics of study, “we just kind of talked about where everybody was at and was there anything that anybody really felt compelled and wanted to study in the Bible” (IP3, 2012, #162, p. 5). Another site asked members to select a parable from the Bible that they would enjoy studying. Participants expressed a comfort with the ability to make suggestions or bring something to share at the gatherings, “Tyler and I are working on a song that we want to sing for the house church eventually, but I think we will just e-mail or send a text ahead of time and just say “hey, we have this song we want to share” (IP12, 2012, #1131, p. 7).

At other times, the involvement was not pre-planned speaking to the open and flexible nature of the house churches versus a very structured environment led by one or a few: “we have had times where we are praying and somebody will just start singing a song and breaking out into a song and somebody will bring scripture as we are praying. We’ve had several people who have said while we are praying God showed me this” (IP 5, 2012, #508, p. 18). Likewise, members had the freedom to express the desire, even when not prompted, about a topic of study or conversation, “they also know that they do have the input and they have the ability to say, ‘hey, why don’t we study this?’ or to take things in the direction they feel like God wants them to go so they feel like they have a little bit more control over the situation” (IP4, 2012, #282, p. 10). This spontaneity was connected to a desire to respond to the needs of members in the moment,

> If there’s someone hurting there or there’s something that someone wants to deal with, yeah we have our bible reading that we want to do and so forth but that may not happen

> that morning. It may be something that has really be laid on someone's heart that they really want to share, trying to make it feel comfortable so that anybody who really wanted to do that if they had something that they wanted to share that they thought would really bless the rest of us. (IP1, 2012, #87-88, p. 20)

Throughout my time participating in the selected house churches, I saw this involvement initiated on the part of individuals and requested from whomever was leading or teaching at the time. One participant brought a book he had been reading during the week and shared an excerpt. Another participant invited everyone to stay after for a meal she had prepared and initiated a baby shower for a pregnant mother in the group. One week, I brought my son along and we shared a song for the kids, teaching them the words and hand motions. Church members could readily speak up and make suggestions during the gathering time but their involvement was also prompted and encouraged. Those who were teaching, reading scripture, or leading songs regularly encouraged feedback, questions, and interruptions: "wherever we can, we try to include the body and get them involved" (IP11, 2012, #992, p. 8). One site facilitated gatherings such that everyone was to do the same Bible reading during the week and each person was asked to bring an insight or observation to share with the group the next week. This structure made up the bulk of the teaching time and in such a way that the gathering was loosely facilitated by everyone present.

Summary of the manifestation of shared leadership. Chapter two summarized the following four driving forces for shared leadership from the extant literature: the rise of the information age, the increasing complexity of the role of the CEO, increasing pressure to perform and do so quickly, and an increase in the use of teams in the organization (Huberman & Loch, 1996). While I was not able to find that these driving forces were those that also compelled the use of shared leadership in the house church setting studied, the above discussion provided some insight into what might be considered driving forces in the house church. General

discontent with the direction of the traditional church including frustration and disillusionment with leadership seemed to compel shared leadership in this setting. Additionally, the perceived trajectory of the traditional Western Protestant Church seemed to propel participants towards a church form which utilizes a more decentralized or shared leadership model.

Shared leadership is manifest through a number of member constructions, both individual and shared, in the house churches via the presence of multiple leaders, involvement of many in decision-making, and members taking initiative to participate and make suggestions. These manifestations and co-constructions of shared leadership seem to align with the Pearce and Conger (2003) definition and the values and attitudes of shared leadership discussed in chapter two (Foss & Griffin, 1985; Gardner & Hatch, 1989; McGregor, 1960).

Member Engagement in the Selected House Churches

Member engagement occurred at a high level in all three sites visited. One might speculate that simply because house churches are small, member engagement would naturally follow. The small size of the gatherings should be acknowledged in that this factor enabled a high level of engagement. However, most groups purposely maintained a small size precisely because they valued a high level of member engagement. The value and benefit placed on member engagement becomes apparent in the following discussion. While the small size is a factor, the chosen form also facilitated member engagement. A very small group could still lack member engagement if the form did not allow for it, and likewise we can see how even with the proper form present, member engagement becomes difficult as group size increases.

Participants in the house church setting acknowledged the necessity of engagement because of the form and small size,

> the one thing that is true about being part of a house church is you really can't be part of a house church and be alone unless there's some really deep issues going on there. And there's times when that's true too, but honestly the average person, you cannot… you cannot not be engaged. (IP2, 2012, #83, p. 20)

I asked one participant directly if they had noticed any house church members who seemed disengaged, her response, "No, not really" (IP10, 2012, #733, p. 11). My own experience as a participant observer confirmed their perspective. As Lincoln and Guba (1985) explain, within the Naturalist paradigm the relationship of the knower to the known is interactive and inseparable. Although through this second research question I aimed to get at the lived experiences of house church members, my presence in their weekly gatherings set me not only a researcher but as a participant. This dimension was enhanced because of the high level of engagement/participation expected. I could not hide on the sidelines as an unaffected observer. I noted in my reflexive journal following a gathering at site one, "I also realized how much I'm going to have to personally invest. Since this is such a small and intimate environment, I won't be able to avoid really getting to know these people and them getting to know me."

Member engagement in the house church setting seemed to be constructed in two main ways: 1) participation during the weekly gatherings predominantly via dialogue and 2) ongoing interaction with one another throughout the week. In addition, participants seemed to engage by taking a deep responsibility or personal ownership in the house church. Once again, the juxtaposition of house church to traditional church illuminated the ways in which member engagement occurred in the house church as the traditional church is provided as a countercase. Finally, member engagement is considered through the lens of structuration theory to illuminate how the shifts in Christian Church history have impacted the form and expression of the Church.

Member engagement via dialogue. Participants described their engagement as happening through a dialogue or a conversation and contrasted their experience to a typical

church setting where one person usually did most of the talking. “It’s a lot more open, we talk about stuff, and you don’t just sit and listen, or stand up and sing. You are a lot more involved” (IP7, 2012, #374, p. 4). Participants also acknowledged the ways in which the environment allowed them to interact and learn:

> well that you know definitely is different because I like to say if you’re listening to a sermon you can’t raise your hand and say, “wait a minute I have a question about this” where, this we can… where we can it’s like “okay wait a minute, you’ve lost me there, I don’t understand what you’re trying to get at” kind of thing. There is that freedom. (IP3, 2012, #172, p. 7)

Participants were able to interact with whomever might be teaching and, because they were expected to do so, this environment changed their engagement,

> Stan would ask us how we saw the verses and what we pulled from them rather than just sitting there and just passively listening to what he had to say. We actually had to pay attention more. You knew that someone was going to expect something from you. (IP10, 2012, #656-657, p. 2)

Another participant added, “sometimes people are called on and it’s like, ‘what do you think about this?’ and so you have to stay on your toes and make sure that you’re listening” (IP12, 2012, #1093, p. 2).

Engagement seemed to occur predominantly through dialogue, “ Its not one person standing up there talking at you…its a dialogue” (IP4, 2012, #230, p. 3). Each site may have had a person who would facilitate the discussion but this person was not the only one to speak or share,

> But the rest of the conversation is all of us together. I think that is the difference, there is a pastor but he’s more there to kind of challenge people, challenge them to think and ask the questions and guide the discussion. (IP4, 2012, #309, p. 14)

Those responsible for facilitating the gatherings seemed to make an effort to formulate the time together such that participation was encouraged. Activities that gave members a chance to verbally respond or jot down notes then share were often incorporated. One site began each

gathering by going around the room and having each person share something they were grateful for. Everyone was asked and expected to read the determined scripture throughout the week and regularly encouraged to provide insights and feedback. This aligns with literature on dialogue which suggests that dialogue allows for commonality and understanding within groups (Veliquette et al., 2012). Dialogue allows those who engage in it to "present their viewpoints, engage in the exchange of ideas, and learn by revealing their perceptions and assumptions" (McLean & Egan, 2008, p. 252). Moreover, dialogue is a inherently a participative process (de Haas & Kleingeld, 1999) so it stands to reason that it would be representative of and a means for the type of engagement house church members experience.

Member engagement during the week. Participants also seemed to measure their level of engagement based on their involvement with one another throughout the week. This engagement included casual get-togethers as well as helping or caring for each other in times of need.

> There's engagement with each other during the week, e-mail or phone calls or that sort of thing and so we really do have participation during the meeting times and afterward people are really engaging with each other. And I think there is a real intention to not leave anybody out, we've got a couple widows and they don't really have a lot of energy or a lot of strength but we want to see them included. We've got the gal with MS and we try to minister to her and it's been I guess a tremendous amount of participation not only in discussion, but in the day-to-day life. (IP11, 2012, #1019-1021, p. 10)

Members described this engagement throughout the week as a given rather than an obligation: "It's not about checking something off it's about a way of life, and a way of living, and really being connected to people and caring about people through the good and the bad and all that" (IP3, 2012, #180, p. 8). Engagement with one another was considered a responsibility:

> It's so much more personal. It is more of a, you take responsibility to say, "I'm going to treat this person the way God commands me to in Scripture" and the family aspect of being Christians together versus the, "I'm your pastor, you're my pupil" it's more like, "I'm your brother." I think it changes things. (IP8, 2012, #555, p. 4)

Engagement throughout the week also manifested itself in the actions of house church members to meet the practical needs of others:

> It was everybody taking care of everybody else and if somebody wasn't there, checking on them, "how you doing? What's going on? Are you okay?" taking care of people and you heard a need and it was okay; lets go, we're going to help so and so fix their house because they can't afford to do it. (IP6, 2012, #462, p. 13)

During one gathering, a young couple shared about some car trouble they were having, asking for prayer. Immediately another couple in the church offered to let them use their car indefinitely. This kind of immediate care and sense of responsibility for one another was not uncommon. One church had a member who had multiple sclerosis and the other members took very seriously their responsibility to help and care for her:

> And she'll tell people 'this is my family' and I think it's been really reassuring to her mom and dad because they're elderly, I think they are in their early eighties, her mom comes once a week to cook for her and buy her groceries, but I think it's been reassuring to them that if something happens to them that there are people who will watch out for Paula, who will take care of her and help her. (IP4, 2012, #147, p. 4)

Meeting physical as well as emotional or mental needs was included in this day-to-day engagement:

> one of our individuals is kind of a, unhealthy and kind of a hoarder, and so one of the women in the group actually went to her home and spent hours upon hours trying to help organize and you know, make it easier for her to do what she wanted to do. That was a very extensive experience, that's been only partly successful I think there's some psychological barriers and a lot of people have engaged at that level helping the widows you know. (IP11, 2012, #1022, p. 10)

These experiences harken back to previous discussion about size and form enabling member engagement. Every site had a time specifically for sharing, where individuals could talk about what was going on in their life, good or bad. This time allowed not only a means for members to participate during the gathering, but encouraged a way for participants to know what was going on with each other so that they could engage and care for each other outside of the gathering.

One participant iterated, “It’s not one of these cultish kind of things, it’s like ‘are you doing okay?’ it’s real and genuine and just helping each other and you know, it’s hard to pinpoint it’s just happening all the time in lots of ways” (IP11, 2012, #1025, p. 10). In every site, when prayer requests were shared, most if not all other members wrote down the needs of others indicating a high level of care and commitment to pray for each other.

This level of engagement can be harder in larger traditional churches unless individuals choose to engage in small group settings. Finding out about needs can be more difficult. Likewise, a temptation exists for church members to avoid responding to needs as they might assume that someone else is taking care of the need. One participant acknowledged this experience in the larger traditional church, “there’s always so many other people, you always think that maybe somebody else is going over there and ministering to those people” (IP3, 2012, #186, p. 10).

As a participant observer I found myself feeling the responsibility to engage not only during the gatherings but also during the week. When one house church member was in a car accident, house church members were encouraged to send encouraging texts and I felt compelled to do so. When another site held a baby shower for a member, I was invited. I was unable to attend but brought a gift and a meal to the family after the baby was born. Because I was participating at such close levels with these people, I too responded by engaging at a high level.

Ownership and responsibility in the house church. Member engagement also manifest through member constructions in more ways than just physical expressions of conversation during the gathering and activities during the week. House church members also seemed to demonstrate engagement which was reflected in their deep level of responsibility to the group and strong sense of ownership in their and the group’s success: “but part of it is I think because I

just feel I have a responsibility to the group to be prepared and to be ready to talk about what we're reading in the Bible and what's going on in my life" (IP3, 2012, #176, p. 8). This engagement was also described as a sense of commitment and the presence of a shared goal:

> I feel we've all come together, because we love the Lord and want to learn more and be more obedient. But there's also more, that we've come together because we want the whole family and community, so there's that common goal or bond there too so it's not people just checking church off I've don't my Sunday duty kind of thing. So I guess it's easier in some respects to share all the things going on in my life, all the hard things when you feel that the people there with you have a commitment to you. And they're not just 'doing my duty' kind of thing. (IP3, 2012, #180-181, p. 9)

Likewise, one participant connected this engagement to the reality that no one in the house church is paid to care for the others, rather everyone must be responsible to do so:

> with the house church in general because it's kind of smaller we all have to pick up the yoke. We all kind of just do it, we're all in this together and there is more of the tendency to help each other just because you're really familiar and you really have to when you're in a united group you take care of each other. No one is paid to do it so somebody has got to volunteer to do it I guess. (IP4, 2012, #315, p. 15)

This ownership was visible as each individual took responsibility to come to the gatherings prepared to discuss the chosen topic, "so when we study Luke if somebody, if one person doesn't really read the chapter or study it, it's unusual. People really do their best" (IP11, 2012, #1017, p. 10). Additionally, beyond the gathering the sentiment was that individuals took more initiative to study the Bible and responsibility for their own spiritual growth, "I think that people are more engaged in their own Bible study. And their own eating of their 'bread, getting fresh bread,' I think they are more engaged in that" (IP6, 2012, #440, p. 10). Rather than relying on a particular person to provide the teaching or prompt individuals towards growth, house church members seemed to take responsibility for fostering their own growth, "home church growth is all on your own, it's something that you want to do, not that you didn't want to do it in the other church, but you don't feel guilty if you can't read one day" (IP9, 2012, #559, p. 4).

I noticed the level of ownership and responsibility that church members took during my observations. In one site, a participant took the initiative to create and design a website for the church of his own accord. Another participant brought a book to share and as mentioned, participants took the initiative to care for others by planning meals, baby showers, or other ways to love each other. This level of engagement was not solely initiated and maintained by the leader; each person seemed to consider how they might contribute and considered the group their own. Church members also felt responsible to communicate with one another if they were unable to attend the weekly gathering. As I was included in their email lists, I often received updates from members about such things. In addition, when I shared with church members the nature of my research several individuals came up to me separately offering help and resources such as books, DVDs, and pamphlets. They seemed to have a personal investment in the house church and were eager to share this experience with me.

Not a higher level of member engagement in the house church. While many attributed their engagement level to the particular setting of house churches, there were those who did not agree. Some suggested that engagement was more about personality, personal choice or personal motivation rather than house church versus traditional church setting: "I'd say it's just a different dynamic. I think you could grow the same, if you want to talk about what you believe about certain doctrines and things like that, I think you can grow equally in both settings" (IP8, 2012, #553, p. 3). Another participant agreed noting, "For me though, I guess I pay attention at both" (IP4, 2012, #253, p. 6). The link between member engagement and the setting, in particular shared leadership, will be discussed more in the next section.

Participation difficult because of history in the traditional church. Although participants noted a higher level of engagement, previous disengagement in the traditional church seemed to be a habit to break. One participant acknowledged this difficulty:

> and I think that because people have come from a traditional church where it's mostly receiving that it's hard to get out of that rut in a sense and start being proactive. And so I think most of the time when people voluntarily share their ideas and stuff, it's usually from the elders, and I think they'd like to encourage that more but it's hard to know how…there's a lot of honesty and openness but it's usually the same people. So it's hard to get some people out of their shells because they're used to something else and maybe they're shy. (IP12, 2012, #1129-1130 & #1159, p. 7)

Not everyone was used to or comfortable with speaking up or participating since their church experience had predominantly included sitting and listening.

Summary of the manifestation of member engagement. Engagement in the house church setting was seen during the weekly gatherings as well as through the interaction between house church members during the week. The level of engagement from house church members seemed to elicit a sense of ownership or responsibility for each other and for the success of the gatherings. This dynamic seems to align with some of the outcomes discussed in chapter two associated with environments where individuals are engaged. Outcomes previously identified included increased communication skills (Veliquette et al., 2012), enhanced task performance, organizational citizenship behaviors, affective commitment, and continuance commitment (Shuck & Wollard, 2010). One could argue that the members in the house churches observed demonstrated these outcomes, reinforcing the research already done on engaged individuals.

A Countercase of Member Engagement

While participants talked about the house church as engaging because of their participation in the dialogue with one another throughout the week, they referred to the traditional church gatherings as performance oriented in such a way that they created spectators

out of the members. One participant stated, “I saw a need in the institutional church, it was becoming more professional, it was becoming more spectator, so more of a performance, spectator sort of thing” (IP11, 2012, #901, p. 1). He elaborated on this idea:

> there’s this, in some ways there’s a legitimate striving for excellence which is okay because we do want that but at the same time it would be the presentation would seem to be more important than the actual substance and I saw things like oh even to the point of music programs where you would hire in a viola for your orchestra or whatever and rather than it being a neutral ministry of believers together there was this oh we need import this skill set from outside because it couldn’t possibly exist here in our midst so it was sort of this procuring of things that I saw as kind of antithetical to what I had been brought up with. Like, we need someone to clean the chapel, as opposed to hiring a janitor; we want someone to lead music as opposed to hiring a position to do worship ministry. So it became a, “I should get paid for that” “I should get paid for that” kind of mentality as opposed to lets love and serve each other. So I saw elements of that and maybe two or three or four months worth of energy spent into putting on a performance for a community as opposed to, “what are we here for? How are we building up ourselves for evangelism and for equipping each other?” Maybe this little loss of focus and concentration was a little more external and appearance oriented. yeah, kind of as that comes along and as you have to have a degree in music for this or whatever, some of this natural people just kind of back off because well here somebody else is hired to do that and I am not qualified to do that and sort of, a result of that environment is a withdrawing and as you get used to that you expect that somebody else should do that and the idea of even serving one another starts to disappear so I think in some ways once that sets in then that becomes the norm because that’s what the church looks for. We need to go hire somebody to do this, out here to do this, so that we don’t have to. right? It’s kind of built in, so structurally you can almost perpetuate that because once you let this happen, you kind of let this keep going. (IP11, 2012, #915-921, p. 2)

Another participant agreed, “And this could be my personal opinion, but I just feel that there’s more of a lecture type atmosphere and it is a little bit more like entertainment centered” (IP12, 1097, p. 3). A teenager attending the house church referred to his experience in traditional churches “I think from the few times that I have been in a youth group situation it wasn’t really based on the Word as much as it was based on having fun and entertainment” (IP7, 2012, #368, p. 3). These descriptions of entertainment, which perpetuated spectators, were in significant contrast to the type of member engagement described in the house churches studied. Likewise, these descriptions hint at the capitalization of Christianity which has been suggested by some in

the literature (Christian et al., 2011; Fleming & Asplund, 2007; Rich et al., 2010). The impacts of this development in terms of creating parishioners as consumers will be discussed later as structuration theory is examined.

Lack of ownership and responsibility in the traditional church. Although there was variance in the type and degree of member engagement within the sites, the different form and small size of the groups enabled, as discussed, increased participation if one was to compare this experience to that of a typical traditional church. Participants did provide some feedback about engagement in the traditional church. One participant, in speaking of her traditional church experience said, "You don't really have to be mentally engaged as much" (IP 3, 2012, #171, p. 7). Another participant affirmed the level of engagement that house church members took in studying scripture as opposed to those in a traditional church:

> it's funny how many people were thinking how we are going to go off the deep end and lose our ways and in fact what it did do was it drove us to the Word and drove us to the Lord and I am confident that we put more energy into trying to know the will of God and the scripture than people who sit in an institutional setting and let someone else do it for them. And in some ways I think the seminaries and those sorts of things could fall prey to things that are perhaps even more heretical than a home fellowship. (IP11, 2012, #938-940, p. 4)

As discussed in chapter one, I have spent many years attending traditional churches myself. After my time in the three house churches studied, I noted a metaphor that could be used to describe the member engagement that can happen in a traditional church. Mother birds often pre chew food for their young making it easier to eat and digest while the babies are young and incapable of doing this procedure themselves. I would suggest that this process is similar to the experience of parishioners in the traditional church. What I noticed in the house church regarding the study of scripture was that everyone was expected to read the assigned scripture and come prepared to discuss and offer insights or thoughts. There were often times when the group

wrestled together over a difficult passage and worked out together what they felt it meant for their application. I would contrast this practice with a traditional church where most parishioners often show up to a gathering without an idea of what scripture will be discussed that day. They then listen as a pastor (often trained in Biblical study) shares a scripture along with the context and history and most likely the application to life. The job of analyzing and applying the scripture to life is the responsibility of one rather than the group.

I would suggest that, in contrast, house church members in the selected sites chewed on the meat of the Bible and digested it together. Whereas, those in the traditional church allow the pastor to do the difficult chewing and then receive the meat after it has first been pre-masticated by the pastor, like the mother bird and her young. Now this comparison is not to suggest that no individuals in the traditional church take the initiative to study and digest the Bible on their own, many do. However, the form of the traditional church fosters a certain level of passiveness on the part of the church member. Scripture in the New Testament of the Bible refers to this as immaturity:

> We have much to say about this, but it is hard to make it clear to you because you no longer try to understand. In fact, though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you the elementary truths of God's word all over again. You need milk, not solid food! Anyone who lives on milk, being still an infant, is not acquainted with the teaching about righteousness. But solid food is for the mature, who by constant use have trained themselves to distinguish good from evil (Hebrews 5:11-14, New International Version)

Again, this observation is not meant to be an assessment of all traditional churches or all individuals who attend traditional churches. However, I noticed an increased level of investment and responsibility from the house church members in the sites explored in studying, memorizing and understanding scripture.

Member engagement in a traditional church. I had the opportunity to visit a traditional

church amidst my research. At the time I was only attending site one and they decided not to meet one weekend so I went with my husband to a video venue church. A video venue church is a church that is similar to any Western Protestant church in its gathering except for the fact that some if not all of the organized activities are transmitted via video screen. In this particular church, the senior pastor, who was physically present at another campus but was only present via video at this location, delivered the teaching.

The gathering was typical to a traditional church. Everything came from the front of the room while the attendees sit in rows facing the front. My participation included standing and singing, clapping, shaking hands with someone next to me and asking what their favorite Olympic sport was, and raising my hand in response to the pastor's questions of 'how many of you...?' I caught myself checking out about 5 min into the sermon because I did not have to mentally engage. People did respond during the message with laughing and raised hands. Of the people that I could see (probably around 60), two had their Bibles out.

During the song singing I was moved to tears but it was interesting because the songs came to an abrupt end, I was still crying but was directed from the front to meet some people around me. I had to quickly wipe my tears and smile at the stranger I met. When I would have rather continued singing or had some time. I could have requested that in the house church.

In this traditional set up there was a specific response time and specific ways to respond. At the end of the teaching the campus pastor came to the front, shared some tidbits, and then invited people to stand and sing, take communion on their own from a table provided, or go to the back corner where there were individuals waiting to pray with whomever needed it. I found it interesting that the audience response was bounded in this way, while in the house church, there were no formal bounds to how one might respond. As evidenced by this experience, one could

ascertain how the form and structure of the gathering directly impacts the engagement of attendees.

Connecting member engagement to history and structuration theory. At this point, referring back to the Protestant Reformation (the fourth event discussed in chapter two) provides insight in relation to structuration theory. As noted in chapter two, one of the outcomes of this reformation was the variety of denominational expressions that emerged. While, this diversity was a benefit in that a new freedom was discovered in the Christian Church and individuals could find a church that suited them best, a new phenomenon was also initiated. Because individuals could pick and choose which church suited them best, church attendees became, in some ways, consumers. Coupled with the results of the fifth event, the colonization of America, this consumer phenomenon was enhanced. As previously noted, the values of religious freedom and separation of church and state, that American settlers held, introduced the practice of religious competition and religious capitalism. If at any point, an individual became discontent or disagreed with the practices of his colony or his church, he could easily leave and begin his own community, illustrating the "central geographical fact of American religious history: the country was too big to enable any form of orthodoxy to triumph—its very vastness made heterodoxy possible" (Barna, 2005; Rainer & Geiger, 2011; Viola & Barna, 2008; T. White & Yeats, 2009). The lasting results of these two events in structuring the Western Christian Church are evident in the ways in which present day individuals seek out and engage in the traditional church.

I was talking on the phone with a friend who recently moved to a new state. She was telling me about her and her husband's search for a church. They had visited numerous churches over the course of a few months and she explained to me how at each one there was something they didn't like, the teaching style, the music, the size, etc. As she was describing to me this

exhausting and frustrating church shopping experience, I couldn't help but contrast this process with what a house church member must experience when looking for a house church. Within a house church there isn't a teacher who's style you can deem pleasing or not, there isn't a person or team that leads a certain style of music, no building to evaluate, and you can pretty much expect that the size will be small. My impression from house church members studied is that the whole notion of church shopping as a consumer to be pleased is displaced, and very quickly after they attend they become responsible for the type of environment present. A house church member cannot remain a detached consumer, if they attend they are responsible for contributing. Likewise, I was speaking to another friend who is attending a Catholic college and recently attended mass. Prior to college she was attending a Western Protestant church. She said that she envied Catholics because there was no concept of church shopping for them, Mass is pretty standard wherever you go. She contrasted this standardization to the highly variant nature of Protestant churches.

Churchgoers commonly and frequently hop around churches because they aren't happy with the music or teaching style. While there should be room for preference, the underlying notion with this system is that it is the responsibility of the paid few to create an environment that is pleasing and enjoyable to the church consumer. Many paid church workers work ardently to change this mindset but find change very difficult in a system which reinforces the clergy-laity distinction.

These observations about the traditional church as a countercase of member engagement enlighten how engagement might look in the house church and why participants might have been drawn to a different form of church. Additionally, the impact of the shifts in leadership in Christian Church history are revealed, informing how and why church structures have come to

be. These observations, again, inform the foundation upon which house church members sought to find and develop different church expressions.

Linking Shared Leadership and Member Engagement

By this point the overlap between the concepts of shared leadership and member engagement may have become evident to the reader. Participants engaged by sharing in the leadership of their house church. At times, they were one in the same. They engaged by providing insights and thoughts about the scripture reading but this involvement was also the way in which they participated in shared leadership because they functioned as co-teachers rather than just recipients of the teaching.

A few participants were asked directly about the relationship between shared leadership and their engagement. They were able to identify the connections between shared leadership and their engagement as well as the benefits and outcomes of a church that utilized such shared leadership. To summarize the link between member engagement and shared leadership, their insights are laid against the informing theoretical framework provided in chapter two (transformational leadership and employee engagement) and Figure 12 provides a modified conceptualization of this theory as visible in the house church settings explored.

The connections. Participants were able to draw connections between how shared leadership and member engagement worked together and augmented each other. One participant explained that because shared leadership allowed everyone to share, church members were thus aware of what was going on in each other's lives and could engage throughout the week:

> I think there is [a relationship between shared leadership and engagement] because I think we know each other. I think we are vulnerable to each other in terms of the environment that we've created there. We know when somebody is going into the hospital and when they need a meal and when somebody is struggling with that and they

> need time off or they are very occupied with a wedding, we know that and were sensitive to that. (IP11, 2012, #1026-1027, p. 11)

Another participant acknowledged the ways in which the shared leadership style encouraged and allowed her to participate and engage:

> I think there is a correspondence, I think in the same way that people may be stuck in the receiving end, I think sometimes there's a tendency for the leadership to be stuck in the regular ways that they have seen leadership done. And, but I think that the way they ask questions or the way they ask people to participate or the way they say "I really enjoyed what you said" they tend to give feedback like that and that feedback I think encourages at least me to participate more. (IP12, 2012, #1137-1138, p. 7)

Another participant made the same connection but specifically emphasized the dialogue format as a means which allowed her to engage: "It's easier for me to pay attention at a house church because, it's more like a discussion instead of being a lesson just taught at you" (IP4, 2012, #252, p. 6). These comments from participants seem to echo Cox et al.'s (2003) statement that "shared leadership may improve the experience of work by offering an incremental measure of self-determination and opportunity for meaningful impact…by more evenly distributing opportunities for meaningful influence, shared leadership may provide a basis for full partnership" (Johnson, 1995, p. 28). I would suggest that because house church members were invited to participate in the discussion and serve as co-teachers, they were able to have meaningful impact on others. Benefitting from the feedback and insight of others in the group will be discussed below as an advantage of this environment. And although participants did not directly refer to the idea of full partnership, as noted previously, a high level of responsibility and ownership was observed in the participation of house church members.

The benefits and outcomes. In addition to participants acknowledging the link between shared leadership and member engagement, they identified several benefits or outcomes of this environment. They connected their engagement to their learning and spiritual development. One of the benefits identified was the diversity in perspectives offered during the weekly gatherings:

> I mean I can stay home and read the Bible by myself. But to hear other people's, how what they've read, how God has used it in their life, what it means to them, and to me, the cool thing is, reading something and just the things that impress people. I mean, just the words that they notice or something, it's like, 'wow! I didn't even see that!' it's just… to me, that's part of how you really get to know people too. Is they share through comments that they make that you might see a little glimpse more in to their life, like maybe they're not ready to talk about something or share something you kind of see that there is something going on there, and you don't necessarily have to know but it can help guide you to know how to be praying for them. (IP3, 2012, #179, p. 8)

This diversity allowed for those with different learning styles or preferences to have the opportunity to hear from someone who might speak to their particular style.

> and because it shifts around a little bit and people react to different styles it provides the opportunity for, 'that thing didn't really work well for me, but the next thing will work really well for me' and so I think that has kinda kept everybody engaged without feeling like this is the same old over and over and I don't think like this or get it that way. (IP11, 2012, #1034, p. 11)

Likewise, the participation of everyone in the dialogue helped some stay engaged:

> I felt like I had been paying attention more, I think it being shorter and having other people's opinions of what was going on rather than the history of everything, blah, blah, blah. I got more out of the scripture itself and was actually thinking about it. Getting other peoples' perspectives, seeing what other people thought about it instead of just one person just telling us what we are supposed to think about it, made a huge difference. I probably learned more and thought about it more instead of tuning out and thinking about what I was going to be doing when I finally got out of there. (IP10, 2012, #704-705, p. 8)

This diversity of perspective and involvement was also highlighted as a benefit because it allowed for a lively dialogue where church members interacted with one another rather than just sitting and listening.

> And it helps me get feedback too. If I have a question I can ask it and get clarification from others and get other people's ideas and it helps me know what other people are thinking and feeling and questions that they have too that are good. (IP12, 2012, #1095, p. 2)

Many of the identified outcomes centered around increased learning for participants. "I probably learned more and thought about it more instead of tuning out and thinking about what I was going to be doing when I finally got out of there" (IP10, 2012, #708, p. 8). Again, the

presence of the conversation was highlighted as a benefit, in this case, because it enabled increased learning,

> Talking about things and analyzing and going over all the fine details. And I think that's what I like the best about being able to just have a conversation. You can find the small details and just talk about it with people and analyze things back and forth. So I feel like I get more out of it. (IP4, 2012, #232, p. 3)

Engaged listening perpetuated by the shared leadership and conversational style fostered deeper learning and application for church members,

> there's tons of questions that people ask during the messages and so, I don't know, I feel that at least from my part that I like to participate because it helps me process and apply the information rather than just sit there and be a bystander and let the information flow in one ear and out the other. (IP12, 2012, #1094, p. 2)

In addition to increased learning broadly, participants connected their experience in the shared leadership setting to more spiritual growth and deeper understanding of the Bible specifically,

> I would say for me I have definitely, my growth and walk with the Lord, the growth has been exponential compared to going to the traditional church. I think it's for part of the reasons like what you've said, I mean, you're mentally engaged but if you have a question you can ask it. (IP3, 2012, #175, p. 7)

Another participant shared this construction connecting it directly to understanding of the Bible, "the learning part of it helps me feel like if I can really get to the meaning and the depth of a verse, I can really understand it. And kind of… sometimes a lot of times when I'm analyzing or discussing I feel like God talks to me a lot through that, if I'm willing to hear it" (IP4, 2012, #234, p. 3).

Throughout my participation, I was able to reflect on my own level of engagement as I have previously been involved in traditional churches as well. I wrote this note in my reflexive journal,

> Its interesting to think about my own engagement here as compared to the mega church I used to attend. I even find myself more engaged. I feel responsible to read throughout the week, I feel encouraged to seek God because of the stories of others and I find that what we read and discuss is sticking with me more. Jason asked me the other day what we were reading in the Bible and I was able to recall for him with detail, which is usually not the case for me. It was much easier in the mega church to tune out and sit passively; nothing was expected of me. Here, however I am expected to participate.

Summarizing the link between shared leadership and member engagement. These findings support previous work which identifies leadership as an antecedent to employee engagement (Wollard and Shuck, 2011, Mester, et al., 2003) and coincides with research that shows an increase in employee engagement when a leadership style which supports employee development is used (Cox et al., 2003, p. 54). I would also suggest that the habits and trends observed in these house churches studied seem to contradict the trends of waning participation and attendance observed in Western Protestant churches (Arakawa & Greenberg, 2007; Babcock-Roberson & Strickland, 2010; Bezuijen et al., 2010; Bono & Judge, 2003; Ghafoor et al., 2011; Salanova et al., 2011; Zhang & Bartol, 2010).

These findings can now be compared to the theoretical framework for leadership and engagement introduced in chapter two. As seen in figure 8, the conceptual model of leadership and employee engagement, from chapter two, Shuck and Herd (2011) suggested that leadership does play a substantial role in an employee's level of engagement. They argue that the leader must use emotional intelligence to determine which type of leadership (transformation or transactional) is most appropriate for the employee. Both types will elicit some engagement from the employee however, transformational leadership, which meets higher level needs, will generally elicit more engagement from employees.

For the house church context, I would modify this figure as shown in figure 17. While Shuck and Herd's (2011) model identifies leadership as an antecedent to employee engagement,

the responsibility for compelling or motivating this engagement is still placed on one (or a few) selected individuals. Within the house church settings studied, because everyone can and should participate in the leadership of the house church, the shared level of responsibility seems to naturally elicit corresponding high levels of member engagement. I have replaced their inclusion of Leader Emotional Intelligence with Shared Leadership. The leader's responsibility for determining which type of leadership is most appropriate for the follower is removed. Instead, everyone is responsible for creating an environment that responds to their needs and motivations thus increasing engagement because individuals are involved in the process and are thus more likely to have their needs and motivations met. I have included traditional church leadership as well since just as transactional leadership elicits some employee engagement, traditional church leadership would elicit some member engagement, too. In an effort to add more contextual detail to this figure, the circle behind church member engagement shows how this engagement tends to happen as discussed above. And, as in the Shuck and Herd (2011) model, there are individuals who engage despite the leadership style utilized and this engagement is demonstrated via the dotted line.

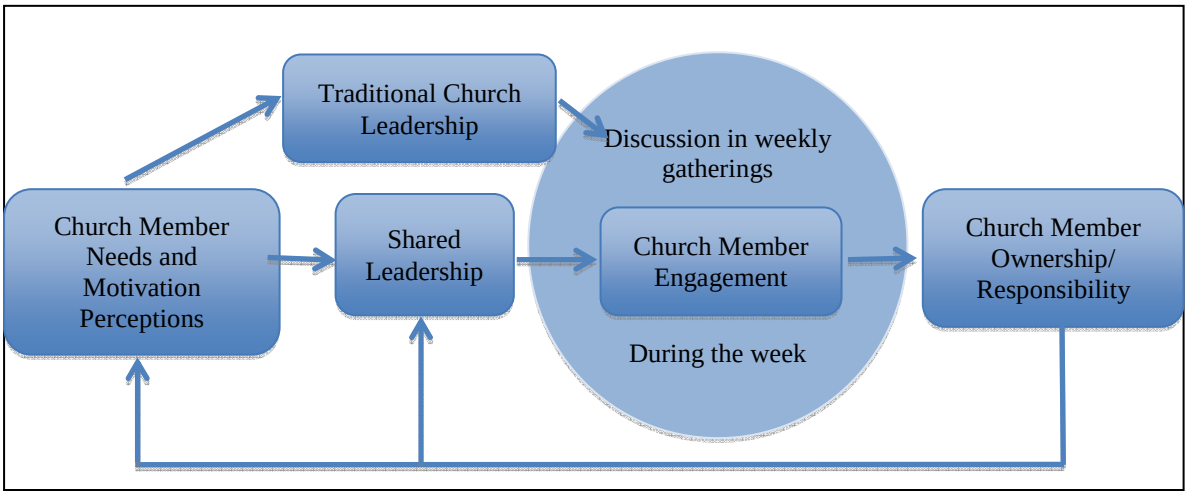

Figure 17. *Modified conceptual model of member engagement and shared leadership. Adapted from Shuck and Herd (2011).*

Following Part C, the quantitative data, my observations here will be combined and aligned with the theory of shared leadership. First, additional manifestations of the phenomenon of the selected house churches will be discussed.

Additional Manifestations of the Phenomenon of the Selected House Churches

While my research was directed at trying to gain an understanding of the manifestations of shared leadership and member engagement in selected Western Protestant house churches, as in any naturalistic inquiry, manifestations of the essence of the phenomenon arose that I had not anticipated. Two substantial manifestations that surfaced were an overall sense of freedom for the house church members and the idea that attending a house church usually took some transition time since most participants were from traditional church backgrounds.

Freedom in the house church. The idea of freedom was discussed in several of the interviews with participants. This freedom was particularly pertinent for individuals who had previously served in a paid pastoral role. Freedom was also mentioned when participants discussed giving money to the church. Participants who had previously served as paid ministers acknowledged the lack of pressure, and thus freedom they felt,

> Since we've done simple church it feels like a want, like a given, like I don't feel the pressure to have to be someplace. I don't have to go do stuff. We can just, be who we are and fellowship with other people and I think that for me is huge. (IP6, 2012, #496, p. 17)

The same participant later added, in talking about her house church experience, "I just felt so freed, yes that's how I feel" (IP6, 2012, #512, p. 19). This new found freedom occurred because they no longer felt the pressure to get a certain number of people to attend or to receive a certain amount of money in the offering each week.

> So you know, not having to count heads. Not having to worry about that is huge for me. That, saying, "God, who do You bring in tonight" and being totally satisfied and not

> discouraged if so and so didn't come and you know we just, "God, who are You bringing tonight," and not worrying about it, that's been huge. (IP6, 2012, #393-394, p. 6)

Another former pastor affirmed this idea,

> I can't tell you how much this is one of the other freedoms that I feel now, I don't feel like I have any need or obligation or anything to recruit anyone… it's like, Lord this has got to be of you… if they want help I'll help… the only thing I want to recruit people to is a closer walk with You, other than that, I don't care where they walk, as long as they're closer to You. And I don't know if I have ever felt that as purely as I have felt that now. And there is a real freedom in all of that. (IP1, 2012, #76, p. 18)

Participants also noted that they were able to find a better pace or cadence to their lives because they were not required to do all the additional tasks that come along with being a pastor,

> I don't know how it's going to turn out, but I don't feel any pressure like I did before. I really like that. When we first were thinking about this I called a pastor who is a mentor to me, and he's really high up in Four Square and he said, "when you do this, don't put any pressure on yourself like you have to do something. But just look at it like you're taking a stroll with the Lord, like you're taking a walk with the Lord. Wherever He leads you that's where you're supposed to be. Don't make something happen, just, you're taking a walk with the Lord and enjoy the stroll." And I really like that philosophy, it makes my life more enjoyable than thinking, okay, we've got to have at least this many people here this week, there's no pressure at all… I feel like I'm okay with the whole time thing right now. The last couple of years I have really been working on finding the right cadence in life and the right rhythm, and with simple church I really feel like I found it because it's not like I have to prepare and do stuff. (IP5, 2012, #490-491 & 521, p. 16)

His wife added, "and for Stan that is really a big step. He would kind of go off on a performance kind of thing, and that's really big for him. That he is now in a relaxation" (IP6, 2012, #492, p. 17). This notion of freedom in terms of not worrying about how many people attend or how much money is collected in the offering plate was reinforced during my observations. The cajoling typical to a traditional church regarding attendance or giving was absent.

This freedom was also connected to how house church members felt about their financial giving. They seemed to take a new level of ownership and responsibility in their giving since there was not a regular tithe collected. Sites would do occasional corporate giving projects but

most often individuals would use their discretion to decide where and to whom to give. One participant described her satisfaction with the level of responsibility she had in determining her giving, “so it’s been nice to see the money that we give, we choose where it goes and it goes directly, we research where we give and trying to look at what God tells us about the homeless and feeding the hungry” (IP3, 2012, #141, p. 3). Others added,

> I would say, yes, it takes a lot more thought and responsibility on your part. Its not a no brainer. You have to be conscious of why and where you’re giving and who you’re giving to. But it also makes it more joyful giving because you’re giving most of the time to people that you know their situation, you know how much it’s going to bless them. It’s a lot more personal that way. (IP8&9, 2012, #598, p. 9)

Church members enjoyed this level of ownership in their giving decisions because they were able to direct their giving to the tangible needs of others: “what is so nice now is that we feel like we give even more because it just feels like what we give is really… we know that one hundred percent is going to that particular need (IP5 & 6, 2012, #482, p. 15). Another participant added that this type of giving seemed more appropriate as the church itself no longer consumes what is given, largely:

> I mean seriously, when it comes down to that, most of what is going through the church is going back in to your own pocket. And you’re like, ‘this is silly’ but what you’re freed up to do now is ‘Lord, this is your money, we want to invest it for eternity. Who do you want us to bless? How do you want us to use this?’ And it could be we’re involved in some missions work, we’ve been involved in the past even more in missions work that we are now… every month it comes down to, where are the needs? Who do you want us to be a blessing to? And so it even comes down to such things that we are seriously considering, we even know a couple families who are in our fellowship right now that really want to get out of debt and want to manage their finances well. And who is going to help them get out of debt? Maybe that would be us, it’s something that we are seriously considering. (IP1, 2012, #63, p. 16)

Participants seemed to appreciate this format and expressed a level of satisfaction knowing where their money was going and that it was being used for practical needs as opposed to salaries or a building, as in the traditional church.

A countercase of freedom in the traditional church. This contrast with how participants had experienced giving in the traditional church came up several times in interviews. Participants lamented that a majority of giving in the Christian church was going right back into the church:

> I'll hazard a guess at something, and there's churches that are exceptions to this…but I would guess that Sunday activities, salaries and building obligations probably eat up eighty percent or more of the giving to the church. There's literally billions of dollars that Christians give in this country that they just consume themselves. And I'm like, there's something wrong with that picture, something's wrong. But we keep on doing it. (IP1, 2012, #65 & 67, p. 17)

This type of giving was a problem for some church members because rather than meeting tangible needs, giving was often directed toward salaries or a building:

> And too looking at the things about you know, a lot of churches have the building that they use one day a week and you pay all that money and you know, how much more could that be used for God's working, you know, helping people in other countries, helping people here in our own country. (IP3, 2012, #139, p. 3)

Another participant summed up her sense of giving in the traditional church, "I felt like the giving I was giving was a waste of the money. I was like, okay, well yeah I paid for the water, but I have to water the lawn again this month. It's just like, a waste to me" (IP6, 2012, #498, p. 17).

This discontent with giving in the traditional church (and thus, appreciation for the freedom in giving in the house church) connects back to the previous discussion about reasons why individuals were compelled to seek out alternative church expressions. In addition to the aforementioned forces (general discontent with the direction of the traditional church including frustration and disillusionment with leadership) individual's disdain for the lack of freedom for pastors and for giving may have added to their desire to see a shift in church leadership.

Likewise, the level of ownership and responsibility church members took in their giving may serve as another way for them to engage at increased levels in this setting.

Transitioning to the house church. The final manifestation that surfaced was the notion of transitioning from the traditional church to the house church. While not always the case, most participants acknowledged some difficulty in making the transition, "It was hard for me because I am a very traditional, change is hard for me, I grew up in a traditional church, smaller but traditional" (IP3, 2012, #132, p. 2). Participants also noted that because of their long history in the traditional church, they had to undergo a process of unlearning church habits, "what he said to me one time over breakfast is, 'Walt, the problem is not that you have a lot to learn, the problem is you have a lot to unlearn' and that's really proven to be true and its been hard for me over the years" (IP1, 2012, #8, p. 2). The same participant added, "the more well trained or experienced you are in traditional church, the harder it is to make that transition. So it's not like you make some…. It really is… it isn't just a changing forms, it really is a paradigm shift in your thinking. It's more major than you even realize at the time" (IP1, 2012, #29, p. 7). This observation connects back to comments from participants about the difficulty of engaging in the house church because of past habits. Because many participants had never seen or experienced the form utilized in the house church, they may have struggled learning how to function in this new environment. One participant alluded to this challenge, "you know, it's like if you've never seen anything but black or white, how do you describe to someone who has never seen anything outside of black or white what color is. It's not that they don't want to get it, it's just, they don't get it" (IP1, 2012, #73, p. 18).

Although house church members studied were eager for this alternative form of church, I did notice through my observations and some comments made in interviews that they would

often default back into thinking that was common to the traditional setting. For example, even though they talked about sharing leadership, there was, for some, an obvious comfort with looking to one person in the house church as a leader. Likewise, the form of the gatherings at times looked very similar to that of the traditional church and it became apparent that individuals were not used to or comfortable with the higher level of engagement expected.

These difficulties with making the transition to the house church seem to again reinforce structuration theory and the notion that within organizations, structures and, in turn, practices are often seen as enduring and persistent (Association of Religious Data Archives, 2008; Barna, 2005; The Barna Group, 2009; Winseman, 2007). House church members studied were those who had decided they wanted to participate in an alternative form of the church, however, they were not immediately free from the values or habits that had developed as a result of their previous experiences.

Summary of the Phenomenon of the Selected House Churches

Returning now to my second research question (How do church members, in Western Protestant house church settings where shared leadership is practiced, describe their lived experience with shared leadership and member engagement?), the findings of my research are briefly summarized. The emergent nature of the church (compelled by general discontent with the direction of the traditional church including frustration and disillusionment with leadership, the projected trajectory of the traditional church, and individual's disdain for the lack of freedom for pastors and giving in the traditional church) appears to have instigated this shift towards house churches. Some of the manifestations of this shift are seen through the enactment of shared leadership as visible through decision-making and the ways in which church members take initiative to be involved. Additionally, the manifestation of church member engagement is visible

through participation in the weekly gatherings, interaction throughout the week, and an increased sense of ownership and responsibility. These findings regarding participants' descriptions of their lived experiences in this setting reinforce structuration theory and provide us with additional information about how to conceptualize the relationship between leadership and engagement. Next the culmination of these findings, along with the aforementioned findings regarding the culture of house churches will be discussed.

The Culture and Phenomenon of Selected House Churches

Before summarizing the findings of my quantitative survey, a few comments will be made about what the qualitative data to this point reveals about the house churches studied. In an attempt to summarize and provide links between the discussion regarding the culture of the house churches studied and the manifestations that described the essence of the phenomenon of these churches, figure 18 was created. If one can conceptualize how culture and phenomenon interact, this figure aims to do so. The manifestation of the emergent nature of the Christian Church has produced the house church and its ensuing culture as depicted inside the circle. Likewise, because house church members have decided to seek out an alternative form of the Christian Church, they experience the manifestation of transitioning to the house church where they then experience and help create house church culture. In turn, this culture has then produced the other discussed manifestations as experienced by participants in this setting: shared leadership, engagement, and freedom.

The final piece of my data collection and analysis sought extended member checking via a quantitative survey. My findings, which report on the survey instrument and offer tentative contextualized definitions of shared leadership and member engagement, follow.

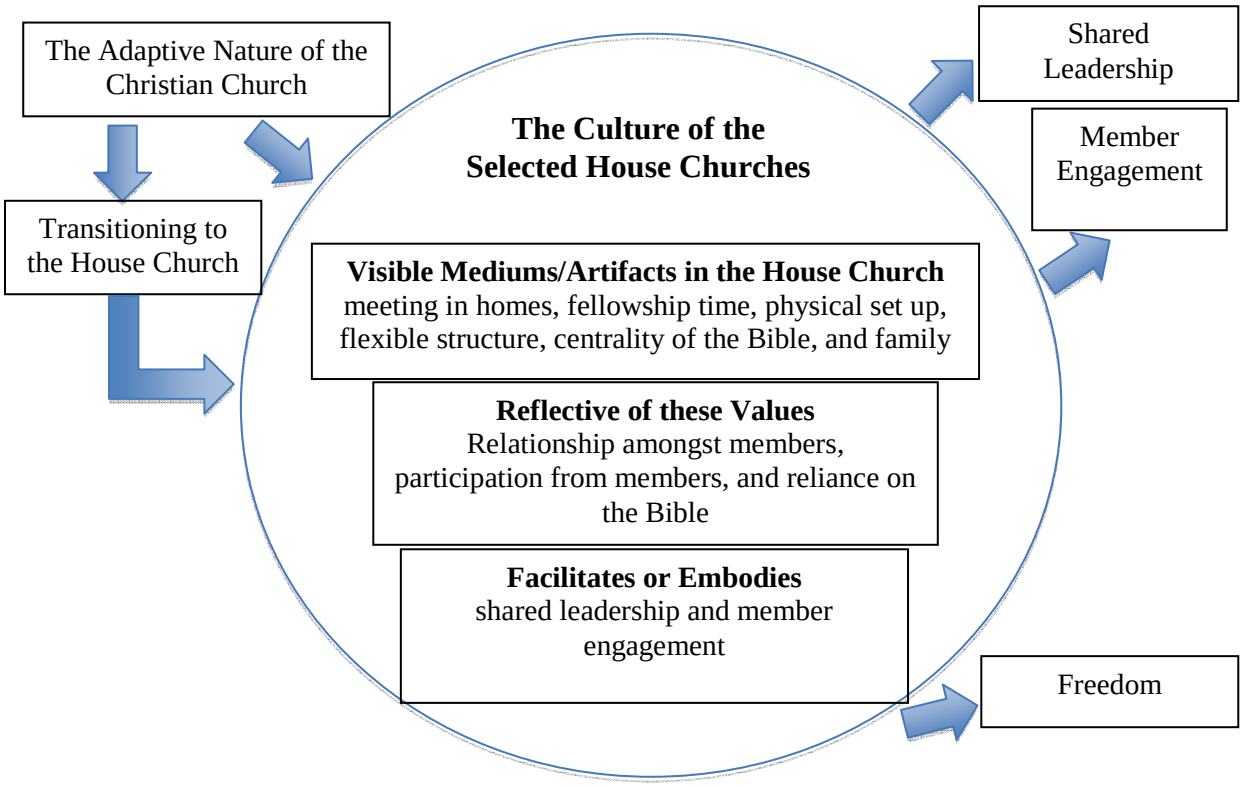

Figure 18. *Conceptualizing the relationship between the culture and the phenomenon of the studied house churches.*

Part C: The Quantitative Data

As explained in chapter three, in order to extend member checking and accumulate different data kinds for a more informed and fuller picture, it was determined that a multiple methods strategy would be beneficial. Thus, a quantitative survey was designed for use as a member checking device. The quantitative survey served as a means to confirm my co-constructions that were gathered via the qualitative data collection methods. The survey's utility to my study is illuminated by Lincoln and Guba (1985):

> If the human instrument has been used extensively in earlier stages of inquiry, so that an instrument can be constructed that is grounded in data that the human instrument has produced…such an instrument might have utility: to provide an easy way to obtain member checks from a fairly large sample of respondents. (p. 239)

As such, the survey was descriptive and information-verifying and was generated out of the findings from the qualitative data collection methods which enabled me to answer my third research question, namely: Can their (interview participants') descriptions of shared leadership and member engagement be used to inform tentative definitions for shared leadership and member engagement which might be confirmed by other members of the selected house churches? The descriptive data gathered from the survey will first be detailed followed by discussion of the reliability and validity of the survey. Finally, I will offer tentative contextualized definitions of shared leadership and member engagement based on the culmination of my data collection as confirmed by the survey.

Descriptive Results

While the survey could not reasonably measure every manifestation of the phenomenon that surfaced, my aim was to refine my focus and understanding of shared leadership and member engagement as well as check on a few other significant findings that emerged. Five questions (1-5) sought to measure the presence and definition of member engagement in the three selected house church settings. Five questions (6-9, 11) sought to measure the presence and definition of shared leadership in the house church setting. Question 10 was directed towards confirming or disconfirming whether a relationship between shared leadership and member engagement existed. Finally, questions 12-15 measured additional findings from my data collection: the group dynamics in terms of belonging, family-feel, and group fit; and the relationship between the house church and the traditional church. As mentioned, Appendix D has a copy of the full survey. The below table provides each question along with the number of

responses for each, the minimum and maximum value entered for each participant, as well as the mean score and standard deviation for each question.

Table 17. *Descriptive Statistics*

Items	N	Min	Max	Mean	Std. Dev.
I feel engaged in the HC	31	1.00	5.00	4.39	.88
Engagement=questions	31	2.00	5.00	4.42	.72
Engagement=suggesting topics	31	2.00	5.00	4.03	.98
More engaged than TC	31	2.00	5.00	4.58	.85
Engagement=caring	31	2.00	5.00	4.39	.76
Leadership=several people	31	2.00	5.00	4.23	1.09
Multiple people make decisions	31	2.00	5.00	4.32	.75
Different people lead based on gifts	31	3.00	5.00	4.68	.54
I can suggest a topic	31	4.00	5.00	4.84	.37
More engaged because of leadership	31	2.00	5.00	4.45	.85
HC leadership=SL	31	1.00	5.00	4.19	1.01
Group is family	31	3.00	5.00	4.68	
I belong to the group	30	1.00	5.00	4.57	
HC competition with TC	31	1.00	5.00	1.65	
HC not a fit for all	31	2.00	5.00	3.81	
Valid N (listwise)	30				

Table 17 reveals high means on all questions. Question 14 was negatively phrased thus a low score confirms what I suspected. Since the survey was designed to confirm my previous findings, it should not be surprising that I was able to gather high means for the questions. Likewise, the standard deviations calculated reveal that there was not much variation in the answers participants gave, in most cases less than one point variance. This too should be expected considering that this survey was grounded in the qualitative research and sough confirmation. Overall, the survey provided the desired extended member check confirming my findings about shared leadership and member engagement. However, naturalistic inquiry is interested in finding the outliers, so it is of note that on questions one, 11, and 13 that the minimum values were one. After examining the surveys, one respondent selected one or “strongly disagree” on these questions. Previous discussion about a closed and open system may account for this response from someone who felt unengaged or that they did not belong to the group. One person also

indicated that they strongly disagreed that shared leadership was the leadership style utilized in the house church. I'm not sure if I can account for or explain this response and the survey did not accommodate for digging deeper if someone disagreed on this question. However, the same respondent selected neutral or disagree on most other questions about shared leadership indicating that they may have felt less included or that a different type of leadership was in place. Likewise, my interview with the participant who had exited the house church after feeling like she didn't belong may also speak to this survey response.

Reliability and Validity

In order to assess the quality of my instrument and inform future refinement, one test was conducted to measure reliability. The validity for my survey was imbedded in the qualitative data. Because the survey was grounded and developed from my previous findings, gathering high means on the survey validated its relevance.

To assess whether the data from the variables in each factor formed two reliable scales, Cronbach's alphas were computed. Alpha's greater than .70 provide good support for internal consistency reliability (Morgan, et al., 2013). The five questions referring to member engagement had a Cronbach's alpha of .73 indicating good internal consistency amongst the five items and the five questions referring to shared leadership had a Cronbach's alpha of .85 also indicating good internal consistency.

Contextualized Definitions for Shared Leadership and Member Engagement

Based on my qualitative findings, and confirmed by the quantitative survey, tentative contextualized definitions of shared leadership and member engagement can now provided. The

following definitions were provided in chapter one based on the extant literature and have been integrated into my contextualized definitions as appropriate:

Church Member Engagement- is for the purposes of this study, the active participation of individuals in the activities of the church (including volunteer service, decision-making, vision creation, and caring for others within the group) (Viola, 2008).

Shared Leadership- is

> a dynamic, interactive influence process among individuals in groups for which the objective is to lead one another to the achievement of group or organizational goals or both. This influence process involves peer, or lateral, influence and at other times involves upward or downward hierarchical influence. (Pearce & Conger, 2003, p. 1)

Updated contextualized definitions:

House Church Member Engagement- is, based on the three sites explored, the active participation of individuals in 1) the weekly gatherings of the house church (including answering and asking questions and suggesting topics or songs) and 2) relationship with one another during the week (including social get-togethers and meeting practical needs).

Shared Leadership- is, based on the three sites explored, the dynamic, interactive influence process among house church members in regards to decision-making, initiating group efforts, suggesting direction, and teaching one another. While one person may take on the leadership role at any given point, leadership is not an official position or limited to any one or few people.

With these definitions established, I am now able to integrate and summarize the culmination of the qualitative and quantitative findings from my three research questions. The final section of this chapter will utilize the theory of shared leadership to facilitate this integration and summary.

Combining the Qualitative and Quantitative Data

Now that the qualitative and quantitative data have been reported, this section is focused on integrating the findings and applying them to the theory of shared leadership. Chapter five revisits each of my research questions and provides a summary of my findings while this section will cumulate the quantitative and qualitative data via a combined table and through alignment with the theory of shared leadership.

The combination of the qualitative and quantitative data thickens my descriptions and demonstrates the ways in which my findings confirm one another. Lincoln. Lynham, and Guba (2005) refer to this as the process of individual and collective reconstructions coalescing around consensus. Table 18 provides the survey questions regarding shared leadership and member engagement with corresponding mean. Finally, participant quotes are provided which demonstrate the finding within the qualitative data. The table serves to confirm the constructions and co-constructions gathered during the study and provides a rich picture of participant experiences with shared leadership and member engagement in the selected house churches.

Table 18. *The Combined Qualitative and Quantitative Findings Regarding Shared Leadership and Member Engagement*

Construct	Survey Question	Mean	Qualitative Findings Reflective of the Survey Question
Member Engagement	I feel engaged in the HC	4.3871	"The one thing that is true about being part of a house church is you really can't be part of a house church and be alone unless there's some really deep issues going on there. And there's times when that's true too, but honestly the average person, you cannot… you cannot not be engaged" (IP2, 2012, #83, p. 20).
	Engagement=questions	4.4194	"Well that you know definitely is different because I like to say if you're listening to a sermon you can't raise your hand and say, 'wait a minute I have a question about this' where, this we can… where we can it's like 'okay wait a minute, you've lost me there, I don't understand what you're trying to get at' kind of thing. There is that freedom" (IP3, 2012, #172, p. 7).
	Engagement=suggesting topics	4.0323	"It's always just been kind of an open forum I guess you'd say when we first started out we studied the book of John, and we just kind of talked about where everybody was at and was there anything that anybody really felt compelled and wanted to study in the Bible" (IP3, 2012, #163-164, p. 5).
	More engaged than TC	4.5806	"It's funny how many people were thinking how we are going to go off the deep end and lose our ways and in fact what it did do was it drove us to the Word and drove us to the Lord and I am confident that we put more energy into trying to know the will of God and the scripture than people who sit in an institutional setting and let someone else do it for them" (IP11, 2012, #938-940, p. 4).
	Engagement=caring	4.3871	"It was everybody taking care of everybody else and if somebody wasn't there, checking on them, 'how you doing? What's going on? Are you okay?' taking care of people and you heard a need and it was okay; lets go, we're going to help so and so fix their house because they can't afford to do it" (IP6, 2012, #462, p. 13).

Table 18. *Continued*

Construct	Survey Question	Mean	Standard Deviation	Qualitative Findings Reflective of the Survey Question
Shared Leadership	Leadership=several people	4.2258	1.08657	"I'm not the only one; I shouldn't be the only one that's coming prepared to try to build people up… Everyone should come with the same mindset that you were just talking about… you know? Listen, and if the Lord has really laid it upon my heart or there's a real burden that I want to share. Then well, you should feel like this is the safest place for you to come and you should really want to do that for everyone's sake" (IP1, 2012, #90, p. 21).
	Multiple people make decisions	4.3226	.74776	"So it became more of a persuasion and more of a shared way, I don't think we have come across anything that is like, well here is what we as a leadership has decided and if you don't like it, tough, we never landed there at all… we were able to incorporate through discussion and questioning back and forth wrestling with the issues and have found this very effective instead of having somebody go away really hostile with this "you're pushing this and you know I can't follow that." Decisions are made via influence and persuasion as opposed to dictate" (IP11, 2012, #976-979, p. 7).
	Different people lead based on gifts	4.6774	.54081	"We went through the study of the church and we were all given gifts from the Holy Spirit, some people have service function, some people have teaching some administration and so on and that kind of, have we pigeon holed people and given them specific titles? No, but one of the things that we really wanted to do was to treat people to be themselves and do what God has gifted them to do, whether it's musical or discernment or whatever, service and those sorts of things. So, I think what we have tried to do is empower people is to use the gifting they have for mutual benefit" (IP11, 2012, #1010-1012, p. 10).
	I can suggest a topic	4.8387	.37388	"Anyone who is in the house church can offer guidance or make a suggestion" (IP4, 2012, #271, p. 9).
	HC leadership=SL	4.1935	1.01388	"With the house church it's all equalized, because the person who is leading it kind of guides the discussion but everyone is talking about it so it's like everyone is giving the sermon, so everyone is on an equal plane which makes things less intimidating I think" (IP4, 2012, #280, p. 10).

Table 18. *Continued*

Construct	Survey Question	Mean	Standard Deviation	Qualitative Findings Reflective of the Survey Question
Linking Member Engagement and Shared Leadership	More engaged because of leadership	4.4516	.85005	"I think there is [a relationship between shared leadership and engagement] because I think we know each other. I think we are vulnerable to each other in terms of the environment that we've created there. We know when somebody is going into the hospital and when they need a meal and when somebody is struggling with that and they need time off or they are very occupied with a wedding, we know that and were sensitive to that" (IP11, 2012, #1026-1027, p. 11).

The theory of shared leadership also provides a framework, or lens, through which I can summarize and integrate the findings. The theory as depicted in chapter two, figure 10, identifies the antecedents and outcomes mediated by shared leadership. The conceptual framework provided by Pearce and Sims (2000) is utilized below in figure 19 predominantly to demonstrate my findings regarding the selected Western Protestant house churches in on Midwestern state rather than to represent previous work on shared leadership. As such, the figure has been altered significantly to represent this research. I have included particular comment on how my research seems to support the theory of shared leadership.

The modified version of the theory of shared leadership still utilizes the basic framework of antecedents and outcomes and aims to integrate a majority of my findings into this model. In regards to antecedents, this category most closely aligns with Pearce and Sims' (2000) model. While the group characteristics identified here were not ones that necessarily emerged as most significant in my findings, I am able to provide some confirmation of their presence as an antecedent to shared leadership. Out of the four antecedents listed (maturity, familiarity, diversity, and group size) group size was the only one directly referenced in my above discussion. My findings, which suggest that a smaller group size correlates with shared leadership, align with Pearce and Sims' (2000) proposed theory. They mention that a saturation point exists at which a large group size is negatively related to shared leadership. Familiarity was visible via the closeness of relationships exhibited in the house church. This familiarity was referenced in my above discussion as the intimacy of the group, the sense of family, and the level of care that was shown for one another.

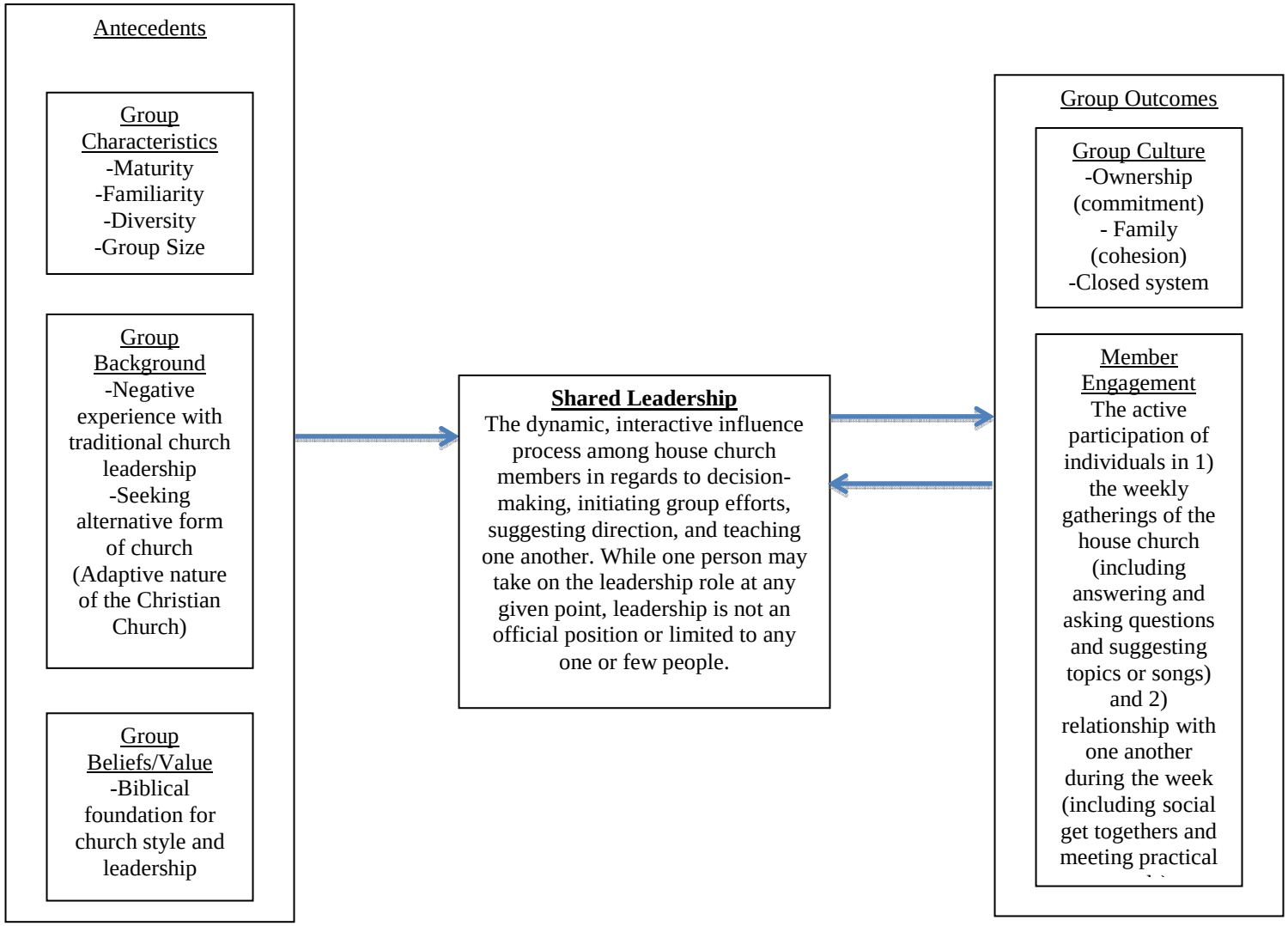

Figure 19. *Modified theory of shared leadership as visible in the selected Western Protestant house church context. Adapted from Pearce and Sims (2000).*

Maturity, although not directly mentioned previously, was observed in the house church settings I explored. This maturity was demonstrated in regards to group members' spirituality, their ability to relate to one another, and their time together as a group. Likewise, diversity was most visible in the demographics (aside from ethnicity, which was predominantly white) of house church members. The various backgrounds, experiences, ages, gifts, and skills of the group seemed to enable them to work well together.

The categories of task characteristics and environment characteristics seemed irrelevant to the selected house church setting as this study was not examining a work group in the same sense that Pearce and Sims (2000) utilized the concept. As such, I am not able to comment on whether my research confirms or denies this portion of the previous model. However, I was able to integrate my findings into two other categories, which represent important antecedents to the success of shared leadership in the house church setting. As discussed previously, several factors contributed to the likelihood of the selected house churches practicing shared leadership. Group background and group beliefs/values aim to reflect these. Many house church participants had previous experiences in traditional churches (often negative), which compelled them to seek alternative forms of church. Likewise, biblical interpretation and understanding led many to believe that shared leadership was an appropriate church leadership style.

In the center of the diagram I have included the contextualized definition of shared leadership based on my qualitative findings and confirmed via my quantitative survey. The relationship between shared leadership and the identified outcomes is seen as reciprocal as I am not sure it is possible to define member engagement as solely an outcome. And, as shown in the previous section, the culture of the house church seems to produce shared leadership as a

manifestation of the phenomenon. Nonetheless, I believe it is accurate to show these as outcomes of the house church environment where shared leadership is practiced.

I replaced Pearce and Sims' (2000) category of group psyche with group culture although my findings align somewhat with theirs. The high level of ownership demonstrated by selected house church members could be equated to their acknowledgment of commitment as an outcome. Additionally, the family culture identified in the house church could align with their concept of cohesion. I included the concept of a closed system to reflect the finding that the close-knit group of the house church, while promoting a family feel, could also make it difficult for outsiders to gain access. Pearce and Sims' (2000) model refers to group behavior as an outcome, however, in regards to this study, the most pertinent form of group behavior displayed was member engagement and I have accordingly included the contextualized definition of engagement from this study.

Figure 19 and Table 19 aim to summarize and integrate the findings from my research. Next, chapter five will provide a concise response to my research questions, reflection on the research process, and implications for the future.

CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSION, IMPLICATIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Thus far, this dissertation has provided four chapters: Introduction, Review of the Literature, Methodology and Methods, and Data Analysis and Findings. In the first chapter, Introduction, the problem of waning church member engagement was addressed with a brief background on Western Protestant Church leadership, employee engagement, and shared leadership. Additionally, the purpose of the study, an overview of the methodology and accompanying methods, ethics, researcher's perspective, delimitations and limitations, operational definitions, and significance of the study were provided. In the second chapter, Review of the Literature, an integrative review of literature of the three constructs germane to this study, namely, Western Protestant Church leadership, employee engagement, and shared leadership were provided. Within each construct an informing theoretical framework, which informed the study, was also provided. In the third chapter, Methodology and Methods, the inquiry paradigm, research methodologies and processes, and quality indicators for this study were shared. The fourth chapter, Data Analysis and Findings, was divided into three main parts addressing the culture, phenomenon, and quantitative data. Within these three parts, the themes, that resulted from individual and shared co-constructions as a result of analyzing the data, were presented in response to each of my research questions. In this fifth and final chapter, Conclusions, Implications, and Recommendations, the summary of the study, conclusions to each research question, implications for the future, the significance and contributions of the study, reflection on process and method changes, and reflection on myself as an instrument of inquiry is presented.

Revisiting the Research Questions

Chapter four aimed to answer the research questions for this study. However, I would like to first revisit the questions and explain how they were modified from their original state as appropriate for this study and second, provide concise responses to each. The processes, analysis, and evaluation of qualitative data is emergent and unpredictable (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011), thus it becomes acceptable and even expected that one might reframe ones initial questions based on the nature of these emergent data. The original research questions for this study were:

7. How do church members, in Western Protestant house church settings where shared leadership is practiced, describe their lived experience with shared leadership and member engagement? (a hermeneutic phenomenological question)
8. How do participants describe the particular setting, where shared leadership is practiced, and how does this setting seem to interact with their engagement as house church members? (a descriptive ethnographic question)
9. Can their descriptions of shared leadership and member engagement be used to inform tentative definitions for shared leadership and member engagement which might be confirmed by other house church? (a descriptive quantitative question)

Based on my data collection and analysis, I reordered and rephrased these questions as follows:

1. How do participants describe the particular setting of Western Protestant house churches, and how does this setting facilitate the practices of shared leadership and member engagement? (a descriptive ethnographic question)
2. How do church members, in Western Protestant house church settings where shared leadership is practiced, describe their lived experience with shared leadership and member engagement? (a hermeneutic phenomenological question)

3. Can their descriptions of shared leadership and member engagement be used to inform tentative definitions for shared leadership and member engagement which might be confirmed by other members of the selected house churches? (a descriptive quantitative question)

In analyzing my findings it became clear that understanding and describing the particular culture and setting of the selected house church was a necessary foundation to answering the following research questions. Thus, I have moved my second question regarding the culture of house churches to be the first question. While this change might seem inconsequential, it speaks to the larger notion that shared leadership and member engagement as manifestations of the phenomenon are not the driving force in house churches but rather outcomes facilitated by and located in a specific environment. This environment is one that is developed from the biblical understanding of house church members and the alternative mediums utilized in their gatherings.

In addition, I have changed the wording of this research question to reflect focus on gathering an understanding of the culture first and then identifying how it facilitates and supports shared leadership and engagement. In the following discussion, I address these research questions and attempt to provide overview responses to each.

1. How do participants describe the particular setting of Western Protestant house churches, and how does this setting facilitate the practices of shared leadership and member engagement? (a descriptive ethnographic question)

The culture of the house churches selected could best be described through the practiced mediums of the house church including meeting in homes, fellowship time, the physical set up, the flexible structure, and the study of scripture. These mediums were indicative of the

underlying beliefs, values, and assumptions of the house church culture. And, these mediums (or artifacts of culture) reflected the value placed on relationships with one another, relying heavily on scripture and the desire to see everyone participate. An additional important piece to the house church culture was that they referred to themselves as a family and while this dynamic impacted the ways in which they cared for each other, the close-knit nature of the group also created a group culture which effected, positively or negatively, the integration of new members. Additionally, the aforementioned mediums of physical set up and flexibility facilitated shared leadership and the culture of house churches compelled a high level of member engagement that extended beyond participation in a gathering once a week.

2. How do church members, in Western Protestant house church settings where shared leadership is practiced, describe their lived experience with shared leadership and member engagement? (a hermeneutic phenomenological question)

The adaptive nature of the church (compelled by general discontent with the direction of the traditional church including frustration and disillusionment with leadership, the projected trajectory of the traditional church, and individual's disdain for the lack of freedom for pastors and giving in the traditional church) has, in notable part, instigated this shift towards house churches. Some of the manifestations of this shift are seen through the enactment of shared leadership as visible through decision-making and the ways in which church members take initiative to be involved. Additionally, the manifestation of church member engagement is visible through how these members construct, shared and individual, the experiences of participation in the weekly gatherings, interaction throughout the week, and an increased sense of ownership and responsibility. These findings regarding participants' descriptions of their lived experiences in this setting reinforce structuration theory and provide us with additional information about how

to reconceptualize the relationship between leadership and member engagement (see Figure 17, p. 225).

3. Can their descriptions of shared leadership and member engagement be used to inform tentative definitions for shared leadership and member engagement which might be confirmed by other members of the selected house churches? (a descriptive quantitative question)

The descriptions and related constructions gathered via the aforementioned research questions provided the content for my descriptive survey. The themes that had emerged were predominantly confirmed and enabled me to develop these contextualized definitions for shared leadership and engagement:

House Church Member Engagement- is, based on the three sites explored, the active participation of individuals in 1) the weekly gatherings of the house church (including answering and asking questions and suggesting topics or songs) and 2) relationship with one another during the week (including social get togethers and meeting practical needs).

Shared Leadership- is, based on the three sites explored, the dynamic, interactive influence process among house church members in regards to decision-making, initiating group efforts, suggesting direction, and teaching one another. While one person may take on the leadership role at any given point, leadership is not an official position or limited to any one or few people.

The culmination of these data also allowed me to utilize Pearce and Sims' (2000) theory of shared leadership as a lens through which to conceptualize my findings regarding Western Protestant house churches and provide some support for their theory of shared leadership and to provide a table which summarizes and aligns the qualitative with the quantitative findings. Now

that my research questions have been revisited and their resulting responses summarized, I next reflect on what my findings might mean for future related research, theory and practice.

Implications for Research, Theory, and Practice Research

Research

As already highlighted, the lack of empirical research on shared leadership in all settings has been acknowledged (Ardichvili & Manderscheid, 2008). While, this study provides additional research, which helps us to understand the manifestation of shared leadership better, and its perceived (and experienced) relationship with that of member engagement, room still exists for more research on shared leadership's viability in various settings. Each of the antecedents and outcomes identified in Pearce and Sims' (2000) theory of shared leadership provides an interesting area of research in evaluating how that antecedent or outcome interacts with shared leadership.

Additionally, research has already hinted at shared leadership's connection to employee engagement: "shared leadership may improve the experience of work by offering an incremental measure of self-determination and opportunity for meaningful impact…by more evenly distributing opportunities for meaningful influence, shared leadership may provide a basis for full partnership" (Cox et al., 2003, p. 54). Employees that have "full partnership" and a "meaningful influence" would seem to align with principles of employee engagement. I would like to particularly see the relationship between shared leadership and member/employee engagement further explored as this study adds to the increasingly compelling evidence of a direct relationship between the two. Although the theory to date lacks substantiation, this study helps to provides some support, thus buttressing the trustworthiness of the theory further (Lincoln & Lynham, 2011).

In regards to my particular setting of house churches, there is much room for research on the intersecting phenomenon of house churches and the experiences (not just of member engagement) of their members. The extant literature on house churches is predominantly anecdotal and prescriptive at this point. Church leaders and members could benefit from more deeper description and a greater understanding of this movement and perhaps even some direct comparisons between the experiences of house church members and those of traditional churches. While the survey utilized in this study was designed for the purposes of member checking and thus aligned with the axioms of the Naturalistic paradigm, the survey could be utilized within other research paradigms beyond my local region of focus. In this case, the survey questions would need to be revisited and tested with larger groups since the standard deviations calculated on the existing survey demonstrated that little variance was found. The survey could be refined for use on a broader scale within house churches and perhaps modified to allow for measuring and comparing with the experiences of those in traditional churches.

Although only briefly mentioned in chapter four, the impact of the chosen mediums within church settings should be examined further to identify how these mediums (or artifacts in Schein's (2004) terminology) impact the message or produced culture in church settings. One might also examine how the chosen church mediums apply to particular groups and how these mediums are chosen. As noted, one of the advantages observed in the selected house churches was the ability to adapt and respond (in form and function) to the needs of the particular group. This advantage seems to differentiate the selected house churches from the described traditional church settings that were prescriptive and normative. Thus, research opportunities exist to explore how mediums impact the message and culture, how these mediums interact with the

particular individuals who attend (is there a ‘fit’ for certain people), and how the ability to adapt the mediums differentiates house churches.

One might also, very easily, take this research and analyze it through the lens of the critical paradigm. Throughout participants’ descriptions, the traditional church was often depicted as a hierarchical, masculine, exclusive organization in contrast to the house church which might be described as collective, feminine, and inclusive. Acker (1990) suggested that organizational structure is not gender neutral and offered the theory of gendered organizations which could illuminate the structural nuances of the traditional church versus the house church if research was conducted from a critical perspective.

Finally, the findings regarding family and group dynamics in the selected house church culture compels further investigation into house churches as more and less open cultures of worship. Identifying a continuum to this effect and factors that determine the level of ‘familyness’ and thus openness could illuminate the culture further.

Theory

In regards to suggestions for theory development, each of the three theoretical frameworks provided as informative to this study, would benefit from further development and refinement (Lynham, 2002). Likewise, each of these theories provided a lens through which I could examine the data collected. These varying lenses enabled me to see different aspects and identify nuances in how participants and I constructed reality (Lincoln & Guba, 2013). While this inquiry was not interested in theory testing or in generating grand theory, I was able to develop modifications of each theory as representative of the very localized context under study. This allowed me to localize applicability of the lens of difference offered by each with regard to understanding the phenomenon of the selected house churches. Within chapter two, I included

the original theoretical frameworks which informed the study and provided modified versions as applicable to the localized context within chapter four. These modifications of the theories should be revisited for extended local investigation and saturation. They are all hypothetico-deductive in nature and may allow for transferability. One might utilize these theories in other house church settings and examine how the theory applies or could be modified.

Structuration theory, amongst the three theories utilized in this study, has undergone the most substantiation via research and application as well as contextual modifications (Poole & McPhee, 2005; Pozzebon & Pinsonneault, 2005; Sarason, 1995). I provided a modification which begins to conceptualize its relevance to the adaptive nature of the Christian Church as visible in the selected house churches (see figure 5, page 36, for the original and figure 16, page 170, for my modification). Likewise, I provided a modified version of the conceptual model of engagement and shared leadership from Shuck and Herd (2011). Opportunity for refinement and operationalization of this theory exists as well (see figure 8, page 60, for the original and figure 17, page 204, for my modification).

In regards to shared leadership, other than brief mention by other scholars, the theory has not been revisited. Opportunity exists for operationalization and refinement (Lynham, 2000), and possibly a particular adaption, which might demonstrate the relationship between shared leadership and member/employee engagement. This study could confirm some of the categories identified by Pearce and Sims (2000). However, my research does not yet provide enough data to refine the theory as is needed to further substantiate its relevance. However, as with the two theories previously mentioned, I was able to provide a localized modification of the theory (see figure 10, page 73, for the original and figure 19, page 222, for my modification). Future development of this modified theory could also examine the outcomes portion of the theory as

well. As created by Pearce and Sims (2000) the group outcomes portion is more process oriented and does not identify performance outcomes per say. Examining the actual performance outcomes that could be identified in house church settings that practice shared leadership could prove beneficial.

After submerging myself in the data collection and data analysis process, it became clear that additional theoretical frameworks could have been illuminating to the study. A few of these were mentioned in chapter four (Schein's (2004) theory of culture, McLuhan's (1964) theory of the medium and the message, Hofstede, et al.'s, (2010) theory of open and closed systems) shed light on my findings. However, these theories could be further explored and modified to provide an additional lens for examining the culture and phenomenon of the selected house churches. Likewise, additional theories could prove helpful in examining the data and providing additional means for illuminating the findings; for example, Morgan's (2006) images of organization, Gardner's (1989) multiple intelligence theory mentioned in chapter two, and feminist theories such as invitational rhetoric (Foss & Griffin, 1985) also mentioned in chapter two and Acker's (1990) theory of gendered organizations.

Practice

For practice, I can, first, make a few suggestions for house churches in particular. The utilization of shared leadership, in most cases, was viewed by participants as highly desirable and beneficial. Participants appreciated the opportunities to be included in decision-making, teaching, and initiating other activities. The affect that this inclusion had on their sense of engagement and ownership was palpable. Thus, a number of tentative hypotheses might be offered regarding the utility of shared leadership in house churches. Following are two that might be so ventured. First, continuing to integrate opportunities for shared leadership would be

recommended for house churches. Second, the use of shared leadership, in its various forms, could also benefit the experiences and increase the engagement of members in other church settings.

In regards to pastors or church leaders, it is recommended that they consciously consider the impact of the chosen mediums utilized in their gatherings. Rather than adapting and integrating practices simply because they have a long history in the church or because they are presently popular within the culture, church leaders should consider the impacts that these practices and mediums have on the message they aim to communicate, and those whom they aim to attract. Likewise, the ability within house churches to adapt and respond to the needs of the group seemed to be a great advantage, thus, maintaining flexibility and a group size which enables this is also suggested. Additionally, church leaders should be aware of the traditionally hierarchical and masculine practices utilized in the church and the tendency these practices have to limit engagement and inclusivity, if not alienate and oppress, churchgoers. And as a church is led and directed by a few, the tendency towards focusing on performance and the ensuing impact on churchgoers who become consuming spectators should be managed. Finally, within house churches specifically, leaders should be mindful of the progression towards a closed culture as the group becomes more close-knit. Avenues for new members to engage and belong should be maintained.

For churchgoers or parishioners, recommendations for practice include an awareness about the habits of their chosen church and the ensuing impact. Parishioners should be mindful of the tendency to become consumers who demand a performance rather than active participants.

Also, as mentioned, employee engagement as a construct has gained significant interest in the last few years. My research, which adds to the speculated link between shared leadership

and member/employee engagement, could also be used to justify more use of shared leadership in organizational settings as a means to promote employee engagement.

Significance and Contributions of this Study

My findings in response to my first research question enlighten, first, an understanding of the impact of the chosen mediums utilized in the selected house church settings. In this case, these mediums reflected and enabled an emphasis on relationships, a reliance on scripture, and a desire to see everyone participate. These findings provide one contextualized picture of how the 'medium is the message' and could inform practice for house and traditional churches. Likewise, because the reflected culture in the selected house churches seemed to facilitate shared leadership and engagement, a rich contribution to the literature about potential antecedents to shared leadership and engagement has been offered. Finally, with regard to my first research question, the findings suggest a potential disadvantage unseen by the house church members. The close knit group and their deep level of care for one another, as evidenced by their reflection of a family, could actually create an unsafe or undesirable environment for new individuals.

My findings in response to my second research question highlight the adaptive nature of the church and add to existing literature on this nature, suggesting that the next adaptation may be visible via house churches. These findings also provide thick description of the expressions of shared leadership and engagement and the perceived relationship between these two constructs in one localized context, increasing our understanding of them. Additionally, my findings in response to research question two provide a picture of contrast between the traditional church and house church which can inform the identity of each, highlight the spectrum of engagement and consumerism, and the hierarchical and shared manifestations of leadership in each.

In regards to my third research question, a greater understanding of shared leadership and member engagement has been offered via the contextualized definitions. Additionally, the utility and capacity of the Naturalistic paradigm has been demonstrated by this research which utilizes quantitative research methods to reinforce the grounded qualitative research.

Broadly speaking, this study provides several lenses for viewing the culture and phenomenon of the selected house churches (via the theoretical frameworks) and adapts these theories to provide a richer, more contextualized understanding of the particular setting. The findings of this study add to scholarly research and literature in the fields of shared leadership, employee engagement, member engagement, church leadership, and house churches. The potential relevance of shared leadership for organizations has hopefully become more apparent. Likewise, although employee engagement is a burgeoning field, this study adds to our understandings of engagement in a specific context: the Western Protestant Church as exemplified in selected house churches in a Midwestern state in the United States. Finally, the literature on church leadership, which tends to be laden with anecdotal theory, benefits from this empirical research.

Revisiting My Method

Although this study was naturalistic, and thus by nature emergent in design, my initial observations and pilot study enabled me to determine a method that did not have to be altered greatly throughout the course of the study. Some comment will be provided on what was changed, what was illuminated through my research, and how the data might still be mined.

Minor adaptations along the way included determining how many sites should be included (I settled on 3), how many participant interviews from each site were necessary in order

to illuminate the culture and phenomenon (to achieve saturation), and the specific questions I asked in the interviews (chapter three, as updated, reflects and explains these decisions).

Most significantly, the way in which I was approaching my study of shared leadership changed in a number of ways. Firstly, I realized that I had been looking for the absence of any formal structure or leadership; however, I realized quickly that shared leadership was rather the presence of leadership that resides in multiple people. Likewise, the greatest discovery was probably the realization that was discussed at the beginning of the phenomenon in chapter four. The individuals and groups participating in house churches were not primarily seeking a church environment where shared leadership was practiced, rather they desired something different from their traditional church altogether. Shared leadership seemed to be a consequential byproduct, desired by some, but not the driving force which catapulted them into this form of church. Their desire for something different, I believe, is connected to a larger shift that may be taking place in the Christian Church.

Finally, because I opted to utilize both quantitative and qualitative methods and triangulated observations, interviews, and artifacts from three sites over a period of nine months, I came away with a mountain of data. As such, my research questions informed and enabled me to bound my findings so that they could be reasonably presented here. However, slight alteration in my methods or different research questions could be applied to the same data and produce another interesting picture of house churches, shared leadership, and member engagement. For example, I might re-mine my data for constructions that support and/or refute the theoretical frameworks used to inform the study, and thereby engage in more explicit theorizing on the topic and phenomenon that were the focus of this study. This kind of recognition supports the nature of naturalistic inquiry and provides opportunity for future scholarly work on my part.

Reflecting on Myself as an Instrument of Inquiry

The value of reflexivity or the process of critical reflection on the self as researcher/instrument is highlighted by Denzin and Lincoln (2011). They explained,

> It is a conscious experiencing of the self as both inquirer and respondent, as teacher and learner, as the one coming to know the self within the processes of research itself. Reflexivity forces us to come to terms not only with our choice of research problem and with those with whom we engage in the research process, but with ourselves and with the multiple identities that represent the fluid self in the research setting. (p. 124)

As detailed in chapter three, throughout this study I utilized reflexive journaling as a means to "interrogate [myself] regarding the ways in which research efforts are shaped and stages around the binaries, contradictions, and paradoxes that form [my own life]" (p. 124).

In chapter one, I detailed the researcher's perspective and my long history with and interest in the leadership of Christian churches. As stated, I came to this study with experiences that had enamored me, disillusioned me, and began to stir up questions for me about the most appropriate expressions of leadership in the church. Because of my experiences, I began investigating shared leadership as a construct and examples of church leadership as depicted in the New Testament of the Bible. This journey, along with the observations about waning engagement and an overworked clergy, had led me to the research problem for this study.

As mentioned, my husband was working for a mega-church where I too had been on staff for six years. Our experiences at this church had been a large part of my development and understanding of leadership in the Christian Church. However, shortly after I began my data collection in house churches, my husband was unexpectedly let go from his position after nine years. His departure was quite painful as there was seemingly no justification for the decision, which was a complete surprise to us. While, I had previously been on a journey of evaluating and

questioning the viability of typical Christian church leadership practices, this jolting experience catapulted me forward. I would be remiss if I did not acknowledge that every doubt, dislike, and frustration I had with the traditional Christian church was, in my mind, reinforced and exaggerated. As a researcher amidst the process of exploring and understanding house churches, this painful break from the traditional church, inevitably endeared me to house churches as an alternative form of church. Throughout the data collection and analysis process, I tried to reflect on this awareness and how my experience served to co-create my findings. The following observations speak to my experience as an instrument within this study.

First, one of the purposes of the ethnographic participant observer is to try and gain an insider's perspective while being able to identify and observe things as an outsider that those inside the culture might take for granted. Because I had never been a part of a house church I was able to identify some of these things and compare them to my experiences in a traditional church. However, I was very much an insider in the sense that I have a significant background and history in the church so many of the traditions, customs, and habits were very normal to me. I realized that there were unique experiences that seemed very normal to me because I was not a complete outsider. My history impacted the way I observed and analyzed what I was experiencing. Everything was analyzed against the backdrop of my past in the church. In particular, because I recently had a bad experience with a mega-church, I found myself often comparing and contrasting the house church to the mega church.

In addition, I experienced an interesting level of interaction with one of the house church sites because I was participating in their gathering when I experienced my husband's difficult departure from the mega church. Because of the level of intimacy and engagement that took place in the gathering, they knew about my experience and thus responded. I experienced a

substantial level of care and concern from them evidenced via conversations, prayers, and even financial support. Thus, I was not only observing their engagement with one another and their commitment to caring for each other as family, I was experiencing these things first hand. And as a participant in the gathering, I was inevitably altering their experience. They were given opportunity to demonstrate their care and engagement because of my presence.

These reflections emphasize the nature and value of co-creation, or co-construction, both individually and shared, in qualitative research within the naturalistic paradigm (Greene, 1990; Lincoln, Lynham, & Guba, 2011; Mishler, 1979). I was a co-creator, one, because I was participating in the sites, thus my actions impacted the people and the activities that took place. For example, I asked one of the house church facilitators if he ever asked for suggestions for giving projects during his interview and he said no, but that he wanted to do that. Later, I received an email that he sent to everyone asking for giving ideas. Secondly, because I was interpreting the activities and language of the house church through my experiences and understandings of the literature, I again had an impact on the meaning that was derived. Mishler (1979) affirmed this approach within the naturalistic paradigm: “the perspective of the observer is intertwined with the phenomenon which does not have objective characteristics independent of the observers perspective and methods” (Mishler, 1979, p. 10). As such, I am able to identify some of the additional ways in which I co-created meaning in this study:

1) I was a fan of shared leadership already and believed that it should be practiced in the church setting because of the Biblical descriptions of the early church.
2) Because I had studied the history of leadership in the church, I affirmed that traditions and practices in the church were responses to culture and events and

had developed over time. I did not hold them to be necessarily sacred or unchanging.

3) Because I became personally interested in being a part of a house church after my study was complete, this interest informed the way I interpreted everything and the way I communicated with attendees

4) Because I was a participant observer, I became personally involved with the house church members. It was this personal involvement that enabled me to better understand and so describe and co-construct meaning and deeper understanding of the manifestations of the phenomenon involved.

These observations should serve to clarify the lens through which this study was constructed.

Summary and Conclusion

This final chapter offered conclusions to each research question, implications for the future, the significance and possible contributions of the study, reflection on process and method changes, and reflection on myself as an instrument of inquiry. I return now to the problem statement presented in chapter one: Western Protestant churches measure success through member engagement. Waning church member engagement has led some to argue that ineffective leadership structures are to blame. While the possibility of shared leadership has been advanced to this end, its use in Western Protestant church settings has yet to be explored and understood. Thus, research could help inform and illuminate how member engagement occurs in Western Protestant churches which practice shared leadership and more specifically, in house churches, which represent instances of such church settings. In response to this problem, my study offers some insight as to if and how shared leadership interacts with the engagement of church members, particularly those in the selected house churches. My findings suggest that in this

particular context, shared leadership served as a beneficial means for engaging church members at higher levels and, as suggested above, is recommended for practice.

My study, although rigorous and extensive, highlights the pertinence of naturalistic inquiry in regards to the relevancy of context. The knowledge gained through this research speaks richly to the culture and phenomenon of these three house church sites. Depth was necessary in order to understand the unique experiences of house church members. The chosen paradigm and methodologies allowed me to deeply explore the data and as such provide a contextualized picture. This picture may be transferrable to other sites with extended research. As I gathered the stories and experiences from house church members and participated extensively in their gatherings, I gained an appreciation and understanding that would not have been possible had I chosen another research approach. As such, additional methodologies and methods applied would continue to enlighten and enhance this study, revealing new facets to this phenomenon and this culture.

The final significant take way, for me, from this study is the acknowledgement of how and why long-standing organizations change. As demonstrated in my review of leadership in Christian Church history, there seems to come a point in large organizations when what has been practiced has been done so for such a long time that no one can remember the past otherwise and no one can imagine the future otherwise (Rorem, 1990). Within organizations, structures and, in turn, practices are often seen as enduring and persistent (Ranson et al., 1980), but they are often the result of a long process of development. It can be difficult to separate, in the religious setting, those practices that are in direct response to Biblical mandates, those that developed as purposeful expressions of the organization's mission, and those that developed as happenstance and the evolving need for increased order, control and thus hierarchy. While the structures of any

organization can seem enduring and persistent when one aims to examine or change them, my review findings as well as my observation about the adaptive nature of the Christian Church should be a hopeful recognition that the Christian Church is able to adapt and respond as needed to the people and culture it serves. House churches may serve as one viable representation of the adaptive nature of the Christian Church. And as such, they potentially embody positive manifestations of shared leadership that improve the engagement of members and compel further exploration and study.

As a participant observer, a fellow co-constructor, I have been deeply impacted by my experience via Naturalistic inquiry in these three house churches. And as I move forward on my personal journey, I will continue participating in a house church, one that my husband and I are starting together, one where we hope to practice shared leadership and so improve the member engagement of anyone who attends.

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Appendix A: Quantitative Analysis of Research on Leadership Styles and Engagement

Authors	Research Question	Sampling	Internal Validity	External Validity
Arakawa, D. & Greenberg, M., 2007	Are teams more engaged and productive when led by an optimistic manager?	Participants were recruited via email from a highly ranked property and casualty insurance company location in Worcester, Massachusetts. All participants were IT professionals in various roles. Participants that had been assigned to company selected projects in 2005 were included. 117 participants completed the survey. There was a 75% response rate	Sampling was limited to one company and only those who had been assigned to certain projects and participation was voluntary, so participants self-selected. Participants completed an online survey. The names of the instruments were changed to control for suggestions effects. No mention of efforts to make the groups equivalent. **Medium Equivalence Internal Validity, Medium Contamination Internal Validity**	Participants were from one company so they are not representative of the theoretical population. Each participant could complete the survey at their convenience. **Low Population External Validity, Low Ecological External Validity**
Babcock-Roberson, M. E. & Strickland, O. J., 2010	Hypothesis: Charismatic leadership will be positively related to employee's work engagement	Participants were undergraduate students enrolled in psychology courses at a large Western university and were those who registered to attend a research session. 12 participants were excluded because they had not been currently employed for 6 months or longer, yielding a total of 91 participants.	Sampling was convenient and limited to those in the course who registered for the research session. The effort to remove participants who had not been employed for more than 6 months would help some on equivalence. Participants completed the questionnaire in a laboratory. **Medium Equivalence Internal Validity, Low Contamination Internal Validity**	Participants are from one class at one university so they are not representative of the theoretical population. The procedures and setting seem somewhat unnatural (lab, with tester present the whole time). **Low Population External Validity, Low Ecological External Validity**

Appendix A: Quantitative Analysis of Research on Leadership Styles and Engagement Continued

Authors	Research Question	Sampling	Internal Validity	External Validity
Bezuijen, X. M., et al., 2010	How are leader-member exchange (LMX), goal setting, and feedback related to employee engagement in learning activities?	Sample includes 1112 employees and 233 leaders from 7 organizations in the Netherlands	Chi- square tests for non-response bias indicated that there were no differences between employee respondents and non-respondents for age, gender, and years of education. **Medium Equivalence Internal Validity, Low Contamination Internal Validity**	Participants were from seven different industries; sampling methods are not discussed; there was a 47% response rate. Participants completed one survey. **Medium Population External Validity,** **Medium Ecological External Validity**
Ghafoor, A., et al., 2011	H1a: Employee engagement is positively related to employee performance. H1b: Transformational leadership is positively related to employee performance. H2a: Psychological Ownership mediates the relationship between transformational leadership and employee performance. H2b: Psychological ownership mediates the relationship between employee engagement and employee performance.	The sample included all the telecommunication service providers currently operating within Pakistan and providing international services. Participants were employees and managers. Employees included all the officers, technicians, engineers and heads of areas while managers were of the middle and lower level. Few upper level managers were also included in the sample. The data was collected from a total sample of 270 respondents directly linked with the telecommunication sector.	Participants were not randomly assigned to groups and there is no mention of effort to make sure the groups were equivalent other than that all participants work in the telecommunication sector. There is also no mention of how the survey was administered. **Medium Equivalence Internal Validity, Low Contamination Internal Validity**	The sample did include all telecommunication service providers, but we are not told how they were accessed, what percentage responded, or anything about the setting. **Medium Population External Validity,** **Low Ecological External Validity**

Appendix A: Quantitative Analysis of Research on Leadership Styles and Engagement Continued

Authors	Research Question	Sampling	Internal Validity	External Validity
Salanova, M., et al., 2011	Hypothesis: The relationship between transformational leadership and nurses' extra-role performance is mediated by self-efficacy and work engagement.	Convenience sampling was chosen, and involved all the nurses (*N* = 364) and their supervisors (*N* = 17) working in a large Portuguese hospital. In the end, 280 nurses and their 17 supervisors composed the final sample. 79.6% participation rate for nurses and 100% for supervisors	Sampling was convenient and participants completed surveys that were delivered to them by their supervisors. **Medium Equivalence Internal Validity, Low Contamination Internal Validity**	Participants were from one hospital so they are not representative of the theoretical population. Participants could complete the survey at their convenience. **Low Population External Validity, Low Ecological External Validity**
Zhang, X., & Bartol, K. M., 2010	Two hypotheses were of interest to me: Hypothesis 1. Empowering leadership is positively related to employee psychological empowerment. Hypothesis 4. Psychological empowerment is positively related to creative process engagement.	Participants were professional-level employees, such as software engineers and new product developers, whose work required substantial creativity in order to be effective, and their respective supervisors. Using contact information obtained from the company's human resources (HR) department, the authors sent an e-mail, along with an URL survey link, to 670 professional employees. The employees also received an e-mail from the vice president of the company supporting the study and encouraging participation. The 498 usable employee survey responses received constituted a 74.3 percent response rate.	Sampling was limited to one company in China and participation was voluntary, so participants self-selected. Participants completed an online survey. No mention of efforts to make the groups equivalent. **Medium Equivalence Internal Validity, Low Contamination Internal Validity**	Participants were from one company so they are not representative of the theoretical population. Each participant could complete the survey at their convenience. **Low Population External Validity, Low Ecological External Validity**

Appendix A: Quantitative Analysis of Research on Leadership Styles and Engagement Continued

Authors	Instrument	Instrument Reliability	Instrument Validity	Findings
Arakawa, D. & Greenberg, M., 2007	The authors used the Life Orientation Test Revised (LOT-R), The Gallup Organisation Q12, and developed their own measures for positive leadership, strength-based approach, perspective, and recognition	The Life Orientation Test Revised had an alpha of.78 and high test-retest reliability (.56- .79). The Q12 has been widely used. Recognition measurement alpha is provided, .80 and an item-to-total correlation above .60.	The LOTR has been previously used as well as the Q12.	Positive leadership is significantly positively correlated with employee engagement (r=.63, .64, p<.01)
Babcock-Roberson, M. E. & Strickland, O. J. (2010)	Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire, the OCB scale, and the Work Engagement Scale	The internal consistency reliability for the charismatic subscale of the MLQ was .96. The reliability (Cronbach's alpha) for the Work Engagement Scale was .90.The reliability (Cronbach's alpha) for the OCB scale was .85.	Authors cite previous research using the OCB instrument. Organ's (1988) five-dimensional model has the greatest amount of empirical research (LePine et al., 2002). Podsakoff and others have provided a reliable and valid measure of Organ's five dimensions (Lepine et al.). OCB has been linked to job satisfaction, fairness, leader support, and burnout (Chiu & Tsai, 2006; Lepine et al.).	Charismatic leadership is significantly positively related to work engagement (r=.40, p<.01), the regression for charismatic leadership and work engagement was significant (B=.40, p,.01, R^2=.16).Work engagement was positively related to OCB (B=.41, p,.01, R^2= .16). The regression analysis for charismatic The relationship between leadership and OCB was significant (B=.26, ,p<.05, R^2=.07). Results also indicate a full mediation of leadership's effects on OCB via work engagement.

Appendix A: Quantitative Analysis of Research on Leadership Styles and Engagement Continued

Authors	Instrument	Instrument Reliability	Instrument Validity	Findings
Salanova, M., et al., 2011	The authors used the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ), constructed their own scale to measure self-efficacy, and used the Utrecht Work Engagement Scale and Extra Role Performance Scale	MLQ alphas ranged from .72-.84, the self-efficacy scale had an alpha of .91, Utrecht had and alpha of.80 & .84. Reliability information is not provided on the Extra Role Performance scale.	To guarantee the independence of the evaluation carried out by each supervisor, the authors calculated the ICC (*Intraclass Correlation Coefficient*) value.* The ICC obtained a non-significant value of 0·19. Thus, supervisor variance can be considered a small component of the total variance, because 81% of the variability in scores is due to differences between employees. MLQ, Utrecht, and Extra Role Performance scale had been used before. The nurses' director then read the questionnaire and confirmed the clarity and familiarity of items.	The influence of transformational leadership and self-efficacy on extra-role performance was fully mediated by work engagement. The model explained 12% of the variance of self-efficacy, 19% of work engagement and 2% of extra-role performance. * The ICC provides the appropriate measure when the error variance for measures is uniform across the conditions of measurement (McGraw & Wong 1996), and therefore there is no need to carry out multi-level analysis.
Zhang, X., & Bartol, K. M. (2010)	The authors developed an 11 item scale based on prior work.	Cronbach's alpha for the scale was .77-.81.	Six experts independently reviewed the items and sorted them according to the authors' definitions of three intended dimensions. All allocated the items to their intended dimensions. The entire survey was translated from English into Chinese and then back-translated into English by two independent bilingual individuals to ensure equivalency of meaning	Empowerment is positively related to creative process engagement (B= .19, p < .05). Results also supported the hypothesis that intrinsic motivation is positively related to creative process engagement (B= .71, p < .05). Finally, results support the contention that creative process engagement is positively related to employee creativity (B=.55, p < .05).

Appendix A: Quantitative Analysis of Research on Leadership Styles and Engagement Continued

Authors	Instrument	Instrument Reliability	Instrument Validity	Findings
Bezuijen, et al., 2010	The authors developed an eight-item scale that addressed a range of relevant learning activities.	Cronbach's alpha was .85 for employee self-reports and .91 for leaders ratings of employees. The scales were tested first in a pilot study using four organizations. Exploratory factor analysis supported the measurement model and indicated that the scale for employee engagement in learning activities measured a distinct construct. Cronbach's alpha in the pilot study was .78 and .88.	Research has demonstrated that LMX is related to important employee and organizational outcomes such as job performance, organizational citizenship behaviour, job satisfaction, organizational commitment, retention, and LMX and employee learning openness to organizational change. The quality of the leader–member relationship has also been found to affect employee learning goal orientation (Janssen & Van Yperen, 2004).	There were significant, positive relationships between LMX and both employee and leader ratings of engagement in learning activities when gender, age, and education were controlled. Goal difficulty was positively related to engagement in learning activities (employees z=5.52 (p<.001), leaders z=4.63 (p<.001)) Goal specificity was significantly and positively related to employee engagement (employees z=8.78 (p<.001), leaders z=2.26 (p<.001))
Ghafoor, A., et al., 2011	The authors created their own scale for Transformational leadership, employee engagement, and employee performance, and used the scale of Psychological Ownership used in previous research.	The authors provide Cronbach's alpha scores for each of their measures: Transformational leadership .815, Employee engagement .845, Psychological ownership, .746, and Employee Performance .737	The authors cite literature that establishes the relationship between transformational leadership, employee performance, and employee engagement. One of their instruments was previously used.	Employee performance is significantly, positively related to independent variables, employee engagement (mean = 5.10, p < 0.01) and transformational leadership (mean = 5.40, p < 0.01). Employee performance is also significantly, positively related to mediating variable, psychological ownership (mean = 5.09, p < 0.01). Employee engagement and psychological ownership (mean = 5.09, p < 0.01) are also positively, significantly related. Transformational leadership and psychological ownership is also positively, significantly related to psychological ownership (mean = 5.09, p < 0.01).

Appendix B: Consent to Participate in a Research Study

Colorado State University

TITLE OF STUDY: Shared Leadership and Member Engagement in Western Protestant House Churches: A Naturalistic Inquiry

PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR: Susan Lynham, School of Education, Phd, Susan.Lynham@colostate.edu, (970) 491-6720

CO-PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR: Abigail Veliquette, School of Education, Doctoral student, Abigail.veliquette@colostate.edu, 970-219-5760

WHY AM I BEING INVITED TO TAKE PART IN THIS RESEARCH? I am interested in gathering information about the experience of church members in settings where shared leadership is used. Because you/or your child attend the _____ House Church at least twice a month, your/their experience is of interest to me.

WHO IS DOING THE STUDY? I, Abigail Veliquette, doctoral student at Colorado State University, will be conducting all of the research under the supervision of Dr. Susan Lynham.

WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF THIS STUDY? This study will help me understand how shared leadership functions in a Western Protestant house church setting and how members in this setting describe their engagement experience. It will also serve to inform further exploration in my dissertation.

WHERE IS THE STUDY GOING TO TAKE PLACE AND HOW LONG WILL IT LAST? The study will take place at your church. We will set up additional times to meet at your convenience at a location that is also convenient for you. This will be a two month study. Participants will be interviewed 1-3 times within the two months; each interview will last approximately 1 hour (10-30 minutes for individuals under the age of 14). Total approximate time commitment for participants is 1-3 hours.

WHAT WILL I BE ASKED TO DO? You will be asked to be available for 1-3 interviews each lasting approximately 1-3 hours (10-30 minutes for individuals under the age of 14).

Appendix B: Consent to Participate in a Research Study Continued

ARE THERE REASONS WHY I SHOULD NOT TAKE PART IN THIS STUDY? There are no known reasons that you/your child should not take part in this study.

WHAT ARE THE POSSIBLE RISKS AND DISCOMFORTS?

There are no known risks to participants.

It is not possible to identify all potential risks in research procedures, but the researchers have taken reasonable safeguards to minimize any known and potential, but unknown, risks.

ARE THERE ANY BENEFITS FROM TAKING PART IN THIS STUDY? There are no known direct benefits to participating in this study, but I hope individuals will gain more knowledge on shared leadership and engagement in the church setting. Likewise, the research may help other churches in regards to leadership and engagement.

DO I HAVE TO TAKE PART IN THE STUDY? Your/your child's participation in this research is voluntary. If you/your child decide to participate in the study, you/they may withdraw consent and stop participating at any time without penalty or loss of benefits to which you/they are otherwise entitled.

WHO WILL SEE THE INFORMATION THAT I GIVE? We will keep private all research records that identify you/them, to the extent allowed by law.

Your/their information will be combined with information from other people taking part in the study. When we write about the study to share it with other researchers, we will write about the combined information we have gathered. You/they will not be identified in these written materials. We may publish the results of this study; however, we will keep your/their name and other identifying information private.

WILL I RECEIVE ANY COMPENSATION FOR TAKING PART IN THIS STUDY? *No*

Appendix B: Consent to Participate in a Research Study Continued

WHAT IF I HAVE QUESTIONS?

Before you decide whether to accept this invitation to take part in the study, please ask any questions that might come to mind now. Later, if you have questions about the study, you can contact the investigator, Abigail Veliquette at 970-219-5760. If you have any questions about your/their rights as a volunteer in this research, contact Janell Barker, Human Research Administrator at 970-491-1655. We will give you a copy of this consent form to take with you. This consent form was approved by the CSU Institutional Review Board for the protection of human subjects in research on (Approval Date).

WHAT ELSE DO I NEED TO KNOW? Your/their interview will be audio-recorded to enable the researcher to more accurately capture your/their comments.

Your signature acknowledges that you have read the information stated and willingly sign this consent form. Your signature also acknowledges that you have received, on the date signed, a copy of this document containing 3 pages.

_____ _____

Signature of person agreeing to take part in the study Date

_____

Printed name of person agreeing to take part in the study

_____ _____

Name of person providing information to participant Date

_____

Signature of Research Staff

Obtain your parent's permission ONLY if you are under 18 years of age. (next page)

Appendix B: Consent to Participate in a Research Study Continued

PARENTAL SIGNATURE FOR MINOR

As parent or guardian I authorize _____ (print name) to become a participant for the described research. The nature and general purpose of the project have been satisfactorily explained to me by _____ and I am satisfied that proper precautions will be observed.

_____

Minor's date of birth

_____

Parent/Guardian name (printed)

_____ _____

Parent/Guardian signature Date

Appendix C: Artifact Inventory

Key: SR= supplemental resource
EM= email
HO= handout

Code	Title	Date	Unit #s
Site 1			
SR1-1	H2H Newsletter	4.15	197
EM1-1	Email	4.3	205-206
EM1-2	Email	4.29	
EM1-3	Email	4.29	207-208
EM1-4	Email	4.19	198-203
HO1-1	Words to hymnal	5.6	204
EM1-5	Email	4.27	209
EM1-6	Email	9.13	212-213
EM1-7	Email	9.14	214
EM1-8	Email	7.21	210-211
SR1-2	Towards a HC theology	4.29	
SR1-3	Open Church	4.29	
SR1-4	The Church	4.29	
SR1-5	Lectures	8.26	
EM1-9	Email	9.20	800-801
EM1-10	Email	9.25	802-804
EM1-11	Email	10.7	805
Site 2			
EM2-1	Email	7.18	806-807
EM2-2	Email	9.7	808
EM2-3	Email	9.13	809-811
HO2-1	Spiritual Gifts list	8.19	812
HO2-2	Invitation	8.25	813
HO2-3	Song	9.16	818
HO2-4	Men's conf. flyer	9.23	819
HO2-5	Scripture notes	9.23	820
SR2-1	DVD	9.2	
SR2-2	DVD	9.2	

Appendix C: Artifact Inventory Continued

Key: SR= supplemental resource
EM= email
HO= handout

Code	Title	Date	Unit #s
Site 2 cont.			
SR2-3	Simply Church	9.2	
SR2-4	So you Don't want to go to Church anymore	9.2	
EM 2-4	Email	9.26	814-815
EM 2-5	Email	10.8	816-817
Site 3			
EM3-1	Email	9.17	821
HO3-1	Scripture handout	9.16	822
EM3-2	Email	9.18	823
EM 3-3	Email	10.1	824-825
HO3-2	Teaching handout	10.14	826
EM3-4	Email	10.13	827-828
HO3-3	Teaching handout	10.21	829

Appendix D: Quantitative Survey

Please circle one number for each question. Answers will be confidential.

1=Strongly Disagree, 2=Disagree, 3=Neutral, 4=Agree, 5=Strongly Agree

1. I feel engaged in my house church.
   1 2 3 4 5

2. Engagement in my house church means answering or asking questions during our weekly gathering.
   1 2 3 4 5

3. Engagement in my house church means suggesting discussion topics or songs.
   1 2 3 4 5

4. I feel more engaged at my house church than I did when I attended a traditional church.
   1 2 3 4 5

5. Engagement in my house church means caring for each other during the week.
   1 2 3 4 5

6. Leadership in my house church happens through several people.
   1 2 3 4 5

7. Multiple people are usually involved in making decisions about our house church.
   1 2 3 4 5

8. Different people teach/speak/share at different times based on their experience, gifts, or skills.
   1 2 3 4 5

9. I can make a suggestion about an activity, topic of study, or song in my house church.
   1 2 3 4 5

10. I feel more engaged in my house church because of the style of leadership used.
    1 2 3 4 5

Appendix D: Quantitative Survey Continued

11. I would define the type of leadership that takes place in my house church as shared leadership.
    1 2 3 4 5

12. This group feels like a family to me.
    1 2 3 4 5

13. I feel like I belong to this group.
    1 2 3 4 5

14. The house church is in competition with the traditional or temple church.
    1 2 3 4 5

15. The house church is not a fit for everyone.
    1 2 3 4 5

Appendix E: Detailed Data Analysis Process Utilized

Round 1:

1) Transcribe each interview as soon as complete

2) Listen to recording and review transcription to correct

3) Listen again and make notes, underline, or highlight for initial theme observations

4) Format the transcription and remove any identifiers

Round 2:

5) Unitize interviews- and add **[IN]** Interviewee notes

6) Peer checking of unitizing

Round 3: (initial triangulation of sources)

7) Transfer interviews to spreadsheet and add another layer of comments **[OC]** using the field notes, artifacts, and theoretical frameworks. Include field note dates, and artifact unit #s

Round 4: (additional triangulation)

8) Create a table of themes from each site's field notes and another table of themes from each site's artifacts. Then create a table of themes for each interview.

9) Triangulate the themes from the 3 above mentioned sources on one document and develop a table of integrated themes.

10) Once all interviews are done from a site, combine the integrated tables for each site

11) Peer checking of interview triangulations and integrated site themes

Appendix E: Detailed Data Analysis Process Utilized Continued

Round 5:

12) Transfer unitized interviews to notecards/ review and print

13) Review each card and write a short phrase which seems to capture the essence/main message

14) Sort the cards into piles

15) Go through each pile to check for alignment

16) Name each pile, label with a sticky note

17) Type names of piles into spreadsheet, print

18) Sort names of themes as one round of sorting- sorted by themes about traditional church and those about house church

19) Sort physical card stacks into an outline on the table- sorted by shared leadership, engagement, culture, others, and coutercases of each of these groups

Round 6:

20) Start writing up this outline and dropping in quotes from cards

21) Rework outline multiple times, go back to the cards to pull more quotes as needed.

22) Use Round 4 triangulation integrated tables to check and add in site and artifact units.

23) Review field notes for additional information to be added

Appendix F: Initial Data Analysis Themes

Initial Themes (from Round 5 data analysis)	*=theme with 1 card, **= theme with 1-3 cards
Focus (teaching/study) on the Bible	Ownership/Responsibility in HC
Still some traditional leadership in HC (1 person)	Kids as challenge in HC
No competition with TC	Importance of physical proximity
Flexible form/variety/ customizable nature of HC	HC= shorter gatherings (site 2)
Christ/Spirit led HC	Missing worship in HC
Purposeful/strategic leadership in HC	Site 2 descriptors/history
Not able to identify anyone who's come and not fit in to HC	Questioning traditions/ ST theory
Danger of paying a pastor	Using gifts in the HC
Danger of 1 leader	HC as threatening to the TC
Evolving nature/ no roadmap	Link between SL and Engagement
HC as family	God calling to HC
Caring for/helping each other like family	Missing opportunities in HC
HC as comfortable/safe place	HC doesn't need traditional leadership **
TC heading towards problems	Dislikes of HC **
Decision to start HC	HC as a fit for certain people
Traditional leadership not approachable by lay person	HC as a reaction to TC
HC free from government control**	Weaknesses of HC**
Participation difficult because of history in TC	Outsiders perspective of group culture*
Conversations about multiplication in HC **	HC hosts= leaders*
Communication throughout week about hard times	Culture is independent*
Teenager involvement in HC	HC as a place for outcasts**
Engagement examples/definitions	Criticisms of HC*
HC as sharing life/lifestyle	Church mindset is consumerist*
Freedom in giving $ in the HC	TC as institutional
Negative TC experiences	HC as small
Bible as guide for HC form	Definition/Descriptors of HC
Site 1 descriptors/history	More opportunities in TC
HC as underground movement	HC as new normal
Shared leadership descriptors/examples	Engagement as personal choice
Female leadership in HC	Emphasis on mutual reliance in HC
HC intimidating/hard for introverts	TC descriptors
Transition to HC	Families separated in TC
Intimate relationships in HC	TC as a formal system
History/previous experience in TC	Lack of close relationship in TC
Site 3 descriptors/history	TC as performance/ spectator
Evangelism via relationships in HC	Pressure/drive for $ in TC
Integrate new people via relationships in the HC	Misuse/waste of $ in TC
Simple focus in HC	Misfocus in TC

Appendix F: Initial Data Analysis Themes Continued

Larger network of HCs	TC not providing what it should*
Reasons for not attending HCs	Not missing the TC*
Need close personal relationships in the HC	Busyness/lots to do in TC
Initial Themes (from Round 5 data analysis)	*=theme with 1 card, **= theme with 1-3 cards
No pressure on pastor in HC/freedom	Lack of ownership in TC*
Role of the pastor	TC dependent on pastor*
No right/biblical way to do church	TC as distraction from relationship with Jesus*
Perceptions of HC	Giving as a habit in TC*
Going to HC and TC simultaneously**	Easier to avoid caring for each other in TC*
Disagreements/conflicts in HC	Anomalies **
HC as a conversation/dialogue	
HC as financially simple	
Stigmas of HCs	
No ownership in giving in this HC	

Appendix G: Triangulation Sample

IP 10 Themes	Unit #/Example
Not fitting into the family	647, 648, 663, 694, 713
HC as a family	649, 724
Draws to the HC	653, 654, 655, 656, 657
Negative experiences with TC	662, 678, 681, 683, 684, 685
Shared leadership in the HC	664,665, 666
Authority hinders relationship/accessibility	672, 673, 674- 677
HC as a place for people who don't fit in the TC	690-693
HC as a fit for certain people	696, 715, 721-723
Engagement because of multiple perspectives	705, 708
Stan is the leader	667

Artifact Theme	Unit #/Example
Focus on study from the Bible	813, 820, 812, 814, 806, 809
Connection to larger denomination/network	819
Corporate giving	815, 817, 807
Caring for each other	808
Focus on prayer	811, EM 2-4

Field Notes Theme	Date/ Example
Function like a family	6.17- laid back, kids are a part, 7.18- sharing food together, 8.12 sharing lives in conversation, 8.12 sharing food, 8.20 sharing food, 8.25- bbq, living together, 9.23 sharing food
Giving thanks to God	7.18- opening activity most nights, 7.29, 8.20, 9.16. 9.23
Activities for participation	7.18- come up with a list of excuses, 7.29 reading scripture aloud, 8.20 Spiritual gifts list, 9.9 Reading Psalm 23
Gathering prayer requests	7.18- brief time for prayer requests at the end, 8.12 starting weekly prayer meetings, 9.16
Open prayer times	7.18. 8.12- praying for Bailey, 8.20, 9.19
Caring for one another	7.18- sharing plums, 8.12 sending Bailey off, gift cards for each other, 8.12- sharing more fruit, 9.9- Kristy's car accident
Emphasis on pastor's responsibility to provide teaching/ guidance	9.9- Scott brought book, dvd, and had several guiding comments, 9.16, 9.23- handout from Scott, 7.22- Scott read story, Pam shared experience, 7.29

Appendix G: Triangulation Sample Continued

Integrated Themes	Theme from sources	Units/Examples
Family	HC as a family	649, 724
	Function like a family	6.17- laid back, kids are a part, 7.18- sharing food together, 8.12 sharing lives in conversation, 8.12 sharing food, 8.20 sharing food, 8.25- bbq, living together, 9.23 sharing food
	Caring for one another	7.18- sharing plums, 8.12 sending Bailey off, gift cards for each other, 8.12- sharing more fruit, 9.9- Kristy's car accident
	Caring for each other	808
Shared leadership/participation	Shared leadership in the HC	664,665, 666
	Activities for participation	7.18- come up with a list of excuses, 7.29 reading scripture aloud, 8.20 Spiritual gifts list, 9.9 Reading Psalm 23
Traditional leadership	Stan is the leader	667
	Emphasis on pastor's responsibility to provide teaching/ guidance	9.9- Scott brought book, dvd, and had several guiding comments, 9.16, 9.23- handout from Scott, 7.22- Scott read story, Pam shared experience, 7.29
Emphasis on prayer	Giving thanks to God	7.18- opening activity most nights, 7.29, 8.20, 9.16. 9.23
	Gathering prayer requests	7.18- brief time for prayer requests at the end, 8.12 starting weekly prayer meetings, 9.16
	Open prayer times	7.18. 8.12- praying for Bailey, 8.20, 9.19
	Focus on prayer	811, EM 2-4
	Not liking open prayer	658
	Not fitting into the family	647, 648, 663, 694, 713
	Draws to the HC	653, 654, 655, 656, 657
	Negative experiences with TC	662, 678, 681, 683, 684, 685
	Authority hinders relationship/accessibility	672, 673, 674- 677
	HC as a place for people who don't fit in the TC	690-693
	HC as a fit for certain people	696, 715, 721-723
	Engagement because of multiple perspectives	705, 708

Appendix H: Sample Artifact

#103 -

LUKE 5

Stories:

- Jesus teaches from Simon's (Peter) boat / fish harvest
- Jesus calls Simon, James and John to follow him
- Jesus cleanses a leper
- Jesus heals a paralytic man lowered from roof
- Jesus calls Levi (Matthew), a tax collector
- The Pharisees criticize Jesus for associating with sinners and because his disciples did not fast
- Jesus tells some parables

Jesus calls Peter, James, and John to follow him (5:1-11)

1) What do we learn about Jesus with regard to his interaction with Simon at the lake?

2) Does this trigger any response in you?

Jesus heals a leper and a paralytic man (5:12-26)

3) In what ways do these miracles establish Jesus' credentials?

4) Why would Jesus tell the leper not to tell anyone but to show himself to the priest? (Lev 13:45-14:57)

5) Why did Jesus heal the paralytic man? Describe the way this miracle affected various other people present.

Jesus calls Levi (5:27-28) So the scribes and Pharisees complain that he associates with sinners

6) Why would Jesus choose a tax-collector named Levi (Matthew) to be one of his disciples?

7) What was good about Matthew's response?

8) What key truth can we learn from Jesus association with despised people and social outcasts?

Jesus tells parables & metaphors (5:36-39) - What do each of these metaphors communicate?

- Jesus' disciples did not <u>fast</u> because the **bridegroom** was with them. They would fast later
- Patching an old **garment** with <u>new</u> cloth
- <u>New</u> wine in <u>old</u> **wineskins**