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Soli Deo Gloria: A Doxological Hermeneutic of Mission in Emerging Ministries in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

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SOLI DEO GLORIA:

A DOXOLOGICAL HERMENEUTIC OF MISSION IN EMERGING MINISTRIES

IN THE EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN AMERICA

by

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ABSTRACT

Soli Dei Gloria: A Doxological Hermeneutic of Mission
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This research project is a grounded theory, ethnographic study of emerging ministries in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA). Twenty emerging ministries were selected from within the ELCA. Six of those sites were the subjects of in-depth site visits by a research team. Eleven additional sites were the subjects of partial site visits and interviews. The data-gathering phase of the research concluded with a consultation with thirty emerging leaders held at Luther Seminary. Four sensitizing concepts were used as lenses in data gathering: Lutheran, emerging, missional, and doxological hermeneutics. Leadership in emerging ministries and emerging ministries as contextual and indigenous developed as themes in the research. The sociological concept of transculturation as deculturation and neoculturation emerged in support of a grounded theory that *transculturation provides a way forward for the ELCA to glorify God through diversity among and within its congregations and ministries.* The research question, *"How is God glorified in emerging ministries in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) and in the lives of their people?"* developed from the perspective of a doxological hermeneutic of mission. Mission shapes and is shaped by the praying and believing of the church: *lex orandi, lex credendi, lex movendi.* A doxological hermeneutic of mission is Spirit led, perichoretically discerned, publicly realized, theoretically informed, and biblically/theologically/confessionally framed—*soli Deo gloria!* And finally, doxology is perichoretic play.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AELC	Association of Evangelical Lutheran Churches
ALC	American Lutheran Church
AME	African Methodist Episcopal
BCP	Book of Common Prayer
CCM	Contemporary Christian Music
CML	Center for Missional Leadership
CML	Congregational Mission and Leadership
DL-MDiv	Distributed Learning Master of Divinity
ELCA	Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
ELW	Evangelical Lutheran Worship
EOCM	Evangelical Outreach and Congregational Mission
FAQ	Frequently Asked Question
GOCN	Gospel and Our Culture Network
HUP	Homogeneous Unit Principle
IMC	International Missionary Council
IRB	Institutional Review Board
LBW	Lutheran Book of Worship
LCA	Lutheran Church in America
LWF	Lutheran World Federation
NCD	Natural Church Development
NRSV	New Revised Standard Version Bible

NT	New Testament
OT	Old Testament
SAWC	Synodically Authorized Worshipping Community
SBH	Service Book and Hymnal
TEEM	Theological Education for Emerging Ministries
WOV	With One Voice

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CHAPTER 1

AN EMERGING QUESTION

The church of Christ, in every age beset by change, but Spirit led,
must claim and test its heritage and keep on rising from the dead.[1]

    The Lutheran ministry arising down the street may appear to be quite different

from its parent or elder sibling congregations in your community. New ministries are

emerging on the cultural margins of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

(ELCA) among hipster, urban, young adults, in ethnic specific communities, in first and

second-generation immigrant communities from the global South and East, and in

communities of intentional diversity. Leaders and those who gather in these emerging

ministries are exploring ways to be church with a Lutheran understanding of the gospel

but expressed in contexts and cultures not typically thought of as Lutheran in the United

States.

    The ministries included in this study have developed over the course of the past

fifteen years under the label of *emerging ministry new starts* or as *redevelopment*

congregations with support from the leadership of the ELCA responsible for new mission

development. These ministries have been allowed and even encouraged to explore

outside the box of normal Lutheran structures and praxis for the sake of developing

Lutheran communities outside the normal Lutheran demographic. This study explores

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[1] From the hymn, *The Church of Christ in Every Age,* text by Fred Pratt Green, 1903-2000, music by William Knapp, 1698-1768. Text © 1971 Hope Publishing Company.

what is emerging among these ministries and what the larger church might learn from their experiences.

This chapter explores the theological and theoretical[2] lenses that shaped the development of this study and served as sensitizing concepts in the research process. Chapter 2 describes the grounded theory research methodology and design employed in this study, the research team involved in the study, and the qualitative data gathering processes used in the research that included site visits, interviews, and a consultation event hosted at Luther Seminary. Chapter 3 presents the findings of this research in thick descriptions of each of the six sites visited in the research. Chapter 4 presents and analyzes data categories and themes that emerged in the course of the research. Chapter 5 places emerging ministries in the ELCA in the context of a larger American Lutheran cultural and liturgical history, explores literature relevant to a theory that emerged, and develops a theory grounded in this research. Chapter 6 engages a doxological hermeneutic of mission, draws this study to its current conclusions, and suggests possibilities for further study. Allow me to begin with a brief anecdote and introduction to a concept that emerged as significant in describing the lives of the ministries studied.

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[2] The term *theory* is used three ways in this study: First, it is used broadly in reference to theoretical sources that inform the sensitizing concepts and background assumptions of this thesis. The term is used in a second sense in the name of the methodology used in this research, grounded theory and will be used in discussion of the methodology. And finally, a theory or theories will be developed as the result of this research and may become the impetus for further study.

Nepantla

Nepantla is a word from the Nahuatl language spoken by the Aztec people of central Mexico. It means *in between* or *the middle.*[3] It has connotations of *betwixt and between* or *neither one nor the other.*[4] The word nepantla became incarnate for me in the story of one of the ministry leaders interviewed in this study.

He told the story of Fray Diego Duran (c 1537-1588), a Dominican friar, who "sits down with an Indian guy and he asks him in Spanish, 'How are things going? What's kind of the pulse on things?' And the guy says, 'we just feel like we're in nepantla. We feel like we're in this middle place.'"[5] It was a middle place between Christianity and their native Nahua (Aztec) philosophy. It was the place between their own Aztec culture and the culture of the Spanish *conquistadores*.

The ministry leader being interviewed went on to say that his life experience had also been in nepantla. He was born in the US with Mexican ancestry. His mother was a Lutheran pastor who served in the denominational offices. He described his experience in this way:

> Within the Latino community I've been branded a sell-out. They call me a
> coconut. I'm brown on the outside and white on the inside. They make fun of me

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[3] Lara Medina, "Nepantla Spirituality: Negotiating Multiple Religious Identities among U.S. Latinas," In *Rethinking Latino(a) Religion and Identity*, ed. Miguel A. De La Torre and Gaston Espinosa. (Cleveland, OH: Pilgrim Press, 2006), 251.

[4] James Maffie, "The Centrality of Nepantla in Conquest-Era Nahua Philosophy," *The Nahua Newsletter* 44, no. 11 (2007): 11.This article was available for download on Maffie's faculty webpage at www.colostate.edu/dept/Philosophy/Maffie.html (accessed May 9, 2011).

[5] Medina, "Nepantla Spirituality: Negotiating Multiple Religious Identities among U.S. Latinas." 251. Lara Medina quotes the original version of this story in her text. The quotation used in sharing this story is from an interview with this ministry leader conducted for this research project in September 2008. Ministries and persons interviewed for this study will not be mentioned by name as per confidentiality agreements to keep ministries and interviewees anonymous. Quotation marks or block quotes are used to indicate when the words are those of the people being interviewed and not my own. Sometimes their words are best; and they share some of the flavor of the ministries studied.

because my Spanish isn't perfect. I am in some respects not a full participant within the Latino community. But I've also been around long enough to know that within the white community, I'm not a full player either. I don't know when I lost my say in all that.

He went on to say, "what I am doing here, and if you want to call it emerging ministry, is I am doing the ministry of nepantla. I'm meeting people in their own middle ground."

Nepantla is the lens through which this leader could make sense of his life and ministry. The idea of emerging ministry as nepantla resonated with what had been observed in this study to that point and aroused our curiosity as researchers as we moved on from that interview. Lara Medina connects nepantla with the sociological concept of *transculturation*.[6] Transculturation occurs when cultures interact and something emerges in the middle ground that is created. Transculturation proved to be a helpful sociological lens for viewing the results of this study and suggests a way to navigate the meeting of cultures. Ministries emerging in the ELCA are essentially transcultural ministries—*en nepantla*.

A Doxological Hermeneutic of Mission in Emerging Ministries in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

This grounded theory research project began as a research proposal with the same title, "A Doxological Hermeneutic of Mission in Emerging Ministries in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America." The question raised in the proposal was *how is God glorified through emerging ministries in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) and in the lives of their people?*

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[6] Dr. Lara Medina is on the faculty in the Department of Chicana and Chicano Studies at California State University, Northridge.

The proposed research project, research question, and questions asked in interviews drew upon four hermeneutical lenses implicit in the dissertation proposal title that became sensitizing concepts in the research process.[7] Those lenses are *doxological, missional, emerging,* and *Lutheran.* We continue with a description of those lenses.

A Lutheran Hermeneutic

All of the ministries included in this study were recent or current new mission developments or mission redevelopments in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. Here is a brief snapshot of the ELCA: The ELCA was formed as a denomination in 1988 through the merger of three Lutheran bodies (the American Lutheran Church—ALC, the Association of Evangelical Lutheran Churches—AELC, and the Lutheran Church in America—LCA)[8] with an initial combined membership of 5.2 million members. The membership of the ELCA in 2009 was 4.5 million baptized members.[9] In 2010 the number was 4.27 million in 10,008 congregations.[10] The median age of ELCA attendees reported in 2008 was fifty-eight which was significantly higher than the median age of thirty-nine for the US population. Nearly 97% of the ELCA

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[7] Glenn A Bowen, "Grounded Theory and Sensitizing Concepts," *International Journal of Qualitative Methods* 5, no. 3 (2006): 13-14. The role of sensitizing concepts will be discussed further in the chapter on methodology.

[8] Daniel R. Anderson, "Missional DNA of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America," In *The Missional Church & Denominations*, ed. Craig Van Gelder. (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 2008), 170-80. A brief history of the development of the ELCA is presented in this chapter of an edited volume of Missional Church Consultation essays.

[9] Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, "Evangelical Lutheran Church in America," Chicago: Evangelical Lutheran Church in America) www.elca.org/research (accessed March 31, 2011). This information was available in two reports: "Baptized Membership of the ELCA by Race/Ethnicity" and "Comparing the 2008 Age of ELCA Attendees and the US Population."

[10] Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, "The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America," Chicago: The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America) http://www.elca.org/Who-We-Are/Welcome-to-the-ELCA/Quick-Facts.aspx (accessed January 6, 2012).

baptized membership in 2007 reported as white in an ELCA conducted study of race/ethnicity. This snapshot suggests that the membership of the ELCA is white, aging, and has been declining in number throughout its relatively brief history.[11]

The ministries chosen for this study reflect different trends and are out of the norm for typical ELCA congregations. They are a part of new growth in the denomination that reflects different demographics in areas of age and race/ethnicity. They were selected for this study because they look different than the typical ELCA congregation in demographics and in praxis. For the purpose of this research, we were curious about those differences. We asked what is Lutheran about these emerging ministries from the perspective of a Lutheran hermeneutic.

The starting point for a Lutheran hermeneutic in this study is the simple fact that all of these ministries are affiliated with the ELCA and are on a continuum of development as congregations in the ELCA. Organized congregations and ministries in the ELCA are united by shared elements of their constitutions.[12] Those elements include a confession of faith, a statement on the nature of the church, a statement of purpose, and sections on the responsibilities of congregations and their relationships with synods and the churchwide expression of the ELCA. Many of the ministries in this study have yet to develop formal constitutions because they are in mission development or redevelopment.

[11] Statistics currently published by the ELCA do not completely reflect the loss of a small percentage of ELCA congregations (approximately 600 congregations) that chose to leave the ELCA in response to the 2009 Churchwide Assembly approval of "Human Sexuality: Gift and Trust – An ELCA social statement (2009)" and associated ministry practices.

[12] A 'Model Constitution for Congregations of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America' was available on the ELCA website under the Office of the Secretary at www.elca.org (accessed February 8, 2012).

For the purpose of this research, we were curious about the ways these ministries

organize and how their current structures align with the constitutional expectations.

The Lutheran tradition, of which the ELCA is a part, is a confessional tradition.

The Augsburg Confession, published in 1531, is a defining document for the Lutheran

tradition. Article VII of the Augsburg Confession defines the church:

> It is also taught that at all times there must be and remain one, holy, Christian
> church. *It is the assembly of believers among whom the gospel is purely preached,*
> *and the holy sacraments are administered according to the gospel*. For this is
> enough for the true unity of the Christian church that there the gospel is preached
> harmoniously according to a pure understanding and the sacraments are
> administered in conformity with the divine Word.[13] (Emphasis mine.)

Lutheran ecclesiology, from a confessional perspective, is built upon Word,

sacrament, and assembly.[14] In *The Use of the Means of Grace: A Statement on the*

Practice of Word and Sacrament, the ELCA confesses that the Triune God creates the

church for the sake of God's own mission for the life of the world through the gifts of

Word and sacrament:

> The Triune God Creates the Church: God gives the Word and sacraments to the
> Church and by the power of the Spirit creates and sustains the Church among us.
> God establishes the sacraments "to awaken and confirm faith." God calls the
> Church to exercise care and fidelity in its use of the means of grace, so that all

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[13] Robert Kolb, Timothy J. Wengert, and Charles P. Arand, *The Book of Concord: The Confessions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2000), 42.

[14] Gary M. Simpson, "God in Global Civil Society: Vocational Imagination, Spiritual Presence, and Ecclesial Discernment," in *The Missional Church and Global Civil Society: Helping Congregations Engage as Public Church* (Luther Seminary: 2008), 37. "The Protestant Reformers stressed that the church is the creature of the Word. (Among the numerous places that Luther makes this point see: "The Babylonian Captivity of the Church," *LW* 36:107; "The Misuse of the Mass," *LW* 66:144-145; "On the Councils and the Church," *LW* 4:150.) First, God's Word of law and promise creates the church and therefore the church in no way has any authority or sovereignty over God's Word, as was common in late medieval Christianity. Second, through Word and Sacraments the Holy Spirit creates the church by communicating to the church the very form of life that is God's Word. God's Word has, of course, become incarnate and taken form precisely in Jesus Christ himself, in his ministry, death, resurrection and ascension. Regrettably, this first implication often overshadowed the second implication and this overshadowing has continued among Protestantism to the present." "The assembly is created, nurtured, formed, and sustained by Word and Sacrament. This emphasis guards against the assembly being primarily created and formed by some other force, like a particular cultural heritage, be it lutefisk or hipster."

people may hear and believe the Gospel of Jesus Christ and be gathered into God's own mission for the life of the world.[15]

It is common practice in the ELCA that the worshipping community gathers in Word and sacrament on Sunday mornings in a worship service using settings of the Lutheran liturgy that takes its basic shape from the ancient Roman mass. Hymnals and liturgical resources are published by the ELCA for use in worship. It is important to distinguish between what is confessionally Lutheran and what is traditionally or culturally Lutheran. Word and sacrament are confessional. Sunday morning, liturgy, and hymnbooks are cultural. As already noted, the Augsburg Confession Article VII defines church in terms of Word, sacrament, and assembly. The next line in Article VII says, "It is not necessary for the true unity of the Christian church that uniform ceremonies, instituted by human beings, be observed everywhere."[16] Ceremonies are confessionally, contextually and culturally shaped.

A Lutheran hermeneutic can be viewed constitutionally, confessionally, and culturally. For the purpose of this research, we were curious about the ecclesial shape of emerging ministries that are included in this study and their relationship with the confessional tradition. We were also curious about the nature of the assembly, the role of word and sacrament in each community studied, and in the ceremonies instituted in each of these emerging ministries.

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[15] Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, *The Use of the Means of Grace: A Statement on the Practice of Word and Sacrament* (Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg Fortress, 1997), 7.

[16] Kolb, Wengert, and Arand, *The Book of Concord: The Confessions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church*, 42.

An Emerging Hermeneutic

The term *emerging* has meaning in several contexts relevant to this study. The meaning most closely related to the title of the research proposal is the generic dictionary definition of emerging and its variants. *Becoming manifest, coming into view, rising from an obscure or inferior position, coming into being through evolution, arising unexpectedly, arising as a natural or logical consequence* and *being newly formed or prominent* are some of the definitions from the dictionary in my book case.[17] Emerging ministries in the ELCA reflect each of these sometimes-contradictory definitions to varying degrees. For the purpose of this research, we were curious about what is *emerging* among these non-typical Lutheran ministries within the ELCA and, in light of the exploratory nature of this research, hold a fairly broad understanding of the term.

The word *emerging* and variants including *emergence* and *emergent* are used in additional contexts that are relevant to this study. Emergence, in the realms of philosophy and science, is a term used to articulate the reality that "the whole is often more than the sum of its parts. That is to say, at each level of complexity, new and often surprising qualities emerge that cannot, at least in any straightforward manner, be attributed to known properties of the constituents."[18] This inexplicability requires an element of *self-organization*.[19] (If an outside agent organized that which emerged, the agent could explain the process of organization.) For the purpose of this research, we were curious to

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[17] Merriam-Webster, *Merriam Webster's Collegiate Dictionary*, 10th ed. (Springfield, MA: Merriam-Webster, Incorporated 1995), 377-78.

[18] Philip Clayton and P. C. W. Davies, *The Re-Emergence of Emergence: The Emergentist Hypothesis from Science to Religion* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006), x.

[19] Steven Johnson, *Emergence: The Connected Lives of Ants, Brains, Cities, and Software* (New York: Scribner, 2001), 15-18. Johnson explores the concept of emergence from the perspective of self-organization using ants, brains, cities, and software as models to explain the concepts.

know if that which is emerging in the ELCA can be explained from its constituent parts as continuous development or, if there is something 'greater than the sum of its parts' emerging in the church.

The preponderance of popular literature dealing with the emerging church has been published since 2000.[20] Much of it draws upon literature concerning the modern/postmodern cultural shift and identifies the emerging church as a contextualization of church within a postmodern culture. In *The Great Emergence: How Christianity is Changing and Why,*[21] Phyllis Tickle suggested that a paradigm shift or emergence is occurring in Christianity. She used the metaphors of cleaning out the attic and having a giant rummage sale to describe the phenomenon of change that she suggests has happened in the church every 500 years. She cites Gregory the Great and the rise of monasticism fifteen hundred years ago, the Great Schism a thousand years ago, and the Great Reformation 500 years ago as times of phenomenal change in the church and argues that the church is in the midst of another of those shifts which she labels the Great Emergence.[22] Whether or not one is convinced by Tickle's thesis regarding a half-millennial cycle of emergence, we are without doubt living in a time of complex and radical global and local cultural change. For the purpose of this research, we were curious

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[20] Much of the literature regarding the emerging and missional church conversations cited in this study was published after the site visits were completed in 2008. It has been useful to me for reflecting on my research. Most of this literature was not yet in the hands of ministry leaders included in the study at the time of the study. Appendix A provides a list of resources mentioned by people interviewed.

[21] Phyllis Tickle, *The Great Emergence: How Christianity Is Changing and Why* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2008). Phyllis has had significant influence on a segment of leaders in the emerging church movement through her books, her presentations in emerging church conferences and gatherings, and through her presence on the web and in social media. Phyllis provides a practical entre and level of engagement in the concept of emergence for emerging ministry leaders.

[22] It is Phyllis Tickle's poetic license to use the word "great" in the labels of each of the four eras and to label the current era as the Great Emergence.

about how emerging ministries in the ELCA respond to or are a part of the cultural

changes that have been experienced since the middle of the 20th century.

    Emerging also refers to an *emergent* conversation or *emerging church* movement

centered in the US and the UK[23] that has been taking place among an emerging network

of church leaders and communities for the past decade or so. Brian McLaren is one of the

emerging movement's earliest, most influential and prolific voices. One of his early

works, *A New Kind of Christian*, fostered conversations that he has continued to shape by

writing nearly a book a year for the past decade culminating in *A New Kind of

Christianity*.[24] Other early voices in the conversation such as Spencer Burke, Chris Seay,

Dieter Zander, Dan Kimball, Mark Driscoll, and Karen Ward developed communities of

young adults that gave physical expression to the conversation. More recent voices

including Eddie Gibbs, Ryan Bolger, Peter Rollins, Alan Hirsch, Peter Ward, Shane

Claiborne, Doug Pagitt, Tony Jones, Nadia Bolz-Weber, and many more have written

books on topics related to the emerging church as publishers have jumped into the

emerging church/missional market. Emerging theological conversations have drawn in

such voices as N.T. Wright, Jürgen Moltmann, Miroslav Volf, Walter Brueggemann,

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[23] The movement in the UK has evolved with the publication of *Mission-shaped Church* in 2005 and the development of the *fresh expressions* initiative. Graham Cray and Mission and Public Affairs Council (Church of England), *Mission-Shaped Church: Church Planting and Fresh Expressions in a Changing Context* (New York: Seabury Books, 2010). Fresh Expressions, "Fresh Expressions," Fresh Expressions) www.freshexpressions.org.uk (accessed April 12, 2011).

[24] Brian D. McLaren, *Everything Must Change: Jesus, Global Crises, and a Revolution of Hope* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 2007); Brian D. McLaren, *A Generous or+Hodoxy: Why I Am a Missional, Evangelical, Post/Protestant, Liberal/Conservative, Mystical/Poetic, Biblical, Charismatic/Contemplative, Fundamentalist/Calvinist, Anabaptist/Anglican, Methodist, Catholic, Green, Incarnational, Depressed-yet-Hopeful, Emergent, Unfinished Christian* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2004); Brian D. McLaren, *Naked Spirituality: A Life with God in 12 Simple Words* (New York: HarperOne, 2011); Brian D. McLaren, *A New Kind of Christian: A Tale of Two Friends on a Spiritual Journey* (San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, 2001); Brian D. McLaren, *A New Kind of Christianity: Ten Questions That Are Transforming the Faith* (New York: HarperOne, 2010); Brian D. McLaren, *The Secret Message of Jesus: Uncovering the Truth That Could Change Everything* (Nashville, TN: W Pub., 2006).

Robert Webber, and Richard Rohr as conversation partners. The Internet is playing host

to many of these conversations through websites, blogs, and social media. Conferences

such as the *Emergent Conference* held in conjunction with the National Pastors'

Conferences and *Soularize*[25] events hosted by Spencer Burke and The Ooze

(www.theooze.com) served as gathering points early in the conversation. Gatherings such

as the *Greenbelt Festival*[26] in the UK and the *Wild Goose Festival*[27] in the US are

emerging as venues in which the conversation is continued, expanded, shaped, and

focused. For the purpose of this research, we were curious to know if and how emerging

ministries in the ELCA are involved in this emerging conversation.

There are several streams or lenses within this emerging church movement that

are helpful to keep in mind as we use this lens further in this study. Robert Webber

championed *ancient-future* concepts in the early 1980s[28] and contributed to this

conversation through an *ancient-future* series of books.[29] Webber was a conversation

partner with early leaders in the emerging church movement through conferences, books,

[25] Spencer Burke, "Soularize," www.theooze.com/soularize (accessed April 7, 2011). The most recent Soularize "learning party" took place in October 2011 in San Diego, CA.

[26] "Greenbelt Festival," UK: Greenbelt Festivals Ltd) www.greenbelt.org.uk (accessed April 5, 2011). Appendix A is a listing of such events and resources that were identified by interviewees in this study as resources that were significant for them.

[27] "Wild Goose Festival - 2011," Durham, NC: Wild Goose Festival) www.wildgoosefestival.org (accessed April 5, 2011). A festival is being planned for summer 2012.

[28] Robert Webber, *Worship, Old and New* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1982). This was one of his earlier works in this conversation. A revised edition was published in 1994.

[29] Robert Webber, *Ancient-Future Evangelism: Making Your Church a Faith-Forming Community* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2003); Robert Webber, *Ancient-Future Faith: Rethinking Evangelicalism for a Postmodern World* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1999); Robert Webber, *Ancient-Future Time: Forming Spirituality through the Christian Year* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2004); Robert Webber, *Ancient-Future Worship: Proclaiming and Enacting God's Narrative* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2008). As a long time professor at Wheaton, Webber has had a significant voice regarding worship in the evangelical tradition, particularly in attempting to draw the evangelical church back to ancient traditions and practices.

and face-to-face conversations. Emerging ministries are drawing upon ancient resources and traditions and re-traditioning them in their own contexts.

One of the ancient traditions drawn upon in emerging ministries is monasticism. *New monasticism* or *neo-monasticism* is a movement within the emerging movement that draws monastic practices into the organization and praxis of emerging ministries. Shane Claibourne and Johathan Wilson-Hartgrove are two of the emerging leaders who have influenced this stream of the emerging conversation through their community praxis, presentations, and publications.[30]

Relationality is one of the themes that emerges consistently in conversations about the emerging church movement. Tony Jones, in his recently published dissertation, *The Church is Flat: The Relational Ecclesiology of the Emerging Church Movement,* drew his research of eight prominent emerging churches in the evangelical and mainline traditions into conversation with the relational ecclesiology of Jürgen Moltmann. Jones argues, "The emerging church movement holds the promise of renewal within American Protestantism…if the movement commits to a relational ecclesiology."[31] There are hints of an as-yet-unrealized relational ecclesiology in the churches included in Tony Jones' study and in the ministries included in my own.

The term *hipster* was beginning to be used to describe young adult, urban participants in emerging ministries that are a particular subset of the emerging church

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[30] Shane Claiborne, *The Irresistible Revolution: Living as an Ordinary Radical* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2006); Jonathan Wilson-Hartgrove, *New Monasticism: What It Has to Say to Today's Church* (Grand Rapids, MI: Brazos Press, 2008). These are recent examples of their work. Claiborne's book was mentioned by several people interviewed in this study as having been influential.

[31] Tony Jones, *The Church Is Flat: The Relational Ecclesiology of the Emerging Church Movement* (Minneapolis, MN: The JoPa Group, 2011), 180.

movement. *Hipster Christianity: When Church and Cool Collide* by Brett McCracken[32] is a recently published work on the subject of hipsters. He describes twelve common types of hipsters, lists hipsters' ten favorite American cities, and distinguishes between the 'wannabe hip churches' and 'authentic Christian cool.' Three of the ministries visited in this study used hipster language and could be included in the hipster subset of emerging ministries.

Finally, *Emergent Village* is a network of emerging leaders formed in the late 1990s and represented at www.emergentvillage.org that has taken considerable responsibility for furthering the emerging conversation through the hosting of events, production of books and web resources, and networking of emerging leaders in various forums. Emergent Village defines itself as "a growing, generative friendship among missional Christians seeking to love our world in the Spirit of Jesus Christ."[33] Denominational networks of emerging leaders with connections to Emergent Village have developed in the social media realm including Luthermergent, Anglimergent, and Presbymergent.[34] For the purpose of this research, we were curious to know if emerging ministries in the ELCA are connected with the Emergent Village or similar networks within denominations and what influence those connections may have. In general, we were curious about the level of familiarity or engagement of emerging ministries in the ELCA with the broader emerging/emergence/emergent conversations.

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[32] Brett McCracken, *Hipster Christianity: When Church and Cool Collide* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2010).

[33] Emergent Village, "Emergent Village," www.emergentvillage.org (accessed February 18, 2012).

[34] Phil Snider, *The Hyphenateds: How Emergence Christianity Is Re-Traditioning Mainline Practices* (St. Louis, MO: Chalice Press, 2011). Several authors in this collection wrote from a Luthermergent perspective and contributed to this conversation regarding what is emerging in the ELCA.

The emerging church conversation has been influenced by the missional church

conversation to the extent that some consider the terms to be synonymous. The

conversations are, at a minimum, overlapping, and, to a great extent, are merging. Some

background on a missional hermeneutic may help to distinguish the lenses as used in this

study.

A Missional Hermeneutic

Twentieth century conversations in Trinitarian theology led to the development of

a doctrine of *missio Dei* that has shaped missional hermeneutics of theology, ecclesiology

and missiology.[35] In the missional church conversation, *missio Dei* commonly refers to

God's mission in the world. Karl Barth was one of the first theologians to articulate the

idea that *mission is an activity of God* in a paper presented at the Brandenburg

Missionary Conference in 1932.[36] Barth noted that in the ancient church the term *missio*

(Latin for *sending*) was an expression of the doctrine of the Trinity referring to the divine

sending forth of the Self, the sending of the Son and the Holy Spirit to the world.

This concept of *missio Dei* as God's mission to the world was further engaged in

1952 at the Willingen Conference of the International Missionary Council (IMC) in

Willingen, Germany although the term did not emerge until later.[37] Influenced by

Barthian theology, mission was understood to be the very nature and activity of God

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[35] This PhD and other degree programs in Congregational Mission and Leadership at Luther Seminary are grounded in a missional hermeneutic.

[36] Norman E. Thomas, *Classic Texts in Mission and World Christianity* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1995), 104-06.

[37] World Council of Churches, "History of World Mission and Evangelism," World Council of Churches) www.oikoumene.org (accessed April 7, 2011). The world mission conference held in Edinburgh in 1910 gave rise to the International Missionary Council in 1921 that became a part of the World Council of Churches in 1961.

rather than being within the exclusive purview of the church. The language of mission as *missio Dei* was formulated following the conference at Willingen by Karl Hartenstein[38] and was further developed by Johannes Blauw in his 1962 publication *The Missionary Nature of the Church.*[39]

Lesslie Newbigin (1908-1998) served for 36 years as a missionary and bishop in India. During those years he was involved in the International Missionary Council and had significant responsibility for the 1952 IMC conference in Willingen. Newbigin returned to England in 1974 and became involved in issues related to the church and society. He wrote *The Other Side of 1984* as a discussion document and as the first of a series of publications focusing on the missionary challenges posed by the dominance of a post-Enlightenment culture in the West.[40] This led to the development in the UK of the Gospel and Our Culture programme in the early 1990s that hosted regional gatherings in 1990 and 1991 and an international gathering in 1992.[41]

The questions about gospel and culture raised by Newbigin stimulated interest that led to the development of the Gospel and Our Culture Network (GOCN) in the US.

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[38] H. H. Rosin, *Missio Dei: An Examination of the Origin, Contents, and Function of the Term in Protestant Missiological Discussion* (Leiden, Germany: Interuniversity Institute for Missiological and Ecumenical Research, Department of Missiology, 1972).

[39] Johannes Blauw, *The Missionary Nature of the Church: A Survey of the Biblical Theology of Mission* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1962).

[40] Lesslie Newbigin, *The Other Side of 1984: Questions for the Churches*, The Risk Book Series (Geneva: World Council of Churches, 1983). Additional books by Newbigin have been influential in the missional conversation, including the following: Lesslie Newbigin, *Foolishness to the Greeks: The Gospel and Western Culture* (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 1986); Lesslie Newbigin, *The Gospel in a Pluralist Society* (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 1989); Lesslie Newbigin, *The Open Secret: An Introduction to the Theology of Mission* (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 1995).

[41] Craig Van Gelder, "Gospel and Our Culture View," In *Evaluating the Church Growth Movement: 5 Views*, ed. Gary L. McIntosh. (Grand Rapids MN: Zondervan, 2004), 83-86. Van Gelder provides a brief history of the Gospel and Our Culture Network.

GOCN gave voice to this movement through a quarterly newsletter, yearly consultations, and a series of books in the *Gospel and Our Culture Series* published by Eerdmans Publishing Company. *Missional Church: A Vision for the Sending of the Church in North America,* a seminal volume in the series published in 1998, introduced the term and concepts of *missional church* to North American missiology.[42]

The missional conversation has continued beyond GOCN through network members and others drawn to the conversation that serve on various seminary and university faculties. For example, an annual Missional Church Consultation at Luther Seminary, St. Paul, MN continues the movement in this missional stream to deepen and expand the conversation into areas of theology, missiology, and ecclesiology with the concept of *missio Dei* as a central claim in a missional conversation.[43] Consulting organizations such as Church Innovations with its Partnership for a Missional Church are engaging clusters of congregations in North America, Europe, and Africa in the missional conversation and exploring implications for the church in their contexts.[44]

Missio Dei is *missio Trinitatis.* The doctrine of *missio Dei* arises from Trinitarian theology. David Bosch articulates the connection between the mission of God—*Missio Dei*—with the missionary activities of the church—*missiones ecclesiae.* Bosch draws on a traditional Western Church view of the sending Trinity to argue for the sending of the

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[42] Darrell L. Guder and Lois Barrett, *Missional Church: A Vision for the Sending of the Church in North America*, The Gospel and Our Culture Series (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 1998). This work is often cited in the bibliographies of literature in the emerging church conversation and has ben influential in shaping the use of missional language in the emerging movement.

[43] The Missional Church Consultation has addressed the missional church and context, denominations, leadership formation, global civil society, planting missional congregations, spiritual formation, first third of life, and global media culture since it began in 2005.

[44] Church Innovations, "Church Innovations," St. Paul, MN: Church Innovations) www.churchinnovations.org (accessed April 11, 2011).

church. "The classic doctrine on the *missio Dei* as God the Father sending the Son, and God the Father and the Son sending the Spirit was expanded to include yet another 'movement': Father, Son, and Holy Spirit sending the Church into the world."[45] The missional church is sent into the world to participate in God's mission.

The God that is fully engaged in mission to the world is a God of *relationality.* The term commonly used by theologians for this kind of communion or *koinonia* is *perichoresis.*[46] Leonardo Boff provides a summary description of a perichoretic Trinity that is helpful for the missional conversation.[47] Boff describes perichoresis in the Trinity as the permanent interpenetration, the eternal co-relatedness of each Person to the others.

> In simple words it means that the Father is ever in the Son, communicating life and love to him. The Son is ever in the Father knowing him and lovingly acknowledging him as Father. Father and Son are in the Holy Spirit as mutual expressions of life and love. The Holy Spirit is in the Son and the Father as source and manifestation of life and love of this boundless source. All are in all.[48]

According to Boff this perichoretic union does not blot out the differences and individuality of each; but, in fact, union supposes differentiation. Boff refers to God as the *union of three uniques.* This union is a union of *intersubjective* persons. Perichoretic

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[45] David Jacobus Bosch, *Transforming Mission: Paradigm Shifts in Theology of Mission* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1991), 390-91. This is another seminal work in the missional conversation as Bosch provides biblical and historical background for the paradigm shift from missions as purview of the church to *missio Dei.*

[46] Understandings of perichoresis draw heavily upon Trinitarian theology of the Eastern Church. Jean Zizioulas is a contemporary representative of that tradition. Jean Zizioulas, *Being as Communion: Studies in Personhood and the Church* (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1985); Jean Zizioulas and Paul McPartlan, *Communion and Otherness: Further Studies in Personhood and the Church* (New York: T & T Clark, 2006).

[47] Leonardo Boff, *Trinity and Society*, Theology and Liberation Series (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1988), 4-7. Boff draws upon the work of theologians such as Moltmann in Trinitarian theology and develops it further in the area of liberation theology. There are other theologians whose work could be used to articulate an understanding of perichoresis. I chose to use Boff's language because he draws on the work of others but takes the conversation to *imago Trinitatis*—community formed in the image of the Trinity.

[48] Leonardo Boff, *Holy Trinity, Perfect Community* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2000), 15.

relationships are subject-to-subject, not subject-to-object relationships. This union-communion-perichoresis opens outward, and includes human beings and the whole universe in communion in the divine life. Ultimately, for Boff, the community of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit becomes the prototype of the human community created in the image and the likeness of the Trinity—*imago Trinitatis.*

The implications of a perichoretic understanding of the Trinity are significant for the missional church as God's mission draws God's people into perichoretic relationships with God and one another. The nature of the church created by the Holy Spirit in the image of the perichoretic Trinity will be communal/relational. The nature of communion in the church created in the image of the Trinity will reflect the necessity of otherness, intersubjective relationships, and openness to all. *Perichoresis* draws together. *Missio* sends forth. A missional God embraces us in God with one another and sends us forth with the Holy Spirit as communal, missional people of God.

The missional church asks what is God up to (*missio Dei*) and how might we join God in what God is up to (*missiones ecclesiae*). For the purpose of this research, we were curious about how emerging ministries in the ELCA view God and God's relationship to mission within their own understanding of mission. We were also curious about how and if emerging ministries in the ELCA use or understand the term *missional.*

The view of missional presented here is one among several. Alan Roxburgh, one of the early contributors to the missional conversation in the US, notes "The word 'missional' seems to have traveled the remarkable path of going from obscurity to banality in only one decade."[49] The same might be said for the term *emerging.* The terms

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[49] Craig Van Gelder and Dwight J. Zscheile, *The Missional Church in Perspective: Mapping Trends and Shaping the Conversation* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2011), 1. This book is a

emerging/emergent and *missional* are frequently used interchangeably. The meanings of the terms are neither exclusive nor synonymous. The missional and emerging movements have drawn inspiration from the same Spirit but from streams with different sources. As conversations continue those streams increasingly converge. Alan Roxburgh used the conjoined term *missional/emergent* to describe the conversation on-going today.[50] The descriptions of *emerging* and *missional* hermeneutics given above are to differentiate the terms and provide focus to the lenses used as sensitizing concepts in this study.

Created *imago Trinitatis,* the missional church finds its nature in *perichoresis* and its calling in *missio Dei.* The nature of *perichoresis* and the realization of *missio Dei* are *doxological.*

A Doxological Hermeneutic

A doxological hermeneutic emerges from a stream of Biblical theology that encompasses the Biblical story of the *glory of God*. In Hebrew scripture it is the *kabod*[51] *(doxa* in the Greek Septuagint)[52] or *glory* of God that is revealed in creation and

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resource for the history of the missional conversation, the many emerging variations on the missional theme, and directions in which the missional conversation may develop.

[50] Alan J. Roxburgh, Fred Romanuk, and Leadership Network, *The Missional Leader: Equipping Your Church to Reach a Changing World* (San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, 2006), 4.

[51] Tryggve N. D. Mettinger, *The Dethronement of Sabaoth: Studies in the Shem and Kabod Theologies*, Coniectanea Biblica. Old Testament Series (Lund: CWK Gleerup, 1982). Mettinger argues that the destruction of the temple in 586-87 BCE resulted in a theological cognitive dissonance from which emerged two theological responses: *shem* (name) and *kabod* (glory) theologies. A doxological hermeneutic gives particular attention to the *kabod* stream of Biblical theology although both are related in scripture.

[52] Hans Urs von Balthasar, Joseph Fessio, and John Kenneth Riches, *The Glory of the Lord: A Theological Aesthetics*, 7 vols. (San Francisco: Ignatius Press; Crossroad Publications, 1983), 6:52. Von Balthasar provides a monumental theology of the 'glory of the Lord' in this seven-volume work. Volumes 6 and 7 are particularly helpful in exploring the 'glory of the Lord' in the Old and New Testaments respectively. Von Balthasar affirms the connections between the Hebrew *kabod* and its translation as *doxa* in the Septuagint. He notes that *doxa* is used to translate 25 different Hebrew words. He further notes that *kabod* is translated as *doxa* 181 times – far more frequently than any other Hebrew word. The weightiness

celebrated in song in Psalm 19:1.[53] It was the glory of the Lord *(kabod Yahweh)* that

filled the tabernacle as described in Exodus 40:34-35.[54] It was the prophet Isaiah who

spoke comfort to the people of Israel and prophesied that the *kabod Yahweh* would be

revealed and that all people would see it together in Isaiah 40.[55] It was the glory *(doxa)* of

the Lord revealed incarnate that was proclaimed in John 1:14.[56] It was to the glory of God

the Father that Christ emptied himself, took on the form of a slave, became obedient to

the point of death on a cross, and was exalted by God as sung in the Christ hymn of

Philippians 2.[57] It is the glory of God that lights the eschatological holy city Jerusalem

foretold in Revelation 21.[58] A doxological hermeneutic of the Bible suggests that God's

story is the story of God's glory revealed, promised, incarnate, exalted, and fulfilled from

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of meaning and frequency of translation of *kabod* to *doxa* shapes the understanding of *doxa* in both the Septuagint and in the NT use of *doxa.*

[53] Biblical quotations are from the NRSV unless otherwise noted. Psalm 19:1: "The heavens are telling the glory of God; and the firmament proclaims his handiwork."

[54] Exodus 40:34-35: "Then the cloud covered the tent of meeting, and the glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle. Moses was not able to enter the tent of meeting because the cloud settled upon it, and the glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle."

[55] Isaiah 40:1, 5: "Comfort, O comfort my people, says your God…the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all people shall see it together, for the mouth of the Lord has spoken it."

[56] John 1:14: "And the Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory, the glory as of a father's only son, full of grace and truth."

[57] Philippians 2:5-11: "Let the same mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God, did not regard equality with God as something to be exploited, but emptied himself, taking the form of a slave, being born in human likeness. And being found in human form, he humbled himself and became obedient to the point of death—even death on a cross. Therefore God also highly exalted him and gave him the name that is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bend, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father."

[58] Revelation 21: 10-11, 22-23: "And in the spirit he carried me away to a great high mountain and showed me the holy city Jerusalem coming down out of heaven from God. It has the glory of God and a radiance like a very rare jewel, like jasper, clear as crystal…I saw no temple in the city, for its temple is the Lord God the Almighty and the Lamb. And the city has no need of sun or moon to shine on it, for the glory of God is its light, and its lamp is the Lamb.

creation to new creation. "For the appearance of the *doxa,* the glory of God, at the end of

all history is nothing else than [God's] definitive revelation."[59] (So says Wolfhart

Pannenberg.) The *missio Dei* is realized in the eschatological, definitive revelation of

doxa—hence, this proposal of a doxological hermeneutic of mission.

The glory of God is the glory of the Trinity both *ad intra—in se* and *ad extra—*

pro nobis.[60] Jürgen Moltmann has described the intra-Trinitarian perichoretic relationship

of God from a doxological perspective: "God the Father *glorifies* Christ the Son through

his resurrection, while the Son *glorifies* the Father through his obedience and self-

surrender. The event of their mutual *glorification* is the work of the Holy Spirit"

(emphasis mine).[61] This description of the Trinity provides clues about the nature of

perichoresis and *missio Dei.* The nature of *perichoresis* is doxological in the mutual

glorification within the Trinity and in God's perichoretic embrace of all creation in God's

glory.[62] The death and resurrection of Christ, in the work of the Holy Spirit, are at the

heart of *missio Dei*—God's mission in the world by which God's glory is made manifest.

Von Balthasar argues that this act of God "is credible only as love—and here we mean

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[59] Wolfhart Pannenberg, *Basic Questions in Theology: Collected Essays*, 2 vols. (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1983), 1:237. This is from the chapter entitled "Analogy and Doxology."

[60] That is *internally—in self* and *externally—for us.* A doxological hermeneutic argues that the glory of the Lord is inherent in the immanent Trinity (God's being) and in the economic Trinity (God's history).

[61] Jürgen Moltmann, *The Trinity and the Kingdom: The Doctrine of God* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1993), 124. I used this passage from Moltmann because of the image it presents of mutual glorification within the Trinity.

[62] Don E. Saliers, *Worship as Theology: Foretaste of Glory Divine* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1994), 40. Saliers also defines perichoresis from the perspective of *doxa* drawing on similar resources, particularly Catherine LaCugna: "As John of Damascus and those preceding him in the patristic period knew so well, we cannot understand who God is until we know the shared life of glory in God: the divine *perichoresis,* to cite the Greek theological term. Intrinsic to the Christian concept of God is this mutuality of glory in the inner life of God. The inner life of the Trinity is that blessed community that shares glory and honor among the persons of God."

God's own love, the manifestation of which is the manifestation of the glory of God."[63]

Missio Dei is the manifestation of God's love that is the manifestation of God's glory.

<div style="text-align:center">The Praxis of Doxology</div>

The praxis of doxology has to do with glorifying God. Glory is at the heart of the

perichoretic communion of the Trinity and it is into God's glory that all are embraced in

perichoretic relationship as the definitive realization of *missio Dei*. Embraced by God, we

encounter the glory of God and; like Moses, we find that even a brief encounter with the

glory of God changes our lives.[64] Those who encounter the glory of God respond by

glorifying God. A doxological praxis has implications for our lives as worship and

discipleship. Jürgen Moltmann suggests:

> In the Trinitarian doxology we adore God for himself and glorify him because he
> is what he is…the person who worships and adores becomes in his self-
> forgetfulness part of the worshipped and adored counterpart. Adoration and
> worship are the ways in which created beings participate in the eternal life and
> eternal joy of God and are drawn into the circular movement of the divine
> relationships.[65]

The confessional understanding of *church* in a Lutheran hermeneutic is a

community gathered in Word and sacraments.[66] The people of God gathered in worship

encounter the glory of God in the assembly, Word, and sacraments. The response of the

people of God gathered in worship is to glorify God in thought, word, and deed. The

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[63] Hans Urs von Balthasar, *Love Alone* (New York: Herder and Herder, 1969), 8.

[64] See Exodus 33:17-23. *Kabod* appears twice in this passage.

[65] Jürgen Moltmann, *The Spirit of Life: A Universal Affirmation* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1992), 304-05. The 'circular movement of the divine relationships' is a metaphor for *perichoresis.*

[66] Kolb, Wengert, and Arand, *The Book of Concord: The Confessions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church*, 43. Article VII of the Augsburg Confession says, "The church is the assembly of saints in which the gospel is taught purely and the sacraments are administered rightly." Gathered "in" seems to be the most inclusive of the options available. It could also be gathered *for,* gathered *by,* gathered *through,* or even gathered *around* word and sacrament. The nature and purpose of the gathering are significant.

encounters of the people of God with God and one another shape them for doxological life.

The apostle Paul speaks of such a life in his letter to the Romans. *I appeal to you therefore, brothers and sisters, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual* [alt. reasonable] *worship.*[67] A living sacrifice is life lived for the glory of God (from a doxological hermeneutic). Worship is each life lived each day for the glory of God. Worship in the gathered community and worship in daily life are both doxological—living for the sake of the glory of God.

Catherine LaCugna describes this life further:

> The "spiritual life" of Christians is nothing more than training the eye of the heart on the glory of God, and living in such a way that one acquires the habit *(habitus)* of discerning the brilliance of God's glory…By encountering the glory of God we are changed by it…Christian life is indeed an ongoing encounter with a personal God who brings about both our union with God and communion with each other. Union with God and communion with each other are actualized through doxology.[68]

It is in doxology that we live in right relationship with God and one another. All of life is meant for, and perichoretically drawn into, the glory of God. It is in this doxological context of human and Christian life that we have our vocations as disciples of Jesus Christ who are children, spouses, parents, friends, laborers, priests, and servants "for the

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[67] Romans 12:1.

[68] Catherine Mowry LaCugna, *God for Us: The Trinity and Christian Life* (San Francisco, CA: HarperSanFrancisco, 1991), 345.

glory of God and the good of the neighbor."[69] We dedicate our lives as Johann Sebastian Bach dedicated his music: *Soli Deo Gloria* (to the glory of God alone).[70]

For the purpose of this research, we were curious about how emerging ministries in the ELCA glorify God in their communal life and in the daily lives of their people.[71] That curiosity included, but was not limited to, emerging ministries' expressions of corporate worship.

Emerging Questions

It was this doxological hermeneutic of mission that led to the question put forth in the dissertation proposal: *How is God glorified through emerging ministries in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) and in the lives of their people?* Grounded theory research methodology begins with the question "what's happening here?"[72] That was the first question asked at each site and in each interview. Conversation flowed from that essential question as interviewees shared their stories and the stories of their ministry. The research team was conscientious to ensure that

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[69] Ulruch S. Leupold, ed., *Luther's Works: Liturgy and Hymns*, vol. 53, Luther's Works (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1965), 61. Martin Luther used this phrase in his preface to the German mass in reference to Christian liberty.

[70] J.S. Bach signed his compositions with the initials *SDG* or *Soli Deo Gloria*. Richard H. Bliese and Craig Van Gelder, *The Evangelizing Church: A Lutheran Contribution* (Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg Fortress Press, 2005), 134. Salvation is in Christ alone (*solus Christus*), by grace alone (*sola gratia*), through faith alone (*sola fide*), and normed by scripture alone (*sola scriptura*) or word alone (*sola verbum*). In other sources *solo Christo* (by Christ alone) is used in the place of *solus Christus* (in Christ alone). Many Lutheran sources cite only three '*solas*' – grace alone, faith alone, and scripture alone. *Soli Deo gloria* (to the glory of God alone) is a fifth Reformation *sola* most often referred to in the Reformed tradition citing Calvin. The fifth *sola* is understood as encompassing of all the other *solas* – all are for the glory of God alone.

[71] The flipside of this question has to do with idolatry: if it is not God who is glorified, then who or what is? To the glory of the pastor, the ministry, the denomination?

[72] Kathy Charmaz, *Constructing Grounded Theory* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 2006), 20.

curiosities regarding the sensitizing concepts defined in this chapter—*Lutheran, emerging, missional*, and *doxological*—were satisfied in each of the site visits and interviews conducted in this study. The final question asked in each interview, "What haven't we talked about yet that you would like us to know?" mirrored the intent of the first question, to fully hear "what's happening here."

In this first chapter we began with an introduction to nepantla and transculturation that will be addressed in later chapters. We raised the research question and introduced the sensitizing concepts that were used in this study. We raised the questions that emerge from the sensitizing concepts and from grounded theory methodology. In chapter 2 we will explore grounded theory methodology and the roles of sensitizing concepts and triangulation within grounded theory. I will introduce the research team, ethical considerations in the research, and the research design that included three phases of qualitative data gathering.

CHAPTER 2

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND DESIGN

This research project is an ethnographic study of emerging ministries in the ELCA. The research methodology employed is grounded theory. In this chapter we will discuss the grounded theory methodology employed in this study, the research team, and the research design for data gathering. We begin with a discussion of grounded theory research methodology.

Grounded Theory

Barney Glaser and Anselm Strauss are credited with developing grounded theory and establishing its credibility as a social science research methodology. They described grounded theory as "the discovery of theory from data systematically obtained from social research."[1] Kathy Charmaz built upon the work of Glaser and Strauss and her work served as the primary resource for the use of grounded theory methodology in this study.[2]

Grounded theory research involves a process of discovery that is both open in regard to expectations of results and focused in scope. Researchers in an ethnographic study seek to "obtain a holistic picture of the subject of study with emphasis on

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[1] Barney G. Glaser and Anselm L Strauss, *The Discovery of Grounded Theory: Strategies for Qualitative Research* (New Brunswick: Aldine Transaction, 1967), 2.

[2] Charmaz, *Constructing Grounded Theory*.

portraying the everyday experiences" of those being studied.[3] Charmaz argued that participant observers using grounded theory in ethnography "may limit their focus to one aspect of daily life."[4] The focus of this study is on religious praxis through participation in emerging ministries.

Grounded theories develop over the course of the research process. I appreciate Charmaz' use of emerging language in this description: "Finished grounded theories are emergent, the grounded theory method itself is open-ended and relies on emergent processes, and the researcher's emerging constructions of concepts shape both process and product."[5] Grounded theory research, according to Charmaz, is an inductive, constructive process. She argued that it is an abductive method "…because grounded theory includes *reasoning* about experience for making theoretical conjectures and then checking them through further experience."[6] John W. Creswell used the term *iterative* to describe this thinking process, "…with a cycling back and forth from data collection and analysis to problem reformation and back."[7]

Charmaz developed a constructivist stance regarding grounded theory that was helpful in shaping parameters for this study. Four of the principles she proposed are discussed here. First, *the grounded theory research process is fluid, interactive, and open-ended.* She described an inductive reasoning process in which theory emerges from

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[3] John W. Creswell, *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Method Approaches* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 2003), 200.

[4] Charmaz, *Constructing Grounded Theory*, 21.

[5] Ibid., 178.

[6] Ibid., 103. Charmaz credits Charles Sanders Pierce with developing the language of abductive reasoning.

[7] Creswell, *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Method Approaches*, 183.

the data. This is an exploratory process that one enters without preconceived expectations of what will emerge. Each 'next step' in the research process emerges from the previous steps and cannot be predetermined.

Second, *the research problem informs initial methodological choices for data collection.* The strategies chosen for this study of emerging ministries in the ELCA were selected to derive ministry stories. Previewing ministries through their websites, visiting ministry sites in person, interviewing leaders and participants, participating in pubic ministry events, and consulting with emerging leaders regarding emerging observations and themes were strategic choices determined in the initial proposal. The proposed strategies were more focused on gathering narratives than numbers (although attention was paid to basic quantitative information such as numbers of participants and years in ministry).[8]

Third, *researchers are a part of what they study, not separate from it.* The research team engaged this study as *participant observers*. Site visits were conducted in person. Interviews were conducted face-to-face and in a conversational style. The researchers participated fully in worship and other public ministry events. Emerging leaders were consulted both formally and informally throughout the research process as theories emerged. The research team sought to immerse itself in each of the sites to as great an extent as possible within the constraints of time and travel and to engage emerging ministry leaders as conversation partners.

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[8] Jill E. Rowland, "Breaking Open the Alabaster Jar: Assessing Vitality in Missional Emerging Congregations" (DMin thesis, Luther Seminary, 2008). Jill Rowland's research focused on assessing vitality in emerging ministries in ways that were more helpful to the ministries than the statistics requested in denominational parochial reports. Conversations with Jill influenced my decision to emphasize qualitative and narrative methods in studying emerging ministries.

Fourth, *grounded theory analysis shapes the conceptual content and direction of the study. The emerging analysis may lead to adopting multiple methods of data collection and to pursuing inquiry in several sites.* On-going analysis of field notes and memos within the context of conversation in the research team determined next steps and shaped strategies. The bulk of the field research in this study took place over the course of four months allowing the research team time to monitor and adjust the research process. For example, the significance of photojournalism in the research process became evident as photos and video from the sites and their contexts taken by the research team helped to document the study and shape our conversations. (Commitments to anonymity in reporting the findings of this research prohibit the use of identifiable visual images in this report.)

Two additional concepts from grounded theory research methodology were influential in shaping this study: *sensitizing concepts* and *triangulation.* The particular sensitizing concepts that provided initial direction to this study were presented in chapter one. Their role in this study and the role of triangulation will be considered here.

Sensitizing Concepts

The sensitizing concepts identified initially in this study included *Lutheran, emerging, missional,* and *doxological* hermeneutics. These sensitizing concepts reflected the curiosity of the research team and influenced initial interview foci and questions.

Herbert Blumer introduced the term "sensitizing concept" in a 1954 article in the American Sociological Review. He contrasted sensitizing concepts with definitive concepts. "Whereas definitive concepts provide prescriptions of what to see, sensitizing

concepts merely suggest directions along which to look."[9] Kathy Charmaz described

sensitizing concepts as "points of departure" and reminded researchers that they provide a

place to start, not to end.[10] Robert Stebbins, in his work on exploratory research,

suggested that sensitizing concepts could guide the exploration as "the explorer searches

for generalizations leading to a detailed and profound understanding of the group,

process, or activity under study."[11] There is considerable consensus regarding the

usefulness of sensitizing concepts in exploratory and grounded theory research

methodologies. Glenn Bowen also provides a caveat: "whereas sensitizing concepts

might alert researchers to some important aspects of research situations, they also might

direct attention away from other important aspects."[12] Every effort was made in this

research to have sensitizing concepts serve as lenses and not as blinders in the research

process.

    Additional areas of curiosity surfaced in the course of the study as themes

emerged and theories developed. For example, clergy-laity roles in leadership and

leadership structures emerged early in the process as additional concepts to explore.

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[9] Herbert Blumer, "What Is Wrong with Social Theory?," *American Sociological Review* 19, no. 1 (1954): 7.

[10] Charmaz, *Constructing Grounded Theory*, 17.

[11] Robert A. Stebbins, *Exploratory Research in the Social Sciences*, Qualitative Research Methods (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 2001), 22.

[12] Bowen, "Grounded Theory and Sensitizing Concepts," 14.

Triangulation of Multiple Data Sources

Triangulation[13] is a process by which the validity of a study is enhanced by accessing multiple data sources. John Creswell suggested that researchers "triangulate different data sources of information by examining evidence from the sources and using it to build a coherent justification for themes."[14]

Multiple data sources were built into the design of this study on two levels: first, this study uses a *multi-level design* that began with accessing publicly available information about possible emerging ministry sites including websites, continued with site visits, and concluded with a formal two-day consultation with emerging leaders regarding the findings.[15] Second, ministries selected for site visits were studied from *multiple perspectives*. Websites and other publicly available information provided significant background information about each of the sites. Interviews were conducted with ministry leaders, staff, participants, and, when possible, denominational leaders related to those ministries. The research team participated in public events at each of the sites including events such as worship, adult education forums and group gatherings.

The Research Team

The field research for this study was conducted from August through November 2008. Strategies used included site visits, interviews, and a culminating consultation held

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[13] The term 'triangulation' has negative connotations in other fields of study involving social relationships. The term is used here because of its use in resource materials used in this study. It designates the use of multiple data sources as a research strategy to increase the validity of the results of the study.

[14] Creswell, *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Method Approaches*, 196.

[15] John W. Creswell and Vicki L. Plano Clark, *Designing and Conducting Mixed Methods Research* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 2007), 62-64. I imagine the process used in this study as a variation using qualitative methods of the multi-level research design described as a mixed methods form of triangulation design.

at Luther Seminary. The responsibility for this study as a graduate degree completion requirement is mine from inception to completion; however, during the field research phase, I invited two research assistants to join me as participant observers in each of the site visits and interviews. We conducted the site visits, consultation, and nearly all of the interviews as a team. Each of us brought unique perspectives, gifts, and biases to the research process.

A Graduate Student Researcher

I have made every attempt in this research process to be objective and open to whatever results may emerge. I can claim no such objectivity or lack of bias in the selection of the topic of the research. The subject of this study grows from the same passions and life experiences that have shaped my career choices and graduate education.

I am a white male in my mid-50s with roots in the rural Midwest and raised in the Lutheran church (ALC, now ELCA). My passion for music led me to the Pacific Northwest for bachelor's and master's degrees in music education and a sixteen-year career in music education, church music, and worship leadership. My passion for the church and its reform led me to seminary in the mid-1990s and ordination as a Lutheran pastor in 1999. My passion for a generation of young adults who were not a part of the church led me to develop a so-called-post-modern-church-within-a-church alternate worshipping community in my first call as a pastor in Portland, Oregon (1999-2001). The same passion resulted in a focus on young adult discipleship and house churches in my most recent call as pastor of adult ministries at Prince of Peace Lutheran Church in Burnsville, Minnesota (2002-2005). A doxological hermeneutic of mission has given focus to my doctoral studies in Congregational Mission and Leadership since 2005.

I have been involved professionally in the church in various capacities for more than thirty years, engaged in the emerging conversation for more than twenty years, a pastor in the ELCA engaged in the missional conversation for more than twelve years, and a graduate student engaged in study and this research for nearly seven years. This graduate research project is the product and culmination to this point of those passions and life experiences. It seemed wise to bring research assistants into the research data gathering process given my level of engagement with and passion for the area of research, the potential for bias, and for the sake of additional perspectives (particularly perspectives from a younger generation).

Research Assistants

Heatherlyn and Jason Hamilton-Chronis served as my research assistants. They were a young married couple in their late 20s at the time of the research. They shared my passions for music, the church and its reform but with unique gifts and perspectives to bring to the research conversation. They both served on staff with me at Prince of Peace Lutheran Church in Burnsville, MN during my years there as a pastor. Heatherlyn served as Worship Arts Associate and provided leadership for an alternative worshipping community at Prince of Peace called *Nexus.* Jason served as Media Arts Director. We also met together over a period of time with a small group of leaders for theological conversation in addition to our work together as staff colleagues.

Heatherlyn is a gifted singer/song writer. She released her first self-titled CD in 2007. She is also a visual artist. Her music and visual art reflect her passions for issues of peace and justice. Her perspective as a worship leader, singer, composer, and artist proved valuable as we engaged the worship expressions and leaders in the emerging

ministries that we studied. In a couple of instances Heatherlyn was invited to share her music in the worship experiences that we observed. She served as worship leader for the consultation that we convened as part of the research process. Heatherlyn brought an important perspective to this research as a young, female artist who was directly engaged in emerging ministry albeit in a different context than the ministry starts being studied. She proved to be an excellent note-taker during interviews. She studied Bible and theology in her bachelor's degree program and engaged the research conversations as an astute, experienced, and well-informed conversation partner.

Jason is a media artist. His responsibilities at Prince of Peace included all aspects of media related to worship such as sound, lighting, projection, Media Shout, video, web, and more. He is an accomplished photographer and served as photojournalist in our travels. His expertise was employed in our audio recording of interviews and video recording of worship experiences. Jason is remarkably intuitive and analytical. He noticed (and often photographed) things in the context or environment that would have otherwise gone unnoticed. Jason is a PK (pastor's kid) who has grown up in the Lutheran church and has worked in several congregations. His media arts skills, photographer's eye, analytical mind, and perspective as a 20-something male provided valuable perspectives in the research.

Jason and Heatherlyn have since left their positions at Prince of Peace to pursue careers as performing artists. Heatherlyn's second CD *Storydwelling* was released in 2011.[16] The title *Storydwelling* is a reflection of their values as artists and, in my mind at

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[16] Heatherlyn, "Heatherlyn," Bloomington, MN: Heatherlyn and Jason Hamilton-Chronis) www.heatherlynmusic.com (accessed May 6, 2011). Information about Heatherlyn's and Jason's ministry and recordings are available on their website.

least, reflective of the research process that we engaged together as we sought to dwell in the stories of these emerging ministries.

<div align="center">Ethical Considerations</div>

The ELCA, through the offices of the Director and Associate Director for Development of New Congregations for Evangelical Outreach and Congregational Mission (EOCM),[17] was supportive of this research from its inception through assistance in the process of identifying emerging ministries and through the provision of a research grant. This research was also undertaken in cooperation with the Emerging Ministry New Start Team[18] that had the task within EOCM of encouraging new emerging ministry starts in the ELCA. The ELCA has been informed and involved during the research process.

The Luther Seminary faculty and the Luther Seminary Institutional Review Board (IRB) approved the dissertation proposal and research process. All persons interviewed in this study were over the age of 18 and signed informed consent forms for their participation in the study.[19] Names of persons interviewed and the ministries of which they were a part will be kept confidential. Pseudonyms are used for the names of ministries studied and persons involved when necessary.

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[17] The ELCA restructured its national offices in 2011. The new office titles are Director and Associate Director for New Evangelizing Congregations in the Congregational and Synodical Mission unit of the ELCA. The Associate Director was a participant in the consultation on this research held at Luther Seminary.

[18] The Emerging Ministry New Start Team is no longer functioning as a result of restructuring within EOCM and the ELCA.

[19] A copy of the informed consent form is provided as appendix B.

In addition to a commitment to confidentiality the informed consent forms indicated that data from this research is the property of the researcher. Access to the data will be limited to the researcher and research assistants supervised by the researcher. Data will be securely stored for up to ten years, then destroyed. Data from this research is presented in this dissertation and may be used in future publications by the researcher.

The Research Design

The research design included three phases of data gathering. This is a brief summary of the design that will be followed by a more narrative summary of each phase of the data gathering process.

Phase 1 involved identifying emerging ministries in the ELCA and generating a ministry profile for each ministry based upon publicly accessible resources including the ELCA and ministry websites. Twenty emerging ministries were identified in consultation with the Director and Associate Director for Development of New Congregations in the ELCA and with the Emerging Ministry New Start Team. Six emerging ministries were selected for in depth study and site visits. Sites for visits were selected on the following criteria: (1) diversity of ministry expression within the sample, (2) a range of ministry durations with a minimum of two years, (3) diverse locations within the continental US, and (4) willingness to participate in the study.

Phase 2 involved site visits to each of the six selected ministry sites over the course of a four-month time period ending in November 2008. Interviews were conducted with ministry leaders from an additional eleven ministry sites included in the original list of twenty during the same time period. Interviews and public ministry events were recorded, transcribed, coded, categorized, and analyzed for emerging themes.

Phase 3 involved a formal consultation with emerging church leaders at Luther Seminary hosted by the research team and co-facilitated with Dr. Terri Elton.[20] Ministry leaders from the original twenty sites were invited to attend along with leaders from other forms of emerging ministries, Luther Seminary, and the ELCA. Notes and recordings of sessions from the consultation were gathered for study.

Phase 1: Identification of Emerging Ministries and Site Selection

The process for selecting ministries for study sounds rather straightforward in the above description. The reality was a bit more complex. The list that emerged started from my own experiences and developed further in conversation with the ELCA. It was an evolving, not a definitive, list and one that was not readily available. The story is instructive about the place of emerging ministries in the ELCA at that time: in the minority, on the fringe, somewhat marginalized, experimental, but increasingly supported. Here's a bit of the story:

I had been involved in the emerging church conversation since the mid-1990s, had done a lot of reading as new works related to emerging church would come out, had attended several emerging church gatherings, had been a part of the ELCA's Emerging Leaders Network, had connected with non-Lutheran emerging ministries that had begun to develop in the Pacific Northwest,[21] and had developed an alternate worshipping community as part of my responsibilities as associate pastor in my first call in Portland,

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[20] Dr. Terri Elton serves as Associate Professor of Children, Youth, and Family Ministry and is Director of the Center for Children, Youth, and Family Ministry at Luther Seminary. She is a graduate of Luther Seminary in the PhD in Congregational Mission and Leadership degree program and a skilled facilitator.

[21] Mars Hill Church in Seattle, WA and Mark Driscoll were influential in the emerging church conversation in the Pacific Northwest. Their church plant in Portland, OR was Imago Dei led by Rick McKinley.

OR. I had met most of the first generation of emerging leaders in the ELCA and was familiar with new ministries that were developing.[22] I drew upon that background and had some of those ministries in mind when I started a list of emerging ministries to consider studying.

I was also aware that new ministries and leaders were emerging in the ELCA that I did not know. I contacted the ELCA's director and associate director for Development of New Congregations and requested a list of non-traditional, emerging-style new church starts. They did not have one. But, they invited me to participate in a meeting of the Emerging Ministry New Start Team when they met in May 2008 in Chicago.

The Emerging Ministry New Start Team consisted of mission developers and worship/music leaders from several emerging ministry mission developments around the country. This group of about 10 people was charged with helping to identify new emerging leaders and processes by which new emerging ministries might be fostered in the ELCA. They had met once or twice before this meeting and met again in November 2008 at Luther Seminary in conjunction with the consultation hosted in Phase 3 of this research. I was given time in their agenda at the May meeting to have their assistance in generating a list of current and potential emerging ministries and leaders in the ELCA. We came up with a list of about sixteen ministries in development at that time in non-traditional, mostly urban-young-adult focused new starts. They also developed a list of

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[22] Several of the earliest attempts at developing non-traditional worshipping communities met great resistance from the protectors of institutional policies and from colleagues of the pastors and mission developers who may have felt threatened by the new thing on the block. Several of the early emerging leaders succumbed to the pressures and are no longer involved in emerging ministries. There was significantly more support for emerging ministries at the time of this study then there was in the beginning.

potential emerging leaders who they knew were considering starting such a ministry or might be asked to consider the possibility.

A new start team for multicultural/ethnic ministry was meeting in Chicago at the same time as the emerging ministry team and addressing some of the same issues of identifying leaders and developing ministries within immigrant and ethnic communities as non-traditional ELCA mission developments. The director for the Development of New Congregations noted the similar issues and challenges they faced in developing new ministries within the ELCA and suggested that I include them in this study. Since I had not been a part of their meeting, he suggested particular leaders and ministries from the Asian, African, Hispanic, African American, and Native American communities that I might consider. I added four of those names to the list for study bringing the list to 20.

Ministry profiles were developed for each of the twenty sites identified through publicly available information on ministry websites, ELCA websites, and through conversation with people familiar with the ministries. My research assistants and I selected six sites for in depth visits based upon those ministry profiles. The criteria used were listed above.[23] We selected two sites from the multicultural/ethnic ministry recommendations and four from the emerging ministry list that met the established criteria. Site visits were conducted from August through November of 2008. Chapter 3 is the summary and analysis of those six site visits.

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[23] See page 37.

Phase 2: Site Visits and Ministry Leadership Interviews

My research assistants and I spent about three days or the equivalent in each site.[24] Visits took place over weekends because each of the six sites had their primary public events such as worship on either Saturday or Sunday. Each site visit included interviews with ministry leaders and participants. The mission developer(s) in each site were interviewed and set up additional interviews with leaders and participants that they selected. Five to eight people in addition to the mission developer(s) were interviewed at each site. People were interviewed one person at a time, as couples, or in small groups of three or four depending upon people's schedules and the formats that would work best at each site. Interviews lasted from sixty to ninety minutes with more time given to group interviews.

Interview questions were drawn from six areas of interest: the story of the ministry and the interviewees' involvement, the four lenses from sensitizing concepts— emerging, missional, Lutheran, and doxological, and finally, anything else the persons interviewed might want us to know about their ministry. Interviews were audio recorded and transcribed for analysis and study.

Site visits included participation in public events hosted by the ministry during our time with them. In most cases the event was a worship service. In once case the event was a free community meal followed by a discussion group. In another site I was invited to lead an adult education forum following a worship service. Worship services were videotaped for analysis and study.

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[24] In the case of two sites within driving distance we conducted the interviews and visits at convenient times over the course of a week or two. It was also possible to participate in worship services more than once in those sites although one service from each site was selected to record and transcribe for study.

My research assistants and I participated fully in worship. In some cases we were introduced and I was invited to say something about our presence there. On a couple of occasions Heatherlyn was invited to share some of her songs as special music. We joined in worship in whatever way felt appropriate to those leading the worship services at their instigation. Descriptions of those worship experiences are included in chapter 3.

Mission developers and ministry leaders from eleven additional sites were interviewed during this same time period. In the cases of six of those leaders we were able to meet them in their own sites either locally or in the course of our travels for primary site visits. In three of those cases we were able to participate in worship as well. The other interviews were conducted with leaders from sites who came to Luther to participate in the Phase 3 consultation. These supplemental interviews were transcribed and studied but will not be presented in the same detail as the primary site visits. These interviews served as a means of triangulation and in a corroborative manner as we were conducting the primary research. We listened for resonance with what we were hearing in our primary site visits in these additional interviews. We also listened for information that might be different from what we were hearing in our six sites. Some data and stories from these supplemental interviews will be used in chapter 4 as emerging themes are presented and analyzed.[25]

In addition to the formal research process of interviews and participation in events, we spent time paying attention to surroundings, the locations of ministries, the kinds of neighborhoods, the local businesses and restaurants, the up-keep of the

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[25] In all, about 67 hours of recorded interviews (52 in primary sites, 15 in corroborative interviews) were transcribed for analysis and study along with about 10 hours of video recordings of worship services.

community, the mix of people on the streets or in the neighborhoods—in other words, context. That information was gathered primarily in our notes and photographs.

Our research notes, photographs, impressions, potential theories and ideas were brought to Luther Seminary in November 2008 for Phase 3 of this process—a consultation with emerging leaders. The consultation provided an opportunity to gather further data and corroborate the data already gathered with leaders involved in other aspects of emerging ministry and interested in this research.

Phase 3: Consultation

A consultation was held at Luther Seminary on November 5-6, 2008 as Phase 3 of this research project. There were four goals: building community among emerging leaders, learning with and from one another, gathering additional data, and corroborating data previously gathered.

Thirty participants gathered for dinner and conversation on the evening of November 5. This gathering was to foster community by getting to know one another. Emerging leaders have very few opportunities to gather face-to-face. This was an opportunity to build personal and professional relationships. It was also an opportunity to introduce the research project and the agenda for the next day when the research questions and data would be addressed.

On November 6 participants gathered on campus at Luther Seminary. We spent time in worship led by Heatherlyn. We shared our ministry stories together, first in pairs, then in small groups. We invited participants to respond to the same four lenses—emerging, missional, Lutheran, and doxological—from the perspectives of their ministries. Finally, I shared a summary of the data that we had gathered in our research to

that point.[26] We discussed that list in comparison with the lists generated in the conversations that had happened earlier in the day from the perspectives of their own ministries. We prayed for one another and closed the day.

Thirty people participated in one or both days of the consultation. Participants included fifteen mission developers or music leaders from twelve emerging ministries who had been interviewed in Phase 2 of the research. Three of the ministries included in the six primary site visits were represented at the consultation. Additional participants included leaders from emerging ministries not included in the original study, seminary faculty, the associate director for Development of New Congregations in the ELCA, my research assistants, and my co-leader for the consultation.[27]

Information gathered from the consultation serves as corroborative data in this project. Data from the consultation is presented in chapter 4, as it is helpful in the presentation and analysis of emerging themes.

In this chapter we have considered grounded theory methodology, been introduced to the research team, and explored the three phase research design. The three phases of this research provided multiple sources of qualitative data with opportunities for triangulation and corroboration of data. In chapter 3, a thick description of each site will be provided using a six-point profile. The six sites visited provide a rich glance into emerging ministries in the ELCA in 2008 and provide ample insight for the themes that emerged and are presented in chapter 4.

[26] The agenda for the consultation and the handout that was shared with participants are included as appendices C and D.

[27] The Emerging Ministry New Start Team met at Luther the two days prior to this consultation, which facilitated their participation in both events. Luther Seminary's Missional Church Consultation was held the two days following this consultation to allow participants to stay and participate in that event as well if they so chose.

CHAPTER 3

EMERGING MINISTRY SITE VISITS

The primary data presented in this research project comes from site visits to six emerging ministries. This chapter provides ministry descriptions of the sites visited and observations drawn from the gathered data. Each ministry description includes quotations from interviews to provide a sense of the flavor and character of each site.

Each ministry description is structured in a six-point profile for clarity and ease of comparison. Each profile includes (1) a brief description of the site and its context, (2) a synopsis of the ministry's story, (3) a view of organization and leadership, (4) observations from each of the sensitizing concepts used in this study: emerging, Lutheran, missional, and doxological, (5) a description of the ministry's cultural distinctives, and (6) a summary of challenges they face.

The first three sites presented shared an urban, young adult focus; yet, each was distinct from the other two in context, worship style, organization, and pastoral leadership style. The fourth site began with that same young adult focus in mind but evolved into a ministry of service to youth and the marginalized. Gathering as a worshipping community was not its central activity. The fifth and sixth sites represented the development of ministries in the ELCA emerging among non-white populations. The fifth site described in this chapter was an African American ministry. The sixth site was actually quite diverse but had a Hispanic emphasis.

Each ministry is given a pseudonym that reflects the character of that particular ministry—a sort of 'patron saint.' The thought behind the selection of each name is provided in the footnotes of each section for those who are curious. The names are abbreviated after first used in each section, in part for the sake of the typist, but also because it seemed appropriate. Emerging ministries draw upon ancient traditions with reverence but also transform them with alacrity. It seemed a bit out of character for emerging ministries to continually use the formal names. We'll start with St. Joe's.

St. Joseph's[1]

Site Description and Context

St. Joseph's was located in an uptown urban setting in a major Midwestern city. It was started in the fall of 1997 by an established, urban, Lutheran congregation as "an attempt to create a Christian faith community for young people living in Uptown and for people who would not normally feel comfortable in a 'traditional' church."[2] St. Joe's continued to be a "subset" of the "momma" congregation.[3] St. Joe's was celebrating their 10th anniversary at the time of this study.

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[1] The Joseph of Genesis and Mary's Joseph were both visionaries and dreamers. St. Joseph's was one of the first emerging ministries in the ELCA and the result of many dreams. St. Joe's also used a lot of automobile metaphors that brought to mind Joe's Garage—one of my favorite local burger joints.

[2] Just a reminder: quotation marks and block quotes will be used to designate quotations from transcripts of interviews or materials provided by the ministries studied (such as websites or materials available to participants) to indicate that I am using their words. The agreement made with ministries studied in this project was that ministries and people interviewed would not be identified by name; hence quotations will not be cited in the traditional manner where confidentiality has been promised.

[3] One of the staff members interviewed referred to the founding congregation as the "momma" church. Since I am using pseudonyms for ministry names in this paper, "momma" seemed to be an appropriate substitute in this case.

St. Joe's participants were primarily urban, young adults and young families. They met for worship at 10:30 on Sunday mornings in a rented theater in a neighborhood filled with apartments, condos, and ethnic restaurants on the edge of an urban center. Worship in this community included prayers, sacraments, preaching and significant amounts of "classic rock sounds of music"—much of which was composed by musicians involved the ministry. Earplugs were available in the lobby (although on the Sundays that I attended I did not need them). St. Joe's was one of the ministries in this study that had experienced a transition in leadership from the founding pastor.

St. Joseph's Story

A large, traditional, urban, Lutheran congregation was challenged in the late 1990s to reach out to the young adults in their neighborhoods who would most likely never find their way into their traditional space or culture. They sent a young, female, ordained, Lutheran pastor to engage that community and begin St. Joseph's in the fall of 1997. St. Joe's began meeting in a small Uptown theater that is now a coffee shop and intimate concert venue. After a year or so in that space they needed a larger venue and moved to an 880-seat school auditorium. It proved to be too large and too spendy so St. Joe's moved to a smaller theater where they remained for "six or seven years…a long time," with worship led from a stage where worship leaders were surrounded by whatever sets were present from the theater company's productions.

St. Joe's moved to their current location, a larger and more upscale theater in the Uptown area, a little over a year before this study. St. Joe's was a mobile ministry that moved in and out of its worship space each week. Rented theaters provided desirable features such as a lobby for hosting and hospitality, a stage and seating area for worship

with resources such as lighting, and freedom from the responsibility of maintaining a building (although flexible seating and space for things like children's ministry would be desirable). Small groups and other gatherings occurring during the week met in homes, coffee shops, or restaurants.

Organization and Leadership

St. Joe's continued to exist under the auspices of its momma church. It had not organized as a separate congregation. The momma church provided office space and support along with inclusion in its non-profit tax status. This relationship provided stability in difficult and transitional times and, in the eyes of some, credibility for St. Joe's as a ministry because of their relationship with the momma church. The momma church was intentional from the beginning to allow St. Joe's its independence in ministry and praxis. This balance of support with independence was significant in the longevity of St. Joe's ministry and was unique among the emerging ministers included in this study.

St. Joe's began with the previously mentioned ordained, female, Lutheran pastor and a Minister of Music whose job it was to "facilitate, write, rehearse, and lead worship music." St. Joe's used a significant amount of original music. The Minister of Music wrote about half of their original songs; other members of the worship bands wrote the other half. Coaching and mentoring songwriters became significant aspects of his job. There were three worship bands that rotated in a schedule of Sunday morning worship leading. The bands recorded CDs of their original worship music. The Minister of Music was the only full-time staff person at St. Joe's at the time of this study. The current pastor spent about eighty-five percent of his time with St. Joe's and the other fifteen percent working with the youth program in the momma church.

The founding pastor served St. Joe's for about four years until she became pregnant with her first child. Her decision to work part-time led to the development of a Minister of Community Life staff position. A person who had been a participant in St. Joe's ministry for a couple of years filled that half time position in the fall of 2001. During the course of her maternity leave the founding pastor accepted a call to serve another Lutheran congregation. She returned to St. Joe's for a brief time after her maternity leave, and then left for her new call in May of 2002.

The Minister of Community Life stepped into the breech and provided necessary leadership, essentially acting as an associate pastor. He was authorized by the bishop to officiate the sacraments when necessary. A pastor from the momma church helped out at St. Joe's during the founding pastor's maternity leave. He became the interim pastor in the beginning of 2003 and accepted the call as pastor of St. Joe's in 2004 with the understanding that he continue to serve part-time in the momma church; hence the 85/15 percent arrangement with St. Joe's and the momma church.

The time of transition in pastoral leadership is instructive. Candidates for this kind of emerging ministry were not readily available, in part because of the unique ministry of St. Joe's and in part because candidates would be expected to serve at St. Joe's and in a limited role at the momma church—two very different cultures. St. Joe's entered into a call process that was unsuccessful. Ultimately the pastor who accepted the call was the one who had been with St. Joe's throughout the transition time. Both the Minister of Community Life and the current pastor were *called from within the community*.

The transition in pastors became a *transition in organization*. The founding pastor was responsible for the entrepreneurial, start-up phase of the ministry. Her gifts for

ministry attracted people to join in that venture. After her departure, the Minister of Community Life's job description increased from fifty-percent time to eighty-percent. He and the interim pastor (who would become called pastor) saw the need to develop a more formal organizational structure. The Minister of Community Life was described as one who "really carried the load" during the transition. The current pastor was described as "very organized, very thorough, very nuts and bolts, wanted to get his hands dirty, rollup his sleeves." They used their gifts and the interim time of transition to bring greater organization and structure to the ministry of St. Joe's. Another leader described it as a cultural shift from "being kind of spur-of-the-moment and very free" to instituting "some kind of operational process."

The role of *ministry participants in leadership* evolved during this time of transition and organizational change. Volunteers "have always been a part of what we do…serving coffee, baking bread, everything." Those roles expanded beyond serving to more formal opportunities to lead, including ACTS (like a church council responsible for the health and mission of St. Joe's), Vision Team (responsible for taking "a long look down the road"), and a stewardship team. St. Joe's claimed, "Leadership happens in many different ways and by many different people." They "cultivated a culture where when someone says, 'hey, I've got a really great idea; we should have this,' we say, 'great, you should be the one to lead it'." New ministry happened when "someone has a passion for it, can lead it, and when there is a following for it."

The transition in pastors became a transition in *identity*. St. Joe's began with a negative identity. They described themselves as "not your traditional church" and "not your grandmother's church." They advertised themselves as "church for people who

don't like church." Their identity was shaped by what they were "not." St. Joe's current "Belonging Guide," a resource for people who want to become members, described St. Joe's values of "authentic relationships, compassionate community, 'big door'—meaning all are welcome, God gifted, and in grassroots ministry." Identity was defined in positive terms.

The transition in pastors heightened the *transition in participants*. Transition was a constant factor for St. Joe's and in the lives of many participants. Job change, marriage, families having kids and wanting children's ministry were just a few examples of change that resulted in a relatively *transient* population. But during the summer of the transition between pastors, "membership dropped by half and giving by two-thirds." The life and identity of St. Joe's were closely aligned with the life and identity of their founding pastor. Some people expressed "hurt feelings" and abandonment when the founding pastor left and responded by leaving as well. People tend to identify with the leader in emerging ministries, particularly if they are new to the church, and identify less strongly with the institution.

The *support of the momma church* was critical to St. Joe's survival during this time of transition. They not only provided financial support but they also provided the pastor who would serve during the founding pastor's maternity leave, as interim pastor, and ultimately as the called pastor of St. Joe's. The Minister of Community Life helped to fill the gap left by the founding pastor's resignation and provided continuity in leadership for several years with the current pastor until 2008. Another significant factor during this time of transition was the on-going presence of the Minister of Music who had been a part of St. Joe's from the beginning. His leadership in music and worship

provided continuity of ministry in the midst of changes in pastoral leadership,

organization, and culture.

Sensitizing Concepts

An Emerging View

The founding pastor was part of an *emerging leaders network* of Lutheran leaders

that was drawn together with the support of the ELCA for occasional gatherings in the

late 1990s.[4] Those gatherings consisted of conversation and sharing about strategies for

new Gen X or post-modern ministries and engagement with the emerging church

conversation that was developing at the time.[5] St. Joe's was one of the first ministries to

develop in the ELCA in the midst of those conversations.

Current leaders at St. Joe's were reluctant to use the term "emerging." One leader

saw the term as part of a progression over the past decade or so from Gen X to post-

modern to emerging to missional language. Another leader suggested we need a new term

because "frankly, St. Joe's has emerged." Another leader preferred to talk about

contextual theology and contextual mission and expressed skepticism about the emerging

church movement because it "seems to be localized largely within the white middle

class." St. Joe's was not seeking to be "emerging" or fit a label since their "job is to

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[4] I was a part of several of those gatherings and got to know other leaders who were emerging at that time, including the founding pastor of St. Joe's.

[5] Leadership Network hosted an emerging conversation in the late 1990s that would become organized as Emergent Village in 2001. Their history is recounted on their website Emergent Village, "Emergent Village." They are mentioned in chapter 1 as part of the emergent conversation. Several leaders involved in the ELCA's emerging leaders network were also involved in the Emergent Village conversation.

emerge as the Spirit is moving in the world." The current pastor described his

understanding of emerging as "always becoming what is necessary to let the Spirit BE."

A Lutheran View

St. Joe's printed resources such as the Belonging Guide and their website use the

metaphor of a car to describe their Lutheran affiliation. Here is their answer to the FAQ,

What denomination are you?

> The people of St. Joe's come from all kinds of religious and not-so-religious
> backgrounds. We like to say we are "Lutheran under the hood" because we
> maintain financial and official ties to the Lutheran church (ELCA) through our
> pastor, who is an ordained ELCA minister, and our sponsor congregation…
> Nevertheless, the paint job is not what most people would call Lutheran. We're
> not "institutional types," but we find that the connection to the larger church is
> helpful for the red tape part of life.

Denominational identity was thought to be unimportant and even a turn off to

people they were trying to reach who thought of Lutheran with images of the elderly and

hot dishes. St. Joe's sought to distance itself from Lutheran stereotypes. There was a

community conversation during the transition from founding to current pastor in which

some participants thought of themselves as non-denominational with a Unitarian flavor.

The current pastor "called the question" by saying "if that's the way you want to go, I

can't go with you. I'm gonna be a Christian pastor." The community chose to maintain

their Christian identity and the leadership moved the community towards a Lutheran

confessional understanding as is evidenced by their website FAQ, 'What do you

believe?': "As we said, the engine that drives us is Lutheran—a theological focus on the

grace of God through the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ."

In addition to an emphasis on *grace,* the current pastor emphasized the *priesthood*

of all believers as expressed in a flat, non-hierarchical leadership praxis and in an

emphasis on the importance of "each person being a minister." The Belonging Guide also stated, "A Lutheran understanding of who God is and how we approach the Bible and other faith traditions is very important to us." St. Joe's claimed to be Lutheran by affiliation and by theology, but were not culturally Lutheran, as they understood it.

A Missional View

The leaders interviewed at St. Joes did not articulate a missional hermeneutic but they did communicate a sense of mission. St. Joe's had a published mission statement: "By the same grace that Jesus has given you, seek to love God with all of your spirit, mind, and body and to share God's love with all people." The Belonging Guide spoke of "Being Jesus hands, feet, and voice of grace in the world." One of the leaders interviewed said that their "first mission was ministering to the neighborhood, to this area, an uptown neighborhood." After awhile they discovered that St. Joe's was drawing membership from around the metro area in addition to the folks who would come from the neighborhood. They were not limited to the immediate neighborhood for participants. They also realized that five to thirty percent of people attending any given Sunday were visitors—some seeking a church, others curious about experiencing or studying this non-traditional Lutheran ministry.

The current pastor expressed familiarity with missional language from sources such as Brian McLaren and Reggie McNeal. The pastor's emphasis upon "being church" resonated with the missional conversation described in chapter 1 as does another leader's emphasis on contextual theology and contextual mission. When asked about St. Joe's future, the current pastor spoke of strengthening the community that already gathered (especially in the area of children's ministry), expanding worship times beyond Sunday

morning, being a presence on a nearby university campus, and helping a younger crowd

from St. Joe's begin a new ministry for folks who "get the mission but might not relate to

current classic rock sounds of music."

A Doxological View

When asked, "how is God glorified here?" the current pastor spoke of "stirring up

the Spirit in each person who is accepted, healed, nurtured, and sent." Another leader

responded, "through the mess." He described St. Joe's as the strangest church he had ever

been a part of that brought together an incredibly wide variety of people: a large recovery

community, some who are fairly churched but wanted a non-traditional congregation,

people who were seeking, people with mental or physical disabilities, people from a wide

economic swath from living on public assistance to well-to-do business leaders. "It

somehow works."

Doxology Observed

Responses to the doxological question in interviews tended to be specific and

limited in scope. If one were to assume that God might be glorified in the activities of

emerging ministries then there were additional opportunities through which God might be

glorified through St. Joe's. For example, St. Joe's website advertised a Sunday morning

worship event at a lakeside community band shell with encouragement to invite friends

and a list of ways to make the event eco-friendly. The Sunday morning "worship menu"

listed opportunities for participants to join in fundraising for charity, to participate in a

poetry group poetry slam, to explore faith in a "what do I believe? small group," to

discover gifts using Gallup's *StrengthsFinder*[6] assessment in a small group setting, to

participate in a community sailing event, and to serve at St. Joe's on Sunday mornings.

God was glorified through St. Joe's in public worship in the community, through the

invitation to friends, in their eco-friendly efforts, in their work for charity, through

poetry, in small group explorations of faith and gifts, in fellowship and in serving

together. God was glorified in worship.

Worship at St. Joseph's

Participants gathered to worship at St. Joe's on Sunday mornings at 10:30. There

were about 60 people gathered on the late summer Sunday that we attended. The pastor

greeted people on the sidewalk outside the theater as they arrived. Pastries and beverages

were served in the lobby. Both the main floor and balcony were available for seating.

Participants welcomed folks and handed out "worship menus" as people entered

the theater.[7] Earplugs and information about St. Joe's were available on a table in the

lobby along with slips of paper and a basket for prayer requests that would be included in

the prayers during worship.

The stage was set with a small table that served as an altar and communion table.

There was a three-candle candelabra on the table along with communion elements and

offering baskets. The band was set on stage behind the altar with area rugs and theater

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[6] Gallup's *StrengthsFinder* assessment tool is made available through the purchase of books from Gallup that provides an access code for an on-line assessment. The following is one of the resources currently published by Gallup that includes access to the assessment: Tom Rath, *Strengths Based Leadership: Great Leaders, Teams, and Why People Follow* (New York: Gallup Press, 2009).

[7] The worship menus were 12 page printed booklets that contained welcoming information about St. Joe's, the order of worship including song lyrics and scripture texts, announcements of upcoming events, a core value of the week, and a contact information request page that could be torn off and left behind. Projection was not used in worship because "people didn't want PowerPoint slides; they wanted something in their hands."

lighting to create a sense of space. There was a black backdrop with a cross created by lighting effects.

Worship was thematic at St. Joes. Music, scripture readings, prayers, and the message were topically related. The Revised Common Lectionary was used as a "guide, not our master." Any members who wished to participate in planning worship were welcome to meet, pray, read the lectionary texts, and plan the next worship and message series.

The order of worship was flexible but, for the most part, consistent from week to week. Worship followed the basic pattern of *gathering, word, meal, and sending.* Holy Communion was a part of worship each week.

On the Sunday of our site visit, a vocalist from the band informally welcomed people into the space and invited us to participate as we felt "in the mood." She pointed us to the worship menu and invited us to fill out the communication card on the back page. She invited us to rise and sing. (Musicians from St. Joe's wrote five of the six songs sung in worship. Lutheran songwriter and performer, Jonathan Rundman, wrote one of the songs. All of the songs were copyrighted since the year 2000.)

Worship began with two *Gathering Songs*[8] that were both related to the theme of the day, "why do bad things happen to good people?" A participant came forward for the *Welcome & Invocation*, lit the three candles in the candelabra, reflected briefly on the theme of the day, spoke a Trinitarian invocation, and led the ritual of *Sharing God's Peace.* (L: God's peace be with you. A: And also with you. L: Share a sign of God's peace with one another.)

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[8] Italicized words and phrases in this section were the headings used in the worship menu.

A children's ministry leader stepped forward and invited children—toddlers through 6th grade—to participate in *Children's Time.* Children were welcome to join activities in the lobby or to remain with their families in worship. Parents were instructed to come to the lobby to "gather their children during the communion time."

A *Message Song* was sung prior to the *Message* that was a part of a message series entitled "Mystery of Faith." The pastor came on stage, introduced himself as the pastor, and began a conversational style message. A scripture text from Genesis was printed in the worship menu but was not formally read. The pastor incorporated a reading/telling of the text in the message. The pastor asked at one point in the message "why do bad things happen to good people" and took six or seven responses from participants, interacting briefly with each response. The message concluded after about thirty-five minutes with prayer that led directly into the *Prayers with Prayer Song* that were read by a female participant. A brief song was interspersed with petitions of prayer that included the petitions written on slips of paper before the service began. After a final singing of the prayer song, the pastor began a communion liturgy with the Words of Institution and gave instructions for communion by intinction. People came forward to stations for *Communion with Communion Song. Offering, Announcements and Blessing* followed communion. The offering baskets were passed while announcements were made and solicited from participants. The announcements concluded with "let's sing our last song and get the heck out of here today." The *Sending Song* was sung and the worship gathering ended after an hour and thirteen minutes with "Go in peace; serve the Lord."

Reflections on Worship at St. Joseph's

Worship at St. Joe's was highly *contextual.* It was designed for an uptown crowd of young adults and families with their needs and cultural tastes in mind. The informal feel, rock style of music, conversational preaching, consistent order of worship with sparse liturgical elements, and even the coffee and pastries in the lobby created a worship experience that was unique to this particular context within the Lutheran tradition.

Worship at St. Joe's was not only contextual, meaning that it was created for a particular place and people; it was also highly *indigenous,* meaning that it emerged from the participants at St. Joe's. Musicians at St. Joe's composed much of their worship music. Participants led most elements of the worship service. Participants made announcements about ministries they led or in which they were involved. Interested participants were involved in planning worship. Prayers of participants were included in the public prayers in of the church.

Hospitality was given high priority. The pastor greeted people as they arrived on the sidewalk outside the front door. Servers were at the coffee bar serving good, complimentary, fair-trade coffee and tasty pastries. The informal welcome to worship gave people permission to sit, stand, sing, or not: to "do whatever you're kind of in the mood to do today." Intentional informality in worship was an element of hospitality in this context. St. Joe's stated value of having a "big door" reflected a commitment to welcome everyone.

Cultural Distinctives

The underlying culture of St. Joe's reflected its early formation as a "church for people who don't like church." Many of the participants could be described as hipsters.[9] Many of the participants were disaffected Lutherans and Catholics who were looking for a fresh expression of church. All were welcome; but, young, white, adults and families with a preference for informal worship with hints of liturgical elements, in a non-churchy physical setting, and music in a classic rock genre were most likely to be at home in this ministry. St. Joe's spoke their cultural languages and gave them voice.

Challenges

St. Joe's was seeking to be financially self-sufficient even though it had a strong relationship with the momma church. The need for some kind of ministry with children was arising as more participants had children. The theater space used for worship gatherings limited what could be done with children and youth in that location and limited opportunities for public ministry gatherings other than Sunday morning.

St. Benedict's[10]

Site Description and Context

A young, female, African-American pastor ordained in the ELCA formed St. Benedict's as a joint Lutheran/Episcopal mission development in a hip, urban

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[9] McCracken, *Hipster Christianity: When Church and Cool Collide*, 111-13. McCracken includes this Midwestern metro area in his list of Ten Favorite American Cities for Christian Hipsters.

[10] St. Benedict is probably too obvious a choice of pseudonym. This ministry draws heavily on St. Benedict's monastic rule in their organization and spirituality.

neighborhood of a major city in the Pacific Northwest.[11] She described St. Ben's

succinctly on the home page of their website:

> [St. Ben's] is a *future church with an ancient faith*…in the story of Jesus we have glimpsed God's future and know that "*thiscouldchangeeverything.*" So our purpose is to *helpgodchangeeverything* by participating in God's future within today's culture and our local zip code, living and serving in intentional, sacramental community in the way of Jesus Christ.[12]

The language used in this description reflects St. Ben's development in the neo-

monastic stream of the emerging church movement. St. Ben's was a community of 150

participants, ages one to seventy-one with an average age of twenty-seven, who were

"united beyond differences around one Eucharistic table, engaging a common

Benedictine ethos, Rule of Life and spiritual practices."

St. Benedict's Story

St. Ben's began as a house church gathering of five young adults. They moved

from the pastor's living room to a "tea bar" across the street from their current location

on the main street of their urban neighborhood. Their current facility was an historic

church building that had fallen into disuse and disrepair. It was purchased with the help

of grants from the ELCA and the Episcopal diocese[13] and was in the process of being

renovated with the assistance of a $750,000 loan from the ELCA Mission Investment

Fund.

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[11] This city also makes McCracken's list of Ten Favorite American Cities for Christian Hipsters. St. Ben's is included in his list as an example.

[12] Sections of text quoted from St. Ben's website are quoted with the style, punctuation and capitalization used on the website.

[13] The ELCA and the Episcopal diocese each pledged $100,000 to St. Benedict's. Funds from the ELCA were provided from the sale of other church property. The Episcopal diocese was in the process of gradually providing funds from mission funds and contributions. Those funds were in addition to funds received annually for ministry support.

This renovated facility was home to two non-profit organizations set up by the pastor/developer. The first, St. Benedict's was incorporated as a religious non-profit. The second was a non-profit community arts center. The sanctuary was remodeled into a Great Room that St. Benedict's used for worship gatherings on Saturday evenings. The arts center used the space for gallery shows, concerts, dance and yoga classes, and other neighborhood and community arts and education events. The rest of the facility included an upper room chapel with seating for twelve, offices for St. Benedict's and the arts center, smaller rooms that were used for music lessons and classes by a music school, and a kitchen in the lower level. The hope was to develop an "organic, soul-food, monastic kitchen" and café on the lower level. The facility's primary identity in the community was as a community arts center. St. Benedict's placed a sandwich board sign on the sidewalk in front of the building to invite people to weekly worship events.

Organization and Leadership

St. Benedict's claimed three affiliations (as described on their website): "our anglican tribe is the episcopal church, and our lutheran tribe is the elca…our emerging church affinity is with the northwest hothouse." It was a unique situation for St. Ben's to be a mission development within two denominations. Both the Lutheran and Episcopal Churches provided support and accountability. The pastor described the relationship as having two big families or as having two parents in good relationship but living in different houses and playing them off each other "to get a higher allowance." Both denominations provide considerable flexibility in leadership and organization for ministries in the mission development phase. St. Ben's was a showcase mission development for both denominations as an emerging ministry and as a joint venture.

Conversations had already begun with the Episcopal diocese and the Lutheran synod to try to figure out how St. Ben's could organize as a congregation affiliated with both denominations.

Current organizational structures drew upon both Lutheran and Episcopal traditions with a strong monastic influence. For example, the pastor/mission developer used the titles abbess/vicar when referring to her roles in the community. A board of "Alders"—a term created by this ministry—provided leadership that was the equivalent of a vestry in the Episcopal tradition or a council in the Lutheran tradition. An alder board president, treasurer, and senior warden provide leadership along with a "capital campaign continuation director, intentional Christian community coordinator, musician director, sacristan, seminary intern, and curate." A Liturgy Guild shared responsibility for designing and leading worship. St. Ben's was in the process of seeking applicants for a position of "community architect" to provide administration and volunteer coordination. Some of these leadership positions had a stipend or salary; most were volunteer positions. Titles used for ministry roles were drawn from ancient traditions and were unique to this ministry among ministries sites visited.

Raising up and equipping leaders for the church was another of the unique aspects of St. Ben's ministry. Twenty-four participants at St. Ben's were seminary students from one of several non-Lutheran seminaries in the metro area. St. Ben's hosted discernment groups for participants who might be sensing a call to leadership in the church. One person who was on staff in the early years at St. Ben's had established a sister mission development through the ELCA in another neighborhood in the metro area. He was

seeking ordination in the ELCA through the TEEM[14] program while serving as mission developer in this new mission start.

Participants moved quickly into leadership roles at St. Ben's. Participants included many students and young adults who were professionally mobile. There was opportunity, freedom, and need for participants to become actively involved as participants and leaders as soon as they are willing. The people who participated shaped the ministry of St. Ben's. "St. Ben's is very much a function of the people that are here. The gifts that individual people bring are what St. Ben's is. If anybody leaves, St. Ben's changes."

New ministry initiatives at St. Ben's "come from the people and are owned and sustained by the people, and it's OK when something dies out." Participants were given and accepted responsibility for the ministry of St. Ben's.

Sensitizing Concepts

An Emerging View

St. Ben's website noted that they were "a well known and often visited community within the 'emerging/fresh expressions of church' movement." Visitors were frequently a significant percentage of worship participants. St. Ben's had been a subject of graduate research, a site for seminary cross-cultural ministry study, and a teaching site for seminary interns from several denominational and non-denominational seminaries. The pastor was one of the founding conversation partners in the Emergent Village and

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[14] TEEM is the acronym for Theological Education for Emerging Ministries. TEEM is a three-year ordination process in the ELCA that prepares a candidate for ordained ministry without the requirement of a Master of Divinity (MDiv) degree. Candidates may serve as a pastoral leader in a particular ministry site while pursuing theological education and ordination. An example of a TEEM program can be found at www.luthersem.edu/teem.

was frequently invited to speak on the topic of emerging church at emerging church gatherings and in denominational events. St. Ben's and their pastor have had significant influence in the emerging church conversation within the Lutheran and Episcopal denominations and beyond.

St. Ben's was an example of the neo-monastic stream of emerging church. Elements of neo-monasticism include commitments to a Benedictine way of life, worship, communal living, and community. Elements of Benedictine spiritualty embraced by St. Ben's included a commitment to listening to the voice of God through prayer, scripture, "the depths of our own experience, and in listening to one another in community…"

St. Ben's had a communally discerned *Rule of Life* that shaped the praxis of their community. There were aspects of the Benedictine tradition in St. Ben's rule but they had also made it their own (an example of ancient-future spirituality—taking something from the tradition and giving it voice for the present and future church). The Rule of Life for St. Ben's articulated their Rule (priorities),[15] Practices (spirituality/actions),[16] Virtues (character traits/values),[17] and Postures (how they approach others and the world).[18] Participants at St. Ben's were encouraged to embrace this rule of life as their community praxis "of the kind of life we are seeking to lead in the way of Jesus."

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[15] St. Ben's rule included "Love God and love neighbors, give invitations and provide welcome, engage community and practice faith, share stories and throw parties, create art and exchange gifts, renew culture and steward creation."

[16] St. Ben's practices were "hospitality, worship, prayer, scripture reflection, tithing, confession, forgiveness, fasting, feasting, discernment, sabbath, and pilgrimage."

[17] St. Ben's virtues included "generosity, graciousness, thankfulness, humility, accountability, compassion, transformation, obedience, courage, faith, hope, and love."

[18] St. Ben's postures were "presence, openness, mindfulness, expectancy, and wonder."

St. Ben's included aspects of *monastic worship life* in their praxis. The Eucharist/mass offered each Saturday evening was the core worship gathering for the community. Participants were encouraged to pray the daily offices and were invited to join in or lead regular morning prayers in the chapel at St. Ben's. A mid-week vespers service was offered regularly on Wednesday evenings. Communal prayer and worship were incorporated in the life of the community houses that were a part of St. Ben's.

St. Ben's had three community houses as part of their ministry at the time of this study. The community houses provided an opportunity for *communal living* with the opportunity to share in communal meals, prayer, and worship. The community houses practiced hospitality by occasionally providing lodging to guests at St. Ben's or making a meal for the weekly "feed" that happened after worship on Saturday evenings. The community houses also served the practical purpose of providing housing for students and others in a mobile time of their lives that was safe, relatively inexpensive for the metro area, and connected with community.

St. Ben's practiced the Benedictine *commitment to place* in their commitment to their "zip code." The pastor spoke of St. Ben's having presence in the community as "monks influence the village." She saw St. Ben's as an "incarnational, organic, non-consumeristic community—not commuters to church." If people came from outside the neighborhood they were encouraged to find a ministry nearer their home, in part to encourage commitment to their own community and in part to reduce carbon footprints.

St. Ben's Rule of Life and spiritual practices of monastic worship patterns, communal living, and commitment to the community were ways that St. Ben's was connected with and representative of the neo-monastic stream of the emerging church. St.

Ben's was also connected with and representative of the Lutheran and Episcopal traditions.

A Lutheran View

When asked. "What's Episcopal about St. Ben's?" participants who were interviewed mentioned several aspects of high-church worship. They mentioned a participant who worked at the local Episcopal cathedral who "Episcopalianized our altar" with the right cloths and the right cups. They mentioned the use of the *Book of Common Prayer,* the procession of the "lectern book." and "high mass" with bells, incense, genuflecting, and cassocks "stolen" from the cathedral. St. Ben's used "Godly Play," which is a model for children's "Sunday School" developed in the Episcopal Church. The pastor appreciated that the Anglican tradition was non-confessional which allowed for diversity in theological opinion.

When asked, "What's Lutheran about St. Ben's?" participants mentioned the pattern of the liturgy but they also acknowledged it is pretty much the same as in the *Book of Common Prayer*. They said that there is "a distinct, amazing theology in this church that is very Lutheran." They mentioned the "priesthood of all believers" and the lack of hierarchy at St. Ben's that contrasted with what they saw as "typical Lutheran churches where the focus is on the pastor." St. Ben's was rooted in Lutheran liturgical and theological traditions but participants who were interviewed were adamant that they were "not culturally Lutheran."

A Missional View

The assertion that God was up to something in the story of Jesus and that *thiscouldchangeeverything* along with the assertion that their purpose was to

helpgodchangeeverything reflected a missional view. St. Ben's had a "MISSIO DEI GROUP" that coordinated monthly service projects and encouraged participants to "get involved in one of these, as you are led by the Spirit, to share in the *missio dei* (mission of God)." Participants wanted the community around them to know that "God is relational" and will "come meet you where you are." The pastor described their mission in the neighborhood as being to "walk lightly and serve"—a relational, incarnational approach to the community.

A Doxological View

God was glorified at St. Ben's through their incarnational presence in the community—directly as a neo-monastic community and indirectly through the community arts center. St. Ben's sought to be a "third place," in addition to home and work, where people might find community. God was glorified in and through the many students and visitors who come to learn from St. Ben's about fresh ways to be church in a culture that is highly un-churched. God was glorified as participants practiced the Rule of Life in their daily lives. God was glorified in the relationships that developed in the community houses. And God was glorified in worship.

Worship at St. Benedict's

The main worship gathering at St. Ben's was called "Holy Eucharist" and was held on Saturday evenings at 5:00 PM. The pastor and musician director met once or twice a month with the Liturgy Guild to write liturgies and shape the worship experiences. They used the Revised Common Lectionary and followed the calendar of the church year. St. Ben's used the "Western rite" of the liturgy. Their website described a worship ordo with the language of "Gathering—Word—Table—Sending" as the

essential movement of worship. Most often that involved creating a liturgy based on an

order of worship found in the *Book of Common Prayer*[19] or in *With One Voice*.[20] Both

provided an outline of the liturgy that could be shaped for particular worship experiences.

They sometimes used more formal settings of the liturgy. They have used liturgies based

on the music of U2 (U2charist), Marvin Gaye, Coltrane, and others.

Worship at St. Ben's was neither 'traditional' nor 'contemporary,' but *ancient-future.* They combined ancient resources like hymns, chants, candles, and communion

with "techno-modern" resources like alternative rock music, art, projection, and video in

worship that was an expression of the community.

St. Ben's was reclaiming the church's ancient role as a patron of the arts. Artists

from the community created icons and other works of art that were used in the worship

space. An artist did live painting during a worship service. A group of people created a

fountain "like a river flowing from the back of the church to the front with a baptismal

font at the end." One of the artists created labyrinths—including one made entirely of

candles. Musicians from St. Ben's wrote much of the music used in worship and recorded

CDs of worship music, including contemplative music used for vespers.

On the night we participated in worship at St. Ben's, the Great Room, a large

rectangular space, was set with an altar/communion table in the center of the longest wall

with a podium and microphone set to the participants' right of the altar/communion table.

A band with percussion, guitar, bass, and two vocalists was set up to the participants' left

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[19] Episcopal Church, *The Book of Common Prayer and Administration of the Sacraments and Other Rites and Ceremonies of the Church: Together with the Psalter or Psalms of David According to the Use of the Episcopal Church* (New York: The Church Hymnal Corporation and Seabury Press, 1979), 400-05. The setting in the BCP is "An Order for Celebrating the Eucharist."

[20] *With One Voice: A Lutheran Resource for Worship*, Pew ed. (Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg Fortress, 1995), 8-9. The setting in WOV is "Holy Communion: the Shape of the Rite."

of the altar/communion table. Moving images of crashing waves on rocks and words were projected on the wall above the heads of the band. (St. Ben's used projection in an effort to be paperless for the sake of the environment and for the artistic use of graphics, images, and video as means of expression and proclamation.)[21] Chairs were set in long, curved rows facing the altar/communion table, podium, and band. A couch and an area for children were set in the back of the room within the worship space. There were about sixty-five people in worship on that particular Saturday evening in early August.

The worship service began with an *invocation, greeting*, and *sharing of the peace*. People were invited to "greet someone you don't know with the peace of Jesus Christ." Greeting, conversation, and introductions continued for about two minutes. People were invited to stand and sing. Following the *song* a lay reader read a *text* from Romans. The reading ended with "This is the word of the Lord" and the response, "Thanks be to God."

People were invited to sit as the band vamped on the intro of a song while the pastor lead the gathering in reading a portion of a *Psalm* in unison. The band continued in a sung version of the gospel reading for the day. Following the *song*, participants were invited to "stand for the reading of the gospel." The *gospel* was announced. "Glory to you O Lord." Matthew 14:22-33 was read followed by "The gospel of the Lord" and the response, "Praise to you O Christ." The band reprised the singing of the gospel text. People were invited to sit.

The pastor moved to the podium for the *Reverb* (St. Ben's word for sermon— from 'reverberation'). Dressed in black slacks and an oversized black t-shirt, with hands

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[21] St Ben's was the only one of the six sites visited that used projection in worship. Others used printed bulletins. Bulletins were not used at St. Ben's. Italicized words in this section are from my own labeling of the elements of the worship experience.

braced on the podium, and speaking from a manuscript, the pastor spoke for twelve minutes. People appeared to listen attentively. Following the Reverb, the band moved into place and led the participants in a *song*.

Worship continued with ten minutes of *Open Space*. During this time, atmospheric music was played in the background. People were invited to sit quietly, to move to stations for prayer, candle lighting, reflecting on icons, or to simply 'be' as the Spirit leads. People moved quietly about the worship space (or even outside on the summer evening).

A male leader drew participants back together for *Family Business* (announcements). After several announcements, a female leader announced the *offering*. As the offering was being received, the pastor prepared the communion elements at the altar/communion table. The offering was processed to the altar/communion table. Participants stood to sing the last verse of a *song*. The pastor continued with the *Eucharistic prayer, words of institution, and prayers*.

Participants were welcomed to the table. *Communion* was served by intinction or one could eat the bread and then drink from a common cup. The pastor served the bread using a loaf of bread at the head of the center aisle in front of the altar/communion table. Wine servers stood on either side of the pastor. Participants received the bread from the pastor then moved to either side for the wine.

Worship continued with the *hymn*, "Come Thou Fount of Every Blessing" and concluded with a *blessing*. Following worship a group of about fifteen went out together for dinner at a local restaurant.[22]

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[22] My research assistants and I joined the group for dinner and informal conversations.

Reflections on Worship at St. Benedict's

Worship at St. Ben's was highly *contextual*. The context was a "hipster-yuppie-boho"[23] neighborhood in an urban center of the most un-churched area in the country.[24] Worship was grounded in St. Ben's presence in this particular community. The use of arts, music, and ancient-future liturgy took into account the community of artists, young professionals, and students that lived in the neighborhood. The use of "open space" in worship incorporated the arts, silence, reflection and contemplative elements that allowed for the individual expression of spirituality. The early evening worship time on a Saturday evening left the rest of the evening free for social activities and Sunday mornings free for rest and recovery from Saturday evening social activities and in preparation for the workweek. St. Ben's held a unique place in its community and was influenced by it.

Worship at St. Ben's was also highly *indigenous.* Participants in the community composed much of the music. Artists provided icons and other works of art for use in worship. A Liturgy Guild of participants helped to write liturgies and shaped the worship experiences. Participants took part in leading all aspects of worship with the exception of officiating the Eucharist. Participants who were willing were equipped to share the Reverb (sermon) and did so regularly. Participants were also encouraged to write and lead other services such as Morning Prayer and Vespers.

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[23] This was a phrase used by the pastor to describe the neighborhood: hipster, young-urban-professional, and bohemian.

[24] Patricia O'Connell Killen and Mark Silk, *Religion and Public Life in the Pacific Northwest: The None Zone*, Religion by Region (Walnut Creek, CA: AltaMira Press, 2004), 28-30.

Cultural Distinctives

Participants at St. Ben's tended to be hipster, young, urban professionals, artists, and graduate students. Many of them would be in the area for a few years then move on as they finished school and found or changed jobs. The spiritual culture at St. Ben's was ancient-future, liturgical, monastic, and contemplative (with an alternative rock flair). Participants at St. Ben's were predominately white with only a half-dozen people-of-color identified in reports to the ELCA. It was interesting to note that, even though the founding pastor was African American, it was her hipster cultural identity that had shaped St. Ben's. St. Ben's was in a predominantly white context and was a predominantly white community of neo-monastic hipster young adults.

Challenges

St. Ben's faced significant financial challenges as they carried their $750,000 debt for the renovation of their facility along with the ongoing expenses of maintaining a historic building. The community arts center was a partner in facing those challenges. Leaders at St. Ben's anticipated that the founding pastor would transition out of the community when St. Ben's organized as a congregation. Those conversations had begun. They would face the multiple challenges of a change in pastoral leadership, the unique situation of trying to organize as a congregation in two denominations, significant debt and financial responsibilities, and a relatively small group of participants made up of about 150 mobile young adults.

St. Gregory's[25]

Site Description and Context

St. Gregory's was located in an urban residential neighborhood of a major Midwestern city. It rented space from a neighborhood church that also hosted other ministries. Participants at St. Greg's were primarily urban young adults, artists and professionals with an intellectual edge. A team of two pastors—one female, one male, and a music director led St. Greg's. Participants in the ministry composed ten settings of the traditional liturgy in a variety of musical genres that were used in worship. Indigenous liturgies and edgy preaching were hallmarks of the worship life of this community.

St. Gregory's Story

St. Gregory's story began in its pastors' stories. The male pastor (MP for our purposes) was part of a three-pastor team that started a church in the American Baptist tradition about a decade earlier. It was a ministry for "critical-thinking urbanites who were suspicious of the church." MP described their worship services as "basically a free church service with word and sacrament at the center." After some years he was "itching to see" if such a ministry could be developed for "lapsed Lutherans" who had grown up Lutheran, heard about grace, but it "didn't necessarily sink in." He also wondered, as a Lutheran pastor, if it could be done with the "full on liturgy of the church."

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[25] Pope Gregory (540-612 CE) was called *the father of Christian worship* and was known for liturgical reform that further developed the Western liturgy. The folks at St. Gregory's continue in that liturgical vein so it seemed to be an appropriate pseudonym.

About that same time, the female pastor (FP for our purposes) was serving as an associate pastor, sensed a call to move on, and was considering starting her own church. She met MP through friends and they hit it off professionally. Since both felt called to start a church they decided to work together rather than be rivals for resources. They presented a proposal to the synod bishop that included two and one-half staff positions. They were told that adequate funding wasn't available. A year later they returned with their proposal. Additional funding had become available through a special missions grant. MP and FP began their work as developers of St. Greg's in August 2005. A start team was formed, and St. Greg's held its first worship service in March 2006.[26] From the beginning St. Greg's identified itself as "an urban church that was a creative response to a growing need for critical-thinking, grace-based Christian orthodoxy."

Worship at St. Greg's was held on Sunday evenings at 5:00 PM in a large, open sanctuary. Their first service used a jazz liturgy written by their music director. The local papers ran articles about the new urban ministry, such as: "All jazzed up: Holy Hipsters birth a church."

Additional liturgies were written in various musical styles including punk rock, pop, art rock, alt-country, and contemplative genres. Composers with connections to St. Greg's were commissioned to write liturgies using the ordinary of the Western rite of the liturgy as texts. Several of the composers performed as musicians locally and brought their bands or musical friends to assist in leading the liturgies when they were used. Liturgies were typically used for six to eight weeks at a time or seasonally. St. Greg's

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[26] During the time of their launch, MP's wife was diagnosed with stage 4 cancer and eventually died. MP commented that added greatly to the chaos of the first couple of years of the mission development.

was unique among ministries studied in their commitment to create and use new settings of liturgies based on traditional texts and forms.

Organization and Leadership

St. Greg's was in its mission development phase and was not yet organized as a congregation in the ELCA. Mission development ministries have a great deal of flexibility in their organizational structures. MP and FP served as pastors and provided leadership to St. Greg's. A part-time music director provided additional leadership for worship music and liturgies. At the time of this study there was no formal church council or official leadership team of ministry participants. A "committee of the future" was being formed and had met once. St. Greg's website listed MP and FP as pastors but did not indicate other leaders as contacts or indicate any formal structure. There were three Luther Seminary students mentioned who were doing contextual learning for pastoral ministry at St. Greg's. The pastoral team assumed primary responsibility for the vision and leadership of St. Greg's.

St. Greg's website presented their mission statement:

To respond to the Triune God's self giving by celebrating incarnational liturgy, by thinking critically about church and culture, by working for peace and justice in our neighborhood and around the world, by incubating artistic expression, and by behaving as if God's grace is already sweeping us into the promised future.

In conversation about mission statements, both MP and FP were hesitant to claim theirs. FP: "We have a mission statement but…um…we don't even think of it…it's so terrible." MP: "We're about theology and preaching and liturgy and service…we don't have to be reminded of it by looking at the mission statement." One participant, when asked if there was a clear mission or mission statement said, "No there isn't." She went on to say "I think maybe you have to be mystic to be a good preacher and that's

sometimes at odds with the art of administration." Participants in a focus group expressed it this way: "We don't talk about our core values. Mission statements feel like a business. Values and mission are more modeled and natural." A little over two years since their first worship service, St. Greg's appeared to be primarily pastor-team led with limited formal structure or on-going participant involvement in leadership.

<div align="center">Sensitizing Concepts</div>

An Emerging View

MP and FP both articulated ambivalence about the term *emerging* as it relates to labeling ministries. FP said, "I have never ever located myself there." They preferred to speak of the church as always reforming. MP had a PhD from Northwestern University where he studied the post-modern turn. He was critical of early literature in the emerging church conversation that used post-modern as a demographic to define a generation. He expressed appreciation that there was some "sophistication that is growing" in more recent literature in the emerging conversation. Neither MP nor FP claimed much connection with the emerging conversation but had been to the Greenbelt festival in England and appreciated both the context of the conversation (a muddy tent instead of a stuffy boardroom) and the contents of sessions they attended (on the Cappadocians and the Trinity, for example).

One of the participants at St. Greg's liked the emergent language and identified several aspects of their ministry that she thought of as emergent: first, it was highly contextual. The ministry was a reflection of the artsy, urban neighborhood in which it was located. The tradition was interpreted for and connected with that context. Second, there was an ancient-future aspect to the use of liturgy. There was an intentional effort to

connect with the ancient liturgical tradition and texts of the church while setting those texts in musical genres of the day. Finally, the liturgies were indigenous, "home-grown." They were commissioned by St. Greg's to be written and led by people who are a part of St. Greg's. Those were all themes that had emerged as characteristic of ministries that were emerging in the ELCA: contextual, ancient-future, and indigenous.

A Lutheran View

MP and FP were very intentional about the Lutheran identity of this ministry from its inception. Their liturgical emphasis with word and sacrament at the center of the liturgy was one connection with Lutheran confessional tradition. Both MP and FP expressed passionate frustration that Lutherans had abandoned "what is best about their tradition, what is most beautiful about them, and their greatest gift to the greater church— their theology of grace." In addition to liturgy and theology, MP and FP were committed to the Lutheran tradition of preaching. One participant commented that there was an "identifiably Lutheran hermeneutic [law-gospel] at work in the preaching."[27] Liturgy and the preaching of a theology of grace reflected St. Greg's commitment to a Lutheran identity.

A Missional View

MP and FP entered a conversation about missional language through a Trinitarian lens (as was articulated most clearly in the "backstory" on St. Greg's website):

> Enter good ol' Trinitarian proclamation—the message that the Spirit who opens up the future and creates life, derives from the event of Golgotha, the event of the love of the Son and the grief of the Father. Hence the vision of [St. Greg's]: to

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[27] One of the participants interviewed was also a seminary professor who appreciated St. Greg's commitment to intellectual challenge and critical thinking.

proclaim the good news of Jesus Christ in creative and socially conscious ways, to become a living laboratory for liturgical renewal, to reclaim the power of the 'visible word' of the sacrament, and to empower the worshipping community to enflesh God's grace in the world.

The vision of St. Greg's as identified here was tied to the mission and life of the Triune God. The connection of their vision with God's mission reflects a missional perspective in that sense, though they do not intentionally use missional language.

St. Greg's had been in existence for about two and a half years at the time of this study. Most of their energy was focused on building a worshipping community of people at St. Greg's. Their internal focus may be a reflection of their stage of development. St. Greg's is one of the youngest ministries included in this study. The vision for ministry reflected here, however, would also suggest that St. Greg's vision was not enacted primarily "in the world." St. Greg's vision was enacted within the worshipping community—proclamation (preaching), liturgy, sacraments, and empowering the worshipping community (to the end of enfleshing God's grace in the world).

While St. Greg's focus to this point has been primarily on building a worshipping community, there was one area in which they have intentionally engaged their neighborhood—the arts community. St. Greg's neighborhood was home to artists, studios, and galleries. St. Greg's sought to engage the arts in an authentic way that "kinda decreepifies the church a little bit." For example, St. Greg's produced an art show for Holy Saturday called the "tomb show" for which they commissioned twelve artists, sculptors, and ceramicists to create their own ashes, or urns, or coffins, or caskets which were placed on display throughout the worship space. Another year artists were invited to contribute to a show called "Show Us Your Ordinary." The invitation to artists was not to produce religious art but to simply produce art that reflected everyday life. More recently,

St. Greg's engaged a non-Christian performance arts group to create a performance art experience in four weeks of worship. Our site visit occurred during that experiment and will be chronicled in the following section on worship at St. Greg's. In all cases mentioned, St. Greg's sought to engage the artists in their community through the expression of their arts in collaboration with the church.

A Doxological View

God was glorified at St. Greg's through "the enormity of God's mercy" that is the thrust of St. Greg's message. St. Greg's was an inclusive community that was in relationship with Reconciling Lutherans and was intentionally welcoming to GLBTQI folk. St. Greg's glorified God by welcoming people who are "encouraged and allowed to be who God created them to be."

God was glorified through engagement with artists and musicians who are encouraged and commissioned to create works of art and music for the church and in worship. St. Greg's had a book club in which writers read and discuss one another's writing. God was glorified in the constant challenge for participants at St. Greg's to be creative and to think critically. Critical thinking was expected of participants at St. Greg's in worship.

Worship at St. Gregory's

"Our worship service is aimed to blow you away." Worship at St. Greg's was an uncanny mix of the liturgical and the playfully absurd. First we'll address the liturgical identity of worship at St. Greg's. Both MP and FP were committed to the traditional liturgy as an ancient expression of faith. FP was involved, along with 30 other Protestant women, in a three-and-a-half year grant-funded program to be with a group of

Benedictine sisters in Indiana. She was struck by the discipline of prayer and liturgy and the idea that what unites Christians around the world is the liturgy. "Someone's doing the liturgy right now." More than that, we are united "beyond time and space" with those who have prayed the liturgy "for thousands of years." For FP the liturgy was a connection with the global and the ancient/future Christian community. On an even more practical level: "Why reinvent the wheel…why would I think I could do liturgy better than people have done it for thousands of years?" The Revised Common Lectionary was used at St. Greg's for similar reasons: it linked St. Greg's to other Christian churches and "it deflates the grandiose subjectivity of the preacher."

St. Greg's chose not to reinvent the wheel but they had brought it into the 21st century. Chariot wheels and mag wheels with chrome spinners are functionally the same but serve different times and cultures. The text of the ancient liturgy was set in the musical and colloquial languages of the participants of St. Greg's and their community.

Our site visit at St. Greg's included participation in worship on two consecutive Sunday evenings at 5:00 PM. The same setting of the mass was used on both evenings. The language of the liturgy was familiar although the musical setting was, of course, new to us. The liturgy included the following traditional elements that were consistent from week to week: *Opening Reading, Welcome, and Announcements, Greeting, Kyrie, Brief Order of Confession and Forgiveness, Song of Praise* (Gloria), *Prayer of the Day, First and Second Readings, Hallelujah* (Gospel Acclamation), *Gospel Reading* (with response), *Sermon, Prayers of the Community, Passing of the Peace, Offertory, Great Thanksgiving, Preface, Sanctus, Words of Institution, Prayer of the Disciples* (Lord's

Prayer), *Communion, Agnus Dei, Post Communion Prayer, Sending Hymn*, and

Benediction.[28]

Subversive Sermons

St. Greg's website promised "uncanny worship, soulful music, subversive

sermons." The sermon in each of the weeks we observed was unique and challenging. In

our first week at St. Greg's, FP preached a "satire sermon." She said the opposite of what

she actually meant for the entire sermon. One participant we interviewed said that her

husband leaned over to her about five minutes into the sermon and asked, "Is she

joking?" She responded, "I love it when you're confused." Participants were challenged

to think critically.

The second week of our site visit, MP and FP presented a dialogue sermon. The

topic had to do with broken relationships. They began the sermon with an argument then

alternated sharing and teaching about brokenness in relationships. The sermon was set in

the context of a performance art experiment on the subject of Christian unity. A non-

Christian community performance arts group was invited in to instigate disunity. As

people arrived for worship they were given either a pink or blue armband. During the

announcements we were instructed to put them on our arms. The liturgy continued as

usual until the sermon. The argument in the sermon was used to set up conflict or rivalry

between the people with pink and the people with blue armbands. Following the sermon

and prayers, during the "passing of the peace," the performance artists came down the

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[28] Italicized terms were taken from the order of worship in the bulletin that included words and music for the liturgy and songs. The ordinary of the liturgy was printed for re-use. The propers of the liturgy were printed on an insert. The closing hymn was sung from a hymnbook with the page number listed in the bulletin.

center aisle, placed tape down the center of the aisle, and stood still as a barrier on the taped line. Participants were invited to share the peace. The presence of the performance artists made it difficult for people to cross the aisle. Some participants found their way around or through the barrier. Others simply greeted people on their own side of the aisle. One person interviewed was upset by the tension created and left the sanctuary. After the passing of the peace, the performance artists left the aisle and the liturgy continued with the offering, communion, benediction, and sending song. Participants were invited to join the performance artists following the service for a workshop that included receiving a t-shirt imprinted with a Christian unity logo to decorate with the help of the performance artists. This unity/disunity experiment was intended to continue for a couple more weeks with the participation of the community performance arts group.

Play and Touches of the Absurd[29]

There is a *theology of play* at play in worship at St. Greg's. Jürgen Moltmann argues, in *Theology of Play, "Following the crucified* liberates men from the laws and powers of this world and sets them free" (emphasis his).[30] This liberation sets us free for play and spontaneity. Moltmann carries his argument into the realm of worship:

> Worship itself may become a source of this new spontaneity; it does no longer have to be a place of inhibitions, embarrassments, and polite efforts. Christian congregations may then become testing grounds of the realm of freedom right in the realm of necessity.[31]

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[29] I mean *absurd* in the very best sense of the word—absurd in the way that *comedia del arte* or *cirque* are absurd. I mean using spectacle and the entire range of emotions to cause a community to think—using nonsense to make sense. If liturgy is *divine drama,* then St. Greg's is a taste of *theater of the absurd.*

[30] Jürgen Moltmann et al., *Theology of Play* (New York: Harper & Row, 1972), 53.

[31] Ibid., 70.

MP and FP "give people permission to play" in worship at St. Greg's. They encourage play because "we think that's a part of being human and partaking in the gifts of God's creation." So worship at St. Greg's is an interesting mix of liturgy (*leitourgia* – the *work* of the people) and *play*.[32] The use of liturgy provides structure in worship that creates space for play.

For example, St. Greg's worship space was very large with a broad, high ceiling. To make use of the space they bought a remote controlled blimp, put a picture of Jesus on the side, and used it to fly in the "verse of the day" during worship.

When the bishop visited St. Greg's they used the blimp, with a picture of Jesus on one side and the bishop on the other, in a "big processional" with the bishop, a fog machine, and "Climb Every Mountain" played on the pipe organ.

On Super Bowl Sunday, St. Greg's had an air show. Everybody brought airplanes and flying saucers and the blimp and the kids and grown-ups played together for about an hour while the music director played a medley of airplane songs and FP and MP, dressed as flight attendants, came up the aisle pushing a cart and handing out airplane snacks.

On one of the Sundays in our site visit, the pastors and two vocalists processed in at the beginning of worship. One vocalist sang the Oscar Meyer wiener song (O I wish I was an Oscar Meyer wiener…). The other followed with the Oscar Meyer bologna song (My bologna has a first name…). People applauded. The vocalists took their seats with the band. The pastors began the announcements. No explanation was offered regarding the tribute to Oscar Meyer. Reflecting after the fact, perhaps the intention was to

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[32] Ibid., 85. Robert E. Neale, in his chapter of response to Moltmann's thesis, "The Crucifixion as Play," says, "The enemy of play is not death but work." Perhaps we need to think of worship as perichoretic play rather than as the 'work of the people.'

demonstrate a humorous form of rivalry between wieners and bologna before we dealt with the subject of disunity with the performance arts group later in worship.

This mix of play with the absurd extended beyond worship events. One of St. Greg's recurring fellowship events was to gather after worship in the parking lot and "run over things with FP's minivan." (I'm guessing they were familiar with the comedian Gallagher.)

Reflections on worship at St. Gregory's

Worship at St. Greg's was complex. There was an emphasis on liturgy and its connections with the broader and ancient church but set in musical languages of the participants at St. Greg's. There was an emphasis on the recurring structure of the liturgy that creates the space for an equally significant emphasis on play. Worship at St. Greg's was highly contextual (for hip, young, urban, artists and professionals with a penchant for critical thinking) and indigenous (drawing on the artistic, musical, and playful gifts of the participants). The interplay between liturgy and play is instructive for the church.

Cultural Distinctives

Participants at St. Greg's must be willing to be challenged to think. Worship services were complex events. The mix of traditional liturgies, contextually indigenous musical genres, an emphasis on play, and subversive sermons provided great stimulation for people who wished to think critically and theologically.

Challenges

The most immediate challenge at the time of this study was financial. St. Greg's was drawing near to the end of the three-year grant that was initially received. Salaries

for two pastors in addition to a music director, musicians, and other operating expenses would be a challenge for an emerging community with an average of seventy-five participants in worship.

The leadership structure and culture of worship were dependent upon MP and FP. Their collective cultural, intellectual, and spiritual DNA had shaped St. Greg's. One wonders how leadership beyond the pastors might be developed at St. Greg's and how transition might happen if and when MP or FP are no longer pastors at St. Greg's given the idiosyncratic nature of their leadership styles and worship experiences.

St. Timothy's[33]

Site Description and Context

St. Timothy's was located in a mid-sized recreational community in a river gorge with mountains on the horizon. What began as a main street coffee shop now met away from the tourist center of town in a storefront property that served as a drop in center for youth during the week and a gathering place on Sunday evenings for a free community meal followed by an adult discussion group. These activities served as the primary functions of this ministry although St. Tim's community also gathered occasionally in worship.

St. Timothy's Story

In 2002 the young, female, Lutheran pastor who would become the mission developer of St. Tim's was serving as the pastor of a Lutheran congregation in the same

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[33] Paul's instruction to Timothy was "Let no one despise your youth…" (I Timothy 4:11f). The folks at St. Tim's have taken that advice to heart and have lived into the next few verses as well; hence, their pseudonym.

town. She became concerned for the many people in the community who claimed to be "spiritual, but not religious."[34] She and a small group of leaders began to imagine a ministry that would create a place for "spiritual, but not religious" folks to gather in the community. She shared the idea with her congregation. About half were very supportive of the idea. About half were not; perhaps out of concern for the time it would take their pastor away from serving their congregation. The pastor was convinced this was something God was calling her to do but she was unwilling to split the congregation over it so she resigned her call with the congregation and began developing St. Tim's.

St. Tim's opened a coffee shop in a building shared with several other business on the main commercial street of town in the spring of 2003. It was a very small space— about 426 square feet. St. Tim's was somewhat surprised when it became a hangout for kids. They became more intentional about reaching out to youth and more youth came. Another restaurant in the building was not pleased to have kids hanging out on the property and actively discouraged their presence. St. Tim's decided they needed a larger and more youth friendly space. In May of 2007 St. Tim's moved into a profit/non-profit partnership sharing space with a fast food restaurant on the same main street. The restaurant was pleased to have the ministry on premises because of the youth they employed and the youth it would attract. St. Tim's was pleased to leave the cooking to the restaurant and to focus on the ministry. Things did not go as planned. By October the partnership ended with attorneys involved.[35]

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[34] St. Timothy's is located in the heart of the "none zone" in the most un-churched state in the US as described by Killen and Silk. Killen and Silk, *Religion and Public Life in the Pacific Northwest: The None Zone*, 17. Killen and Silk use the term " secular but spiritual."

[35] The story is a long one but it had to do with a lack of clarity in setting up the initial agreement and the difficulties of a partnership between non-Christian for-profit and Christian non-profit organizations.

During those months of gathering in a larger space, momentum continued to build for a youth center. In January 2008, St. Tim's moved into a new space several blocks up the hill from the main street location. The new location was a storefront building on the main drag coming into town from the west. It was located near schools, an employment center, and the community food bank. The property was near space for a community garden and had plenty of parking. It was a more youth friendly setting than the main street whose tourism-focused merchants did not really want local youth hanging around.

The new space was remodeled with a main area that provided computer/internet workstations, a big screen TV with video games and Wii, foosball, board games, puzzles, and tables for activities and dining. A commercial kitchen and a conference room for small group meetings were included. The new space was open as a drop in center for youth from 4:00 – 9:00 PM Tuesday through Saturday and on Sunday from 4:00 – 8:00 PM for a free community meal and discussion group. The ministry had essentially transformed from a coffee shop/restaurant based ministry to a community youth drop-in center.

On Sunday evenings St. Tim's served a free community meal. Volunteers cooked the food, served it, and then sat and ate in conversation with the people who came for the meal. An offering basket was set out for those who could contribute. People arrived early for conversation and games. A small group of adults gathered following the meal for a discussion group. Topics for discussion varied from Bible studies to discussions of books, movies, or issues like the environment and interfaith dialogue. On the Sunday evening of our site visit to St. Tim's about twenty people gathered for the meal. About eight people stayed after the meal or arrived for the small group discussion. The topic for the evening

was a visioning conversation for the group on the subject of how St. Tim's engaged in worship.

Organization and Leadership

St. Tim's began as a mission development in the ELCA and was designated a Synodically Authorized Worshipping Community (SAWC) of the synod. It was organized much like a non-profit organization with a board of directors, executive director, and staff. The board members used the title "stewards."

The pastor served as executive director and used the titles "lead vision steward" and "lead mission explorer." She described herself as a bi-vocational pastor, working part-time with St. Tim's (ten hours per week) and as a chaplain in a local hospital. She began a Doctor of Ministry program about the same time that St. Tim's began and completed the program a few months before our site visit. Her experience as a mission developer shaped her work in the DMin program just as the DMin coursework influenced her work as a mission developer.

Other staff positions included a manager/volunteer coordinator and a youth coordinator. At the time of our site visit St. Tim's was interviewing candidates for the manager/volunteer coordinator position.

The original vision was that St. Tim's would develop into a worshipping community. Over the course of several years a youth centered ministry emerged as central to St. Tim's mission. Worship in various forms was present but remained on the periphery of St. Tim's mission. Many of the leaders and volunteers at St. Tim's were also participants in or members of other congregations. St. Tim's was more a ministry where people served than a worshipping community in which people had membership.

Financial support for St. Tim's was provided by mission development funds from the ELCA and the synod initially. St. Tim's relied upon grant funding. They were in the third year of an $88,000 grant from the ELCA at the time of this study. They received grant funding from the United Way because of their work with youth. They have received grant funding from the county, from a coalition of congregations, and anticipated receiving a grant from Thrivent Financial for Lutherans. St. Tim's also received a portion of its revenue from supporters who contributed to the ministry.

St. Tim's facility was made available to other organizations and churches such as Leos (a youth version of the Lion's Club). St. Tim's was working on a building use policy that could both serve the community and generate revenue for the ministry.

<p style="text-align:center">Sensitizing Concepts</p>

An Emerging View

St. Tim's pastor was serving on the Emerging Ministry New Start Team for the ELCA at the time of our study. She was not enamored with the "emerging church" label, particularly as it was applied to ministries by the wider church in a faddish sense. Rather she was of the opinion that "if we're paying attention to the work of the Holy Spirit in the world that every ministry, every congregation, every church is emerging…it's about changing, not for the sake of change, but change because that's what God is cooking up."

Participants and leaders interviewed at St. Tim's did not use emerging language; but St. Tim's did reflect several of the same themes that have emerged in the emerging conversation with other ministries. For example, St. Tim's was highly contextual. It was inspired by the "spiritual, but not religious" demographic of the community. It responded

to the needs of youth who were attracted to the ministry because it provided a place to hang out.

Another theme in the emerging conversation is relational community. St. Tim's published goal was "to create a place where people of all ages can gather and be present with openness, freedom, love, and respect—learning from and with one another." Their work with youth, in the community meal, and in small groups was focused on building relationships in community.

At a practical level, St. Tim's saw itself as a laboratory, a playground for the ELCA to see if church could be done in a different way. One participant described it this way: "I really want to be a leading edge Christian...to be where the newest, most effective stuff is…to find out what could make them see Christ…or other connections with Christians who loved them."

A Lutheran View

Lutheran was understood at St. Tim's to be an experience of grace. The pastor said, "We don't use the language of justification by grace through faith, but we certainly live that." She described that as not only having open doors, but people's hearts being open to all kinds of people, to loving them where they were "knowing that God loves them where they are and that they don't have to do anything to make themselves loved."

Participants who were interviewed reinforced the prevalence of grace as an attribute of the Lutheran tradition at St. Tim's. One said, "the connection is grace—grace for the people that come in, grace for the people that work here. And showing people what that looks like." She mentioned sitting in their first location and listening to a young girl who had attempted suicide who felt that she did not have a safe place. "And when she

got up she was like thank you so much and hugging and sobbing and crying and happy to

have just had an ear." Another volunteer shared a story that she described as a typical

experience:

> Sunday I had to run out and get more salad because we were running out. As I
> was coming back, there was a man out on the street fixing his truck and he said,
> "What is this place?" That's the kind of question I get all the time. I just love it
> because then I started explaining to him and he got really excited. He's a tree
> cutter and new to the community. He wanted to get to know people. Where he
> lived before he was a youth pastor. He said, "You know, there's a girl down by
> the freeway with a sign." He said, "I think I'll go get her and bring her up here."
> And he did. He brought her up there and she ate and she hung around for at least
> an hour, which was good. So those kinds of things just happen all the time.

She went on to say, "the Lutheran part of it is God's grace is in everybody…and

that kind of ties to the possibility part, that with God's grace anything is possible."

A Missional View

The Doctor of Ministry degree program that the pastor completed was grounded

in a missional hermeneutic of theology, ecclesiology, and missiology. She was well

versed in the language of the missional church and used the language intentionally at St.

Tim's. Missional language was reflected in the language of St. Tim's leaders as well.

When asked where she saw God at work, one leader responded "everywhere…absolutely

positively everywhere. " She described that with the language of *perichoresis,* which she

described as *"God dancing through the neighborhood."*

St. Tim's statement of mission articulated a missional understanding of being

church for the sake of the world: "Led by God's Spirit to explore and participate in the

margins, uncover the questions, be present, and be bold, we are becoming a community,

reimagining and re-imaging what it means to be church for the sake of the world." At St.

Tim's, community was experienced among youth in the drop in center, among those who

prepared and gathered for meals, and among those who gathered for small group discussion. St. Tim's was developing community as church and reimagining what it is to be church in the process.

The pastor sent an email update to St. Tim's leaders and volunteers. She observed that there is always a danger that a new ministry might be formed around the personality of the mission developer. She wrote, "Thanks be to God the Mission Developer at [St. Tim's] has *always* been God! We have been Mission Explorers together in this adventure with God!" The idea that mission is God's (*missio Dei*) and that we participate in God's mission in the world is a core concept in the missional conversation.

A Doxological View

St. Tim's pastor referred to a work by Richard Bliese and Craig Van Gelder that replaced the phrase "word and sacrament" with the phrase "word, sacrament, and the Christian community." She argued, with Bliese and Van Gelder, that Luther made the connection of Word and Sacrament with community (Smalcald Articles, Part III, Article 4) by asserting that the gospel of grace is made known also in "the mutual conversation and consolation of the brothers and sisters."[36] St. Tim's pastor argued that community is a prerequisite to the ministry of word and sacrament. St. Tim's was about creating community. As community grew, word and sacrament would have a place to emerge. At St. Tim's, God was glorified in community.

Community happened most often in conversation. Sometimes that conversation was in a formal discussion group. Sometimes the conversation was around the Sunday

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[36] Bliese and Van Gelder, *The Evangelizing Church: A Lutheran Contribution*, 9-10.

evening dinner tables or among the youth and volunteers in the drop in center. God was glorified in mutual conversation.

God was also glorified in mutual consolation. One volunteer spoke of a brother and sister who came to St. Tim's. Their father had died about three weeks earlier and the brother (about age 12) hadn't spoken since then. He started playing Wii with another boy and talked for the first time with the guy who was playing with him. His sister came to St. Tim's and did puzzles for weeks. St. Tim's was a place for healing and growth and connections with people. The volunteer saw God glorified in that mutual consolation.

The same volunteer spoke of God being glorified "through each and every individual." She mentioned two men who are mentally challenged and regularly came to the Sunday meal. I had met them playing Wii the night before and had sat at their table for supper. She reflected that they were inspired by being included in St. Tim's community and wanted to help—move tables, whatever is needed. "It's allowing God to flow through everybody."

God was glorified through St. Tim's engagement in the broader community and through their witness as people who provided a place for youth and for people who needed a meal at a table with people who care. And God was glorified in worship,

Worship at St. Timothy's

Worship at St. Tim's "flows from the community that exists at the time." Prayer and Bible study had been a part of St. Tim's from the beginning in whatever form the community had taken. The discussion group gatherings would often end with communion. Communion would sometimes be incorporated in the Sunday evening meals:

[Pastor] would let us do communion. You know she wouldn't serve communion. We would serve communion. We would tell the story from our own perspective. This is going to make me cry because it was so cool but this kid one night gave communion and he had brownies and I don't remember what we had to drink— totally not communion food. And the story he told was so precious. And it was like, why is this not allowed? We get to break the rules here.

St. Tim's pastor was passionate about following the church year calendar, especially in Advent and Lent. The community discussion group topics were shaped to connect with the church year.

In their first location a Bible study in Isaiah prompted the community to paint words describing God on the ceiling of the coffee shop that would catch the customers' eyes and attention. It created a sense of sacred space.

St. Tim's has had seasons of more formal worship expressions. "Thin Places worship" was held monthly for over a year. It was a sensory, contemplative worship service with the sound of flowing water, candles, *lectio divina,* and meditation. Participants met in neighboring church buildings for those worship experiences.

Reflections on Worship at St. Timothy's

The topic of discussion in the discussion group time on the Sunday evening of our site visit was worship at St. Tim's. Participants discussed what constituted worship and how were the things that already happen at St. Tim's worship—things like prayer, communion, sharing a communal meal, Bible study and discussion. They realized that much of what they do at St. Tim's is surrounded in informal acts of worship. They committed with one another to imagine their discussion group time as a time of worship and to incorporate acts of worship in their time together.

There was no conversation in our visit about if or how the youth were engaged in worship. The examples of worship that were discussed related to the Sunday evening

activities: communal meal and discussion group. My impression was that the youth were the objects of St. Tim's ministry and were provided with a safe place to hang out with volunteers who were available for mentoring and homework assistance after school.

It was evident from the conversation regarding worship that St. Tim's had not resolved how worship would be a part of the community. It was certainly contextual— unique to the St. Tim's community and participants. It was also indigenous—determined by the people who were a part of the community; not imposed from outside the community in any sense. It was my impression that the pastor was feeling a bit of personal, and probably synodical, pressure to develop a worshipping community from the service community that had emerged at St. Tim's.

Cultural Distinctives

The culture of St. Tim's centered on youth and service to the marginalized (which included the youth). Many of the participants and volunteers who made up St. Tim's were parents, even grandparents, of youth who participated in the drop in center. The youth who participated were middle school and high school age youth in the community who felt the need for a safe place to hang out, to get help with homework, have access to computers and internet, or have conversation and adults who listen. The community meal brought together people with passion for the marginalized with folks who were marginalized—in poverty, homeless, lonely for a variety of reasons. The unifying value in the culture was the creation of community amongst those who served and those who were served.

Challenges

The original vision for St. Tim's was similar to the vision of the first three sites documented in this study. The thought was that a coffee shop would attract the "spiritual, but not religious" hipster young adults and draw them into a community that would grow into a worshipping community. The surprise was that it was the youth who responded. The pastor and volunteers were faithful to follow what they believed to be the Spirit's lead in developing a youth center and providing community meals.

The challenge that emerged was financial. St. Tim's did not have a congregation or worshipping community to provide a steady source of financial support or volunteers. The initial expectation that a self-supporting worshipping community would grow became unrealizable when the ministry identity shifted to serving the youth and marginalized. Ministry survival was dependent upon grant funding and an adequate supply of volunteers. The scale of the ministry increased the challenge of attaining either.

At the time of this study the mood was optimistic. A new manager was being hired who would be responsible for volunteer coordination and ministry organization. Grant funding was in place and additional funding was anticipated. A new school year was about to begin and St. Tim's would be ready.[37]

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[37] We received an email from St. Tim's pastor during the November consultation at Luther Seminary announcing her resignation from her work at St. Tim's effective Dec. 31, 2008.

St. Barnabas'[38]

Site Description and Context

St. Barnabas' was "An Africentric community grounded in the gospel of Jesus Christ that creates a space for listening, teaching, and responding to the needs of young African Americans." This opening line from St. B's mission statement for its youth mentoring program was descriptive of St. B's ministry as a whole. St. B's was an African American congregation under development in the ELCA. It was located in a multi-cultural urban neighborhood of a major Midwestern city. St. B's pastor was a young, male, African American lay mission developer who anticipated being ordained through the TEEM program in February 2009. The culture of worship and leadership at St. B's was drawn from the black church tradition infused with a Lutheran theology of grace. St. B's emerged from a mentoring ministry to African American urban youth that continued to be a central part of their ministry.

St. Barnabas' Story

In 1992 a group of African American men "realized that there were no black leaders attempting to help young black men mature and learn skills to handle their feelings in a healthy constructive way." A Lutheran camp shared their concern about urban violence. Together they created a two-week "rite of passage" camp that instilled "spirituality, centrality of community, harmony with nature, personal centeredness, reverence for ancestors, and survival." After the second year of the camp the leaders

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[38] Barnabas was Paul's companion and co-worker on his first missionary journey (Acts 13-14). Paul and Barnabas had a sharp disagreement and went separate ways in mission (Acts 15). The folks at St Barnabas' had their birth in mentoring young men and women. They also experienced a split in the history of their ministry. But mostly, I chose the pseudonym because of the emphasis on companioning.

realized that the young men were not connecting with churches or communities that could sustain the behavior changes experienced at camp. The ELCA partnered with the mentoring group to create an after-care program that provided services such as haircuts and community meals during the week. Worship services were held twice a month on Saturday evenings beginning in June 1995. By 1998 the program had grown to the point that worship services were held each week on Sunday evenings. What was now referred to as "Old [St. Barnabas'] became a Synodically Authorized Worshipping Community in the ELCA.

The current pastor's story intersected with St. B's story at about this point. He began attending St. B's in 1997 with a group of college buddies who were in their early 20s with young families. He became a minister, and eventually, lead minister. The founding pastor of Old St. B's moved the community from the Lutheran building they were using into their current space that they rented for a year. From there the 300 or so participants of Old St. B's moved into a school. It became clear that the founding pastor was not intending to stay with the ELCA.

In 2005 a split occurred. About 70 people who wanted to remain in the ELCA appointed the current pastor their leader and moved out. They were able to acquire their current facility that they had previously rented. They became a congregation under development in the ELCA with their current pastor as lay mission developer. The synod "got him on an alternative ordination track" through the TEEM program.

The mentoring program for African American young men continued to be a part of the ministry of the new St. B's and was expanded to include camps and mentoring

programs for young women and for families. St. B's was a partner in creating chapters of the mentoring program in surrounding states.

Organization and Leadership

The mission developer for this ministry came from within the ministry. The TEEM program allowed him to be a lay pastor and mission developer in his home ministry context during his three years of preparation for ordination and to remain there as pastor upon ordination.

Mission developers have a great deal of latitude and responsibility for organization and leadership. Pastor[39] used traditional black church models of leadership at St. B's. The pastor and his wife, addressed as First Lady, held honored positions in the church. Authority and responsibility to lead and represent the congregation rested with the pastor.

Pastor described his model for leadership: "My style is to make St. B's look no different than any church they [new participants] just walked out of. In traditional black church worship there is this minister crew." Ministers have particular roles in worship that will be discussed in the section on worship. Ministers also serve as leaders in the congregation. The role of minister is similar to the role of an associate pastor. They represent the authority of the pastor and have oversight of several ministries and ministry leaders. All ministers at St. B's were volunteers. As one of the ministers said, "No, I'm not paid. But I am paid. I'm paid through God. Just serving the Lord is my pay." There were three ministers in addition to the pastor at the time of this study; one was the

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[39] Participants at St. B's referred to their current pastor as "Pastor" so I will do the same here.

pastor's wife who served in women's ministry, Sunday School, and intercessory prayer ministry.

The pastor and other leaders from St. B's also served as leaders outside of St. B's. They were frequently asked to serve on synodical and churchwide teams, committees, and assemblies.[40] Pastor was part of two community-organizing groups that addressed issues such as violence, transportation, street lighting, sewers, affordable housing, gun laws and other issues that affected the community.

Leadership within ministries in the congregation was conferred by pastoral "appointment." One participant noted that, "if you're going to be on Pastor's ministry, you'd better be ready to work because he ain't going to ask you. He's just going to appoint you with the rest of the congregation." So we asked Pastor about his gifts for calling forth people's gifts and setting them free for ministry. He laughed and said, "I typically just will announce before the congregation what somebody's going to do." He then spoke about discernment. He said, "I don't want anyone to just do it because Pastor asked them to do it. But I've been blessed to suggest and people feel like it was right in line with where they wanted to go." The authority to "appoint" is indicative of the power, honor, respect, responsibility, and trust that are given the pastor in the black church tradition.

Leadership within the congregation was encouraged in the development of new ministries and new leaders. "If there's a ministry that you want and you don't see it; it's because you haven't started it yet." Participants were encouraged to use their gifts for ministry. St. B's used the language of "birthing the gifts." Everyone has gifts inside

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[40] The ELCA constitution required a quota of at least ten percent people-of-color on ELCA committees and assemblies.

them—has been "impregnated with a gift from God." There are people along the way to

nurture and encourage those gifts till you are at a place where you can "birth out that

gift." They used as an example a woman who for eight or nine years tried to figure out

what her gift was until she was finally at a place where she could "birth out her gifts."

The gifts of the people shaped the ministries of St. B's.

The ministers respected Pastor for his humility and leadership ability. One

minister said, "Pastor's the greatest pastor I've ever been under. I'm probably ten years

older than him, but I respect him to the utmost." The language used reflected a black

church leadership model of leadership under the authority and delegation of the pastor.

Sensitizing Concepts

An Emerging View

"Don't like it. Don't care for it." Pastor noted that 'emerging' was a word that had

been attached to St. B's with the implication that they were intentionally trying to be

different. He argued that worship at St. B's is "just who the community is right now…It's

like we all showed up and used our gifts and that's just what you got." We discussed the

idea that contextual/indigenous worship as he was describing it was one of the common

characteristics we were finding in our study of emerging ministries. Pastor was surprised

by that.

Ministers and participants talked about emerging from the perspective of what is

growing or developing at St. B's. They talked about the growing pains of being a new

ministry and learning how to be church with the diverse denominational backgrounds of

their participants and a median age of twenty-six. They talked about emerging in the

word of God and learning to be disciples. They mentioned their fledgling, growing choir and laughed that it was emerging too.

We observed a pastor who was emerging in his identity as a Lutheran pastor and as a strong leader within the ministry of the congregation, in the community, and in the ELCA. We observed a congregation under development that was emerging in its Lutheran identity and in its influence within the ELCA and beyond. We observed a worshipping community that merged its black church experience with Lutheran theology and glorified God in music, dance, poetry, preaching, prayer, and mutual consolation every Sunday (and in communion once a month).

A Lutheran View

St. B's affiliation with the Lutheran church started with the Lutheran camp that partnered with them in the mentoring program for young black men. The ELCA partnered further with them in developing the "after-care program" that included worship twice a month, and eventually, weekly worship as an SAWC. The partnership continued through the congregational split when those who wished to stay in partnership with the ELCA became a new congregation under development and their lead minister (current pastor) became a candidate for ordination in the TEEM program. They had long been a black church with a Lutheran affiliation.

Ministers expressed appreciation for what the Lutheran church had done for them. One commented that he had come to St. B's from the AME Zion Church and they were always giving money to the denomination. When he came into St. B's it "blew my mind because they [the ELCA] was just giving money to help us with our ministry." He commented that they never set out to be Lutheran but the Lutheran church had embraced

them and, "because we are appreciative and we've been embraced by Lutheran, we are embracing Lutheranism." St. B's developed their constitution based upon the ELCA model. The ministers commented that the ELCA helping Pastor get through seminary helped him to "learn what it is to be Lutheran and bring it back to us." They laughed that they would be in leadership meetings and say, "Well, Pastor, what's that mean? He says, "I ain't got that far yet."

Pastor observed that they were very involved in the ELCA at the national and synodical level. He also noted that when they show up they are usually the only black faces present. He noted that a 'Lutheran' identity is not attractive in the black community and that 98% of their participants were converts to Lutheranism with no Lutheran background. Lutheran isn't in their name. People come for a while and then are surprised to learn that St. B's is a Lutheran church.

But then they talked about the Reformation and Martin Luther breaking away from Catholicism. "I think one of the more important things is that we all believe no matter what that you are saved by grace." "I'm a sinner saved by grace." Another said, "we've all been through the process and understand what the Lutheran philosophy is. We're all saved by grace…that's what makes us Lutheran."

A Missional View

Participants interviewed at St. B's were clear on the subject of mission. There were three or four statements that summed it up for them. First, there was a mission statement that they pointed to, framed with signatures and hanging on the wall of the narthex. But everyone we spoke with referred to their motto: "bring 'em in, train 'em up, ship em' out" (some said "send 'em out"). That was the phrase that generated the most

energy. They also noted that they had a new mission recently: "to advance the Kingdom of Jesus Christ."

The byline under the ministry name on the website says, "where God is in the midst." They were very articulate about God's active presence in their midst and God's call in their lives to "birth their gifts" for the sake of the Kingdom of Jesus Christ. "We're all called to be ministers." None of the participants interviewed, including the pastor, were familiar with the missional conversation or that language. When we brought it up they talked about mission and mission-focus. Of course, one need not use missional language to be missional.

A Doxological View

The question "how is God glorified here" led to very specific answers that flowed quite readily at St. B's. One participant mentioned the Thanksgiving meals that were served for people in the community. People were invited to eat at the church or food was taken to their homes if they preferred. God was glorified in people having a good meal and by participants of St. B's "giving back to those who are in need." Several participants, including Pastor, spoke of their passion for youth and saw God glorified in youth growing in maturity, their dance ministry, their hip-hop worship, and their fellowship with youth of other churches.

God was glorified in God's provision for the church that has been blessed with many resources. When people had needs, those needs were met. The church was not large but it was "rarely ever in need of finance." It came from God. "So with all the resources we have, we glorify God."

A participant said, "The real ministry begins Sunday after service." She spoke of glorifying God in daily life, at work, being with the stressed out single parent at the bus stop. "One of the best ways that we can glorify God is just by our actions…be doers of God's word as opposed to just hearers of God's word. That's how God is glorified."

God was glorified in the daily lives of participants and in the ministries of St. B's. And God was definitely glorified in worship.

Worship at St. Barnabas'

Worship began at 2:15 in the afternoon on a Sunday in October and ended at about 4:30. Of the 70 or so who participated in communion later in the service, about 20 were present in the sanctuary when worship began. Twelve youth gathered in the basement with an elder for Bible study. Dancers prepared in the narthex for their part in the worship. People continued to arrive throughout the first half of the service.

A jazz trio (piano, bass, and drums) of professional musicians and a vocalist/worship leader/choir director with several back up singers led the congregation in singing. The jazz/gospel pianist improvised continuously throughout the service, underscoring the prayers, silence, and speaking. A bulletin provided a few announcements, a very brief outline of the order of worship,[41] and contact information for the pastor, ministers, and staff. Song lyrics were not printed. Projection was not used in worship. Songs used in worship were either call and response or familiar to the participants (familiar to everyone by the time each song concluded after much repetition and elaboration). The first thirty minutes of *Praise and Worship* included a prayer of invocation and three contemporary gospel songs interspersed with prayer, "hand praise"

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[41] The italicized words in this description of worship are from the order of worship in the bulletin.

(clapping), raised hands, and shouts of "amen" and "hallelujah." The pastor and ministers, dressed in suits, had entered the sanctuary during the singing, taken their places in the front row, and joined in worship. During the third song the pastor and ministers moved to the chancel, knelt in prayer at their chairs for some time, then stood and joined the Praise and Worship that had continued.

Praise and Worship flowed into a reading from *Scripture* read from the King James Bible by one of the ministers. After reading, the minister invited the First Lady (also a minister) to come and pray. She prayed prayers of thanksgiving and intercession for about six minutes accompanied by the pianist and the congregational chorus of encouraging responses and applause.

Following the prayers, Pastor came to the podium for *Encouragement/Announcements.* He invited a participant who had just returned with him from an African American leadership conference hosted by the ELCA in Atlanta to come and share about the experience. Pastor also invited me to come forward and share about my research and reason for being at St. B's.

Then, in the middle of this time of announcements, Pastor led us in one of the most profound moments of spontaneous ritualizing in worship that I have experienced. He invited a young woman to come forward and stand with him. Her father, a local police officer, had been killed in the line of duty. The funeral had been that Friday with full honors and media attention. He briefly spoke of that, thanking those from the church who had been there for support. He commented that her dad had taken care of her financially. "He was a great dad." That wasn't what this was about. She had lost her father's spiritual direction in her life. So he called all the men up and said what we will do right now is

make a vow.[42] He spoke about the promises that parents and Godparents make in baptism and reminded the congregation that they also made promises to the ones baptized. He called the rest of her family to come and join her, invited us to gather around her, lay on hands, and invited one of the ministers to pray. The prayer ended with this question: "Men of [St. Barnabas'], do you promise to advocate for this child, if so answer, we do, and we ask God to help and guide us." We did. People returned to their seats. The announcements, including the announcement that worship would be moving to 11:00 AM in 2009, continued. Encouragement and announcements had taken about fifteen minutes.

Worship continued with *Poetry,* which was a three-minute 'spoken word' recitation of a rap-style poem newly composed by one of the ministers who is the leader of the 'spoken word' ministry.[43] *Dance* followed the poetry recitation. Six dancers dressed in flowing gowns interpreted a recorded version of "Mercy Said No." (The pastor left the chancel during the dance and returned dressed in a black robe[44] and stole to serve communion.) *Communion* had been inadvertently left out of the bulletin but was inserted at this point.

The communion liturgy included confession, the Words of Institution, and the Lord's Prayer. After some brief instructions, Pastor took his place at the head of the center aisle with the bread. Two women servers with white gloves stood on either side

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[42] The obvious reason to invite the men forward was because they represent her father. Beyond that, when asked, Pastor said, "Most congregations lack of men. We try and be very intentional with our men. Because she lost her father, I just wanted to create some symbolism."

[43] The Spoken Word ministry had recorded CDs of their work and shared their work in other congregations. They also perform in non-church poetry venues.

[44] Pastor shared that the first time he wore a white robe in worship one of the participants whose mother was visiting from the South said, "I never thought I'd see a black man in a KKK robe." He wears a black robe "because you have to consider what the symbols mean to the people" in the context.

with cups of grape juice and a basket to receive the empty cups. The youth and elder came up from their basement Bible study and led the procession to communion. People were ushered from the back of the sanctuary. The musicians led the singing of a praise song.

Tithe & Offering followed communion. A participant from the congregation came forward to share a brief testimony about an accident he had been in earlier that week and his gratitude that he was standing there healthy. He offered a prayer thanking God for the opportunity to give their offerings. Ushers stood with offering baskets at the head of the center aisle. People again processed, this time from the side aisles, to bring their offerings forward. The eight singers in the gospel choir came forward and provided the *Ministry of Song* after the offering procession had concluded.

Pastor stepped to the pulpit in shirtsleeves about an hour and ten minutes into the worship service to read the gospel and preach *God's Spoken Word.* He led the congregation in about a nine-minute worship improv of music, dancing, and various expressions of praise before reading the text from the NRSV. He delivered a thirty-minute sermon punctuated with encouragement from the congregation.[45] Pastor closed with prayer and led the congregation into a Call to Discipleship. He invited Heatherlyn to come and join the musicians in singing. He invited me to come forward to join him and the ministers in praying for individuals who would come forward for prayer. The singing and praying continued for about ten minutes. Worship closed with a song and *Benediction*. The two hours and 18 minutes had passed quickly.

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[45] The ministers contrasted the delivery of the word at St. B's with that they imagined was a traditional Lutheran sermon. "Pastor gets all excited and very animated. He has props that he brings up, all kinds of stuff."

Reflections on Worship at St. Barnabas'

Worship at St. B's was modeled in the black church tradition. Lutheran showed up in the theology and communion liturgy. Pastor preached from a Lutheran theological perspective. They ended with a Call to Discipleship rather than an altar call. He drew upon baptismal theology in the ritual of prayer for the young woman. We experienced a Lutheran theology of grace in a black church context.

Worship came from the people in rich ways. The pastor had an important but limited role in worship. The ministers provided most of the leadership through prayer. The worship leader and musicians provided leadership through song and prayer. Artists led in spoken word poetry, dance, and the gospel choir. Others ushered and served communion. Nearly everyone was involved in the responses of encouragement, hand praise, dancing, and praising that happened throughout the service. Prayers were extemporaneous. Songs were improvised. Worship emerged from the people and was truly the work (play) of the people in response to God's presence.

Ministers play a crucial role in the black church tradition and at St. B's. They represent the pastor, supervise ministries and ministry leaders, teach Bible studies, supply preach in other settings, and do whatever is needed. They lead in worship, in prayer, in enthusiasm, and preach when needed. One of the ministers commented that Pastor had taken on the seminary piece, was leading the flock, and upholding his relationships. They have been trying to protect him by doing more so that he doesn't have to do as much.

The youth of St. B's hosted a quarterly 'Hip Hop Holy Service.' The upcoming service was part of a community revival weekend. I found it interesting that worship at St. B's grew out of worship as after-care for mentored young men. At this point the youth

of the congregation were in Bible study during the Sunday worship service and hosted

their own quarterly hip hop service. The relationship between worship and the camps

seems to have continued to evolve since its beginning in 1995.

Cultural Distinctives

Participants at St. B's were African American and a part of the black church

tradition. They also professed a Lutheran theology of grace and a desire to grow in their

Lutheran identity. The pastor embodied the merging of black and Lutheran that was

shaping the congregation's identity as both black and Lutheran.

Challenges

The challenges that the congregation faced were the challenges that St. Barnabas'

community faced. Poverty, unemployment, violence, lack of community infrastructure

and resources were realities in the lives of many of the people who participated at St. B's

and in the neighborhoods that surrounded them. Organizationally St. B's faced the

challenges of organizing as a congregation, ordaining their pastor, developing a Lutheran

constitution that doesn't force them into an institutional box, and becoming increasingly

self-sufficient financially.

St. Mary Magdalene's[46]

Site Description and Context

St. Mary Magdalene's was located in a suburban neighborhood of a major US city in the desert Southwest. The neighborhood surrounding St. Mary's was in transition from primarily white residents to a multi-ethnic demographic. Participants in the congregation included original older members of a predominately white Lutheran congregation that had engaged in an intentional transformational ministry process in order to better reflect their context and, frankly, to survive as a congregation. The result was the most diverse community in this study in terms of age, race, ethnicity, and sexuality. Their mantra was "God welcomes everyone." The traditional form of Lutheran worship served as common ground for the diverse cultures present among the participants. English and Spanish were used in worship and in web and print publications. This emerging ministry focused on engagement with their context through community events. The lay pastor of this ministry was involved in a process to become ordained through the TEEM program.

St. Mary Magdalene's Story

The congregation that has become St. Mary's was in danger of closing. The accumulated debt was greater than the seventy or eighty members could manage. The neighborhood had become ethnically diverse. That diversity was not reflected in the congregation. The synod offered assistance under certain conditions. The synod would

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[46] St. Mary Magdalene was maligned for nearly 1500 years of church tradition and in popular movies such as "The Last Temptation of Christ" and "Jesus Christ Superstar" as a prostitute. The biblical record tells of a woman healed from seven demons, a supporter of Jesus ministry, present at the cross, at his burial, at the empty tomb and with the resurrected Jesus. Mary would have been welcome in this emerging ministry as a disciple even if she had been a prostitute. It also seemed prudent to use a female saint's name as a pseudonym for the most diverse community studied.

help refinance the debt, provide necessary funds to catch up on bills, and provide a mission redevelopment pastor to lead them in a transformational ministry process. The conditions were that the congregation would have no say in who the pastor would be, and the pastor would be in charge upon his arrival. The congregation agreed to the process and a redevelopment pastor was assigned. The pastor took a group of members to Chicago for training in the transformational ministry process. Membership dropped from about eighty to about forty, then grew back to about eighty. At that point the current lay pastor joined the pastoral team as an "intern pastor" as part of his training for ordination through the TEEM program. The redevelopment pastor, now with the title "lead pastor" (LP for our purposes), changed the intern's title from "intern pastor" to "mission pastor" (MP for our purposes). Together they led the emerging ministry to double in number from eighty to about one hundred sixty over the course of two years. It was during that time that this emerging ministry decided they needed a new name in light of their new life and identity as a redevelopment congregation so the name was changed to [St. Mary's]. The purpose statement of this newly named ministry was "Transforming lives with Christ."

At the time of these interviews in September 2008, LP had received a call to begin a transformational ministry in another congregation in need of redevelopment and had ended his ministry at St. Mary's about a month earlier. MP was assigned the role of interim pastor until his ordination in January 2009 at which point it was expected that he would be called as ordained pastor of St. Mary's. The transition was smoothed by the fact that MP had been at St. Mary's for two years and would assume the leadership role as pastor. The plan at that point was to serve as a solo pastor with the assistance of two lay

leaders who were entering seminary (one in a TEEM program and one in a Distributed Learning MDiv program).

Participants at St. Mary's were the most diverse of any ministry studied. A significant number of members of the original congregation were still actively involved at St. Mary's. Participants now included Hispanic families, African American families, an Ethiopian student, and people who were openly part of the GLBT community. St. Mary's diversity was grounded in the belief that "God welcomes everyone." They exercised that belief religiously.

Organization and Leadership

Dissolving the existing council and standing committees was part of the transformational process. LP formed a new council with new purpose and praxis. One participant who had served on both versions of the council said that "council the old way" was arguing about every dime spent. The new council spent one whole summer in prayer while meeting in each other's homes. They now started with prayer, communion, Bible study, and then got into business. They stopped doing all the "little piddling things." Task force-like teams were created to address particular issues, such as facilities.

Before coming to St. Mary's as part of the requirements for the TEEM program, MP served as Mission Director for the synod. His role involved starting new churches and shutting down unhealthy ones. He was angered and saddened by "the inability, or unwillingness, of pastors to lead." LP and MP agreed that they "weren't going to pull any punches." That was particularly true concerning two convictions: "We don't have members here, we have disciples" and "God welcomes everyone."

One participant interviewed remembered the pastor announcing one Sunday, "We're not accepting any more members." He continued by talking about discipleship and making disciples. MP preached against membership. "If you want to be a member of something…go join a club. But if you want to live out your baptism, you make a commitment here, you don't join here." Discipleship classes were offered by invitation. One must have a conversation with MP about discipleship and what it means to be invited to the classes.

God welcomes everyone at St. Mary's regardless of language, culture, ethnicity, socio-economics, sexual orientation, or gender. Participants reported that MP has said, "Everyone is welcome here, and if you can't get over that and you can't accept that, then you need to go find another church." A culture of diversity was created by gathering people who shared the value of diversity.

MP spoke of starting a second site once St. Mary's has about 250 participants that would be led primarily by the laity of St. Mary's. There were people MP had "taken under my wing and have put extra energy into because we do need to start raising up disciples with particular leadership skills." The transformational ministry process had created the organizational space for pastors with strong leadership skills to create a significant amount of change in a relatively short period of time. MP was intentionally raising up leaders to work within that new culture of diversity and discipleship.

That leadership culture was a factor in the reasonably smooth transition that was occurring after LP's departure. MP had been a strong leader as mission pastor at St. Mary's for two years. He had been a co-leader in creating the current culture. People knew, loved, and respected him as pastor; yet, people still grieved the loss of LP as their

lead pastor. Attendance in worship had been down in the weeks since LP's last Sunday (although they were also the final weeks of summer.) MP was allowing time for people to grieve.[47]

One other factor to note regarding pastoral leadership: both pastors had connections with Hispanic culture and language. LP was white but had married a woman from Mexico that he had met while taking a Spanish immersion course. MP was of Mexican ancestry although born in the US. Both spoke Spanish. Those connections were significant to the first Hispanic families who came to St. Mary's. Those families then invited other families. Events like *quinceañeras* were important connections with Hispanic families and became entry points for conversation about discipleship.

<center>Sensitizing Concepts</center>

An Emerging View

MP said, "I don't think I intentionally look at [St. Mary's] as an emerging church place, but the people that I talk to tell me that it is. So maybe we are." He went on to share the story that I included at the beginning of this paper. St. Mary's was blazing a middle road of meeting people in their own middle ground. He referred to that as "nepantla."

Participants who were interviewed understood emerging as that which was coming to be at St. Mary's. They described a welcoming community where everyone was welcome. A young Hispanic woman interviewed said,

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[47] LP's new call was in the same metro area. It is possible that some participant's from St. Mary's who lived in that area may have followed LP to the new church.

This is our home, our church, we know the people there now, we know so many names, they know our name, we're learning, our kids are learning, new people are coming and meeting people and you're glad to meet them. Now I want to welcome the people, I don't want to be welcomed anymore. I want to welcome the people. I'm not going to a church. I am the church.

She talked about the welcome she had received at the women's Bible study. She felt as if they were glad she was there. She talked about being invited to read the scripture on Sunday morning and how much it meant to her that her children saw her doing the reading and teaching kids' church. "If I had a memory of my mom teaching one of my church classes, that would be awesome!"

A culture of diversity was emerging at St. Mary's. The culture was grounded in the belief that God welcomes everyone. The church emerging in that culture was a church that welcomed everyone.

A Lutheran View

Participants experienced Lutheran as *welcome*. "It's so welcoming. They don't turn 'nobody' away. It's just love here." It was grace experienced as welcome. And it was grace grounded in *simul justus et peccator.*[48]

MP had met a woman at their annual Trunk or Treat Halloween community event. He could tell she was "wounded." He invited her to come back to church--to just go inside and look around. She showed up on Sunday:

And I could tell that this woman was wounded, she just had some deep wounds. And I told her, "You know, I think you're hurting inside and I don't know what it's all about. It's not any of my business but this is a place where you can get better. This is a place where you can be around people that are also hurting and I think your wounds will heal. But know that when you come here, you're going to be around people that are liars; you're going to be around people that are thieves; you're going to be around people that are battling addictions in their families;

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[48] Simultaneously saint and sinner.

you're going to be around people that are struggling through broken relationships in their lives; you're going to be around people that are scared about finances. And that's just me and I'm your pastor."

The story continued with the same woman in his office one morning, crying, telling her story and saying, "I just don't think I deserve any of this." MP said, "You know what? You don't, you really don't. And I don't either. And we get it anyway, and that's God's promise." That's what's Lutheran about this.

There was a strong Lutheran identity and commitment to the larger church at St. Mary's. MP had strong personal connections with the ELCA from his experience working in both churchwide and synod staffs and from his candidacy for ministry in the TEEM program. St. Mary's felt strongly supported through the transformational ministry process and was committed to contributing a twelve percent unrestricted benevolence to the synod.

St. Mary's discipleship classes included an introduction to Lutheranism that focused on four things: *Jesus, baptism*—a call to be a part of God's team, *communion*— the need to be in God's presence, and serving a *mission* in the world. "Lutheranism isn't a culture; it's a world-wide movement…what you're committing to as disciples is our way of living…these four things."

A Missional View

One of those four things was "serving a mission in the world." St. Mary's was committed to joining God in welcoming everyone. They were intentional about extending that welcome through connections with the community. Several events and ministries were mentioned. Trunk or Treat was most frequently mentioned (perhaps because it would be coming up again in a few weeks). St. Mary's advertised the event in the

neighborhood. Participants gathered their cars in the parking lot. Families brought children to trick or treat in a safe environment. "Tons of kids came."

Participants talked about setting up a booth in the local shopping center that catered to Hispanic families and joining community events hosted in the local park. One mentioned providing free tax preparation assistance for over two hundred families. St. Mary's provided space in their building for several community service organizations that also drew people to St. Mary's. Most new people came to St. Mary's because of a personal invitation from someone who had experienced being welcomed at St. Mary's.

One of the participants used the metaphor of a "magnet" to describe people's attraction to St. Mary's. It's not attractional or attractive in the sense of "aren't we cool" with advertising, "entertainment, and gimmicks." It was the magnetic attraction of being drawn into relationship, of being able to be who they really are, and authentic, diverse community.

One of the things St. Mary's will not do is "be a warehouse for blankets; we're not going to give out free s**t to poor Mexicans." MP was concerned about the power issues involved in charity that get in the way of what the church is supposed to be about: "welcoming people into community and an opportunity to be in a relationship with Jesus Christ."

Both LP and MP had been involved in the missional church conversation. Professors from Luther Seminary had been working with their synod to move in missional directions. MP had been involved in those conversations during his time working with the synod. The language used at St. Mary's drew more heavily on

transformational language because of their involvement in the transformational ministry process.

A Doxological View

God was glorified in community. Several participants and MP saw God glorified in community with one another. They experienced God in being welcomed and in welcoming others. They experienced that welcome as grace and gift from God.

One participant who had been a part of St. Mary's for about three months spoke about "the feeling of God's presence" and the desire to grow closer to God in discipleship. He hadn't been baptized and was looking forward to being baptized as he entered the discipleship classes at St. Mary's. God was glorified at St. Mary's through intentional discipleship.

God was glorified in worship. Worship at St. Mary's was traditional in form, but unique in the blend of English and Spanish language and music. The formal liturgy provided a common ground upon which a diverse community of people could meet.

Worship at St. Mary Magdalene's

Worship at St. Mary's was in most respects highly traditional with "high church" elements. The pastor wore an alb and chasuble. An assisting minister, also vested in an alb, performed traditional roles including holding the liturgy book for the pastor as the pastor led portions of the liturgy.

The liturgy began with *Confession and Forgiveness* led from the baptismal font at the entrance of the sanctuary.[49] A *Gathering Song* served as a processional hymn that was

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[49] The italicized words reflect the titles used in the worship bulletin.

followed by a *Greeting and Prayer of the Day.* The pastor invited children forward for a *Children's Message.* A lay reader read the *First Lesson*. The congregation led by a cantor chanted a *Psalm*. The same lay reader read the *Second Lesson*. The *Gospel* was read by the pastor and followed by the *Sermon.* The lessons read were taken from the Revised Common Lectionary and included all the traditional spoken and sung responses.

The *Apostles' Creed* followed the sermon. The pastor introduced it as the "cheat sheet of faith." Following the creed, the pastor introduced visitors and presented them with a gift bag from St. Mary's. In this case, he introduced my research assistants and me and explained briefly what we had been doing at St. Mary's for the past few days.

The pastor also made community announcements at that time. *Peace & Offering* followed. Considerable time was given to the sharing of the peace. During the offering, children brought food offerings and spare change to the altar while other offerings were being received. Heatherlyn sang one of her compositions during the offering.

The communion liturgy followed the offering and included the *Dialogue & Preface, Santo* (with both English and Spanish texts), *Thanksgiving at the Table,* which included the Words of Institution, the *Lord's Prayer, Invitation to Communion, Lamb of God* and additional songs sung during the distribution. A *Song After Communion* and *Prayer After Communion* were followed by a *Blessing, Sending Song,* and the *Dismissal.*

Reflections on Worship at St. Mary Magdalene's

The form of worship was the traditional Lutheran liturgy. The performance of the liturgy was highly contextual. The liturgy and song lyrics were printed in the bulletin. Both English and Spanish were printed in some portions of the liturgy and written instructions. St. Mary's mission statement was printed on the front of the bulletin in both

English and Spanish. The pastor sometimes spoke in both English and Spanish at high points in the liturgy such as the communion liturgy. The pastor used a narrative telling of the Words of Institution rather than the brief liturgical form.

The hymns and songs were accompanied by piano.[50] The pianist also played hymns and songs lightly behind spoken portions of the liturgy such as the confession and forgiveness, and prayers.

The diversity of the community was reflected in the diversity of elements in worship within the context of the traditional liturgy. For those with Catholic or traditional Lutheran backgrounds, the form of the liturgy was familiar. For the Hispanic families, the use of Spanish, even though the service was not entirely done in Spanish, honored their presence in the community.

One of the most interesting moments in the worship service was the singing of the Lord's Prayer. Participants joined hands across the aisles and sang together Malotte's "Lord's Prayer."[51] The ritual provided a physical and visual symbol of community.[52]

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[50] Liturgical elements, hymns, and songs were taken from the Lutheran Book of Worship (LBW) and With One Voice (WOV), referred to as Green and Blue respectively in the bulletin with appropriate page numbers. The numbers were printed for reference to the musical score since all words were printed in the bulletin.

[51] Albert Hay Malotte composed a musical setting of the Lord's prayer that is frequently sung by soloists at funerals and in other worship settings.

[52] I wondered about this one. The symbolism of community was strong. The use of Malotte's setting of the prayer seemed highly contextual and probably not the most visitor friendly moment in the worship service. I am sure it broke several rules and guidelines for attractional worship. The ritual symbolism could have been achieved by joining hands for the spoken prayers. But, St. Mary's isn't about "attractional," it's about community. Worship at St. Mary's is a contextual expression of their community, so they sang the Lord's Prayer. Some things are accepted for the sake of community.

Cultural Distinctives

One could say that St. Mary's was multi-cultural or that the culture was diverse. It is more accurate to say that the culture was *diversity*. The unifying cultural element for participants who gathered at St. Mary's was that God welcomes everyone; they found themselves in that welcome, and acted as though God intended that welcome for everyone else as well.

There were a lot of different cultures brought to the table by the participants of St. Mary's. One can see why MP described his ministry as being in *nepantla*. Lutheran theology and the liturgy provided some common ground in which these cultures met. It was participants' commitment to being a part of a diverse community because God welcomes everyone that made St. Mary's work.

Challenges

Not everyone was comfortable with the expressions of culture that such diverse groups of people bring. One would anticipate significant amounts of cultural misunderstandings and inter-cultural conflict. Bringing one's own culture to the table and appreciating the cultures that others bring were starting points for creating a new culture of diverse community—a foretaste of the heavenly banquet to come.

A Foretaste of the Chapters to Come

The six profiles presented represent a diverse set of emerging ministries. The selection criterion of having "diversity of ministry expressions within the sample" was met. My research assistants and I celebrated the diversity of ministries and the uniqueness of each. We were most intrigued, however, by the characteristics they shared. Data from

this study has been coded, categorized, and developed into themes. The categories and themes that have emerged are presented in the next chapter.

The diversity reflected in the ministries profiled in this chapter is equally evident in the additional sites on the initial list of twenty from which this sample of six was drawn.[53] Eleven of the additional sites provided significant data through interviews with each of the developers and partial site visits to six of the sites. The research team participated in worship services in three of those sites. Data from those partial site visits and interviews will not be presented in the form of profiles but will be drawn into conversation with data from the primary six sites studied and treated as supplemental and corroborative data for purposes of the following chapters, as will data from the November 2008 consultation. In the following chapters we will move through categories of data that emerged in this study to themes and relevant literature that will develop into a grounded theory. The final chapter will return to the consideration of a *doxological hermeneutic of mission.*

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[53] Three of those twenty sites provided no data to this study beyond the initial profile data gleaned from public sources. The research team was unable to make contact with ministry leaders from these sites within the necessary timelines of the initial phase of this study.

CHAPTER 4

SENSITIZING CONCEPTS AND EMERGENT THEMES

My research assistants, Jason and Heatherlyn, remind me often that our God is a

God of abundance. That is sometimes a faith claim for them as they deal with the realities

of the lifestyle of musicians and artists and wonder how God's abundance will appear.

Other times it is their testimony of the abundance of God they have experienced. Their

faith in an abundant God remains in either circumstance. Emerging ministries live in that

same faith and prayer. I mention this because it reminded me of one of the comments

made by an emerging leader at the consultation: "We are all broke!" And yet, they were

there together—signs to me at least of God's abundance in creating the church.

I also mention God's abundance because my colleagues and I experienced

abundance in gathering data for this study. Chapter 3 consists of profiles of six emerging

ministries selected to be the primary focus of this research project. This chapter draws

upon that data along with supplemental data from eleven additional emerging ministries

and our November 2008 consultation. The focus of this chapter is not the presentation of

additional data. This chapter is focused on the analysis of themes that have emerged in

this study that will lead us to the development of a grounded theory.

Concepts and Themes

At the November consultation we invited participants to engage this research with

the same lenses that were used in our interviews and site visits. Participants shared from

their own stories, ministries, and experiences as emerging leaders. After gathering their

responses to the questions asked in this research, we shared a list of categories and

observations that had emerged in the initial analysis of our data. (The list of categories

and observations that we shared with them is included as Appendix D.)

We invited the participants to compare our list with the lists they had generated

throughout the day and with their own experiences in ministry. We asked if our

categories and observations were reflective of their experiences. Their experiences

aligned closely with what we had observed in our research.[1] Participants in the

consultation added their stories and perspectives to the data already gathered.

The list presented at the consultation contained eleven categories that had

emerged in our initial analysis of data and from our observations as researchers. Those

categories included the following: contextual, indigenous, Lutheran, emerging, missional,

ecclesiology, leadership, ministry foci, values and characteristics, challenges, and

worship. Four of the categories from the data were reflective of the sensitizing concepts

used in this study and will be treated as themes for analysis in this chapter: *Lutheran,*

emerging, missional, and doxological.[2]

Three additional themes—*contextual*, *indigenous,* and *leadership*—will be

analyzed and used in developing a grounded theory. Here is a brief introduction to these

three themes as they emerged from the data: Emerging ministries in the ELCA were

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[1] At least half of the participants in the consultation had also been interviewed in the research process. Their presence in the consultation provided first hand access to sources of data for the additional participants in the consultation. Their presence created some overlap in the data collected as they shared some of the same stories and convictions in group conversations through the consultation process that they had previously shared in interviews.

[2] Doxology did not appear on the consultation list as a heading. Worship and ministry foci from that list and related interview comments were categorized in doxology in the formal coding process.

contextual. One of the striking observations of emerging ministries in this study was the degree of diversity among the ministries and their leaders. Their uniqueness was shaped by their contexts and through their engagement with their contexts. Emerging ministries used relational and incarnational prepositions such as *for,* or *within*, or *from* when discussing their relationship with their context. That leads to a second theme.

Emerging ministries in the ELCA were *indigenous.*[3] They emerged from their contexts and developed organically.[4] Ministry emerged from the gifts of the participants who gathered. Resources for worship were created from within emerging ministries. Leadership and leaders emerged from within emerging ministries and their cultural contexts. That leads to a third theme.

Leadership was indigenous and contextual. Leadership, particularly in young adult emerging ministries, was grounded theologically in the praxis of the priesthood of all believers. Leadership in emerging ministries was paradoxically leader-centered and communal. Leaders for emerging ministries emerged from within the contexts of emerging ministries and from the cultures in which they led. Leadership transition was a significant challenge for emerging ministries.

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[3] Merriam-Webster, *Merriam Webster's Collegiate Dictionary*, 592. "*Indigenous*—having originated in and being produced, growing, living, or occurring naturally in a particular region or environment." Indigenous can mean "innate or inborn" which has relevance when speaking of people's gifts. I am generally thinking "emerging from within" when I use the word indigenous in this context. Indigenous is also a synonym for 'native', which has some relevance when we begin to discuss culture and transculturation in the next chapter. Emerging leaders are 'native' to the cultures in which they lead.

[4] There is no common template for the organization or structure of an emerging ministry. That is one of the reasons constitutions are challenging to develop for emerging ministries. Model constitutions assume and to a certain extent impose common organizational elements that may or may not be appropriate for emerging ministries. Some of that structure is imposed by regulations related to incorporation as a non-profit organization.

These themes and observations from the sensitizing concepts will be explored and analyzed later in this chapter. Before we turn to those themes it may be helpful to have a broader overview of the sample of emerging ministries and leaders included in this study.

Emerging Ministries in the ELCA: an overview

Ministries were selected for this study because they were unique. They appeared to play by different rules than typical Lutheran congregations. Ministry practices, particularly worship, were not standard fare. The participants involved in emerging ministries looked different than the members of traditional congregations. Word and sacrament ministry was the primary focus of about two thirds of these ministries, but others ensconced Word and sacrament in the context of a concert ministry, or small groups, or in a coffee shop, pub, or youth center. Here is a brief overview of seventeen emerging ministries and their leaders.

Seventeen Emerging Ministries

Four of seventeen ministries gathered in traditional church buildings that they were purchasing. By traditional I mean the building included a space set aside for worship with rows of pews or chairs facing a chancel with an altar/communion table and other traditional furnishings such as a pulpit and/or lectern.[5] Four of the twenty-one leader/developers involved in these seventeen sites were people-of-color (two were Hispanic and two were African American). They were the developers of the four ministries in traditional church buildings.

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[5] In the case of St. Benedict's the sanctuary space was flexible and could be arranged in various formats but it was typically set up with chairs in rows facing an altar and lectern. Three of these sites, St. Benedict's, St. Barnabas', and St. Mary Magdalene's, were profiled in chapter 3. The fourth of these sites was an urban Hispanic ministry.

Three of the additional ministries, including St. Gregory's, met in traditional sanctuary space that was rented from other congregations and shared with other ministries.[6] Two ministries rented space in other congregation's fellowship halls. One ministry, St. Joseph's, rented a theater for worship gatherings. One ministry met in a public school's multi-purpose space. Two of the above ministries, including St. Benedict's, had community houses for communal living as part of their ministries. For the eleven ministries mentioned thus far, the worship gathering was their primary public ministry event.

The remaining six ministries were also ministries of Word and sacrament but with alternative public presence. Two ministries were coffee shop ministries (operating coffee shops and gathering for worship in that space). One ministry connected on-line and in small groups at this phase in their development with the intention of developing a coffee shop ministry. One ministry was under construction to become a pub ministry. One ministry was a concert/TV/recording ministry in a warehouse/concert venue where they also gathered for worship. One ministry, St. Timothy's, was primarily a youth drop-in center but gathered occasionally for worship in various settings. These ministries emerged in supportive contexts and reflected the entrepreneurial natures and passions of their leaders.

Days and times of worship gatherings varied among the emerging ministries. Six of these emerging ministries gathered for worship on Sunday mornings. Another six met on Sunday afternoon or evening. Four of the remaining ministries gathered for worship on Monday, Wednesday, Thursday, or Saturday evenings. One ministry was meeting in

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[6] One of those ministries arranged the sanctuary space in the round rather than in traditional rows facing a chancel.

small groups at various times. Some leaders and participants in ministries not meeting on

Sunday morning would have preferred to meet on Sunday morning but were using space

that was not available at that time. In most cases, ministries not meeting on Sunday

morning preferred the evening or non-weekend gathering times.

Another aspect of time in the church is the calendar of the church year. All of the

ministries studied made at least some use of the church year calendar. Some organized

their worship life seasonally. Not all related the calendar of the church year to the use of

the Revised Common Lectionary. But most did. At least twelve of the seventeen

ministries used the Revised Common Lectionary in worship planning.

The ways in which the lectionary was used varied. Two or three of the ministries

would regularly read all of the assigned texts in public worship. Most would use one or

two of the assigned texts for preaching and for planning worship thematically. Leaders

who shared their reasons for using the lectionary spoke about the connection to the larger

church, the connection to the historical church, and of curbing the predilections of the

preacher. Ministries that did not use the lectionary either gathered around Bible study or

preached series of sermons that were topically rather than lectionary based.

As emerging ministry new starts or ministries in redevelopment in the ELCA,

these ministries were led by mission developers or redevelopers. These leaders assumed

various titles in the contexts of their ministries—pastor, mission developer, mission

pastor, abbot/abbess, father, curator, vicar, lead mission steward and lead vision

steward—but their role within the ELCA was mission developer/redeveloper. It is

important to have a little background information about these emerging leaders and the

roles of mission developers and redevelopers in the ELCA.

Twenty-one Mission Developers and Redevelopers

Mission developers and redevelopers serve similar roles in the ELCA. Developers lead new ministries before they constitutionally organize as congregations. Mission redevelopers enter previously established congregations that are in need of redevelopment or starting over and essentially function as if a new ministry is beginning. Existing constitutions may be set-aside during a time of intentional redevelopment and a new ministry may emerge. The developer/redeveloper has significant latitude and flexibility to lead, develop, and organize a ministry in development or redevelopment. Here is an overview of the mission developers/redevelopers involved in this research sample.

Twenty-one mission developers led the seventeen ministries in this study. Those leaders ranged in age from twenty-two to fifty-six with a median age of thirty-seven. Eight were female; thirteen were male. Ten served their ministries on a part-time basis. (The four developers-of-color mentioned earlier were included among those serving full-time in their ministries.)

Mission developer teams led four of the seventeen ministries (which accounts for the larger number of developers than ministries). Each team included one male and one female (not married to each other). Seven of the eight leaders involved in these developer teams served part-time. In all four of these cases the leaders served as co-leaders. The relationships were non-hierarchical. This communal or shared sense of leadership extended to music director/developer staff relationships as well.

Nine of the seventeen ministries had full or part-time music directors. Music directors partnered with developers in worship planning and developed music ensembles

to lead in worship. They composed or fostered the composition of much of the music and other arts used in these ministries. At least six of these ministries produced CD recordings of their compositions of music or 'spoken word' poetry used in worship. Developer/musician partnerships in leadership were significant investments by these emerging ministries given the relatively small size of ministries[7] and limited resources.[8]

Ordination: Rules and Roles

I noted earlier that mission developers use a variety of titles within their ministry contexts. One of the reasons for the use of various titles among emerging leaders was they were imagining their roles in ministry differently than was implied by traditional titles such as pastor. The other reason was that one third of the developers in this study were not ordained clergy.[9]

Twelve of the twenty-one developers were ordained as pastors in the ELCA. Two developers were ordained in another denomination and were involved in a candidacy process to transfer their ordination (and their ministry) into the ELCA. The remaining seven developers were lay mission developers. One was a rostered lay leader serving on a synod staff and as a part-time developer of an emerging ministry. One was an MDiv seminary student, trained in a non-Lutheran seminary, completing a 'Lutheran year' in a

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[7] Estimates of average worship attendance ranges from 8 to 222 with an overall average worship attendance of 95 among emerging ministries in this study.

[8] These ministries with music director staff positions do not include the additional emerging ministries that used more traditional pastoral support models for paid or volunteer staffing that might include part-time secretarial support, a worship accompanist, choir director, or children/youth ministry leader.

[9] Some ordained emerging leaders chose to use titles other than pastor. Some non-ordained emerging leaders, particularly those in the TEEM program, were encouraged to use the title of pastor. Ordination was not in and of itself a determining factor in the choice of title by emerging leaders.

Lutheran seminary, and beginning a mission development which would also serve as her internship site upon completion of her seminary coursework—a seminary intern mission developer. One was enrolled in a Distributed Learning MDiv program through Luther Seminary and was developing an emerging ministry while a student.[10] His co-leader in ministry was a female lay leader not involved in a ministry candidacy process at that time. They were co-leaders of a Synodically Authorized Worshipping Community. Three of the emerging leaders were involved in the Theological Education for Emerging Ministry (TEEM)[11] program as an alternative route to ordination in the ELCA (ordination without an MDiv degree). All twenty-one of these emerging leaders were serving as mission development in their ministries. At least eleven of them were exceptions to rules.

At the time of this study, mission development and redevelopment were considered to be *specialized ministries*. The ELCA held a *three-year rule* that required pastors to serve three years in congregational ministry before they could be considered for a call to a specialized ministry. Exceptions could be granted at the discretion of the ELCA Conference of Bishops. Exceptions were granted. At least eight of the ordained pastors in this study were serving as mission developers (in specialized ministry) without having served three years as an ordained pastor in congregational ministry. Some were

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[10] The Distributive Learning MDiv (DL MDiv) program allowed students to remain in their contexts while involved in a distance learning degree program through the seminary. Students take on-line or 'click and brick' courses (partially on-line with intensive weeks on campus) for about six years to complete their degree. Information about this particular program is available at www.luthersem.edu/dlmdiv (accessed March 8, 2012).

[11] The TEEM program was described earlier in this document but I will add here that the intent of the TEEM program was to provide a route to ordination for leaders in communities who could not leave their homes to move to seminary campuses and/or were not able to study for a master's level degree. The initial focus was for people-of-color and people over the age of 40 in urban, rural and ethnic ministry contexts. Two of the leaders in this study were eligible for the TEEM program because they were people-of-color. The third candidate was in a pilot program seeking to expand the eligible candidates to include urban young adults involved in emerging ministry contexts such as the ones included in this study.

granted exceptions by the ELCA Conference of Bishops. Some were authorized lay

leaders of Synodically Authorized Worshipping Communities (SAWC) rather than of

congregations under development, which allows for greater flexibility in leadership.

ELCA bishops and churchwide staff were willing to be creative, bend rules, and grant

exceptions for many of these emerging leaders to be involved in mission development.

The rules changed during the course of this study. In the fall of 2008, the ELCA

Conference of Bishops 1) regularized the call to mission development—meaning that

mission development was no longer a specialized ministry subject to a three-year rule,

and 2) linked authorization of lay leaders in synodically authorized ministry to

candidacy—in other words, lay mission developers needed to be involved in a candidacy

process for ordained ministry.[12] This streamlined the process for ordained pastors to

become mission developers as their first call and clarified expectations for lay mission

developers regarding ordination. These changes in rules were supported by changes

already occurring in seminaries.

The emerging leaders included in this study represented the routes to ordination

available in the ELCA at the time of this study. Those included a typical four-year

residential Master of Divinity degree from a Lutheran seminary, a Master of Divinity

degree from a non-Lutheran seminary and transfer of ordination from another

denomination, a Master of Divinity degree from a non-Lutheran seminary that included a

year of required course work from a Lutheran seminary (a 'Lutheran year'), a Distributed

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[12] ELCA Conference of Bishops, "Seamless Mission Leadership: Enhancing Mission Development and Equipping Mission Developers," Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, 2008. This report from the Churchwide Staff New Starts Table of the ELCA was presented to the ELCA Conference of Bishops for approval in October 2008. The new rules required that mission developers be ordained or in a candidacy process for ordination. Under those rules only two of the twenty-one emerging leaders would still require exceptions.

Learning Master of Divinity (DL-MDiv) degree, and the TEEM program (ordination

without a graduate degree). All of these routes to ordination involved the ELCA

candidacy process[13] and some form of seminary education.

      The traditional MDiv degree in the ELCA required students to leave their home

contexts for at least your years, travel to one of the eight ELCA seminaries for three years

of course work and a year of internship. The alternative routes that were developed

allowed seminarians to remain in their home contexts and/or serve as lay leaders or

pastors of ministries while in seminary education. The TEEM program, for example, was

designed to encourage people-of-color and candidates for ministry over the age of forty

from urban, rural, and ethnic ministry settings to be ordained for pastoral ministry within

their home contexts without the requirement of the completion of a graduate degree.

TEEM candidates engaged in three years of seminary training in a distance learning

process while serving as lay pastors of urban, rural, or ethnic ministries in their home

contexts. Three of the emerging leaders in this study were a part of the TEEM program—

two as ethnic ministry candidates and one in a pilot program to expand the definition of

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[13] One of the challenges for the ELCA and a stumbling block for potential emerging leaders is the ELCA candidacy process. Candidacy committees that have responsibility to approve or disapprove candidates for ordination are volunteers and for the most part represent the traditional culture of the ELCA. The instrument used in evaluating candidates for mission development is a behavioral interview process based upon a list of characteristics that predicted success in mission development about twenty years ago. Neither the process nor the instrument were developed with emerging leaders or emerging ministries in consideration. Forward thinking candidacy committees and determined candidates can work through the process. The ELCA would be well served by reconsidering and adjusting the candidacy process and instruments used for mission development to better reflect the transcultural ministry and leadership that is emerging in the ELCA. That would necessarily include training for candidacy committees and perhaps a behavioral interview process for selecting members of candidacy committees.

emerging ministry[14] to include urban young adult ministries like the ones included in this study.

In addition to offering non-degree seminary education for TEEM candidates and developing non-residential, distance learning degree programs like the DL-MDiv, the rule changes related to specialized ministry meant that seminaries could focus on preparing seminarians for mission development or redevelopment for their first call. The program in Congregational Mission and Leadership at Luther Seminary is an example of one seminary's response to this opportunity. Seminaries are adjusting curriculum and developing programs to prepare students for mission development and redevelopment as a first call.

These multiple approaches to seminary education and routes to ordination serve the ELCA's continuing commitment to ordained leadership in congregations. At least eight of the emerging leaders in this study had taken alternate routes to ordination in the ELCA.

This has been a bit of an excursus into ELCA policies and organizational detail, but not trivial detail. The mission developers in this study emerged as *exceptions* to rules, with the support of *benders* of rules, and helped to instigate the *changing* of rules by their presence in ministry. Their influence on the ELCA as pioneers in emerging ministry was disproportionate to their number and indicative of the recognition of some leaders in the ELCA that processes needed to change in order to respond to cultural change and to effectively engage the contexts in which the ELCA sought to be church.

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[14] TEEM, Theological Education for Emerging Ministries, used a more limited definition of emerging ministries than the one used in this study. The pilot program expands that definition to include emerging urban young adult ministries.

This overview of the seventeen emerging ministries and the twenty-one emerging leaders leads us to a more focused look at the ministries in this study. This next section looks analytically at the data that emerged through the lenses of the sensitizing concepts introduced in chapter 1. These four sensitizing concepts shaped our curiosity as researchers from the beginning of this research project and provided a framework for questions in each of the interviews in this study.[15]

Lutheran, Emerging, Missional, and Doxological Views

A Lutheran View

The three views of 'Lutheran' described in chapter 1 are helpful in analyzing the data that emerged in this study: confessionally Lutheran, constitutionally Lutheran, and culturally Lutheran. Participants from each of the ministries in this study shared stories that revealed they were *confessionally Lutheran.* Emerging ministries that were not yet organized as congregations were working through the process of becoming *constitutionally Lutheran.* Emerging leaders and participants alike assured us they were *not culturally Lutheran* (emphasis theirs).[16]

From a confessional perspective, a Lutheran expression of theology was the common thread of Lutheranism in these ministries. The most common, almost universal,

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[15] Not all of our many curiosities raised in chapter 1 will be addressed in this chapter. The sensitizing concepts will be presented based upon the themes that emerged that were significant to theories developed in this study.

[16] Emerging leaders and participants claimed to be Lutheran by theology and affiliation as we will discuss here. Their reticence to claim cultural Lutheranism reflected the reality that Lutheranism is finding expression in alternate local cultures. The next chapter on *transculturation* will explore this phenomenon.

response to the question "What is Lutheran about this ministry?" was *grace*.[17] One leader

said, "We don't use the language of justification by grace through faith, but we certainly

live that." Participants interviewed would respond to this question with 'grace,' and then

tell stories of how grace had been experienced, usually through a story of unexpected or

undeserved welcome for themselves or someone else. '*God welcomes everyone'* was the

mantra at St. Mary Magdalene's and was a common value among emerging ministries.

Grace was experienced as being *welcomed just as you are* into relationship with God and

community with others.

In chapter 3, I shared the story from St. Mary Magdalene's of the woman at Trunk

or Treat who experienced grace and welcome in *simul justus et peccator*—the Lutheran

understanding that we are, at the same time, saint and sinner. She recognized the mistakes

in her life and felt unworthy to be welcomed by God or the church. MP assured her that

she was correct. She did not deserve it. Neither did he. But we get it anyway. That was a

Lutheran kind of welcome, grounded in grace.

Participants in emerging ministries, St. Ben's for example, saw an aspect of

'Lutheran' in their ministry through the praxis of the *priesthood of all believers*. They

shared their previous experiences of a "typical Lutheran church" where "the focus is on

the pastor and the pastor will lead things and the pastor has the alb and the stole." They

contrasted that with St. Ben's where "the pastor never vests. She goes, 'I will only vest if

everyone else is allowed to vest because everyone here is equal'." That conviction was

illustrated in a service when everyone made and wore stoles made from strips of cloth as

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[17] Participants mentioned grace, the priesthood of all believers, vocation, paradox, mutual consolation, theology of the cross, kingdom of God/Christ, and Trinitarian theology in response to this question. Grace was mentioned twenty-three times and often accompanied by an example. The other responses were mentioned a total of nine times in this particular area of questioning.

a sign of their priesthood. The priesthood of all believers was experienced through participants' leadership in all aspects of worship at St. Ben's and other emerging ministries, including preaching.[18] Another emerging ministry leader emphasized the priesthood of all believers and a communitarian approach to worship in which numerous voices participated in leading worship from wherever they were seated in the circle of the sanctuary. She also emphasized a Lutheran understanding of *vocation* that recognized people's gifts and roles. The gift and role she brought to the worshipping community was preaching. She preached, not because of hierarchical clergy/lay relationships but because those were her gifts and her vocation in the community. These shared theological values, such as the priesthood of all believers and vocation, were practiced differently in various contexts.

In chapter 1, I posited a Lutheran definition of church and worship from the perspective of the Augsburg Confession, Article VII.[19] In short, the church is defined confessionally as the assembly gathered in and formed by word and sacraments. The *satis est* clause that follows in the Latin version of the Augsburg Confession says "it is enough (*satis est*) for the true unity of the church to agree concerning the teaching of the gospel and the administration of the sacraments." Emerging ministries in the ELCA expressed their churchliness from a Lutheran confessional perspective through their commitment to those practices of Christian unity—word and sacrament. The next sentence in that paragraph of the Augsburg Confession says, "It is not necessary that human traditions,

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[18] The exception at St. Ben's was the celebration of the Eucharist. Both Episcopal and Lutheran traditions have expectations about authorization for the celebration of the Eucharist.

[19] Kolb, Wengert, and Arand, *The Book of Concord: The Confessions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church*, 43.

rites, or ceremonies instituted by human beings be alike everywhere" which is a good thing because, among emerging ministries in the ELCA, they weren't alike anywhere.[20] Emerging ministries in the ELCA were confessionally Lutheran in the diversity of their worship praxis within a context of Word and sacrament ministry.

All of the emerging ministries in this study were Lutheran by affiliation with the ELCA.[21] As emerging ministries move through the process of organizing as a congregation in the ELCA, they will need to become *constitutionally* Lutheran.[22] As mentioned in chapter 1, the ELCA model constitution has required sections that include statements of faith and purpose along with sections on the inter-dependent relationships of the three expressions of church: congregations, synods, and churchwide. The model constitution allows for some flexibility of organization in congregations and synods for the sake of mission. Given the diversity of organizational structures and the common use of non-hierarchical systems in emerging ministries, they will need to make good use of that constitutional flexibility.[23]

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[20] Ibid., 515. Adiaphora is defined in the Formula of Concord, Epitome, Article X: Ecclesiastical Practices as "ceremonies or ecclesiastical practices that are neither commanded nor forbidden in God's word but that were introduced in the churches for the sake of good order and decorum." It goes on to say that "the community of God in every place and at every time has the authority to alter such ceremonies according to its own situation, as may be most useful and edifying for the community of God."

[21] One of the ministries in this study was uniquely interesting because it had been a mission development in another denomination for nearly ten years and had recently affiliated with the ELCA. Its pastoral team was in an ELCA candidacy process to transfer their ordination as well.

[22] Synodically Authorized Worshipping Communities do not develop constitutions but are essentially ministries of the synod. At least one of the ministries studied preferred to remain a SAWC rather than develop as a congregation in order to maintain the flexibility they enjoyed as a SAWC and to avoid what they saw to be constraints of the ELCA constitution.

[23] This implies that bishops and those who approve congregation's constitutions will need to allow and even encourage emerging ministries (and existing congregations) to be flexible in organization for the sake of mission.

In fairness to participants who took such passionate stands that they were not *culturally* Lutheran, that was one criterion for selection to be included in this study. To quote myself from page 1 of this dissertation, we selected emerging ministries that were "exploring ways to be church with a Lutheran understanding of the gospel but expressed in contexts and cultures not typically thought of as Lutheran in the United States."

The stereotypes that study participants jokingly used as examples of what they imagined was culturally Lutheran had more to do with Garrison Keillor-esque caricatures of Lutheranism than with their own actual experiences. They joked about Scandinavians, lutefisk dinners, and Jell-O molds at potlucks. When they actually described their own previous experiences of a 'typical' Lutheran church, they described clergy led worship, hymnbooks, traditional hymns with organ accompaniment, chant-based liturgy, and communities of grey-haired, stoic, somewhat stodgy, and visibly unemotional Scandinavians and Germans in the upper Midwest—essentially the cultural heritage of 10,000 ELCA congregations. What participants experienced in their emerging ministries was a Lutheran understanding of the gospel expressed in their own cultural languages. I would argue that each of these emerging ministries was culturally Lutheran (as were the other 10,000+ ELCA congregations). They are culturally Lutheran as expressed within their own cultures. This enculturation of Lutheran tradition is an aspect of *transculturation* that will be the discussed in the next chapter.

There were some particular elements of worship used in their ministries that participants mentioned as Lutheran, including the liturgy, the lectionary, and the church year calendar. When pressed about why they used those elements of worship they described the connection to the broader church and with the historical church and its

centuries of tradition. As they talked more about it, they realized that those connections were not specifically or exclusively Lutheran.

Emerging ministries in the ELCA defined and exhibited their Lutheran-ness in confessional and theological praxis. They were working through the ELCA process of becoming constitutionally Lutheran. And, whether they realized it or not, emerging ministries in the ELCA were culturally Lutheran within their own cultural contexts as they help to broaden and redefine Lutheran cultures.[24]

<center>An Emerging View</center>

What was *emerging* in these emerging ministries? One of the most insightful responses to this question was a simple but emphatic statement, "We have emerged."[25] What had emerged at the time of this study were communities of culturally connected people gathered in contextually specific ministries around a Lutheran confession of the gospel. Again, we will develop this observation more fully in the next chapter on transculturation. Three other characteristics of emerging ministries will be explored later in this chapter as emergent themes: *contextual*, *indigenous*, and *leadership*. We will take up one additional aspect of the emerging conversation to explore here in light of the data that emerged in this research: *ancient/future*.

An *ancient/future* orientation was evident in emerging ministries in the ELCA and was a characteristic identified in the larger 'emergent' conversation. Robert Webber, who

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[24] We could call them *neo-lutheran* and create our own versions of 'hyphenateds': Hipster-Lutheran, African American-Lutheran, Hispanic-Lutheran, Queer-Lutheran, Multi-cultural-Lutheran to add to our original American categories of Norwegian-Lutheran, Swedish-Lutheran, Finnish-Lutheran, German-Lutheran, et al. Each has its own cultural expression of confessional Lutheranism.

[25] A participant in a ministry celebrating its tenth anniversary as an emerging ministry made this comment. Several ministries in the study were less than three years old and would not have made this comment quite as emphatically.

introduced the language and concept of ancient/future to the emerging church

conversation, described ancient/future as "drawing wisdom from the past and translating

these insights into the present and future life of the church."[26]

St. Benedict's stated on their website that they were "a future church with an

ancient faith" and were neither 'traditional' nor 'contemporary' but were 'ancient/future'

in their expression of worship. Using the traditional liturgy could be considered an

ancient tradition of the church. Several of the ministries studied, including St. Gregory's,

used traditional forms of the liturgy but with alternative musical settings appropriate to

their cultures. A few used settings of the liturgy as found in the *Lutheran Book of*

Worship (LBW) or *Evangelical Lutheran Worship (ELW)* but modified them to fit their

culture. For example, St. Mary Magdalene's used a setting from LBW but used both

Spanish and English for certain sections of the liturgy and substituted Spanish language

songs in some places.

Music used in worship in these ministries embodied the ancient/future dynamic. A

large portion of the music used in worship was composed by participants in the

ministries—both songs and liturgies.[27] The music itself was from the present but the

practice of composing new music for worship is an ancient practice exemplified in the

Lutheran tradition by J. S. Bach and practiced by Martin Luther himself. In addition to

newly composed music, emerging ministries used the traditional (some would say

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[26] Webber, *Ancient-Future Worship: Proclaiming and Enacting God's Narrative*, 19. The concept of translation is significant. Traditions are, in that sense, re-traditioned in their present context.

[27] A musician interviewed argued that newly composed songs and liturgies used in emerging ministries served the same liturgical function as hymns and liturgies in traditional congregations. He contrasted those liturgical functions of music with the use and function of praise songs in contemporary worship settings. Another emerging leader suggested that in this regard emerging ministries "are not less traditional than the traditional church." Ancient/future emerging ministries draw deeply upon tradition.

ancient) hymnody of the church but sung in musical styles appropriate to the

instrumentation and cultures of the ministries. At least three of the ministries were using

ancient and modern forms of chant in their worship services.

The emerging ministries in this study were similar to the larger emerging church

movement in that they were not an outgrowth of suburban churches or contemporary

worship. If anything, they were a reaction against it. None of the emerging ministries

observed in this study used Contemporary Christian Music (CCM).[28] At least two of the

leaders interviewed referred to praise songs as "happy-clappy" music.[29] The worship

gatherings in which we participated included classic and alternative rock music,

contemplative music, Celtic and Taizé-style songs and chant, bluegrass, jazz, gospel,

traditional hymns sung in various styles, and even one hymn accompanied by pipe organ,

but no traditional CCM-style praise songs.[30]

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[28] CCM is a genre of Christian music popular with Boomers in the late 20th century and still popular on contemporary Christian radio and in many churches with 'contemporary' worship services. In one sense among emerging ministries, ancient/future implies "not Boomer" and not "contemporary." Emerging leaders describe the music produced in the contemporary music industry as *bad music*—repetitive soft rock/pop style; *bad theology*—"look what Jesus has done for me today;" and *bad poetry*—"change two or three words and you have a bad love song." CCM is an industry led by a handful of publishers with stables of composers who produce annual volumes of worship music's greatest hits that are available through the purchase of an annual CCLI copyright license. Music in the emerging church is indigenous, often composed by participants in the ministry, grounded in their life experiences—often of *kenosis,* and freely shared (at least at this point).

[29] To be honest, St. B's used one song in worship that was drawn from the praise song repertoire of music. Towards the end of the service the worship leaders invited Heatherlyn to join them in leading a song during a time of prayer. The song came from the praise song tradition but was a scripture song (Holy, Holy are you Lord God almighty, worthy is the Lamb) sung in a contemplative, gospel style (not "happy-clappy." It was selected on the spot, sung without rehearsal, and chosen in part (I assume) because Heatherlyn also knew the song.

[30] Boomers are welcome to be a part of the emerging church movement as long as they leave their contemporary worship and happy-clappy music in the suburbs. Can I say that in a dissertation? Actually Boomers who would be interested in being a part of an emerging ministry probably don't live in the suburbs. They are probably urban, ex-hippies who resonate well with hipster young adults—each a part of the counterculture of their day. Gibson Winter provided significant background for this conversation in his classic work published in 1961 that describes the rise of the White-middle-class suburbia. Gibson Winter, *The Suburban Captivity of the Churches: An Analysis of Protestant Responsibility in the Expanding*

New or *neo-monasticism* is another ancient/future expression in emerging

ministries. St. Ben's and at least two other emerging ministries studied were drawing

from ancient monastic traditions and expressing elements of monasticism, particularly the

practice of spiritual disciplines and a rule of life, in their contexts and cultural languages.

This neo-monastic form of emerging ministry was described more thoroughly in St.

Ben's ministry profile in chapter 3. Contemplative practices were a part of the monastic

tradition. Ten minutes of "open space" were set-aside during the worship gathering at St.

Ben's for contemplative practices. This ancient/future practice from neo-monasticism

was significant in St Ben's context. St. Ben's was located in the heart of the *none zone*

(the Pacific Northwest) where many people describe themselves as *spiritual-but-not-*

religious.[31] These ancient practices as incorporated in "open space" connected people

from a spiritual-but-not-religious context with an opportunity for them to be practice

being spiritual-in-religious-community.

For most of the leaders in this study, emerging language was not a common

language. Connections or familiarity with the emerging church conversation varied

widely among these emerging ministry leaders. I introduced emerging language to

participants in the conversation in at least five of the seventeen sites. Several leaders

admitted they intentionally avoided emerging language. Leaders and participants

struggled to connect with the language. Two of the leaders said something along the lines

of "people say we're emerging, so I guess we must be."

Metropolis (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1961).The rejection of "happy-clappy" music is equally a rejection of the economic values and culture of suburbia as it is a rejection of a particular musical genre.

[31] Killen and Silk, *Religion and Public Life in the Pacific Northwest: The None Zone*, 22. Nearly two-thirds of the population in the Pacific Northwest claim no religious affiliation.

On the other hand, three of the developers interviewed had been immersed in the emerging church conversation. One was a founding conversation partner in Emergent Village and consulted regularly on emerging church related topics. Several had participated in emerging church events such as the Emerging Conferences in the 1990s or more recently, the Greenbelt festival in England. Most emerging leaders, but not all, had done some reading in emerging church literature. All of the leaders interviewed, however, preferred the word 'emerging' as a verb, and not as an adjective. They were most comfortable speaking of emerging as "what was coming into being" in their ministries. Some described what was coming into being in their ministries by describing what God was up to in their sites. They were connecting emerging with a central concept in a missional view.

<div align="center">A Missional View</div>

Those who spoke about what God was up to in their ministries tended to be the leaders who were most conversant in the missional conversation. The pastor at St. Timothy's, for example, had completed a DMin in Congregational Mission and Leadership and was fluent in a dialect of this missional language. As I mentioned in St. Tim's profile, she said God was the mission developer at St. Tim's with participants in the ministry serving as "mission explorers" with God. Participants in the ministry spoke about creating perichoretic community with God. The missional conversation had shaped the conversation and ministry at St. Tim's. Another mission developer in this study had his PhD and taught missional leadership and ecclesiology in a seminary. He too was fluent in missional language. Most of the emerging leaders in this study were not.

Examples of missional ministry, with or without the language, appeared in two ways in these emerging ministries. First, and perhaps most important from a missional perspective, was the conviction that God is active in the world. When referring to God's story as found in the Bible, St. Ben's said that "thiscouldchangeeverything" and said their role was to "helpgodchangeeverything." Implicit in those two statements was the missional idea that it is God who is changing everything with or through the 'help' of God's church. St. Mary Magdalene's was an example of God's action shaping their own. One of their core convictions was that "God welcomes everyone" so, in response to God's action, they did the same. "The *missio Dei* institutes the *missiones ecclesiae*."[32]

Second, emerging ministry leaders spoke about "being church in world." Both St. Joe's and St. Ben's spoke of their desire to "be church" in and for their neighborhoods. St. Ben's used incarnational and monastic language of being a presence in the neighborhood. Being a presence was expressed at least two ways at St. Ben's. First, they talked about a monastic sense of presence, of being a "third place" for people to join in community, of being an abbey in the midst of the neighborhood. Second, they talked about being present in the community. One of the young women interviewed spoke about the opportunities to connect with people through the events held in the community arts center such as gallery shows, concerts, and classes. She said, "the mission is on us" as participants of St. Ben's to be present in those events, make connections, and build relationships with people.

A young Hispanic woman from St. Mary Magdalene's provided the most personal understanding of being church. Her family was one of the first Hispanic families to

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[32] Bosch, *Transforming Mission: Paradigm Shifts in Theology of Mission*, 370.

connect with St. Mary's. They experienced the authenticity of welcome that stood behind St. Mary's conviction that "God welcomes everyone." I shared a bit of the story of her experience of God's welcome through the people of St. Mary's and her desire to share that welcome with others in St. Mary's ministry profile in chapter 3. She concluded, "I don't have a church. I am the church." She experienced a shift from participants being members of a church to being missional people of God.[33]

This is a shift from membership to discipleship.[34] St. Mary's was adamant that they don't have members; they were disciples. In chapter 1, I reminded us of David Bosch's extension of the movement of a sending/missional God to include the Church: Father sends Son sends Spirit sends Church. I argue here for one additional sending: Father sends Son sends Spirit sends Church sends people—missional people of God— into the world for the sake of God's mission. When Church is understood as "congregation," then the role of members or participants is to support the "church" in its mission in the world. When Church is understood as God's missional people called and sent in God's mission, then the role of the congregation is to support God's people in their missions in the world. Disciples are missional people of God.

More accurately, disciples are missional people of God in training. Disciples sent into the world for the sake of God's mission might be called apostles. The Church is

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[33] Anderson, "Missional DNA of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America." 189-90. I argue for a missional ecclesiology in the ELCA that begins with missional people of God.

[34] Michael W. Foss, *Power Surge: Six Marks of Discipleship for a Changing Church* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2000), 11-23. The move from membership to discipleship may be more of an issue for established churches than for emerging churches. Redevelopment congregations like St. Mary's found that to be an issue as well. Post-modern communities come with some natural aversion to the consumeristic tendencies of the modern church. I served as pastor with Mike Foss at Prince of Peace as they made a paradigm shift from membership to discipleship. Mike Foss describes the shift to discipleship and a process in this book.

members (in a Pauline sense) who grow as disciples and are sent as apostles into the world for the sake of *missio Dei.* The pastor at St. Barnabas' got it right when he claimed their motto for mission: "Bring 'em in, train 'em up, send 'em out."

When asked what was missional about their ministry, participants provided nearly two hundred responses. Responses ranged from sharing their mission statement: "Four words—welcome, story, presence, gift," or "Transforming lives with Christ," to recounting ways they had engaged their community that week: sharing a meal on Sunday evening with people who were marginalized, or hosting a quincañeras celebration. From being a "church with no building" for the sake of God's mission in the world, to setting aside their fellowship hall for the community to use free of charge for the sake of God's mission in the world. From developing community houses, to producing concerts, to serving coffee, to creating a community arts center, to developing a youth drop in center, to serving free meals, to training seminarians, to commissioning music and art projects, to hosting a hip-hop youth service and mentoring programs, to gathering their community in worship, emerging ministries engaged their contexts in their own ways. Emerging ministries shared story after story of ways they were joining in God's mission in the world…whether or not they used missional language to describe what they were up to.

Part of what God was up to in emerging ministries was encouraging them to grow, to gather in community, to build relationships, to develop their gifts, to mature in faith, to study the Bible, to worship together, to practice spiritual disciplines, to create a presence in their community. Nearly half of these emerging ministries were less than

three years old. Much of their energy and resources were needed to build their community.[35]

An Excursus Regarding Language

At some point in the site visit and interview process, my research assistants and I began to wonder about the importance of language. We were curious from the beginning of this study about how and if emerging ministries understood or used language from the 'emerging' and 'missional' conversations. Some were very familiar with the semantic fields those words represent. Most were not. We were not particularly surprised at the broad range of familiarity with emerging and missional language among emerging leaders; both semantic fields were relatively new in 2008 and, as described earlier in this chapter, emerging leaders were coming to mission development from a variety of educational and ministry experiences. But we did, and still do, wonder to what extent language matters. (By the way, if I'm giving the impression there was limited understanding or lack of consensus around the language of 'emerging' and 'missional' among leaders in emerging ministries, just wait until we get to 'doxological!')

A Doxological View

The question raised in the proposal for this research was "How is God glorified through emerging ministries in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) and in the lives of their people?" The question asked in interviews was quite directly related: "how is God glorified here?" About half as many responses were given to this question

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[35] The word *community* is used two ways in this document. Sometimes it means the community of people who make up the emerging ministry. Sometimes it means the community or neighborhood in which they gather. Often it can mean both and is left to be intentionally ambiguous.

than were given to the previous question about missional/mission. It is not unusual to think about mission in the American context in the church or in the workplace. People have language for mission, vision, goals, purpose, and are often driven by those ideas. Leaders and participants in emerging ministries were able to talk at length in interviews about what they hoped would emerge and what had been accomplished to that point in their ministries.

Participants in emerging ministries in the ELCA did not tend to think in terms of a doxological hermeneutic. The question, "how is this ministry doxological?" elicited the response, "what does that mean?" The question quickly became "how is God glorified in (or through) this ministry?" I would speculate there are at least three possible explanations for the briefness of conversations on this topic. First, it was a strange question. It used language that people don't often use and it came nearly at the end of the interview after participants had shared their stories and thick descriptions of their ministry.

Second, it required a kind of theological reflection on ministry and their involvement they were not accustomed to doing. This question asked them to switch mental gears from description to reflection with an unfamiliar lens. People were accustomed to working with 'to-do lists' and could talk about what they hoped to do and what had been done. People seemed to have reflected less on who or what was glorified in what they do.

Third, responses to this question had not been rehearsed in the ministries. I don't mean rehearsed in the sense that people had been told what to say in the interviews. I mean rehearsed in the sense that people would have heard the answers to the questions

before. For example, everyone from St. Mary Magdalene's described their ministry as a place where everyone was welcome and where people would grow as disciples. They had heard it preached, taught, and had experienced it themselves. Each person could use nearly the same language to describe St. Mary's because the language had been rehearsed in community life. That was not the case with doxological language in any of the ministries studied.

Yet, interviewees did respond to this question. Their responses clustered in three areas: God was glorified in worship, God was glorified in community, and God was glorified through the witness of their actions.

Participants mentioned encountering or glorifying God in *worship* through liturgy, scripture, the lectionary, prayer, morning prayer, dance, music, poetry, preaching, ritual, art, and in the sacraments. One participant said, "God comes to life in worship." After reflecting on their responses, I would suggest that God comes to *relationship* in worship. Participants encountered God in liturgy and ritual, scripture, preaching, sacraments and the offerings of the community. Participants glorified God in their offerings of prayer, dance, music, poetry, art, liturgy, and preaching. Gathering in worship created the occasion for doxological relationship with God and one another.

Participants described particular kinds of *community* that they said glorified God. Participants in each of the six emerging ministries profiled in chapter 3 described community as welcoming—particularly to those who felt unworthy of welcome,[36] inclusive, accepting, affirming, and allowing people to be who God created them to be. Participants in community prayed for one another, particularly "when others can't pray."

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[36] *Simul justus et peccator* is a Lutheran hospitality strategy in emerging ministries. You're not worthy and you're welcome. None of us are, and we all are.

At least three participants mentioned "conversation." One suggested that "the best conversations about God happen in a bar or coffee shop." Another mentioned conversations with colleagues at work. One of the leaders interviewed said he preferred "how God is witnessed to" rather than "glorified." God was witnessed to in conversation.

God was also *witnessed* to in the actions of emerging ministries and their participants. This cluster of responses was the largest among the three presented here. Participants mentioned, "doing what we were called to do." That meant developing, using, or "birthing" the gifts that were present in each person. It meant serving and giving back to the community. It meant creating art, music, websites, video, liturgy, and sharing those resources. It meant being a training ground for youth, emerging leaders, seminarians, and graduate students doing research. It meant "making a difference."

In their personal stories, it meant "glorifying God by our actions; being doers of God's word." Women in two different ministries shared how important it was to them that their kids saw them up front leading in worship and what it would have meant for them to see their own mothers have that opportunity. Three of the emerging leaders shared that they "didn't get paid initially." One of the minister crew from St. Barnabas' said, "Just serving the Lord is my pay." There was witness in leaders' passion, commitment and willingness to give of themselves.

Those are some of the insights gained through the use of these four sensitizing concepts as lenses in this research. Three additional themes emerged in the course of the research and in the analysis of the data that will be considered here: emerging ministries are *contextual, indigenous,* and there are implications for *leadership.*

Emergent Themes: Contextual, Indigenous, and Leadership

Emerging Ministries and Context

A participant in the consultation held at Luther Seminary commented that "Martin Luther was big on contextual." They generated a short list of examples: Luther translated the Bible, liturgy, and hymns into the language of the people, wrote songs and liturgy for worship, wrote catechisms for use in homes, and used newly available technology to get his stuff out to people. One participant summarized: "Martin Luther translated so that the world could understand the Word of God in their own context." Brother Martin would have fit right in with these emerging leaders.

Craig Van Gelder is also big on contextual. In *The Ministry of the Missional Church: A Community Led by the Spirit,* in a chapter devoted to Spirit-led ministry in context, he lays out seven aptitudes for "Spirit-led, missional congregations" to cultivate.[37] I will use those seven aptitudes, paraphrased into emerging language, as analytical lenses to consider the contextuality of emerging ministries.[38]

Aptitude 1—Emerging ministries read their contexts.

Even this is contextual. Two of the ministries in this study were redevelopment ministries. They were established congregations located in the midst of contexts that had changed around them. In one example, white flight had created space for other ethnic

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[37] Craig Van Gelder, *The Ministry of the Missional Church: A Community Led by the Spirit* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2007), 63-67. Craig Van Gelder is Professor of Congregational Mission at Luther Seminary. He hosted a Missional Church Consultation at Luther Seminary on "The Missional Church in Context: Helping Congregations Develop Contextual Ministry" and edited a book of the papers presented at that consultation. Craig Van Gelder, *The Missional Church in Context: Helping Congregations Develop Contextual Ministry*, Missional Church Series (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 2007).

[38] I am substituting the term "emerging ministries" for Van Gelder's term "Spirit-led, missional congregations."

groups to move into the community. The congregation, having declined to a point of financial crisis, entered a transformational ministry process, brought in a redevelopment pastor, and set a course to become a congregation that reflected its neighborhood. A new ministry with a new name [St. Mary's] emerged in the midst of their changed context. In this case reading the context meant paying attention to the changes occurring in the neighborhood and responding to those changes.

The other emerging ministries in this study were reading their contexts in different, well, contexts. In at least eleven of these ministries, the emerging leader was already a part of the context in which he/she would become a mission developer. They emerged as leaders from within their contexts. They had an insider's perspective on reading their contexts and were already a part of a culture in their context. St. Barnabas' is an example of an emerging ministry in which the pastor was part of the ministry, called to lead, trained, and ordained while in the process of developing the ministry.

Emerging leaders in the remaining ministries in this study selected their ministry locations based upon their cultural affinity with those contexts. Reading the context was a primary consideration in determining where a new emerging ministry would begin. For example, a yuppie, hipster, African American pastor moved from the Midwest to one of the most yuppie, hipster, boho neighborhoods in the Pacific Northwest to start an emerging ministry, St. Ben's, with and among the artists, young professionals, and students who inhabited the neighborhood.

In all the emerging ministries, emerging leaders demonstrated an aptitude for reading their contexts. Reading and responding to their contexts as their ministries continued to emerge and contexts changed was an on-going process.

Aptitude 2—Emerging ministries anticipate new insights into the gospel.

Emerging ministries in the ELCA were engaging cultural contexts not typically considered Lutheran with a Lutheran understanding of the gospel. Lamin Sanneh, in *Translating the Message,* argued that it is "possible to render God's word into other languages."[39] He was referring to languages in the African context but the argument would also apply to the cultural languages of the emerging ministries in this study. Robert Schreiter, writing also from a missionary perspective, argued in *Constructing Local Theologies* that communities construct local theologies by expressing the gospel in their own cultural languages.[40] Encounters with the gospel and the cultures of emerging ministries result in "fresh resources for understanding the faith."[41]

In the earlier section on a Lutheran view, we considered the ways in which emerging ministries described themselves as confessionally Lutheran. They spoke about grace, hospitality, the priesthood of all believers, vocation, gathering in Word and sacrament amongst other things. This confessional theology found local expression in each of the emerging ministries. For example, I had not thought about *simul justus et peccator* as an extension of hospitality until I heard the story of the woman at St. Mary's who found welcome in her unworthiness. And, I had never experienced such a free expression of a 'theology of play' until we visited St. Gregory's.

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[39] Lamin O. Sanneh, *Translating the Message: The Missionary Impact on Culture*, American Society of Missiology Series (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1989), 47.

[40] Robert J. Schreiter, *Constructing Local Theologies* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1985), 16. "The Holy Spirit, working in and through the believing community, gives shape and expression to Christian experience."

[41] Van Gelder, *The Ministry of the Missional Church: A Community Led by the Spirit*, 64.

Aptitude 3—Emerging ministries anticipate reciprocity.

Emerging ministries were transcultural ministries, at least that is the argument I will make in the next chapter. Reciprocity is a significant concept in transculturation. When cultures meet, both are changed. Participants in emerging ministries came from particular cultural communities. They were changed by their encounter with the gospel; but a Lutheran confession of the gospel became enfleshed in different cultural expressions as well. For example, a Lutheran expression of a gospel of grace took on a richer expression when encountered in the black church worship experience at St. Barnabas'; but the worship experience also took on a more Lutheran theological focus as the service ended with a call to discipleship rather than an altar call. A new culture of 'black church Lutheran' was created in the process.

Aptitude 4—Emerging ministries are contextual and, therefore, particular.

There was no model or template for an emerging ministry in the ELCA. Each was distinctly different from any other. Their particularity was at least in part because of their contextuality. Context influenced the emerging ministries' choices of locations. Their choices of locations ands facilities influenced the shape of the ministries that emerged.

The emerging ministries in this study were located in urban areas with the exception of two that were in medium sized cities. The neighborhoods within the urban area and the demographics of the people who lived there also influenced the emerging ministries (and their choices to locate in those neighborhoods). It seems obvious but an African American ministry emerged in an African American neighborhood, a Hispanic ministry in a Hispanic neighborhood, a hipster ministry in an 'artsy-fartsy' gallery neighborhood (to use a description given by one of the leaders). The one surprise was that

a culturally diverse ministry actually emerged in a culturally diverse neighborhood. (Even in diverse neighborhoods people typically self-segregate for worship.[42] St. Mary's worked hard at being an exception to that rule by creating a culture of diversity.)

Emerging ministries chose their facilities based upon the community of folks who gathered and the community in which they lived. The choice to meet in a school, theater, coffee shop, pub, or community arts center rather than a church building, or to meet in a church fellowship hall rather than a church sanctuary shaped the communities that emerged in those places.

There was more to the particularity of emerging ministries than location, facility, or even demographic of the neighborhood contexts. The emerging leaders and particular participants were also a part of the context of any particular emerging ministry. For example, a hipster ministry gathering in a theater with a classic rock band has a different vibe than a hipster ministry gathering in a 100 year old sanctuary seated in the round singing liturgical chant, or a hipster ministry seated in pews singing newly-composed settings of the liturgy with a Jesus blimp flying overhead. Leaders and the cultural languages they 'speak' were a part of the context that shaped the ministry.

Here's one last example of the way the multiple levels of context result in very particular expressions of ministry. One of the ministries studied was in an urban area of a Midwestern city. The area was heavily Hispanic in population. About a third of the

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[42] Donald A. McGavran and C. Peter Wagner, *Understanding Church Growth*, 3rd ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 1990), 46. At the International Congress on World Evangelism in 1974 McGavran said, "Most congregations are shut up to one language, one ethnic unit and frequently to one social or economic class." This phenomenon was observed in emerging ministries in the ELCA in this study and will be discussed in the next chapter.

participants in this emerging ministry were undocumented immigrants.[43] The sanctuary of the church was filled with statuary, artwork, icons, and sacred objects brought by participants from Mexico. In the front right corner of the sanctuary was a nearly life size figure of a "dead Jesus" lying in state as if in the tomb on Good Friday. The pastor, who many of the participants called "Father," told us that, when family members of participants died in Mexico, participants were not able to attend funerals or gather with their families in Mexico (most often because of immigration issues but also because of the expense). Participants and families were invited to come to "dead Jesus" and say the things to Jesus that they would want to say to the one who had died or to their families in Mexico. In this context and culture, this ritual provided a way for families to express their grief and mourn their loss.

None of the other emerging ministries had dead Jesus statuary in their worship spaces—although several emerging leaders asked where they might get one after "Father" shared this story at the consultation. I'm willing to bet that none of them followed up with a purchase. It wouldn't fit in their particular cultures or contexts.

Aptitude 5—Emerging ministries are contextual, and therefore practical.

Van Gelder argues that there is "no common program that works the same in each congregation and context."[44] This is most certainly true in emerging ministries.

Take for example ministry with children. St. Joe's gathered children in the lobby of the theater for Children's Time during the message portion of the worship service. One

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[43] The political context is another level of context that influenced this ministry. The county government instituted a crack down on undocumented aliens which made is unsafe for undocumented participants in this ministry to attend ministry events. Attempts were made to gather these participants in nearby counties.

[44] Van Gelder, *The Ministry of the Missional Church: A Community Led by the Spirit*, 65.

of their concerns for their future was to develop a more significant ministry with children so that the hipster young adults who gathered there wouldn't leave St. Joe's after having children. St. Barnabas' developed out of a mentoring and camp ministry for African American youth that continued to be a major part of their ministry. The Hispanic ministry I mentioned a few paragraphs ago developed study packets for children's and youth education in both Spanish and English that they could do at home with their families. At first most students chose Spanish. At the time of this study most chose English, reflecting the language shifts of second and third generation immigrants. St. Ben's used "Godly Play," as a resource for ministry with children. St. Mary's used a more traditional format of adult education and Sunday School between worship services on a Sunday morning. In a few emerging ministries children had not yet emerged as a significant presence in their ministries.

The context of the ministry and its participants influenced what developed in emerging ministries. Several of the emerging ministries were involved in community organizing. Issues for St. Barnabas' included poverty, affordable housing, gun laws, the availability of public transportation, and neighborhood lighting. A Hispanic ministry was deeply involved in immigration and legal issues of its participants along with poverty issues. St. Ben's was concerned about prostitution on nearby streets and providing care and alternatives for prostitutes. Another emerging ministry developed a Queer-mergent on-line community in support of participants from the GLBTQ community. St. Greg's focused on engaging the artists and musicians in the community by supporting their work and becoming a patron of the arts.

There was no common program among emerging ministries. The common element was ministry influenced by engagement with the community that flowed from the cultural ethos of the emerging ministry.

Another practical issue that affected emerging ministries was the transience of participants. Participants in these ministries reflected demographics that were on the move: students, young professionals, starting families, immigrants, and more. Emerging ministries engaged participants in leadership and ministry quickly and anticipated that participants might not be a part of the ministry for more than a few months or years.

Aptitude 6—Emerging ministries understand that theology is always contextual, and therefore, also perspectival.

The ELCA is becoming increasingly multi-perspectival with the additions of ministries among young adult and ethnic cultures not traditionally a part of the ELCA. Emerging leaders are quite aware that their perspectives are different from colleagues they meet at synod gatherings or other churchly meetings. Emerging ministries have developed at the edge of the church and perspectives tend to be a little different from the edge than from the center.

Theology is contextual among emerging ministries in the ELCA within a shared confession and commitment to a gospel of grace in a ministry of word and sacrament. For example, emerging ministries, along with other congregations in the ELCA, hold different theological positions among themselves on issues such as homosexuality and gay marriage. One emerging leader, reflecting on the role of the church in politics, said they try to be a purple church. (Purple is what you get when red and blue come together.) She spoke about being united in their baptismal identity and around a common table.

Other emerging ministries have taken strong stances on the theological and political positions related to this and other issues.

Emerging ministries are multi-perspectival. Same-ness and conformity are not values that they exhibit.

Aptitude 7—Emerging ministries understand that organization is contextual, and therefore provisional.

A lack of same-ness and conformity also applies to organization among emerging ministries. Organization is provisional in emerging ministries because most of these ministries have not yet developed constitutions. They are functioning under mission development or redevelopment guidelines that allow significant flexibility in organization. Beyond whatever organizational structures might be imposed in their eventual organization as congregations, emerging ministries draw organization from various traditions.

St. Barnabas' was in the process of developing a constitution that combined the ELCA model structure of a church council with black church leadership structures of a "minister crew" that works with and in support of the pastor in leadership. St. Ben's developed their own organizational structure with an "Aldar's board" and wardens as part of a leadership structure. St. Mary's introduced a "new council" that focused on spiritual leadership rather than micro-managing money issues. St. Greg's was pastor-led with task forces such as a "committee of the future" that was exploring St. Greg's development as a ministry. Another hipster ministry developed a "housekeeping team" of four people to help with leadership and organization.

Creativity, flexibility, and the provisional nature of organization were not issues of concern for emerging ministries. To what extent emerging ministries will need to institutionalize as they develop is of concern. ELCA polity provides a minimum expectation of institutionalization. How emerging ministries will organize within that framework was still emerging.

Emerging ministries are contextual ministries. Van Gelder's seven aptitudes for leading a ministry in context provided an exercise in viewing the contextuality of emerging ministries a little more broadly and in areas I might not otherwise have explored. From Van Gelder's perspective, these were aptitudes that congregations needed to develop to engage their contexts as Spirit-led, missional congregations. From my perspective, and through the lens of emerging ministries in the ELCA, these aptitudes are not only present in emerging ministries but are a part of what defines them as emerging. Emerging ministries are *contextual* in their engagement with their communities and emerging ministries are *indigenous* as they emerge from their contexts.

<div align="center">Emerging Ministries are Indigenous</div>

By *indigenous* I mean *coming or emerging from within.*[45] Robert Schreiter chose not to use the word indigenous in his book *Constructing Local Theologies*. He said, "The difficulty with this term [indigenous theology], at least in some places, is the history of

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[45] I am copying here a footnote from the early part of this chapter. Merriam-Webster, *Merriam Webster's Collegiate Dictionary*, 592. "*Indigenous*—having originated in and being produced, growing, living, or occurring naturally in a particular region or environment." Indigenous can mean "innate or inborn" which has relevance when speaking of people's gifts. I am generally thinking "emerging from within" when I use the word indigenous in this context. Indigenous is also a synonym for 'native', which has some relevance when we begin to discuss culture and transculturation in the next chapter. Emerging leaders are 'native' to the cultures in which they lead.

the word 'indigenous.' The term has a distinctly colonialist ring…"[46] He opted for the

terms contextual theology and local theology in his writing. Since I have already used the

term contextual to describe something a little different from this, I am opting to use the

term indigenous because, as I intend it, it means growing or occurring naturally in a

particular environment or native to a particular culture. The emerging ministries and

leaders in this study are indigenous in this sense. They emerged from particular cultural

contexts and, in the case of emerging leaders, were native to those cultures. The ministry

activities, including worship, that emerged from emerging ministries tended to be

indigenous as well—emerging from the gifts and passions of the people within the

ministry.[47]

Being indigenous to a culture or context is one way of being contextual. Emerging

ministries in the ELCA find themselves to be in that kind of relationship with their

contexts because they are newly planted for the most part. They are ministries emerging

from the soil of the cultures in which they planted. These emerging ministries were

formed by African American folks growing a church in an African American community,

Hispanic folks growing a church in a Hispanic neighborhood, hipster young adults

growing a church in neighborhoods filled with hipster young adults, and even a diverse

bunch of folks growing a church in an equally diverse neighborhood. They were

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[46] Schreiter, *Constructing Local Theologies*, 5.

[47] The indigenous nature of these ministries and leaders has been mentioned in various places earlier in this document. This section will draw those concepts together for the sake of emphasis at this point in the conversation.

contextual in that they were influenced by and influenced their contexts. They were

indigenous because they were cultural reflections of their contexts.[48]

Emerging leaders were indigenous to the cultures and contexts of the ministries

they led. They were cultural natives. Some connections were obvious: Hipster young

adults led hipster young adult ministries. Hispanic leaders led Hispanic ministries.

African American leaders led African American ministries. Others are less obvious but

equally culturally connected: a Hispanic leader led a multi-cultural ministry, an African

American woman who was also a hipster young adult led a hipster young adult

ministry.[49] Here's an example from one emerging leaders story: she had met her husband,

a Lutheran seminary student, while she was in recovery from addictions to drugs and

alcohol. She fell in love with Lutheran theology and liturgy but "when I looked around

the church, nobody looked like me. Nobody looked like me at all. And I thought, why are

my people not here?" Her people were "post-modern, urban, young adult, kind of

progressive, a lot of gay and lesbian people, social justice, arts, coffee shops, and bars."

She realized, "I'm called to be a pastor to my people." There was a cultural connection

between the leader, the ministry, and the context in each of these emerging ministries.

Ministry that emerged within emerging ministries was also indigenous. I have

recounted several stories of ministry leaders that encouraged participants who felt

passionately about the need for a particular ministry to lead the effort, gather other folks,

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[48] One might contrast the context of indigenous emerging ministries with established congregations that find they are cultural islands in the midst of a sea of neighborhood change. Engagement with their contexts takes the form of cross-cultural ministry or ministry *to* their context unless and until they re-establish cultural relationships with their contexts as St. Mary's chose to do.

[49] In the black church tradition in other denominations the role of pastor is reserved for men. I suspect this young African American woman found her gender to be a limiting factor for her leadership in the black church. Her ethnicity was not a factor in a hipster, young adult culture, and in fact, may have enhanced her charisma within that culture.

and go for it. The emerging ministries would provide support and encouragement. They were also OK when such efforts failed. Ministry in emerging ministries was not programmatic or determined by a council/committee structure. It emerged from the passions and gifts of the participants. Emerging leaders were OK with not having specific ministries until they would naturally emerge. For example, the leader at St. Ben's said we'll have a children's ministry when children and children's leaders emerge.

The profiles of these ministries recounted the emphasis placed on drawing out the gifts of the participants. St. Barnabas' language of "birthing the gifts" was particularly rich as they talked about growing the gifts and birthing the gifts of the participants. Pastor was also quite good about "appointing and anointing" participants to use their gifts. Other ministries talked about ministry arising from participants' gifts and used language of vocation. In each site the gifts of the participants emerged in worship.

Worship was indigenous and consequently unique to each site and context. Worship emerged from the culture and gifts of the people involved.[50] Worship was planned communally in many cases by "liturgy guilds" or planning parties. In over half the ministries, songs and liturgies were composed by participants for worship. Artists produced icons and artwork. Media artists produced images or video for projection in worship.

Worship leadership emerged from the cultures of emerging ministries and varied by cultural tradition. For example, in Hispanic traditions the role of clergy, vestments, and ritual were significant; but, participants moved freely about the sanctuary, lit candles,

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[50] None of the ministries in this study used hymnbooks in the traditional fashion of "turn to page 94 and follow along with setting one of the liturgy." Only three of the ministries had hymnbooks available in the worship space.

placed flowers, or prayed during the course of a worship gathering—even while the

pastor was preaching. Worship was more a sensory than cerebral experience. In the black

church tradition the pastor was assisted in leading worship by a "minister crew" who had

significant roles in leading participants in an emotional experience of prayer, praise &

worship. In hipster young adult ministries it was sometimes difficult to determine who

was the pastor. Worship in some cases was communally led. Participants sometimes

preached or even led in the communion liturgy. Pastors did not dress differently from

other participants but in some cases may have had more tattoos. The aesthetics of hipster

young adult worship ran the spectrum from contemplative to rock, from sensory to

playfully cerebral, from ancient to future. Worship was an expression of the culture and

the gifts of the community in emerging ministries.

To say that emerging ministries were contextual and indigenous is not to say that

other congregations in the ELCA were not. The 10,000 congregations in the ELCA

represent a broad range of contexts and ministries but perhaps not as broad a range of

cultures. Perhaps what is emerging in these ministries is a Lutheran confession of the

gospel that is contextually and indigenously expressed in cultures outside of the Lutheran

norm—culturally indigenous ministries.

<p style="text-align:center">Leadership in Emerging Ministries</p>

Max Weber described "three pure types of legitimate authority": legal authority,

traditional authority, and charismatic authority.[51] Leaders in emerging ministries exhibit

all three types of authority.

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[51] Max Weber, *The Theory of Social and Economic Organization* (Glencoe, IL: Free Press, 1957), 328.

Legal authority is based upon the authority of an office. Emerging leaders hold the office of mission developer or redeveloper within the polity of the ELCA. They are the official connection between the ministry and the larger church and have significant authority to develop and lead the ministry that emerges.

Traditional authority resides in the fulfillment of traditional roles by leaders. For example, 'pastor' is a traditional role that plays out in varying ways in these emerging ministries. In the black church tradition as experienced at St. Barnabas', pastor was a powerful role within the ministry and with additional expectations that the pastor would represent the ministry as a leader in the community. The pastor's wife assumed the title "First Lady" of the church. Both roles of Pastor and First Lady were honored positions of leadership. The pastor in the Hispanic ministry in this study was viewed as "Father" by participants who drew upon their experience of priests in the Catholic traditions of Mexico. Most of the emerging ministries in this study had less defined roles for pastor. As mentioned earlier, many developers took on titles other than pastor that assumed other roles such as abbess, vicar, curator or steward. Emerging leaders assumed some roles without official titles, including teacher, mentor, prophet, guru, shaman, care giver, or priest.

Emerging leaders exhibited charismatic authority. *Charismatic authority* comes from emerging leaders personal qualities, character, and participants' trust in the leader as a person. Weber described a charismatic leader as one "set apart from ordinary men and treated as endowed with supernatural, superhuman, or at least specifically exceptional powers or qualities…as of divine origin or as exemplary…"[52] Most of the emerging

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[52] Ibid., 358-59.

leaders I met have humility as one of their divine qualities and would consider this description from Weber to be quite grandiose. Nonetheless, emerging leaders have a certain amount of what I might call *niche charisma*, particularly as founding leaders of ministries, that inspires the loyalty of their followers (participants). Developers and redevelopers hold all three types of authority in their reserve as leaders of emerging ministries.

Participants in emerging ministries, particularly in hipster young adult ministries, experienced leadership as non-hierarchical, communal, or relational. They spoke of the priesthood of all believers and the opportunities they experienced as participants to be involved in leadership in their ministry and contexts. You may recall the anecdote from St. Ben's in which the abbess refused to vest unless all participants could vest because all were equal in ministry. Communal ministry was described as being non-hierarchical— particularly in clergy-laity relationships. Responsibility for the ministry was shared with participants—participants were not consumers of ministry but were co-creators in ministry. Communal ministry was charismatic in the sense that it relied upon the charisms or gifts of the people. Paradoxically, the space for participants' experiences of non-hierarchical, communal, relational leadership was created by the legal, traditional, and charismatic authorities of the emerging leader and shaped by their values.[53]

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[53] Jones, *The Church Is Flat: The Relational Ecclesiology of the Emerging Church Movement*. Tony Jones argues for a relational ecclesiology in the emerging church movement. The leaders of the ministries he studied were charismatic leaders who consulted internationally in the emerging church movement and were moving into faculty positions in emerging and missional church areas of study. They created space in their ministries for relational ecclesiology to be imagined. Jones expressed concern that this space would disappear as the emerging church movement institutionalizes.

The contextual and indigenous connections that emerging leaders have with their ministry contexts make leadership transition particularly challenging.[54] One leader indicated that he had some health issues and had been looking for another leader to take his place for about a year and a half. No one had emerged as a possible replacement in his context. The ministries that had experienced some form of leadership transition had raised up leaders from within the ministry.

The pastor at St. Barnabas' had been a lead minister in the forerunner of St. B's and was selected by his community to be their pastor in the split from "Old St. B's." As pastor, he developed a ministry crew of leaders with the gifts to follow in his footsteps.

MP at St. Mary's had spent two years in the role of intern pastor and was called by the congregation to become their pastor when LP moved on. Two of St. Mary's participants were in the TEEM and DL-MDiv programs preparing for ministry and serving at St. Mary's during the process.

The current pastor at St. Joe's had come from the momma church to cover a maternity leave, served as interim pastor, and was eventually called to be pastor. St. Ben's had dozens of seminary students and interns in the community, one of which had gone on to plant a sister ministry in a nearby neighborhood. Several other emerging ministries served as internship sites for local seminaries.

Emerging ministries were raising up leaders for the church from within their ministries. Four of the five emerging leaders mentioned in these short paragraphs were

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[54] William M. Kondrath, "Transitioning from Charismatic Founder to the Next Generation," *Journal of Religious Leadership* 9, no. 2 (2010). Bill Kondrath, in a presentation at the Academy of Religious Leadership published in JRL, argued that a change in leadership from a charismatic founder usually required an organizational shift. A new organization is born. St. Joe's experienced this kind of organizational shift in their transition process.

involved in alternative routes to ordination and remained as leaders in their ministries during their preparation for ordination. All five were called to leadership positions from within their ministry communities. The other emerging ministries in this study had not yet experienced a transition from the founding leader(s).

In chapters 3 and 4 to this point, we have engaged the stories of six emerging ministries through in depth profiles, glanced at an overview of the seventeen emerging, ministries and twenty-one emerging leaders that were sources of data in this study, analyzed that data through Lutheran, emerging, missional, and doxological lenses, and explored three themes that emerged from the data: emerging ministries as contextual, emerging ministries as indigenous, and leadership in emerging ministries. The question raised in the proposal for this research project was *how is God glorified through emerging ministries in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) and in the lives of their people?* This seems like a good place to address that question.

God is Glorified in Emerging Ministries in the ELCA

The research question assumed that God is glorified in emerging ministries. In chapter 1 we explored doxology and the praxis of doxology from biblical and theological perspectives drawing on the Old Testament (OT) *kabod* theology that continues in the New Testament (NT) as *doxa*.[55] In that context, *kabod* and *doxa* are "glory."[56] *Doxa,* as understood in ancient culture, has to do with public opinion. One's glory is one's reputation. This understanding of glory is helpful to our conversation.

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[55] See pages 20-25.

[56] Tryggve Mettinger and Hans Urs von Balthasar are particularly helpful in this conversation: Mettinger, *The Dethronement of Sabaoth: Studies in the Shem and Kabod Theologies*. Balthasar, Fessio, and Riches, *The Glory of the Lord: A Theological Aesthetics*.

Doxa as Public Opinion

Two conversations were important to this understanding of *doxa*. In one of the interviews in a partial site visit, an emerging leader said, "God will be in the world reconciling the world to God's self whether we're here or not. How is God being glorified here? Well, God and his glory are fine. So, God is being glorified and we're doing what we we're called to do." He also said, "I like to use the word 'witnessed to' better than glorified."

The emerging leader's comments reminded me of a conversation I had with my advisor, Dr. Gary Simpson, early in this graduate study process. In the context of an independent study on a doxological hermeneutic of mission, he pointed out that *doxa,* in the Greek language, means 'public opinion' or 'reputation.' *Doxa* was the Greek word most often chosen by the writers of the Septuagint to translate the Hebrew word, *kabod.* Consequently the word *doxa* took on the weightiness and gravitas of the meaning of the Hebrew word *kabod* as it carried into the Septuagint and NT. That doesn't mean that readers in the Hebrew would carry the additional connotations of *doxa* as public opinion or reputation into their interpretation of the Hebrew scripture, nor that they should. It seems quite likely, however, that readers of the Greek would have those connotations in mind. *Doxa* is certainly more than the public opinion of God given its relationship with the Hebrew understanding of *kabod,* but to speakers of Greek, it couldn't be less than God's reputation.

Dr. Simpson also referred to Martin Luther's explanation of the second commandment in the Large Catechism.[57] Dr. Simpson articulated Luther's explanation a

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[57] Kolb, Wengert, and Arand, *The Book of Concord: The Confessions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church*, 392-96.

bit more succinctly. Essentially, he said, when you call yourself Christian you take God's name upon yourself; and, 'you shall not take God's name in vain,' or as he put it: "Thou shalt not bear the name of God without making a Father, Son, Holy Spirit difference in the world," or, as he put it more positively, "Thou shalt bear the name of God making a Father, Son, Holy Spirit difference in the world."[58]

These two conversations help to shape the focus of the research question raised in this project: *How do emerging ministries witness to God's glory?* and *How do emerging ministries make a Father, Son, Holy Spirit difference in the world?* Those weren't the questions we asked initially, but they were the questions people were able to answer.

How Was God Glorified in Emerging Ministries?

This question has been answered in two ways thus far: first, each of the site visit ministry profiles in chapter 3 included a section on doxology reflecting on the research question from the perspectives of persons interviewed in each site. Second, those responses were summarized and analyzed earlier in this chapter from the perspective of doxology as a sensitizing concept and theme in this research.[59] Both of those sections of this document provide numerous examples of ways that God was or may have been glorified through emerging ministries in the ELCA and in the lives of their people. From the perspective of the responses from participants, data analysis, and development of themes, the question has been answered. On another level, the question is unanswerable.

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[58] God's reputation is not always enhanced, of course. *Idolatry* is enhancing the reputation of (or glorifying) that which is not God—often ourselves. I would also suggest, somewhat tongue-in-cheek, that *sin* is making a devil of a difference in the world.

[59] See pages 150-153.

This is one of those emergent situations in which the whole is more than the sum of the parts. The results of emerging ministries' witness or the extent of the Father-Son-Holy Spirit differences they make in the world can't be known or measured. We can hear stories of some of the ways that the incarnational presence of these ministries in their community contexts makes a difference. We can hear stories about how participants in emerging ministries have experienced community with God and one another gathered in worship, in service, and even in communal living. We can hear stories from the two thousand or so participants of these ministries about how their gifts have been "birthed," and how they have been witnesses to God's grace in their homes, workplaces, and communities. We can extrapolate from the stories that we have heard that there are many more stories that we have not heard; and that God is glorified and witnessed to, that God's reputation is enhanced, and that a Father-Son-Holy Spirit difference is being made in the world through emerging ministries in the ELCA and in the lives of their people. Perhaps this question was difficult for people to answer because the answer will always be more than the sum of the parts that we are able to see. The answer will always be beyond our ability to know. Fortunately, there are other things that we can observe in research and develop as theories with some confidence. It is in that light that we turn to the proposal that emerging ministries are transcultural.

<center>Emerging Ministries are Transcultural</center>

This thesis began with a story about *nepantla* and an assertion that ministries emerging in the ELCA are transcultural ministries. In chapter 5 we will take up that assertion. We will place emerging ministries in the story of cultural and liturgical change in the American Lutheran story. We will explore transculturation as a sociological

concept, review literature related to transculturation, and develop a theory that transculturation provides a way forward for the ELCA to more closely reflect the multi-cultural contexts in which we live.

CHAPTER 5

A THEORY OF TRANSCULTURATION

The phenomenon in which a Lutheran confessional tradition is expressed in

cultures of emerging ministries in the ELCA is a result of *transculturation*. Both cultures

are transformed and new cultural phenomena emerge in the process. This understanding

of transculturation draws upon the work of Fernando Ortiz who introduced the neologism

transculturation to the field of sociology in his book *Cuban Counterpoint: Tobacco and*

Sugar in 1940.[1]

Ortiz described transculturation as a process of *deculturation* and *neoculturation.*

He described the concept in a paragraph contrasting transculturation with acculturation

that will set the stage for this conversation:

> I am of the opinion that the word *transculturation* better expresses the different
> phases of the process of transition from one culture to another because this does
> not consist merely in acquiring another culture, which is what the English word
> *acculturation* really implies, but the process also necessarily involves the loss or
> uprooting of a previous culture, which could be defined as deculturation. In
> addition it carries the idea of the consequent creation of new cultural phenomena,
> which could be called neoculturation.[2]

In this chapter we will place emerging ministries in the ELCA in the context of a

larger American Lutheran story from perspectives of cultural and liturgical history. We

will look at two alternative understandings of transculturation as it has developed since

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[1] Fernando Ortiz, *Cuban Counterpoint: Tobacco and Sugar* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1995), 97-103.

[2] Ibid., 103.

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introduced by Ortiz: transculturation as acculturation and transculturation as 'beyond culture.' We will then look at ways that Ortiz's understanding of transculturation relates to Gadamer's 'fusion of horizons' and how Ortiz's understanding of transculturation has been employed in other settings, including the Bible, music, colonization, transliteracy, and in relation to homogeneity. We will return to a focus on emerging ministries in the ELCA and discuss them from the perspectives of transculturation, emergence, and nepantla. Finally we will develop the theory that has emerged in this grounded theory research project that transculturation may serve as a way forward for the ELCA in diversity: both diversity among and diversity within congregations and ministries.

Emerging Ministries in an American Lutheran Story

The American Lutheran story can be viewed from numerous perspectives. This version of the story draws upon historical and liturgical resources viewed from a vantage point of transculturation. Historians such as Eric Gritsch,[3] Clifford Nelson,[4] and Abdel Ross Wentz[5] have written from distinct vantage points over the course of the past sixty years. The story that emerges is a story of immigration, the development of ethnic and language based synods, mergers of synods, and strains of Lutheran orthodoxy and pietism in a developing nation.[6] Liturgical scholars such as Luther Reed,[7] Frank Senn,[8] and

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[3] Eric W. Gritsch, *A History of Lutheranism* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2002).

[4] E. Clifford Nelson, *The Lutherans in North America* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1980). Nelson's work was first published in 1975, prior to the formation of the ELCA in 1988.

[5] Abdel Ross Wentz, *A Basic History of Lutheranism in America* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1964). Wentz's book was first published in 1955, during the height of the common service era of American Lutheranism.

[6] Richard J. Perry, ed., *Catching a Star: Transcultural Reflections on a Church for All People* (Minneapolis, MN: Lutheran University Press, 2004), 198-201. James Mayer recounts a similar synopsis of this history in his chapter, "White Lutherans: Who We Are, What We Bring, What We Need."

Geoffrey Wainwright[9] have traced the development of Lutheran liturgies in America from the use of traditional liturgies from homelands through the formation of a shared liturgy in English to the traditional, contemporary, and alternative forms of worship experienced at the time of this study. The purpose of the following overview of an American Lutheran story is to situate emerging transcultural ministry in the context of a Lutheran cultural and liturgical history.

<div align="center">1620-1888: An Immigrant Church</div>

The first Lutherans to come to America arrived from the Netherlands and Sweden in 1620. Waves of immigrants followed from Germany and the Scandinavian countries. Lutheranism was the established state church in those countries. In this new world, Lutherans were just one of many minorities. Immigrant Lutherans gathered with fellow immigrants and worshipped in the languages, liturgies, and traditions of their home countries. They formed ethnic/language-based synods of Lutheran congregations. Between 1840 and 1875, fifty-eight different Lutheran synods were formed in the United

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[7] Luther D. Reed, *The Lutheran Liturgy: A Study of the Common Liturgy of the Lutheran Church in America* (Philadelphia: Muhlenberg Press, 1959); Luther D. Reed, *Worship: A Study of Corporate Devotion* (Philadelphia: Muhlenberg Press, 1959). Luther Reed was a preeminent Lutheran liturgical scholar at the height of the common service/common liturgy era of American Lutheranism. His books were texts for seminary worship courses. He began his book *Worship* with a twenty-four page chapter on "The Church Building."

[8] Frank C. Senn, *Christian Liturgy: Catholic and Evangelical* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1997); Frank C. Senn, *The People's Work: A Social History of the Liturgy* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2006). Senn is among the most prolific of Lutheran liturgical scholars of our age.

[9] Geoffrey Wainwright, *Doxology: The Praise of God in Worship, Doctrine, and Life: A Systematic Theology* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1980); Geoffrey Wainwright and Karen B. Westerfield Tucker, *The Oxford History of Christian Worship* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006). Wainwright writes from the perspective of a liturgical theologian.

States.[10] Immigration to the United States from traditionally Lutheran, northern European

countries continued through the first two decades of the twentieth-century.

At first, pastors and worship resources were supplied from home countries.

Eventually second- and third-generation families of immigrants transitioned to English as

their primary language. The need for English-language resources, liturgies, and

theological training for clergy emerged. Lutheran synods began to work together to

develop resources and educate clergy.[11]

<p style="text-align:center">1888-1978: The Common Service Era[12]</p>

In 1888 the Common Service was published in English coinciding with the

merger of several Lutheran synods into the United Lutheran Church in America.[13] The

use of a common liturgy and language facilitated a century of mergers that led to the

formation of the ELCA in 1988. In 1917 the *Common Service Book* was published which

included occasional services and hymns in English in addition to the Common Service

liturgy. The *Service Book and Hymnal (SBH)* replaced the *Common Service Book* in 1958

and was the culmination of the Common Service/Common Liturgy tradition.[14] More

recent Lutheran hymnals, including the *Lutheran Book of Worship (LBW)* published in

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[10] Eric W. Gritsch, *Fortress Introduction to Lutheranism* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1994), 57.

[11] The first Lutheran seminary in the Americas was formed in Gettysburg, PA in 1826.

[12] The Common Service era entered a time of transition and phase out with the publication of the *Lutheran Book of Worship* in 1978. LBW moved to ecumenically developed texts for the liturgy and from "shall do" to "may do" rubrics.

[13] The development of a common service in English was the subject of great debate at the time. The 'common service debate' took place in the 1880s leading up to 1888 primarily in articles, editorials, and letters to the editors in "The Lutheran Church in Review" (now published as "The Lutheran Quarterly").

[14] The Common Liturgy was a slightly revised version of the Common Service published.

1978 and *Evangelical Lutheran Worship (ELW)* published in 2006, have moved away from the Common Service/Liturgy to the use of ecumenically developed texts and liturgies. ELW incorporated diverse liturgies, hymnody, and songs drawn from many ethnic traditions and musical genre. It was developed as a "core rather than a comprehensive resource."[15]

At the end of the nineteenth-century, giving up worship in the language and cultural heritage of their homelands for the sake of a common language, liturgy, and worship life was a sacrificial but missional move.[16] It enabled the mergers of numerous ethnic-based synods into a handful of Lutheran denominations with global and ecumenical impact in the twentieth century. It also reflected the acculturation of northern European immigrants (particularly their children) into the American culture.[17]

The Common Service era from 1888 to 1978 ensconced American Lutheranism in an essentially mono-cultural expression of Lutheranism with a common language, common liturgy, common calendar, and common 18th and 19th century northern European hymnody. Common Service era Lutheranism was a reflection of the industrial/management culture of its day: franchised, name-branded, managed, and standardized with interchangeable parts. Seminaries trained clergy to fill common roles

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[15] *Evangelical Lutheran Worship*, Pew ed. (Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg Fortress, 2006), 7. Beyond philosophical commitments to particular liturgies, current technologies provide access to a myriad of worship resources that could not have been imagined in the Common Service era. A comprehensive resource was necessary at that time.

[16] This was an example of a transcultural process: deculturation for the sake of neoculturation.

[17] Acculturation is taking on another culture as your own, or in the case of an infant, growing into your native culture. The term *melting pot* came into use in 1908 reflecting an expectation that immigrant cultures would merge into one American culture. My grandfather who emigrated from Norway as a young man learned English, although spoken with a bit of an accent, and never allowed his children to learn Norwegian.

and, frankly, clergy were interchangeable parts in the church system.[18] The Common

Service era created a shared identity for American Lutherans and a niche in mainstream

culture.[19] Within those narrow cultural boundaries, American Lutheranism grew to more

than five million members in the ELCA at its founding in 1988 along with several million

Lutherans in other Lutheran synods and denominations.

<p style="text-align:center;">1978-Now: Towards Transcultural Mission</p>

The last decades of the twentieth-century were volatile times. The rise of media

culture through radio, television, movies, audio and video recordings, and ultimately the

internet and social media brought the civil rights movements, wars, and global events,

along with entertainment into our living rooms and now, to our cell phones. Vatican II

brought a sea change of reform in the Roman Catholic Church that reverberated

ecumenically. Evangelical Christianity rose in prominence relative to the mainline

churches. Baby Boomers in mainline churches incorporated contemporary worship

modeled after free-church praise and worship styles.[20] Traditional and contemporary

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[18] My point is not to diminish the work that was done by clergy or the importance of relationships in a context but to suggest that the system was designed so that any clergy could enter any Lutheran congregation knowing they were prepared in seminary to lead worship in that context with a common service and lectionary. This would not be the case among emerging ministries included in this study nor would it be an effective process for 'assigning' emerging leaders. (The current 'first call' assignment process in the ELCA is a cultural holdover from that era.)

[19] Reed, *The Lutheran Liturgy: A Study of the Common Liturgy of the Lutheran Church in America*, 225. Luther Reed provided a description of Lutheran worship during this era. "The genius of Lutheranism reacts not only against a casual or irreverent approach to God, but also against externality and display in public worship. We seek to approach God directly, simply, sincerely. The simplicity and forthrightness of our liturgy require corresponding qualities in its setting and rendition. Overelaboration, fussy decoration, excessive ceremonial, concertistic music are all out of harmony with the Lutheran understanding. A strong sense of historic values and of what is inherently worshipful, distinctive, and beautiful, however is entirely in the Lutheran spirit. Creative activity, controlled by established principles, should be encouraged. We must expect the liturgy itself to receive minor revisions from time to time— possibly even some development."

[20] Paul R. Nelson and Frank W. Stoldt, "The Future of Worship in the ELCA: Exploring the Critical Issues," (Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg Fortress, 1999), 74-75. The ELCA studied 402

services coexisted in congregations in part to attract church-shoppers, slow the decline of mainline churches, and to meet the worship-style needs of congregational constituencies.

The median age in the ELCA in 2008 was fifty-eight. That means at least half of the participants in the ELCA grew up in the mid-twentieth century, common service, Christendom era of Lutheranism with 'traditional' worship. Another significant portion grew up in the late-twentieth century, meet-the-needs-of-the-people, consumeristic era of American Lutheranism with 'contemporary' worship options.[21] Lutheran congregations struggle over the segments of the American population that are missing from their congregations: young adults[22] and non-northern European ethnic groups.

At the beginning of the 21st century, post-modern generations of Americans are coming of age and new waves of immigrants have arrived from the global south and east. The participants in emerging ministries in this study come from these populations. They represent the young adult and ethnic communities missing in ELCA congregations.

In summary, the story of Lutheranism in America had diverse beginnings in multiple cultures as northern European immigrants gathered in ethnic/language based synods to worship in the languages and the theological, spiritual, liturgical and musical traditions of their homelands. The Common Service era merged the Lutheran church into a common, essentially mono-cultural identity and language that served its mission and

congregations "whose worship life is exemplary" and reported their findings. Definitions and descriptions of contemporary worship were provided. The top three of 20 or so descriptors were the use of current music styles, the use of bands, and preaching from someplace other than a pulpit.

[21] The introduction of contemporary worship in Lutheran congregations could also be viewed as a transcultural process of contextualizing worship in the musical and cultural languages of the Baby Boomers. As one who helped to introduce contemporary worship in congregations in the 80s and 90s I would suggest that both views, attractional consumerism and contextual enculturation, resonate with reality.

[22] Even young people within their own families belong to different cultures than their parents and grandparents and are noticeably absent from Lutheran congregations as young adults.

established its niche in a modern, Christendom, early-twentieth century environment. The US has since become a nation of micro-cultures with a growing number of people who have never learned to pray in their own or any cultural languages. The Lutheran story in America has moved from an era of diverse immigrant cultures, through a mono-cultural/mono-lingual era of Lutheran identity to the current, multi-micro-cultural environment in which mission is transcultural.

1620-1888
- Ethnic/language based synods
- Northern European diversity

1888-1978
- Common Service
- Common calendar
- Common clergy

1978-now
- ELCA 1988
- Emerging diversity
- Transcultural mission
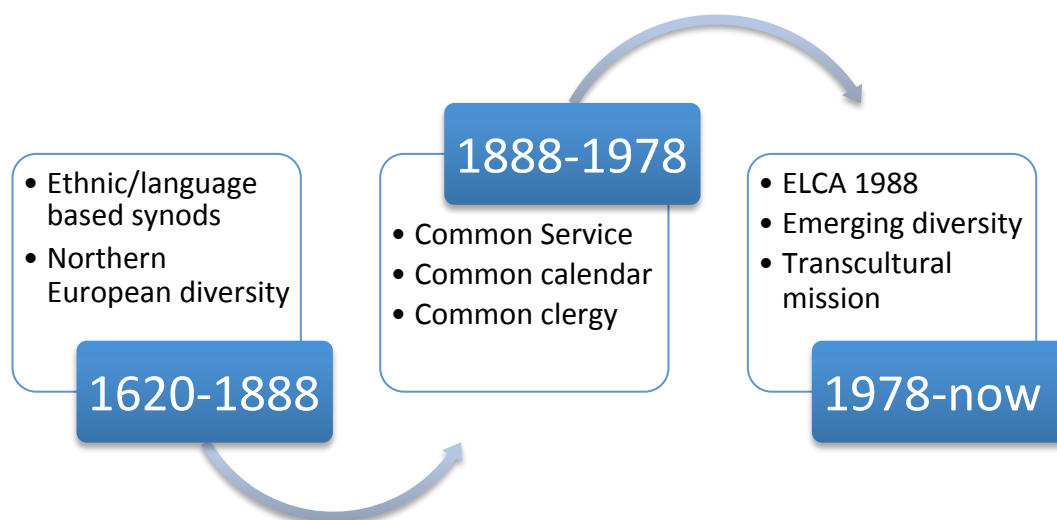
Figure 5.1: An American Lutheran Story

More than 10,000 ELCA congregations have deep cultural roots in traditional and contemporary expressions of American Lutheranism. The twenty emerging ministries identified in this study and the dozens more they represent are expressions of confessional Lutheranism emerging within American religious micro-cultures: hipster, African American, Hispanic, Asian, Queer, and multicultural communities. The theory proposed in this chapter is that transculturation provides a way forward for intentional engagement in those and other cultural communities. Before we move to the proposed theory, we will explore understandings of transculturation that differ from Ortiz's use of

the term; and we will explore uses of transculturation in settings beyond emerging ministries that draw upon or reflect Ortiz's understanding of the concept.

Alternative Understandings of Transculturation

Transculturation, which was initially defined in contrast to acculturation, was eventually defined as synonymous with acculturation. We will explore that development and explore the use of the term transculturation in the context of the Nairobi Statement on Worship and Culture, developed by the Lutheran World Federation.

Transculturation as Acculturation

When Fernando Ortiz introduced the term *transculturation* and the process of deculturation and neoculturation to the field of sociology, he did so with the blessing and support of Bronislaw Malinowski, a "great figure in contemporary ethnography and sociology." Ortiz wrote, "When the proposed neologism, *transculturation,* was submitted to the unimpeachable authority of Bronislaw Malinowski…it met with his instant approbation. Under his eminent sponsorship, I have no qualms about putting the term into circulation."[23] Malinowski wrote the introduction to Ortiz's book. In his introduction, Malinowski contrasted *acculturation*, also a recent addition to sociological terminology, with transculturation. Here is Malinowski's explanation of the word 'acculturation:'

> Aside from the unpleasant way it falls upon the ear (it sounds like a cross between a hiccup and a belch), the word *acculturation* contains a number of definite and undesirable etymological implications. It is an ethnocentric word with a moral connotation. The immigrant has to *acculturate* himself…The "uncultured" is to receive the benefits of "our culture"; it is he who must change and become converted into "one of us."[24]

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[23] Ortiz, *Cuban Counterpoint: Tobacco and Sugar*, 103.

[24] Ibid., lviii.

Malinowski equated 'acculturated' with 'assimilated.' He continued with a

description of the new term, 'transculturation:'

> Every change of culture, or, as I shall say from now on, every transculturation, is
> a process in which something is always given in return for what one receives, a
> system of give and take. It is a process in which both parts of the equation are
> modified, a process from which a new reality emerges, transformed and complex,
> a reality that is not a mechanical agglomeration of traits, nor even a mosaic, but a
> new phenomenon, original and independent. To describe this process the word
> *trans-culturation,* stemming from Latin roots, provides us with a term that does
> not contain the implication of one certain culture toward which the other must
> tend, but an exchange between two cultures, both of them active, both
> contributing their share, and both co-operating to bring about a new reality of
> civilization.[25]

Malinowski clearly articulated the difference between acculturation and

transculturation along with his personal commitment to use the term 'transculturation'

when discussing change of culture. The interesting twist in the story is that he did not.

Malinowski made minimal use of the term and did not acknowledge Ortiz as the source

of the term. The Oxford English Dictionary included the word 'transculturation,' credited

Malinowski for its introduction, and defined it as a synonym for 'acculturation.'[26]

Malinowski contributed to the misunderstanding of the term 'transculturation.'

Transcultural as "Beyond Culture"

The term 'transcultural' was ensconced in the Lutheran conversation in the

"Nairobi Statement on Worship and Culture: Contemporary Challenges and

Opportunities" through the Department for Theology and Studies of the Lutheran World

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[25] Ibid., lviii-lix.

[26] Ibid., xlv-xlvi. In the introduction to the English edition published in 1995 Fernando Coronil tells this story and traces the development of the use of the terms. He points out that Ortiz's book was not available in English at the time for the Oxford English Dictionary editors to use in their deliberation.

Federation (LWF) in 1996.[27] A team of about twenty scholars from five continents was

gathered in Hong Kong in 1994 and Nairobi in 1996 to explore the relationship between

worship and culture from a global perspective. They proposed that worship relates to

culture in four ways: as transcultural, contextual, counter-cultural, and cross-cultural.

> *First, it is transcultural, the same substance for everyone everywhere, beyond culture.* Second, it is contextual, varying according to the local situation (both nature and culture). Third, it is counter-cultural, challenging what is contrary to the Gospel in a given culture. Fourth, it is cross-cultural, making possible sharing between different local cultures (emphasis mine).

In their description of transcultural, they suggest that particular elements of faith

and worship are beyond culture in the sense that they are the same "substance" in any

culture. For example, they argue that grace, gathering in word and sacrament, reading

from the Bible, baptizing in water in the Triune name, ecumenical creeds and the Lord's

Prayer, even a shared liturgical structure, are not limited to a particular cultural

expression and are therefore beyond culture; but, such elements are contextualized into

specific cultures (their second affirmation).

Karen Ward responded to the Nairobi statement in "The Future of Worship in the

ELCA: Exploring the Critical Issues," a report presented to the ELCA in 1998.[28] She

fleshed out the four categories from the Nairobi statement using additional resources to

support the positions, including "Baptism, Eucharist, and Ministry," a 1982 report from

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[27] Lutheran World Federation, "Nairobi Statement on Worship and Culture: Contemporary Challenges and Opportunities," in *Lutheran World Federation's Study Team on Worship and Culture* (Nairobi, Kenya: Lutheran World Federation, 1996). The Nairobi statement has been published in numerous places and is available on the ELCA and LWF websites.

[28] Karen Ward was serving on the churchwide worship staff of the ELCA at the time. She went on to develop an emerging ministry, the Church of the Apostles, in the Seattle area and has had significant influence on the emerging church conversation. She is currently serving as an Episcopal priest in Portland, OR.

the World Council of Churches' Faith and Order Commission.[29] Her concluding

statement described the "transcultural pattern of worship:"[30]

> This transcultural pattern, this essential order of our worship, calls us to gather
> around strong, focused and weekly celebrations of word and sacrament, to renew
> and deepen the baptismal ordo of formation, bathing and communal integration,
> and to be dedicated to participating in God's peaceful and just reign in our
> world.[31]

The Lutheran use of the word 'transcultural' as 'beyond culture' is different from

Ortiz's use of the term regarding cultural encounters and change. The Lutheran use of the

term transcultural reflects ideas of Lamin Sanneh who would agree that God's word is

intended for expression in each culture: "I treat Christianity as a religious movement, or

as a vernacular translation movement."[32] Robert Schreiter also argued that the gospel can

and must be expressed in local theologies. He described the process as the "dynamic

interaction of all three of these roots—gospel, church, culture—with all they entail about

identity and change, to have the makings of local theology."[33]

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[29] World Council of Churches, "Baptism, Eucharist, and Ministry," (Geneva: World Council of Churches, 1982).

[30] Gordon Lathrop, *Holy People: A Liturgical Ecclesiology* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1999), 117-31. Lathrop has been a strong proponent of the use of an ordo in worship and traces its development here. His influence has been significant in Lutheran congregations that have moved away from more formal liturgies to liturgies structured around an ordo. Lathrop was a co-chair of the team that developed the Nairobi Statement on Worship and Culture. See also: Gordon Lathrop, *Central Things: Worship in Word and Sacrament* (Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg Fortess, 2005). Dirk Lange has also contributed to this conversation: Dirk G. Lange and Dwight W. Vogel, eds., *Ordo: Bath, Word, Prayer, Table: A Liturgical Primer in Honor of Gordon W. Lathrop* (Akron, OH: OSL Publications, 2006).

[31] Nelson and Stoldt, "The Future of Worship in the ELCA: Exploring the Critical Issues," 19.

[32] Sanneh, *Translating the Message: The Missionary Impact on Culture*, 7.

[33] Schreiter, *Constructing Local Theologies*, 21. Stephen Bevans and Roger Schroeder have also engaged the topic of contextual theology in helpful ways. Stephen B. Bevans, *Models of Contextual Theology*, Faith and Cultures Series (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2002); Stephen B. Bevans and Roger Schroeder, *Prophetic Dialogue: Reflections on Christian Mission Today* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2011).

Transculturation, as defined by Ortiz, is a process of engagement between cultures. The gospel does not come to us 'beyond culture.' The message of Christianity or gospel is always culturally expressed. Any translation of the message or construction of local theology must involve a transcultural process of the engagement of one cultural expression with another. Emerging ministries in the ELCA were engaging a Lutheran confession of the gospel through transculturation.

The Concept of Transculturation in Other Settings

Ortiz's concept of transculturation as deculturation and neoculturation appears in other settings, sometimes drawing directly upon his work and other time without explicit reference. Transculturation also resonates with philosophical concepts such as Gadamer's 'fusion of horizons.' This section will explore the concept of transculturation as it emerges in other settings.

Transculturation and the Fusion of Horizons

Hans-Georg Gadamer's concept of a *fusion of horizons,* particularly as he related it to the working out of common language in conversation, is helpful in thinking about transculturation. Gadamer argued "the fusion of horizons that takes place in understanding is actually the achievement of language."[34] Gadamer applied a linguistic hermeneutic of dialogue.

> Every conversation presupposes a common language, or better, creates a common language. Something is placed in the center, as the Greeks say, which the partners in dialogue both share and concerning which they can exchange ideas with one another. Hence reaching an understanding on the subject matter of a conversation necessarily means that a common language must first be worked out in the conversation…To reach an understanding in a dialogue is not merely a matter of

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[34] Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Truth and Method* (New York: Continuum, 2004), 370.

putting oneself forward and successfully asserting one's own point of view, but being transformed into a communion in which we do not remain what we were.[35]

Viewed from a perspective of transculturation, Gadamer described a process of dialogue in which dialogue partners engage in a process of linguistic deculturation that leads to neoculturation—*a communion in which we do not remain what we were.* Neoculturation in a transculturation process and the creation of new language in a fusion of horizons in a dialogical process are similar results. Engagement with the Bible is a transcultural process that results in a fusion of horizons.

Transculturation and the Bible

The Bible is a transcultural text: a collection of books from various genre written in Hebrew and Greek over the course of centuries, the most recent addition written about nineteen-hundred years ago, with no original manuscripts extant, formed into distinct collections of Jewish and Christian canon, and translated into nearly all languages. The cultures that produced the Bible are two- to four-thousand years old at this point. We have no direct engagement with those cultures or authors except through the text.[36]

Gadamer's concept of a *fusion of horizons* suggests that readers of the Bible are unable to "speak of an original meaning of the work without acknowledging that, in understanding it, the interpreter's own meaning enters it as well."[37] In this fusion of horizons the reading of scripture is a transcultural act—a form of personal and corporate

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[35] Ibid., 371.

[36] Biblical scholars and historians draw upon additional literature and historical references from the time period in their academic study of the texts that typical readers of the Bible would not access.

[37] Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, 578.

deculturation and neoculturation. Christians and others approach the text anticipating that transformation will result from the meeting.

The culture of the Bible itself changes when translated into a new language. Gadamer states a concept that is commonly accepted in our day: "every translator is an interpreter."[38] The most common discourse for the use of the term 'transculturation' related to the Bible is in discussion of translation. Again, we turn to Lamin Sanneh who argued that "God's purposes are mediated through particular cultural streams" and "all cultures and the languages in which they are embodied" are "lawful in God's eyes" which makes it "possible to render God's word into other languages."[39] When the Bible is translated into new languages it is translated into new cultures with the images, metaphors, and meanings that are brought to the text by those cultures. The Bible is transculturated in the process of translation as well as in the process of being read with as many fusions of horizons as there are interpreters.

The Bible in Emerging Ministries

The emerging ministries in this study used the Bible in at least three ways: first, readings from the Bible served as the textual and thematic basis for worship gatherings. Twelve of the ministries used the Revised Common Lectionary in worship. Others selected texts thematically or engaged in Bible study in worship services.

Second, emerging ministries encouraged involvement in Bible study groups and/or individual reflection and study (sometimes included in a 'rule of life'). Small groups, discussion groups, men's and women's Bible study groups, theology pubs, and

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[38] Ibid., 389.

[39] Sanneh, *Translating the Message: The Missionary Impact on Culture*, 47.

web pages or links for devotional Bible study were common but not ubiquitous among emerging ministries.

Third, although emerging ministries' actual names are not used in this document, thirteen of twenty included in this study chose names that directly reflected a Biblical text or metaphor. Quotations from the Bible were used on websites and in ministry documents to articulate mission and identity, although to a very limited extent. One ministry, for example, used Acts 2:42 as a theme verse: "They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers." On the day we participated in worship in one of our partial site visits, the theme was part of a series introducing the Bible: what it is, where it came from, why and how we should read it. Engagement with the Bible was for many participants in emerging ministries a new cultural practice in a transcultural process of engagement with Christianity.

A Transcultural Narrative and Theology

The biblical *narrative* can be viewed through a lens of transculturation as God's people encountered other cultures.[40] If we pick up the story with Jacob and sons, Joseph's foray into Egypt and the resulting translocation of the tribes of Israel were transcultural experiences.[41] Following Moses out of Egypt into the wilderness and eventually entering a promised land were others.[42] Transitions to judges and kings were significant cultural

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[40] One of the most useful books that addresses mission in the Bible and in the missional conversation is David Bosch's work in which he provided a thorough biblical study for his explication of the missional church. Bosch, *Transforming Mission: Paradigm Shifts in Theology of Mission*.

[41] The people of Israel flourished in Egypt but did not assimilate. Had the people of Israel assimilated, the people of Egypt may not have felt as threatened or felt the need to subdue the people of Israel in slavery. See Exodus 1:1-14.

[42] Being in the wilderness and being *en nepantla* might be similar experiences.

shifts. The building and eventual destruction of the temple, subsequent exile in Babylon, return from Babylon, rebuilding of the temple, occupation by Rome, destruction of the second temple, and the experience of diaspora all had transcultural ramifications of deculturation and neoculturation.

Biblical *theology* can also be viewed transculturally. Theophany and tabernacle encounters with God's glory, the giving of the law, temple theology, *shem* (name) and *kabod* (glory) theologies that emerged in response to the destruction of the temple,[43] a re-engagement with temple theology in the second temple era, the birth, life, death, and resurrection of Christ and the development of a Christian gospel are some of the significant transcultural theological shifts recounted in the Bible. The physical and theological shifts of the church from a Jewish center in Jerusalem to the Gentile churches of the Paul's letters were additional transcultural shifts.

Transculturation in the Bible can be viewed '*congregationally*'. The churches addressed by letters in the NT (either attributed to Paul or in chapters two and three of Revelation) lived in nepantla—betwixt and between their traditional cultures and the culture created through their encounters with the gospel. The issues addressed in the letters point to their unique contexts and the problems that developed as new cultures of Christianity emerged within them. The church in Jerusalem faced pressures and persecution from Jewish leaders and Roman forces and the cultures each defended. The transcultural encounters with the gospel experienced in NT churches have been experienced in churches throughout Christian history and were experienced in ministries emerging within the ELCA.

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[43] Mettinger, *The Dethronement of Sabaoth: Studies in the Shem and Kabod Theologies*. Mettinger describes the transitions from *Sabaoth* to *shem* and *kabod* theologies.

At a minimum, the biblical story tells us that encounters with God and God's word bring about deculturation and neoculturation in some form of transcultural transformation. Paul encouraged this process in Romans 12:2: "Do not be [acculturated] to this world, but be [transculturated] by the renewing of your minds, so that you may discern what is the will of God—what is good and acceptable and perfect."[44]

Transculturation in Music

One of the more interesting examples of transculturation in other contexts appeared in a book review in *The Japan Times*.[45] Donald Richie reviewed *Locating East Asia in Western Art Music,* edited by Yayoi Uno Everett and Frederick Lau, a collection of papers presented at the 1998 Third International Asian Music Conference in Seoul. The editors of the book referred to the interface of East Asian, European, and American music and their influences on one another as 'transculturation.'

Richie used several examples to illustrate transculturation in music. For example, the shakuhachi, bamboo flute, had grown so popular in the West that a shakuhachi flute master at the 1997 World Shakuhachi Festival noted the lack of practitioners in Japan and predicted that the "tradition would migrate to America." The sound of the shakuhachi flute had been imitated in the timbre and articulations of the Western flute by composers such as Toru Takemitsu. Western composers such as Henry Cowell and John Cage used Asian musical elements such as Buddhist chant and the "sliding tones" from Chinese

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[44] *Conformity* is an aspect of assimilation and acculturation. Further, I am suggesting that *transformation* (or *metamorphosis* as in the Greek) is related to deculturation and neoculturation in a process of transculturation. Transculturation is a transformational process.

[45] Donald Richie, "'Transculturation' of Migrating Musical Styles," *The Japan Times*, May 23 2004, http://search.japantimes.co.jp/print/fb20040523dr.html (accessed April 18, 2011). Yayoi Uno Everett and Frederick Lau, *Locating East Asia in Western Art Music* (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 2004).

opera. The presence of symphonies and other Western-style music ensembles in the East indicated the "tsunami" of influence of the West on Asian musical cultures. Transculturation in Eastern and Western music creates a musical fusion of horizons.

<p style="text-align:center">Transculturation and Colonization</p>

Cuban Counterpoint: Tobacco and Sugar is about the interplay of the native Cuban tobacco industry and the imported sugar industry, the spiritual aspects of tobacco, the capitalistic priority of sugar, and the slaves brought from Africa to work the fields. Ortiz described the history of Cuba as "the history of its intermeshed transculturations." In addition to the African slaves,

> other immigrant cultures of the most varying origins arrived, either in sporadic waves or a continuous flow, always exerting an influence and being influenced in turn: Indians from the mainland, Jews, Portuguese, Anglo-Saxons, French, North Americans, even yellow Mongoloids from Macao, Canton, and other regions of the sometime Celestial Kingdom. And each of them torn from his native moorings, faced with the problem of disadjustment and readjustment, of deculturation and acculturation—in a word, of transculturation.[46]

As Ortiz described the history of Cuba, "the concept of 'transculturation' is used to apprehend at once the destructive and constructive moments in histories affected by colonialism and imperialism."[47] Colonizers and the colonized both experienced the destructive and constructive processes of transculturation. Ortiz's book is the story of these multiple transculturations. He created the term 'transculturation' to describe what happened in colonization from a sociological perspective.

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[46] Ortiz, *Cuban Counterpoint: Tobacco and Sugar*, 98.

[47] Ibid., xv.

Here are two other examples of transculturation with connections to colonization. First, Terry Huffman developed a "transculturation hypothesis"[48] to explain why some American Indian students experienced successful college careers while many American Indians encountered difficulties while attending institutions of higher learning. Cultural conflict was the most frequently cited reason for poor academic achievement. Huffman described four *cultural masks* that American Indian students assumed in college: (1) *assimilated* students identified with the mainstream culture and encountered few cultural difficulties in college, (2) *marginal* students were somewhat assimilated but also desired some identification and affiliation with traditional American Indian culture that resulted in pressure from both cultures, (3) *estranged* students had strong identification with American Indian culture, aggressively rejected assimilation, and encountered extremely difficult college experiences, and (4) *transculturated* students also had a strong identification with their American Indian culture and did not aspire for assimilation, but "used their ethnic identity as a firm social-psychological anchor and derived strength and confidence from that cultural mask" to participate in the mainstream culture.[49]

Estranged students experienced a process Huffman described as *initial alienation, disillusionment, emotional rejection, and disengagement.* Transculturated students displayed the ability to interact within and between an American Indian culture and a college mainstream culture as demanded by the situation. The transculturation process was *initial alienation, self-discovery, realignment, and participation*. The transculturation

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[48] Terry Huffman, "Resistance Theory and the Transculturation Hypothesis as Explanations of College Attrition and Persistence among Culturally Traditional American Indian Students," *Journal of American Indian Education* 40, no. 3 (2001): 1.

[49] Ibid., 9.

hypothesis assumes that "American Indian students simply increase their cultural repertoire adding the skills needed while keeping their Native heritage intact…the individual is conceptualized as fully capable of interaction with two cultures without cultural loss."[50]

As a second example, Christopher R. Little from Jordan Evangelical Theological Seminary quoted a Japanese convert to Christianity from the early part of the twentieth century who said "Americans…ought to serve mankind in other fields than in religion."[51] The convert was decrying the colonizing tendencies of American missionaries. Christopher Little listed six characteristics of American Christianity that indicated it was "a local creation and thereby does not have universal appeal and applicability." Those six characteristics reflecting the Americanization of Christianity were (1) a systemized theological perspective, (2) the professionalization of clergy, (3) an Enlightenment anthropomorphism, (4) consumer-oriented marketing (McDonaldization), (5) capitalism in the church, and (6) a dichotomistic worldview.[52] Regarding the Japanese convert's suggestion that Americans should stay out of the religious field, Little agreed, "unless they are willing and able to de-Americanize by dancing transculturally, particularly in the Arab world."[53]

> Ultimately, missionaries of all persuasions must learn the dance of
> transculturation. This entails the ability to move from the communicator's culture

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[50] Ibid., 29.

[51] Christopher R. Little, "Toward De-Americanization through Transculturation," *Currents in Theology and Mission* 34, no. 1 (2007): 29.

[52] Ibid., 31-32.

[53] Ibid., 37.

through biblical cultures to the receptor's culture so that the latter can comprehend God's message.[54]

Stephen Bevans and Roger Schroeder use another metaphor for this transcultural missionary dance. They use the term 'intercultural' and the metaphor of entering another's garden: one is respectful of another's garden. One may take cuttings from another's garden or offer cuttings from one's own garden. They point out that we "naturally tend to perceive, understand, and judge someone else's garden through the lens of our own…Another aspect of this process is that the newcomer will make mistakes in the new world of meaning."[55] In Little's dance of transculturation and Bevans and Schroeder's garden metaphor, the missionary comes as a guest to another culture. A different balance of power in the meeting of cultures is implied in cross-cultural mission than was described in Ortiz's context of colonization.

Bevans and Schroeder presented Gerald Arbuckle's description of the process of interaction between people of different cultures. They described three stages: "(1) fascination with and enjoyment of cultural differences, (2) disillusionment and tension due to the difficulties of communication and interaction, and (3) movement to overcome these difficulties to reach real dialogue and mutual interaction…In this third stage peoples of different cultural groups may reach a point of dialoguing with each other regarding both the seeds and weeds of each other's gardens."[56] Again there is resonance with deconstructive/constructive and deculturation/neoculturation aspects of transculturation.

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[54] Ibid., 33.

[55] Bevans and Schroeder, *Prophetic Dialogue: Reflections on Christian Mission Today*, 76.

[56] Ibid., 86.

Transculturation and Transliteracy

Hans-Georg Gadamer and Bevans and Schroeder both used a hermeneutic of dialogue in their work. Gadamer referred to "the primacy of dialogue, the relation of question and answer" in understanding texts in a fusion of horizons.[57] Bevans and Schroeder viewed mission from a perspective of dialogue: "Mission today…needs to be thought about and carried out in the spirit and practice of *dialogue*…Mission is not just a matter of *doing things for* people. It is first of all a matter of *being with* people, of *listening* and *sharing* with them."[58] In both cases a common language is created or shared for the sake of understanding. Simon Biggs explored the use of multiple languages in a transcultural environment—*transliteracy.*

Biggs asked what effect recent developments in global communications are having on language and its readers and writers. He quoted the same definition of transculturation from Ortiz that I used earlier regarding transculturation, deculturation, and neoculturation to assist in understanding how changes in culture and language have developed. Biggs wrote:

> The suggestion here is that we are all engaged in an interplay of cultural interactions and appropriations, which is now occurring within a world of highly mobile peoples saturated with communications media. Language, a technology fundamental to the human condition, is the primary means by which this process occurs…Transculturation functions…where human migration has proceeded, for multiple reasons, in multiple directions.[59]

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[57] Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, 362.

[58] Bevans and Schroeder, *Prophetic Dialogue: Reflections on Christian Mission Today*, 20.

[59] Simon Biggs, "Transculturation, Transliteracy and Generative Poetics," (2008): 6, www.littlepig.org.uk/texts/trans.pdf (accessed April 18, 2011). This essay is available in several locations on-line in addition to the one cited here, including on SlideShare.

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He continues: "The concept of *pluriliteracy* proposes that certain individuals and communities function within highly multilingual environments where multiple languages are employed in various contexts." Pluriliteracy is usually related to spoken and written languages. Biggs used the term *transliteracy* to refer to the ability to read, write and interact across a broad range of platforms, including signing, speaking, handwriting, print, TV, radio, film, art, and digital social networks. He says: "In the media-saturated societies of today's world it can be assumed that many people are transliterate, capable not only of interpreting information across media and linguistic forms but also translating information from one cultural context to another."[60]

The transculturated American Indian students described by Terry Huffman as able to function in two cultures without cultural loss, might also be described by Biggs as transliterate—able to function in multiple cultural languages. Huffman's transculturation hypothesis included *self-discovery* in the process of becoming a transculturated student. Biggs refers to *self-definition*:

> People define themselves through language and create their own sub-cultural linguistic fields, their own 'tribal' codes, in order to establish their identity and be identified by other members of their 'tribe.' This might be done through the clothes they wear, the language they employ or the means through which they transmit their messages. This is an iterative process where people evolve new dialects that in turn define self.[61]

Transculturation as an iterative process of learning new dialects, defining and redefining self in dialogue with the numerous micro-cultures encountered daily in American (and global) contexts seems to be substantively different from the kind of transculturation experienced in the midst of colonization that the term was coined to

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[60] Ibid., 8.

[61] Ibid., 7.

describe. The process however is the same: deculturation leads to neoculturation when engagement with other cultures occurs.

Transliteracy in Emerging Ministries

Emerging leaders, as indigenous leaders, were fluent in the cultural languages of their ministries. They developed fluency in Lutheran confessional languages through seminary training. The gift of emerging leaders in their contexts was they had already begun the process of translating the gospel into their own cultural languages. Developing an emerging ministry was a process for emerging leaders of helping people from their own cultures engage the gospel in their own cultural languages and developing a new gospel-shaped culture in community with one another.[62]

Transculturated participants in emerging ministries developed the skills of functioning among or between cultures. Participants in emerging ministries continued to be hipster young adults, or African American, or Hispanic, or GLBTQ, or northern European while participating in an emerging community shaped by a Lutheran confession of the gospel. Their indigenous cultural identities shaped their confession of the gospel and their confession of the gospel shaped their perceptions of their identities.

On another level, engagement with a Lutheran confessional culture is not an emerging ministry participant's only experience of transculturation. It is common to encounter people from diverse cultures in daily life (particularly in the public sphere), and to engage those cultures to the extent we must or choose. It was not so common to meet diverse cultures within congregations or emerging ministries in the ELCA.

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[62] This contrasts with typical cross-cultural missionary models where one must first learn the culture and languages of the people before one can communicate the gospel.

So, if many people, as Biggs claims, are transliterate, able to function in multiple cultural environments in public contexts, and capable of learning new dialects in the iterative process of self-definition, why are people in congregations in the ELCA so challenged by multi-cultural engagement in church? Why does the homogeneous unit principle still apply in congregational life—including in emerging ministries?

Transculturation and Homogeneity

Before Donald McGavran introduced the phrase *homogeneous unit principle* as a principle of church growth in 1970, Gibson Winter described the phenomenon from the perspective of the development of the metropolis. He contrasted "impersonal interdependence" that people experience in work, school, and other public settings with "communal insulation" in personal communities that we experience in our neighborhoods and, by extension, churches. The development of metropolitan areas depended upon our abilities to interact impersonally with a wide variety of people; but we tend to live in neighborhoods where people are like us ethnically, and even more-so, socio-economically. "Since churches have traditionally anchored their communal life in residential areas, they inevitably become victims of the pathology that assails neighborhood life."[63] The downside of neighborhood contextuality is homogeneity.

> A Protestant congregation collapses when it cannot recruit a socially homogeneous membership. Every social group depends on numerous factors to sustain its life; each group, however, has its key to life, without which it ceases to be; this is its principle of life. One would expect the principle of life in a congregation to be faith, but in the major denominations it is social homogeneity or economic integration.[64]

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[63] Winter, *The Suburban Captivity of the Churches: An Analysis of Protestant Responsibility in the Expanding Metropolis*, 29.

[64] Ibid., 69.

In *Understanding Church Growth,* Donald McGavran described a *homogeneous unit* as "simply a section of society in which all the members have some characteristic in common."[65] That simple concept coupled with the idea that "people like to become Christians without crossing racial, linguistic, or class barriers"[66] grew out of his study of growing churches.[67] The homogeneous unit principle applies beyond churches. McGavran described the world's population as "a mosaic, and each piece has a life of its own that seems strange and often unlovely to men and women of other pieces."

The ELCA is becoming more ethnically diverse through growth in the numbers of ethnic specific ministries; but, like the nation described by McGavran, the ELCA is a mosaic. The multicultural ministry of the ELCA is focused in ethnic communities. The ELCA has six Ethnic Associations: African American Lutheran Association, American Indian and Alaska Native Lutheran Association, Association of Lutherans of Arab and Middle Eastern Heritage, Association of Asian and Pacific Islander-ELCA, Latino Lutheran Association, and even a European American Lutheran Association that work to develop leadership and ministry within and among ethnic communities.[68]

Ethnicity is just one of the ways we gather in homogeneous units. People select congregations based upon socio-economic similarity. Congregations and people within congregations cluster in homogeneous units based upon cultural characteristics such as

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[65] McGavran and Wagner, *Understanding Church Growth*, 69.

[66] Ibid., 163.

[67] Mark Lau Branson and Juan Francisco Martínez, *Churches, Cultures & Leadership: A Practical Theology of Congregations and Ethnicities* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2011), 17. Branson and Martinez have updated McGavran's language a bit: "The Homogeneous Unit Principle (HUP) states that people respond most effectively to the gospel in ethnic or culturally specific churches."

[68] Information about ethnic associations in the ELCA is available at www.elca.org/Growing-In-Faith/Ministry/Multicultural-Ministries/Ethnic-Associations.aspx (accessed March 21, 2012).

worship style preference, age-based ministry, gender-based ministry, and even political positions.

Emerging ministries included in this study also gathered in homogeneous units using McGavran's definition that "all the members have some characteristic in common." One of the points of comparison for each of the six ministries profiled in chapter 3 was "a description of the ministry's cultural distinctives." Each ministry had at least one cultural characteristic that reflected the cultural unity of participants—what Winter called its *key to life* or *principle of life*. In all but one site there was an essentially mono-ethnic component (four European American, one African American). One, a multi-ethnic ministry, held a commitment to diversity as its dominant unifying cultural element. Music and worship styles reflected the cultural distinctiveness in each ministry. Three ministries were developed around a hipster young adult culture.

Each of the ministries studied had unifying cultural characteristics that a visitor would either experience as welcoming or as foreign to their own cultural experiences and preferences. Each of these emerging ministries was transcultural in relation to the ELCA and filled with transliterate participants (in "impersonal interdependence" areas of public life); yet, they gathered in church ("communal insulation" in a personal community) with participants who shared essential elements of their culture.[69] There was great diversity among emerging ministries and limited diversity within.

The next section will explore transculturation in emerging ministries in the ELCA as emergence in nepantla. A focused view of emergence will shape observations of

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[69] Winter, *The Suburban Captivity of the Churches: An Analysis of Protestant Responsibility in the Expanding Metropolis*. Winter's observations continue to resonate.

emergence in emerging ministries. A deeper view of nepantla will guide reflections on the place of emerging ministries in nepantla.

Transculturation as Emergence in Nepantla

The result of transculturation is neoculturation. Something new emerges in the convergence of cultures. Perhaps what emerges can be explained from constituent pieces of the converging cultures. Perhaps not. Perhaps the new culture that emerges in transculturation is more than the sum of its parts. That would be the classic definition of emergence.

Transculturation and Emergence

There are two assertions from emergence theory that I would like to draw into the conversation at this point. First, emerging ministries are made up of *persons*.

> Human persons are *proactively*—not responsively—emergent realities. Persons are not subsequent products of purely physical processes, the final outcomes of a temporal series of events governed by other agents at the end of which persons emerge. To the contrary, ontologically, personhood adheres in the human from the start—even if in only the most nascent, densely compacted form possible—acting as the causal agent of its own development.[70]

Emerging ministries, actually all human organizations, are made up of persons who are causal agents in their own emergence. The second assertion is that those persons create *interactive organizations*. Christian Smith asserts:

> One of the amazing things about human persons is the ability to engage beliefs and ideas in ways that interact with bodies and the material world in order to creatively form patterns of actions, interactions, and collective social environments.[71]

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[70] Christian Smith, *What Is a Person? Rethinking Humanity, Social Life, and the Moral Good from the Person Up* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2010), 87-88.

[71] Ibid., 119.

"If it be asked: What is it that you claim to be emergent? —the brief reply is:

Some new kind of relation."[72] What is emerging in emerging ministries is the result of the

relations of the persons who make up the ministries. "With emergent phenomena, it is the

interactive organizations, rather than the component behavior, that is the critical

explanatory feature."[73]

Steven Johnson wrote about the complexity of *self-organizing* systems. He used

the example of the city. A city that emerges is not the orchestration of city planners; it is

a complex self-organizing system that has "a coherent personality, a personality that self-

organizes out of millions of individual decisions, a global order built out of local

interactions."[74] Emerging ministries are also complex self-organizing systems, albeit on a

smaller scale than a city. Emerging ministries are not so much planned as emerging into

being through personal relations. What emerges is the result of the interactions of many

more variables than could ever be planned or controlled. In at least this sense, emerging

ministries, are emergent.

One additional view of emergence is relevant to the conversation of emerging

ministries in the ELCA. Margaret Wheatley and Deborah Frieze argue that there is a

"lifecycle of emergence" that involves three movements: Stage One is the formation of

networks. People move in and out of networks based on how much they personally

benefit from participating. Both the emerging and missional conversations have networks

of people who engage them.

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[72] Clayton and Davies, *The Re-Emergence of Emergence: The Emergentist Hypothesis from Science to Religion*, 13.

[73] Ibid., 261.

[74] Johnson, *Emergence: The Connected Lives of Ants, Brains, Cities, and Software*, 39.

Stage Two is the development of *communities of practice*. Those communities may be small groups of people within networks who commit to work together. In the case of emerging and missional conversations, emerging ministries and missional congregations would be 'communities of practice.'

Stage Three is the unpredictable and sudden appearance of *systems of influence.* Practices developed in the networks and communities of practice become accepted standards of practice and shape larger organizations. Practitioners become leaders in their fields. Both the emerging and missional conversations are influencing the church in different but significant ways. Wheatley and Frieze argue that emergence is a means of social innovation; in fact, they conclude, "emergence is the only way change really happens on this planet."[75]

<div align="center">Emerging Transcultural Identities</div>

Emerging ministries in the ELCA are emerging transcultural ministries. Transculturation emerges in at least two ways related to the ELCA and emerging ministries: (1) a Lutheran confession of the gospel emerges within emerging ministries; and, (2) indigenous cultures of emerging ministries develop new Lutheran cultures that emerge within the organizational culture of the ELCA.

First, from the perspective of the ELCA, engagement with emerging ministries was transcultural mission. Emerging ministries and other congregations in the ELCA shared a common confession of a Lutheran understanding of the gospel and gathering in word and sacrament. Beyond that, each emerging ministry was culturally unique and

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[75] Margaret Wheatley and Deborah Frieze, "Lifecycle of Emergence," *The Faith Collaboratory* 2006, no. 1 (2006): 1-4.

distinct from the traditional cultures of the ELCA. Emerging ministries in this study experienced a fusion of horizons with a Lutheran confession of the gospel that resulted in the formation of new Lutheran cultures including hipster Lutheran, African American Lutheran, Hispanic Lutheran, and multi-cultural Lutheran.

Cultural horizons were changed when the profound perichoretic embrace of the gospel met a Hispanic woman who felt profoundly unworthy. Horizons changed when African Americans from the black church tradition in other denominations met a Lutheran confession of the gospel and rethought practices such as baptism, altar calls, and revivals. Children were baptized. Altar calls became calls to discipleship. Revivals still got folks fired up but with less brimstone. Horizons changed when cool, rebellious, individualistic, enlightened, and materialistic, hipster young adults met a Lutheran confession of the gospel through community in emerging ministries.[76] Individual and corporate horizons were transformed and new cultures emerged as a result of transcultural engagement with a Lutheran confession of the gospel.

Participants in emerging ministries did not encounter a Lutheran confession of the gospel by reading *The Book of Concord* (although their seminary trained leaders did). They encountered the gospel in Lutheran voices through the preaching and teaching of emerging leaders, in conversation and study with fellow participants, and by rubbing shoulders with others from the ELCA (including encounters with bishops, other Lutheran pastors, colleagues on synod and national committees, seminaries, and in cooperative ministries).

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[76] McCracken, *Hipster Christianity: When Church and Cool Collide*, 48-49. McCracken describes the origins and notions of *cool* in relation to hipsters. The characteristics mentioned here are from his description and may or may not reflect particular participants in emerging ministries in this study.

Of those Lutheran voices, emerging leaders had the greatest impact in mediating a Lutheran confession of the gospel in emerging ministries because they were indigenous to the cultures in which they were leaders, fluent in their cultural languages, and passionately committed to the ministries emerging. Every encounter with the gospel is a transcultural experience. Deculturation is lessened when the gospel is encountered in one's own cultural languages. Emerging leaders and ministries in the ELCA have developed cultures that express a Lutheran understanding of the gospel in their own cultural languages.

The second transcultural process for emerging ministries and the ELCA involved incorporating emerging ministries into the ELCA and its organizational structures, constitutions, and various expressions of church—congregations, synods, and churchwide. The cultures of emerging ministries and the cultures of the ELCA engaged one another through encounters among leaders such as local pastors and bishops. Emerging leaders participated in ELCA mission developer training.[77] Emerging ministries gathered with ELCA congregations in synod and churchwide assemblies. Emerging ministries, leaders, participants, their music and other cultural expressions of their communities have been included in worship services at synod and churchwide assemblies and gatherings as a public expression of transculturation and inclusion on the part of the ELCA. For the participants from emerging ministries it felt a bit like singing

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[77] One emerging leader described her mission developer training experience as "four days of my life flushed down the *** toilet, absolutely worthless, I resented it." Her strong sentiments suggest a cultural disconnect between the ELCA traditional forms of mission development and emerging ministries.

their songs in a strange land,[78] but changes emerged in the culture of the ELCA through the inclusion of these ministries and their unique gifts.

The process of transculturation between emerging and ELCA cultures was ongoing as emerging African American Lutherans realized they were often the only black faces in the room at ELCA meetings. GLBTQ participants realized they were more readily embraced in some places than others within the ELCA.

Participants in emerging ministries were culturally different from the typical Lutheran demographic but they were also different from folks in their indigenous cultures that were not shaped by a Lutheran confession of the gospel. In other words, participants in emerging ministries lived in nepantla.

<p align="center">Transculturation and Nepantla</p>

It was a conversation with an emerging leader about nepantla that led me to the concept of transculturation.[79] He described his experience of nepantla as a place in between—neither one nor the other—between Mexican and American cultures. He was a poet and shared a poem with my research team about his desire to have his ashes spread in the middle of the Rio Grande so that he might be at rest where he had always lived— between cultures, in nepantla.

Viewed from the process of transculturation, nepantla might be the equivalent of the place where cultures meet and from which something new emerges. Nepantla scholars, however, describe nepantla, not as a place, but as a process. James Maffie

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[78] Psalm 137:4. "How could we sing the Lord's song in a foreign land?" Several emerging ministries spoke of being invited to share music, dance, spoken word poetry, or lead worship in other congregations and in synodical or churchwide gatherings.

[79] See page 3.

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described nepantla processes as "dialectical, intermediating, transactional, oscillating, betwixting-and-betweening activities, middling, and abundant with mutuality and reciprocity." He added that nepantla processes were "transformative processes because they are simultaneously destructive and creative."[80] His descriptions of nepantla echo the transcultural process of deculturation and neoculturation.

As people live *en nepantla* they have choices about how to live between cultures. The American Indian students discussed earlier assumed four cultural masks that represented four ways of living in nepantla between native and dominant US cultures that ranged from assimilation to cultural rejection. This range of responses has been described in *Globalizing the Sacred* as a "continuum of hybridity" that ranges from "assimilationist hybridity" to "destabilizing hybridity."[81] The authors used these terms to describe two Latino churches in the South that have encouraged these two different responses to their hybrid cultures.

Lara Medina described nepantla as a place of *balance* between cultures:

To be *en nepantla* is to exist on the border, on the boundaries of cultures and social structures, were life is in constant motion, in constant fluidity. To be *en nepantla* also means to be in the center of things, to exist in the middle place where all things come together. *Nepantla,* the center place, is a place of balance, a place of equilibrium, or…a place of chaos or confusion…As you make your way through life, *nepantla* becomes the place you live in most of the time—home. How we choose to occupy our home is crucial.[82]

The transculturated American Indian students found a home in nepantla. They found the balance between cultures in which they could maintain their native identity yet

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[80] Maffie, "The Centrality of Nepantla in Conquest-Era Nahua Philosophy," 15.

[81] Manuel A. Vásquez and Marie F. Marquardt, *Globalizing the Sacred: Religion across the Americas* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2003), 169.

[82] Medina, "Nepantla Spirituality: Negotiating Multiple Religious Identities among U.S. Latinas." 265-66.

speak the cultural languages and draw upon the benefits of both native and dominant educational cultures. Lara Medina concluded her chapter with this line: "*Nepantla* spirituality offers a choice, a choice to exclude or to include."[83] Emerging ministries in the ELCA, to the extent they are transcultural, also live *en nepantla*.

<div align="center">Emerging Ministries en Nepantla</div>

Visitors have attended emerging ministry worship gatherings and asked if they were actually in a Lutheran church. Common service era Lutherans might suggest that emerging worship is not Lutheran worship. Confessionally, they're wrong. Culturally, they're also wrong. Word and sacrament are emerging in new Lutheran cultural expressions—part of the neoculturation process as Lutheran and other cultures engage one another.

Nepantla was both a personal and a communal experience for emerging leaders. They felt that they lived on the borders—betwixt and between Lutheran and indigenous cultures. Seminary and ordination were transcultural experiences for emerging leaders as alternative routes to ordination and visions for ministry in alternative cultural expressions of Lutheranism set them apart from traditional seminarians. Coloring outside the lines of typical ecclesial structures as mission developers made fitting in the box of an ELCA constitution a transcultural process for emerging ministries and a challenge for emerging leaders.

Ethnic and hipster cultural identities set participants in emerging ministries apart from mainstream American culture as well as from traditional Lutheran cultures. To be Lutheran and Hispanic in America, for example, meant you were neither a 'typical'

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[83] Ibid., 266.

Lutheran nor a 'typical' Hispanic nor a 'stereotypical' American, but somewhere in between—in nepantla. Transculturated Hispanic American Lutherans learned to speak multiple cultural languages, including Spanish, English, Lutheran, and whatever other cultural languages they would need to communicate in their jobs or the greater community, in order to live in nepantla. To embrace cultural diversity requires a willingness to dwell in nepantla and engage with the other in nepantla in a process of transculturation.

<center>Diversity Among, Homogeneity Within Emerging Ministries</center>

The ELCA is a mosaic created from over 10,000 pieces that together represent rural, small town, suburban, and urban settings with people of all ages, ethnicities, genders, sexual orientations, physical and mental abilities. Emerging ministries added to the richness of the cultural mosaic as dozens of urban hipster young adult and GLBTQ ministries along with Native American, African American, Hispanic, Asian, African and other ethnic specific communities have emerged within the ELCA. There are all kinds of diversity among congregations and ministries in the ELCA. 'Diversity among,' however, does not necessarily translate to 'diversity within.'

Each piece in the ELCA mosaic is essentially mono-chromatic—mono-cultural; people gathered in Word and sacrament who share some common cultural characteristic that unites them but also distinguishes and separates them from other people of faith (and from the other Lutheran church down the street). Emerging ministries in this study were emerging in this same 'diversity among, homogeneity within' phenomenon.

You may recall St. Mary Magdalene's, the final ministry discussed in chapter 3. It was a homogeneous ministry in the sense that participants shared a common cultural

identity. At St. Mary's their shared cultural characteristic was a commitment to *diversity*.

Participants were white, African American, Hispanic, Ethiopian, GLBTQ, old and young;

it was the most diverse ministry included in this study. St. Mary's taught that God

welcomed everyone and, to fit in the culture one had to be willing to do the same. People

who weren't comfortable with that were told they might prefer another church. That

seems a little unwelcoming in a church where God welcomes everyone; but maintaining a

culture of diversity takes work and requires intentionality and commitment from leaders

and participants. Transculturation at St. Mary's involved deculturation through giving up

some personal cultural preferences while embracing aspects of the other's cultures, and

an ongoing process of neoculturation as people continued to add to the emerging cultural

diversity of the ministry.

Diversity among and *diversity within* are two forms of diversity that can result

from processes of transculturation. A theory proposed in this research project is that

transculturation provides a way forward for the ELCA to glorify God through diversity

among and within its congregations and ministries.

A Proposed Theory: Transculturation as a Way Forward in Diversity

The desired result of grounded theory research is a theory or theories that emerge

from themes generated by the analysis of gathered data. In this research project, four

sensitizing concepts—doxological, missional, emerging, and Lutheran hermeneutics—

shaped the data gathering and emerged as significant themes along with three additional

themes of leadership in emerging ministries, contextual and indigenous ministry. The

emergence of the concept of nepantla led to the sociological concept of transculturation.

The concept of transculturation gave rise to a theory grounded in this research:

transculturation provides a way forward for the ELCA to glorify God through diversity

among and within its congregations and ministries.

<h3 style="text-align:center">Diversity in the ELCA</h3>

The ELCA, from its inception in 1988, committed itself to "welcome cultural diversity."[84] The adoption of a social statement *Freed in Christ: Race, Ethnicity, and Culture* in 1993 articulated this commitment.

> We of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, with the whole Church, look forward to the time when people will come from east and west, north and south to eat in the reign of God (Luke 13:29)…We of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America have recognized ourselves to be in mission and ministry in a multicultural society, and have committed ourselves to welcome cultural diversity.[85]

Diversity continues to be an unmet goal in the ELCA. In a section of the social statement titled "Facing Obstacles," the social statement raised concern about assimilation:

> This church has not moved much beyond an 'assimilation' approach to culture, where the assimilated are those who adopt the values and behavior of the dominant culture. This keeps us from benefitting from the plurality of cultures

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[84] *Welcome* is a hospitality word. It implies that we welcome diversity as a guest in our home. A commitment to become a diverse community would imply *becoming*, growing, changing, or transforming. Transculturation assumes the emergence of a new culture. Hospitality welcomes people into the current culture.

[85] Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, "Freed in Christ: Race, Ethnicity, and Culture," (Chicago: Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, 1993), 2-3. Social statements of the ELCA are available at www.elca.org/socialstatements. This social statement articulates eight commitments summarized here: (1) a goal that ten percent of the ELCA's membership would be African American, Asian, Hispanic, or Native American within ten years of its inception, (2) representation of cultural diversity on churchwide staff and on boards and decision making bodies, (3) creation of a Commission for Multicultural Ministries and adoption of a Multicultural Mission Strategy, (4) encouragement of ethnic ministry associations and regard for distinctive cultures, (5) start and support ethnic or multicultural ministries, recognize and empower pastoral leaders while honoring their cultures, and provide resources in languages other than English, (6) public policy advocacy to eliminate racial or ethnic discrimination, and private sector advocacy to encourage corporate social responsibility for community development, (7) attention to inclusivity by seminaries, colleges, and social ministry organizations of the church, and (8) respect for cultural diversity in the work of global mission.

already present in our church, and from appreciating the plurality of cultures in society.[86]

Only five years into its history, the ELCA was aware that acculturation as an expectation from congregations in the ELCA was a deterrent to increased diversity. The expectation that others become 'one of us' is in effect a rejection of diversity. Both Ortiz and Malinowski proposed transculturation as a sociological alternative to acculturation.[87]

Support and encouragement for the development of emerging ministries included in this research project falls within the fifth commitment articulated in this ELCA social statement:

> …to start and to support ministry in African American, Asian, Hispanic, Native American, or multicultural settings…to recognize and to empower pastoral leaders while honoring their cultures…to provide resources in languages other than English.[88]

The goals and strategies of the ELCA to achieve greater diversity, as articulated in this social statement, focus on 'diversity among' ministries. The development of emerging ministries in the ELCA, including those involved in this study, is a result of that focus. The ELCA as a churchwide organization has most influence on 'diversity among' ministries as they develop new ministries in emerging and ethnic cultures. 'Diversity within' congregations and ministries, as we will discuss, lies in the purview of individual congregations and ministries. We begin with ways that transculturation can

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[86] Ibid., 3-4. This statement was written nearly twenty years ago. In 1993 the ELCA reported 97.3% white membership. In 2008, at the time of this study, the percentage had dropped to 96.47% but membership had also dropped from over 5.2 million to just over 4.6 million. The goal stated at the founding of the ELCA was that "within the first ten years of its existence, ten percent of this church's membership would be African American, Asian, Hispanic, or Native American." Twenty-four years later the percentages are essentially unchanged.

[87] Ortiz, *Cuban Counterpoint: Tobacco and Sugar*, lviii. The ELCA's observation resonates with Malinowski's description of acculturation: "The immigrant has to *acculturate* himself…The 'uncultured' is to receive the benefits of 'our culture'; it is he who must change and become converted into 'one of us'."

[88] Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, "Freed in Christ: Race, Ethnicity, and Culture," 2.

provide a way forward in developing 'diversity among' congregations and ministries in the ELCA.

<center>Diversity Among Ministries in the ELCA</center>

The development of emerging ministries in the ELCA reflected a strategy of developing new ministries within ethnic or other cultures not typically a part of the Lutheran mainstream.[89] Adding pieces to the cultural mosaic from other cultures increased diversity in the ELCA. The result of this strategy would be *diversity among* ministries in the ELCA. Transculturation, as experienced in emerging ministries in the ELCA, suggests a way forward in achieving that goal. At least three areas of focus emerged: (1) develop indigenous leaders, (2) unite in common confession rather than common culture, and (3) develop organizational flexibility in dialogue with emerging leaders and ministries.

First, emerging leaders in this study were indigenous to the cultures of the ministries they developed. A transcultural process for engaging cultures new to the ELCA would involve *encouraging and developing leaders who are indigenous to their cultures* and have emerged within their contexts as leaders. Seminary training for leaders already involved in ministry was an important aspect of leadership development in the ministries studied. Increasingly leaders will emerge within cultures, could remain in their

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[89] The inclusion of emerging leaders from hipster young adult ministries in a pilot version of the TEEM program is a recognition from the ELCA that urban young adults are as culturally distinct as ethnic cultures.

cultural contexts and could be equipped for ordination as leaders within those contexts. TEEM and DL-MDiv programs in the ELCA serve those needs.[90]

Second, emerging ministries expressed a Lutheran confession of the gospel in their own cultural languages. The ELCA must *make room for new cultural expressions of Lutheranism* that emerge in the neoculturation process of transculturation by removing cultural barriers that inhibit full participation in the ELCA. Let adiaphora be adiaphora. A common culture served the ELCA well during the common service era of the church to provide a common identity in the marketplace of churches. A common confession enculturated within diverse cultures will serve better in this multi-micro-cultural era.

Third, emerging ministries developed contextual organizational structures that were often more communal, less hierarchical, and less prescriptive than traditional ELCA models. Model constitutions and constitutional approval processes need to *allow for the flexibility of organization necessary for emerging ministry*. Again, let adiaphora be adiaphora. The ELCA must resist the urge to assimilate emerging multicultural and ethnic ministries into the traditional culture and ministry structures of the ELCA. If the complexion of the ELCA is going to change, "culturally Lutheran" will need a new stereotype that includes diversity among participants, in cultural expression, and in organization.

Perhaps the ELCA focused on 'diversity among' congregations and ministries because it touched on areas in which the churchwide expression of the ELCA had purview: identifying and supporting indigenous pastoral leaders and providing them with

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[90] At this point, ordination or involvement in a process that leads to ordination are requirements for congregational pastors and mission developers in the ELCA. Alternatives to ordained leadership in congregations or ministries would be another topic for consideration.

opportunities for seminary education; joining with emerging ministries on the basis of common confession rather than expectations of common cultural practices; creating space organizationally and constitutionally for emerging models and structures of ministry; and supporting their development by embracing emerging leaders and ministries in full participation in the life of the ELCA. The ELCA doesn't have the same authority to instigate 'diversity within' its congregations and ministries. Motivation for 'diversity within' has to come from within congregations and ministries.

Diversity Within Ministries in the ELCA

The challenge to achieving diversity within ministries in the ELCA is that developing multi-cultural community requires a process of transculturation—of deculturation and neoculturation. To intentionally seek diversity implies and requires openness to cultural change. For many congregations in the ELCA, achieving cultural diversity within the congregation would require a change in paradigm from hospitality that leads to acculturation[91] in the current culture to perichoretic embrace[92] in a process of transcultural engagement with people from other cultures that would result in cultural change. Cultural diversity can only happen through a process of transculturation.

I have had two opportunities in the first three months of 2012 to meet with the leadership of congregations who have asked how they might grow to reflect the diversity

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[91] Christian A. Schwarz, *Natural Church Development: A Guide to Eight Essential Qualities of Healthy Churches* (Carol Stream, IL: ChurchSmart Resources, 1996), 36-37. The ELCA has invested heavily in the Natural Church Development process. Two of the variables related to the quality characteristic 'loving relationships' are "lots of laughter" and "hospitality." NCD assumes church growth through acculturation. Diversity is not mentioned as one of the quality characteristics of a growing church in the NCD process.

[92] Hospitality can be experienced as host to guest, member to visitor, subject to object relationships. Transculturation requires subject to subject, disciple to disciple, sinner to sinner, child of God to child of God relationships. When you greet the other as co-equal, the relationship is reciprocal. Both give something in the meeting and new relationships are formed—deculturation leads to neoculturation.

in their community contexts. In both cases I suggested that becoming a diverse congregation requires transculturation. I described the process as coming together with people from other cultures and being willing to give up something of your own cultures in order to develop a shared culture together. The questions I left them with were 'what are you willing (or not willing) to give up?' and 'who are the neighbors in your community that might be a part of this new community with you?'

The example I shared with them was St. Mary Magdalene's. There were three reasons for the diversity experienced at St. Mary's. The first was *theological*: 'God welcomes everyone' and 'grace is underserved by everyone, yet given for everyone.' Those theological convictions led to the second reason for the diversity at St. Mary's: *commitment to diversity*. Commitment to diversity was the defining shared cultural value at St. Mary's. The third reason for diversity at St. Mary's was that their theological convictions and shared *commitment to diversity shaped the life of the ministry*. Diversity wasn't a matter of hospitality; it was a matter of their commitments as disciples of Jesus Christ. "We don't have members here, we are disciples." Disciples welcomed the people that God would welcome; but, even more, disciples were full partners and participants in the ministry. Participants said, "This is my church;" but they also said, "I am the church." It was St. Mary's culture of diversity that kept participants in three of our interviews driving twenty miles each way past numerous other churches to be a part of St. Mary's.

St. Mary's had the advantage of having been a dying congregation. They knew that continuing to exist as a congregation meant embracing the people who were now living in their multi-ethnic community and they were willing to do what was necessary to do so. They submitted themselves to a transformational ministry process in which a

transformational leader was sent in to make difficult decisions for and, if possible, with them to become a congregation that reflected its community. For St. Mary's, embracing diversity was a matter of survival as a congregation. That may be the case for other congregations in the ELCA as well.

For the ministry leaders I met early in 2012 the concern was not survival; rather, they were responding to the nudging of the Spirit and were concerned that the culture of their ministries did not reflect the cultures of their communities. They were frustrated by their lack of relationships with people of other cultures and asking what that meant for the church.

Achieving *diversity within* the congregations and ministries of the ELCA would require *developing a culture of diversity*. It would require a commitment to diversity at the level of *theological conviction*, a commitment to *values of diversity*, and the *practice of diversity as an expression of discipleship*. Diversity within the congregations of the ELCA would require each congregation or ministry to *commit to a process of transculturation* with leaders committed to leading the process and participants willing to change their experience of 'church.'

Deculturation would involve current members giving up the notion that their church exists primarily to meet their needs. The late-twentieth century church developed attractional models of ministry that provided religious goods and services to church-shopping consumers who chose the church that would best meet their needs. Moving from an attractional paradigm to an emerging missional understanding of church is a

significant cultural shift for congregations. Developing a culture of diversity is another step further down that path.[93]

Deculturation would mean holding some of their favorite traditions lightly and embracing new traditions in order to be in relationship with people of other cultures. It would mean becoming transliterate in the cultural languages that are shared among the cultures involved.[94] It would mean embracing a culture of diversity, and the commitments required to sustain it, long enough for community and new cultural phenomena to emerge.

A woman from a leadership team of one of the congregations I met with earlier this year asked if this was something they had to do. The answer, of course, was no. They could faithfully grow in ministry by reaching out to the many people in their community who were culturally like them, only not involved in church. Diversity within congregations and emerging ministries, when viewed from a lens of transculturation, may require more deculturation than people are willing to endure. Cultural diversity within existing congregations and ministries can only be accomplished in a process of transculturation. The existing culture would need to change, first to embrace the concept of diversity, and then, to embrace the people whose cultures would be embraced.

The theory proposed is that *transculturation provides a way forward for the ELCA to glorify God through diversity among and within its congregations and ministries.* The *process of intentional transculturation,* whether among or within

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[93] Congregations who attempt this shift will lose membership. Worship attendance at St. Mary's went from 80 to 40 in the beginning of their transformational process. It grew back to 80 within a few months and was up to about 160 participants in worship at the time of our site visit. Some folks will choose to shop for another church that will focus on meeting their needs.

[94] This is a cultural shift from *I need to pray in my own language* to *I can pray in many languages, including my own.*

congregations, involves at least four movements: (1) a movement into *nepantla* (a middle ground between cultures) through a commitment to meet those of other cultures, (2) a movement to *dialogue* with those of other cultures that involves cultural give and take (mutual deculturation) to create a shared culture (neoculturation), (3) a movement to *perichoretic community* in shared Word and sacrament, and (4) a movement to join in God's *mission* in the world together.

Emerging ministries are examples of ways the ELCA has engaged in transcultural mission to develop 'diversity among' ministries. The cultural mosaic of the ELCA is a little more colorful (particularly around the edges) and traditional Lutheran culture is a little less traditional. Emerging ministries have contributed to the cultural diversity of the ELCA. It remains to be seen if transculturation as an intentional process can move the ELCA beyond its efforts of developing 'diversity among' ministries to developing cultural 'diversity within' congregations and ministries.

In this chapter we have defined transculturation, moved through a version of an American Lutheran history that places emerging ministries within a cultural and liturgical history, mentioned two alternative understandings of transculturation, explored the concept of transculturation in other settings, and explored transculturation as emergence in nepantla in emerging ministries. A grounded theory was proposed: *transculturation provides a way forward for the ELCA to glorify God through diversity among and within its congregations and ministries.* We explored ways that diversity among and diversity within congregations and ministries of the ELCA might become reality.

In the final chapter we will return to a doxological hermeneutic of mission and play with three aspects of doxology as they relate to mission and this study. We will

affirm the theory developed in this study, explore some of the implications of the theory

for the ELCA, wonder about the possibilities for further research, and draw this project to

its conclusions.

CHAPTER 6

A DOXOLOGICAL HERMENEUTIC OF MISSION

In this final chapter we will explore three aspects of doxology as related to mission: (1) a missional hermeneutic of doxology, (2) a rubric for discernment using a doxological hermeneutic of mission, and (3) consideration of doxology as perichoretic play. We will consider the implications of the theory that emerged in this study and suggest possibilities for further research within the current study sample and beyond. Before we draw this study to its conclusions, we will draw a doxological hermeneutic of mission into conversation with this study of emerging ministries in the ELCA.

To be honest, participants in emerging ministries in the ELCA had no idea what a "doxological hermeneutic of mission" was. It was not a lens they used for viewing ministry nor was it familiar language. They were, however, passionate about what their ministries were up to. A missional hermeneutic of doxology connects passion for mission with worship and faith.

A Missional Hermeneutic of Doxology

Emerging ministries in the ELCA were shaped by their perceptions of mission that were grounded in a Lutheran confession of the gospel and expressed in communities gathered in worship. Mission, confession, and worship emerged in relationships of mutual influence. Change in one affects change in each of the other.

Here are two examples from the ministries profiled in chapter 3 that illustrate the relationships between worship, confession, and mission. First, mission at St. Barnabas' was focused in mentoring young black men, women, and families. Their mission shaped their worship that used gospel music, dance, spoken word poetry, preaching, and other practices significant in African American culture. Worship was also shaped by a Lutheran confession of the gospel that influenced the way St. B's interpreted and practiced black church traditions such as altar calls and revivals and affected their understanding and practice of the sacraments of baptism and communion. Mission, confession, and worship influenced one another.

Second, St. Gregory's was an emerging ministry among urban, hipster, critical thinking young adults. The community around St. Greg's was filled with artists. St. Greg's perceived reaching out to the artists in their community as part of their mission. They did that by incorporating art shows in the life of the ministry and including artists and their art as resources in worship. St. Greg's also perceived thinking critically about faith to be part of their mission as they embraced urban, hipster, critical thinking young adults. Deep and critical thinking about faith was embedded in the richly liturgical and absurdly playful expressions of worship at St. Greg's. The edgy sermons and creative praxis of a theology of play shaped worship as it connected with the critical thinking aspirations of participants who were a focus of St. Greg's mission. Mission, confession, and worship influenced one another.

The significant inter-relationships between praying and believing—*orandi* and *credendi*—have been the subjects of reflection in the church for many centuries. In this

era, the conversation must also include mission. It was clear that in emerging ministries,

mission shaped both praying and believing even as praying and believing shaped mission.

Lex Orandi, Lex Credendi, Lex Movendi

Lex orandi statuat lex credendi (the law of prayer constitutes the law of belief[1]) is

an ancient motto of the church. The statement is credited to Prosper of Aquitain, secretary

to Leo the Great, from about 435 CE, who was defending Augustine's arguments "for the

necessity of grace prior to faith."[2] In its original conception, believing is subordinate to

praying (or perhaps better to say the encounter with God shapes our understanding of

God). Alexander Schmemann, a respected Orthodox liturgical theologian, used the phrase

lex orandi est lex credendi (the law of praying is the law of believing) to argue "it is

liturgy, that by fulfilling and expressing faith, bears testimony to faith and becomes thus

its true and adequate expression and norm."[3] This ecclesial motto has taken on many

forms but appears most often in liturgical conversation as the mantra *lex orandi, lex*

credendi and leaves open the questions about the relationship between praying and

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[1] "Prayer" and "belief" are the usual translations of *supplicandi or orandi* and *credendi, which* are gerunds in the Latin that are verbal nouns that would usually be translated by adding '-ing' to a verb. I will translate them as 'praying' and 'believing' when possible in the context. The terms have developed to represent more than their denotations. *Orandi* is used to connote worship. *Credendi* has connotations of both the act of believing and the content of belief or faith as it is used in connection with *lex orandi, lex credendi.* It is sometimes most helpful to translate them in the broader terms of worship and belief or faith.

[2] E. Byron Anderson, *Worship and Christian Identity: Practicing Ourselves*, The Virgil Michel Series (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2003), 24-29. Byron Anderson traces the development and use of this motto from its origins to current usage. The statement appeared in various forms in the early church and in later usage. *Lex supplicandi statuat lex credendi* is another commonly used form of the phrase.

[3] Alexander Schmemann and Thomas Fisch, *Liturgy and Tradition: Theological Reflections of Alexander Schmemann* (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1990), 39.

believing. Most now argue for a reciprocal relationship between *lex orandi* and *lex credendi*.[4] Praying shapes believing and believing shapes praying.

Expanded forms of this motto have emerged in the history of the church to reflect the engagement of the church with the world. *Lex orandi, lex credendi, lex vivendi* (the law of living) suggests that believing is practiced beyond praying—that praying and believing influence our living, and reciprocally, our lives shape our faith and worship.

Lex orandi, lex credendi, lex agendi (the law of ethical action—acting) suggests similar arguments regarding ethical action in the world.[5] Don Saliers wrote about *lex agendi* and translated the three phrases as "patterns of prayer, patterns of belief, and patterns of intention-action."[6]

Both *vivendi* and *agendi* move the church and its people toward the world in life and action. Neither word encompasses a missional hermeneutic of God's movement into the world as *missio Dei* or a missional understanding of the church as mission.[7] As the church lives into a missional hermeneutic, the relationship between mission and *lex orandi, lex credendi* requires consideration. I propose the use of *lex movendi* to represent the movement of God and the Church in the world in mission in conversation with *lex orandi, lex credendi.*

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[4] Patrick R. Keifert, *Welcoming the Stranger: A Public Theology of Worship and Evangelism* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1992), 51. Keifert argues that "the Latin phrase underlines the reciprocity of relationship between the two laws."

[5] Anderson, *Worship and Christian Identity: Practicing Ourselves*, 27.

[6] Saliers, *Worship as Theology: Foretaste of Glory Divine*, 187. David Naugle also used this *lex agendi* formulation and translated it "way of life." David Naugle, "Worldview, Worship, and Way of Life: How Worship Helps Us See the World," in *Calvin Symposium on Worship* (Grand Rapids, MI: 2005), 18-21.

[7] 'Right prayer' and 'right belief' may inspire the church to mission but mission is not explicit in lex orandi or lex credendi. Mission was not in the conversation when this formulation was developed in fifth century Christendom.
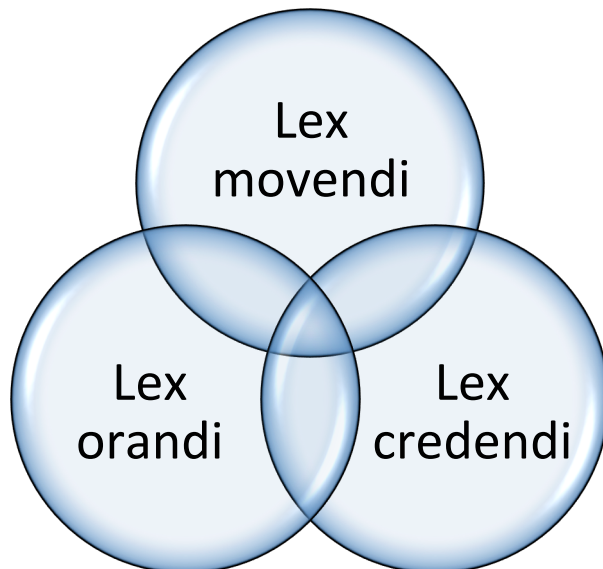
Figure 6.1: Lex Orandi, Lex Credendi, Lex Movendi

Movendi[8] is a form of the Latin verb *moveo* that has similar meanings and connotations as the English word *move* (which comes from the Latin).[9] It means "to move or set in motion" but it also can mean "to disturb, to change, to dislodge, to begin." It can mean "to affect, to influence, to provoke"[10] or persuade. In a reflexive form it can mean "to dance."[11] *Ars movendi* is the art of movement or dance.[12] It can mean "to be

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[8] As a gerund, the word *movendi* is most literally translated as 'moving' and can be used as a verbal noun or as an adjective.

[9] Lorna Sinclair, ed., *Collins Concise Latin Dictionary* (Glasgow, Great Britain: HarperCollins, 1997), 136.

[10] Augustine and R. P. H. Green, *On Christian Teaching* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), 74. Augustine used a form of this word in his statement "It has been said by a man of eloquence, and quite rightly, that the eloquent should speak in such a way as to instruct, delight, and move their listeners" Augustine was quoting Cicero who had written on the best style of the orator who by speaking "teaches, and delights, and moves the minds of his hearers."

[11] LaCugna, *God for Us: The Trinity and Christian Life*, 271-72. LaCugna draws heavily on the metaphor of dance to describe a perichoretic Trinity and the relationship of God with creation.

[12] The term *ars movendi* is used to describe the rhythmic, dance-like motion of Ambrosian chant. St. Augustine, who lived at the time St. Ambrose wrote his chant, defined music from a rhythmic perspective as *scientia bene movendi* (the science of moving well) in his treatise "Da Musica." The word *movendi* is used in the *Libera Me* of the requiem mass: *Libera me, Domine, de morte aeterna, in die illa termenda: Quando cedi movendi sunt et terra….*translated means, Deliver me, O Lord, from death eternal

moved" physically or emotionally. In an imperative form it can be simply translated, "Go!" which resonates with the Great Commission in Matthew 28.

As the Church created by the Spirit *imago Trinitatis* (in the image of the perichoretic Trinity) and co-missioned with God, we move with God, one another, and the other in the world for the sake of God's mission to the world. It is our praying and believing that shape the Church's moving into the world, even as our moving shapes our praying and believing.

Mission is exerting influence on worship and faith in unprecedented ways. For most of the history of worship in American Lutheranism the order of worship was determined by tradition or by what was provided in hymnbooks. Emerging ministries in the beginning of the twenty-first century are drawing upon traditional liturgies and resources but are using them in different ways than their grandparents. Decisions about worship services in emerging ministries are driven by participants' understandings of their purpose and identity. Worship is planned and resources created indigenously in emerging ministries. It seems to be an opportune moment, as missional and emerging church movements continue to grow and expressions of worship become increasingly culturally contextual, to have significant conversation about the relationship of mission with faith and worship—to draw *lex movendi* into dialogue with *lex orandi* and *lex credendi* for the sake of God's mission in the world.

This proposal of *lex orandi, lex credendi, lex movendi* is intended to draw attention to the need for reflection and dialogue about the critical relationships between worship, faith, and mission and to suggest that it might build upon the dialogue that has

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on that fearful day, when the heavens and the earth shall be moved. The Benedictines of Solesmes, ed., *The Liber Usualis* (Tornai, Belgium: Desclee Company, 1961), 1767.

been on-going for centuries. Mission was not a necessary part of the discussion when the

relationships raised by this motto were debated in the early life of the church. In a post-

Christendom, missional era, mission defines the church in light of God's mission to the

world—*missio Dei*.

It is possible words other than *movendi* may be more helpful in the conversation.

Movendi has poetic resonance with orandi, credendi, vivendi, and agendi. It suggests the

movement of God and the church in the world. But, it might be more direct, from a

missional perspective, to say *lex orandi, lex credendi, lex mittendi* (the law of sending).[13]

Missio Dei, of course, is from the Latin word meaning 'to send.' To be in mission is to be

sent. *Mittendi* is a more focused word than *movendi.* Personally, I appreciate the

numerous connotations of *movendi* related to moving, being moved, dancing, persuading,

et al.

The point, of course, is not to rewrite a 1600-year-old motto or to debate the best

word to use in doing so. The point is that in emerging ministries, worship (orandi) was

shaped by a Lutheran confession of the gospel (credendi) and by emerging leaders'

perceptions of mission in a particular context (movendi). Worship that emerged was

unique in each context. Worship in traditional Lutheran congregations was shaped by the

common service tradition[14] (orandi) that limited its cultural reach in today's context

(movendi) and, in that regard, did not reflect a Lutheran theology of inclusion or

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[13] Bosch, *Transforming Mission: Paradigm Shifts in Theology of Mission*, 370. According to Bosch, "The *missio Dei* institutes the *missiones ecclesiae*" or God's mission institutes the missions of the church. I might suggest that *missio Dei* institutes lex orandi, lex credendi, and the missiones ecclesiae; all three serve God's mission in the world.

[14] The adoption of a common service was a missional move in the late nineteenth century. The role of liturgy in the current era is a topic for discussion as it relates to mission.

commitment to diversity (credendi). The inter-relationships of these concepts have implications for the church as it emerges in our time.

This is an important conversation to have in the ELCA as it seeks to develop diversity within congregations and diversity among the ministries that become a part of the ELCA. A missional emphasis on cultural diversity must be grounded in the praying/believing/moving of the people and reflected in the worship life and discipleship of the church or it will not happen. *Lex orandi, lex credendi, lex movendi* (or *mittendi, et al*) must inform and shape the conversation in the process of transculturation within the ELCA and beyond as the Church continues to emerge in the context of the twenty-first century.

A missional hermeneutic of doxology as proposed suggests that mission is critical in the conversation with worship and belief in shaping the church in this missional era. Orandi, credendi, and movendi serve *missio Dei. Missio Dei* is doxological—God's mission in the world by which God's glory is made manifest. This leads to our second proposal regarding doxology: a rubric for discerning a doxological hermeneutic of mission.

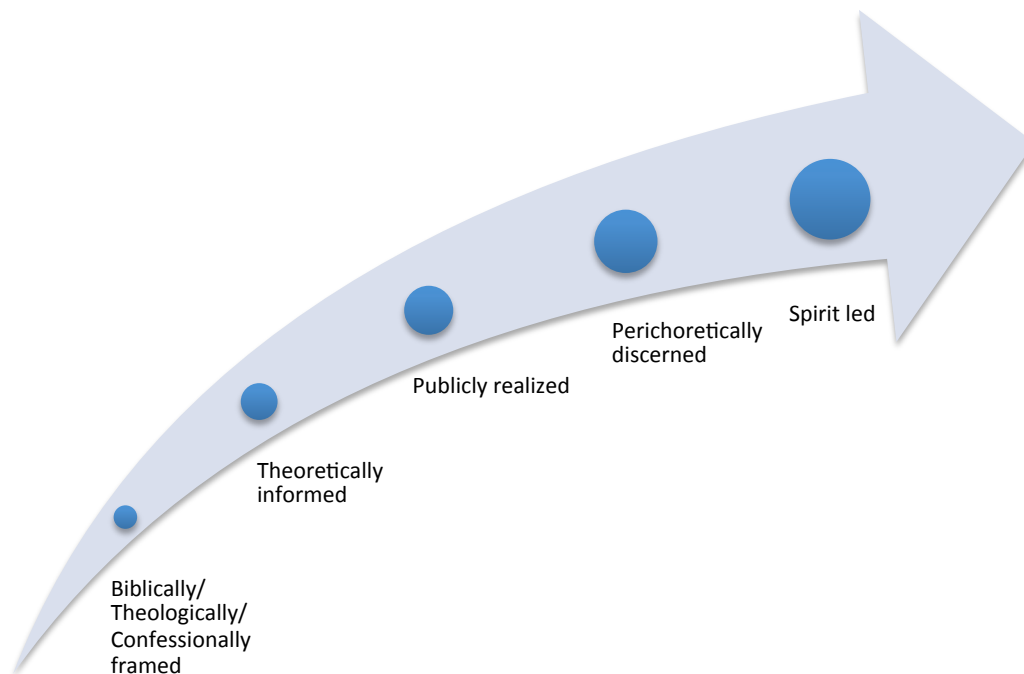## A Doxological Hermeneutic of Mission

The question behind this study—*How is God glorified through emerging ministries in the ELCA and in the lives of their people?*—was shaped by a doxological hermeneutic which was described from biblical and theological perspectives in chapter 1.[15] In this section I offer a rubric by which the church might employ a doxological

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[15] See pages 20-25.

hermeneutic in its discernment of, and engagement in, mission (or the *missiones ecclesiae*).

A doxological hermeneutic of mission is Spirit led, perichoretically discerned, publicly realized, theoretically informed, and biblically/theologically/confessionally framed—soli Deo gloria.[16]

Figure 6.2: A Doxological Hermeneutic of Mission

Mission is Spirit Led

But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.[17]

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[16] Van Gelder, *The Ministry of the Missional Church: A Community Led by the Spirit*, 104-19. This formulation of a doxological hermeneutic of mission draws upon the work of Craig Van Gelder and Gary Simpson. Van Gelder presented "A Theological Theory of Action" that is "Biblically/Theologically Framed, Theoretically Informed, Communally Discerned, Strategic Action." Gary Simpson developed "five interwoven communicative practices" that provide a process of ecclesial discernment that he referred to as the "5As"—attending, asserting, agreeing, acting, and assessing. Simpson, "God in Global Civil Society: Vocational Imagination, Spiritual Presence, and Ecclesial Discernment." Essays from this consultation are being published by Eerdmans in the Missional Church Consultation series. Van Gelder also presented his hermeneutic and Simpson's 5As in an earlier journal article: Craig Van Gelder, "The Hermeneutics of Leading in Mission," *Journal of Religious Leadership* 3, no. 1 & 2 (2004).

Empowered by the Holy Spirit, the disciples were sent in mission near and far to be witnesses. The author of the book of Acts tells the story of these disciples—now apostles sent in mission—by recounting how the Spirit led the disciples: calling them to certain places, forbidding them to speak in others, not allowing them to go to Bithynia.[18] According to the author, Paul and the disciples were quite aware of the Spirit's leading them in mission. The Spirit still leads and when the power of the Holy Spirit has come upon us, we too are witnesses near and far.

The author of Acts is not so forthcoming about how the Spirit leads. He mentions prayer. Sometimes doors opened when others closed. On at least one occasion the disciples cast lots.[19] Perhaps the greatest help to recognizing the Spirit's leading is having the expectation that the Spirit will lead. Expectation makes us watchful, causes us to listen, draws us to prayer, helps us wonder, and, perhaps most important of all, gathers us in perichoretic community. It seems good to discern the leading of the Spirit in the presence of God and one another. In a doxological hermeneutic of mission we seek and pay attention to the leading of the Spirit. The *missiones ecclesiae* are Spirit led.

<div align="center">Mission is Perichoretically Discerned.</div>

For it seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us…[20] Perichoretic discernment is the process of communally figuring out what seems good to the Holy Spirit and to us.

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[17] Acts 1:8.

[18] See Acts 16:6-10.

[19] See Acts 1:26.

[20] Acts 15:28.

Perichoretic is a term used to describe the Trinity.[21] The church, created *imago Trinitatis,* will reflect the image of the Trinity.[22]

There are at least four characteristics of the perichoretic Trinity that shape our discernment in mission: first, discernment is a communal, relational process. Discernment happens in the midst of our relationships with God and one another—in community.

Second, the community is open to all; just as the perichoretic Trinity is open to all creation. The discerning community should attempt to include all who are affected by the results of discernment.[23]

Third, perichoretic relationships are subject-to-subject relationships (which implies that we do not treat one another as objects). In perichoretic discernment each person listens to the thoughts of others and feels free to speak their own thoughts peer-to-peer, person-to-person.[24]

And fourth, perichoresis is doxological. The perichoretic Trinity makes a Father-Son-Holy Spirit difference in the world. Through perichoretic discernment, the Spirit

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[21] See pages 17-20.

[22] Jürgen Moltmann, "The Triune God: Rich in Relationships," *Living Pulpit* 8, no. 2 (1999): 5. Moltmann said, "the Church is an icon of the Trinity. Its community of freedom and equality illuminates the image of the triune God."

[23] Gary M. Simpson, "Africa Is the Lord's and the Fullness Thereof. Praise Be the Lord," In *So the Poor Have Hope, and Injustice Shuts Its Mouth: Poverty and the Mission of the Church in Africa*, ed. Karen L. Bloomquist and Musa Panti Filibus. (Geneva: Lutheran World Federation, 2007), 159.As Gary Simpson says, "Decision makers must be consequence takers; and vice versa, consequence takers must be decision makers." Simpson calls this the "participatory golden rule." Part of the openness of discernment is to include all who may be affected by decisions to as great an extent as possible.

[24] Jürgen Habermas, *Moral Consciousness and Communicative Action*, Studies in Contemporary German Social Thought (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1990), 88. Habermas proposes an "ideal speech situation" that reflects similar ethics for deliberation as are suggested here for perichoretic discernment.

leads us to do likewise. Spirit led mission is to the glory of the Triune God. The *missiones ecclesiae* are perichoretically discerned.

Mission is Publicly Realized

Let you light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven.[25] The missiones ecclesiae are public works; they make a Father-Son-Holy Spirit difference in the world and in the lives of real people in particular places and times. The use of the word 'public' in this setting is a claim that God's mission is in the world and for the world and is not limited to the private religious lives of churchgoers.[26] The use of the word 'realized' suggests that mission becomes real in the real world; but, it also implies that folks will realize the source of these good works and "give glory to your Father in heaven." The *missiones ecclesiae* are publicly realized.

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[25] Matthew 5:16.

[26] There is significant body of work that stands behind this statement regarding the private/public split in the modern era. Richard Sennett argues that public social relationships have been usurped by the private to the detriment of individuals and society. Richard Sennett, *The Fall of Public Man* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1996). Patrick Keifert builds upon Sennett's argument and suggests that the church must retain the public nature of worship in order to be welcoming to strangers. Keifert, *Welcoming the Stranger: A Public Theology of Worship and Evangelism*. Chris Scharen connects the public worship of the church with its work in the world in his published dissertation. Christian Batalden Scharen, *Public Worship and Public Work: Character and Commitment in Local Congregational Life*, Virgil Michel Series (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2004). Jürgen Habermas argues for the role of communicative action as public debate in deliberative democracy. Jürgen Habermas, *The Theory of Communicative Action*, 2 vols. (Boston: Beacon Press, 1984). Gary Simpson draws upon Habermas' arguments and argues further for the church's role in civil society as prophetic public companions. Gary M. Simpson, *Critical Social Theory: Prophetic Reason, Civil Society, and Christian Imagination*, Guides to Theological Inquiry (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2002). These authors argue for the significance of public social space, including the place of the church within that space as a prophetic public voice. God's mission engages public space. Mission is publicly realized.

Mission is Theoretically Informed

You must make every effort to support your faith with goodness, and goodness with knowledge…[27] Peter was writing about knowledge of the Lord. In this information age, we have nearly unlimited sources of information about our communities, demographics, and other resources from the social sciences. These resources can be particularly helpful in getting to know your ministry context or uncovering the many factors involved in addressing social issues. Part of discernment is figuring out what you need to know. Spirit led discernment makes every effort to support discernment with knowledge. The *missiones ecclesiae* are theoretically informed in the process of Spirit led, perichoretic discernment.

Mission is Confessionally, Theologically, Biblically Framed

Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly; teach and admonish one another in all wisdom; and with gratitude in your hearts, sing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs to God. And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.[28]

Mission is framed most immediately by confession. Emerging ministries in the ELCA were united by a common confession: a Lutheran understanding of grace and of community gathered in Word and sacrament. That confession of the church was theologically framed by the reformers and in theological conversation today. That theological framework was biblically grounded by the reformers and in biblical study today. Discernment of the missiones ecclesiae will be biblically and theologically framed,

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[27] II Peter 1:5.

[28] Colossians 3:16-17.

but we don't start from scratch. We learn from those who have gone before us, from biblical scholars and theologians who give their lives to these questions today, and from the confession of the church of which we are a part. To that confession we add our study, reflection, and confession.

Perichoretic discernment will most often focus on particular issues or concerns. Sometimes the church will have a confessional position that is helpful in discernment. For example, the ELCA has eleven social statements that are biblically, theologically and confessionally framed, theoretically informed, publicly realized, perichoretically discerned, and we trust, Spirit led positions on issues from abortion to sexuality. They are resources for our discernment. To those resources we add our study, reflection, and confession. Actually, to any process of discernment we add our biblical study, theological reflection, and our emerging confession. The *missiones ecclesiae* are confessionally, theologically, and biblically framed.

<div align="center">Soli Deo Gloria</div>

Now to him who by the power at work within us is able to accomplish abundantly far more than all we can ask or imagine, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus to all generations, forever and ever. Amen.[29]

A doxological hermeneutic of mission is Spirit led, perichoretically discerned, publicly realized, theoretically informed, and biblically/theologically/confessionally framed—*soli Deo gloria.* It's all to the glory of God in service of *missio Dei.*

This rubric is intended to serve as a guide in discerning mission. It's not a linear process.[30] The arrow in figure 6.2 simply indicates movement in an eschatological

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[29] Ephesians 3:20-21.

direction and suggests the leading of the Spirit as the missional church moves into the world.[31] Now we turn our attention to the completion of this study and future possibilities for research.

What Emerged in this Study

This study began with twenty emerging ministries in the ELCA and a consultation with thirty emerging leaders. In depth visits in six sites, partial visits and interviews in another eleven sites, and a consultation at Luther Seminary produced significant data. The sensitizing concepts of Lutheran, emerging, missional, and doxological hermeneutics used in data gathering led to the emergence of three additional themes: leadership in emerging ministries, contextual ministry that grew from and related to specific contexts, and indigenous ministry that emerged from within particular cultures and from within emerging ministries, their leaders and participants.

The sociological concept of transculturation as deculturation and neoculturation emerged as the basis for a grounded theory that *transculturation provides a way forward for the ELCA to glorify God through diversity among and within its congregations and ministries.* The emerging ministries included in this study were transcultural ministries and represented a step forward in diversity among congregations and ministries in the ELCA.

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[30] The 5As developed by Gary Simpson and referenced in footnote number 12 in this chapter provide a helpful process for engaging with others in discernment.

[31] Several of the ministry sites we visited used reflective, communal decision making or discernment processes reflective of the rubric I have described here. Spiritual discernment processes usually contrast with typical strategic planning processes and decision-making by Robert's Rules of Order. Of course, the Holy Spirit can work in those processes as well.

The emerging leaders that I met in the course of this study were an amazing group of creative, passionate, committed, rebellious, humble, charismatic, industrious, self-giving Lutherans. They were leading a very diverse set of ministries and were aware that their ministries were laboratories for mission development in the ELCA. They were reminded of that by the nearly continuous steam of visitors and students who came to worship, check them out, and learn from them.

There are at least three things to be learned from them: First, emerging ministries were exploring ways to be confessionally Lutheran among people who would not be involved in traditional Lutheran cultures. New expressions of a Lutheran confession of the gospel were emerging among them in cultural languages unique to each ministry.

Second, worship in each ministry was unique, highly contextual, and indigenous to the gifts and cultures of participants. Worship was shaped by their perceptions of mission and in turn shaped the faith of participants.

Third, emerging ministries each had a cultural identity that united its participants in ministry. In that sense, each was a homogeneous community. Diversity within ministries existed with those cultural boundaries.

Implications of Transculturation for the ELCA

The presence of these transcultural emerging ministries provides assurance that a Lutheran confession of the gospel can be expressed in cultures that have not traditionally been a part of the ELCA, such as urban young adults and ethnic communities. These emerging ministries are helping the ELCA 'deculturate' a bit and learn the kinds of flexibility and support that are necessary for emerging ministries to develop. Emerging ministries reveal the beginnings of adaptive change in the ELCA. Neoculturation is

emerging as the culture of the ELCA adapts to the presence of these new cultural

expressions of a Lutheran confession of the gospel and Word and sacrament ministry.

If diversity among and within ministries of the ELCA continues to be a priority,

then congregations and leaders will need to move from expectations of acculturation to a

process of transculturation that would involve significant cultural shifts and require

congregations to embrace a culture of diversity. Embracing a culture of diversity among

and within congregations of the ELCA requires a process of transculturation—

deculturation and neoculturation.[32] It is easier to begin new ministries with a culture of

diversity than to transform mono-cultural communities to multi-cultural communities.

Nonetheless, for congregations willing to embark on the journey, transculturation

provides a way to move forward and to know what to expect in the process.

Possibilities for Further Research

There is always more to be learned. Possibilities for further research suggested

here include three opportunities to reengage emerging ministries included in this study

and four suggestions for study beyond these ministries.

This study of emerging ministries was limited by the amount of time available for

each site visit. Approximately three days of interviews, participation in worship or other

community events, and contextual observation provided significant data from each site

but within a relatively limited view and timeframe. Possibilities for further research

include the following: first, return to these same ministries to observe development over

time. Second, spend a prolonged period of time with one or two ministries for a more in

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[32] See pages 221- 222 for a process of intentional transculturation.

depth view of particular ministries and their effects in the lives of participants. Third, study emerging ministries during times of leadership transition.

There are four areas of research beyond the emerging ministries included in this study to consider: First, this study was limited to emerging ministries in the ELCA. Other emerging ministries were not included except to the extent mentioned in interviews. Further research could explore non-Lutheran emerging ministries.

Second, this study was limited to mission development or redevelopment ministries. Further research could explore young adult and ethnic ministries that are a part of the ministry of existing congregations.

Third, a limited number of ethnic ministries in the ELCA were represented in the sample. Further research could explore ethnic ministries separately from urban young adult emerging ministries with a broader sample of ethnic ministries.

And finally, further research could explore the impact of emerging ministries on the culture and organization of the ELCA. I'm curious about how deculturation and neoculturation will emerge within the ELCA as it engages and embraces other cultures in the process of transculturation.

Curiosities raised in the first chapter of this thesis have for the most part been satisfied from my perspective. There was one additional curiosity that emerged in the course of this study that I have not yet addressed. Having come this far, allow me to play with one final hermeneutic of doxology—doxology as perichoretic play.

Doxology as Perichoretic Play

"The people of God, gathered in worship, encounter the glory of God in the assembly, Word, and sacraments. The response of the people of God gathered in worship

is to glorify God in thought, word, and deed." "God makes a Father, Son, Holy Spirit difference in worship; and, participants witness to it." Both of these statements from earlier in this thesis suggest that doxological life is a response to God's glory.[33] I suggest here that it is more: God's perichoretic embrace in the doxological life of the Trinity is an embrace in perichoretic play.

Consider what this means for worship. There was a time in Christian history when worship was primarily the work of the priest and participants were primarily observers. Twentieth century liturgical theologians, drawing on Reformation principles such as the priesthood of all believers, emphasized instead *leitourgia*—liturgy or worship as the 'work of the people.' Recent liturgical scholars translate *leitourgia* more accurately as 'public work' and emphasize the idea that the public work in worship is God's work— *opus Dei*.[34] But, imagined from a perspective of a theology of play, God doesn't work; God plays.[35] And God, as perichoretic Trinity, created us *imago Dei* to play in doxological relationship with God.

Johan Huizinga describes the characteristics of play:

It is an activity which proceeds within certain limits of time and space, in a visible order, according to rules freely accepted, and outside the sphere of necessity or material utility. The play-mood is one of rapture and enthusiasm, and is sacred or

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[33] The first statement is found on page 23; the second on page 175.

[34] Michael B. Aune, "Liturgy and Theology: Rethinking the Relationship," *Worship* 81, no. 1 (2007): 64.

[35] Moltmann et al., *Theology of Play*, 17. Moltmann explains God's freedom in creation through play: "How then can we explain God's freedom relative to his creation? The world as free creation cannot be a necessary unfolding of God nor an emanation of his being from his divine fullness. God is free. But he does not act capriciously. When he creates something that is not god but also not nothing, then this must have its ground not in itself but in God's *good will or pleasure.* Hence the creation is God's play, a play of his groundless and inscrutable wisdom. It is the realm in which God displays his glory."

festive in accordance with the occasion. A feeling of exaltation and tension accompanies the action, mirth and relaxation follow.[36]

These characteristics of play are easily applied to the context of worship. Hans-Georg Gadamer offers two additional insights into the characteristics of play: "Play fulfills its purpose only if the player loses himself in play" and "…seriousness in playing is necessary to make the play wholly play."[37] Jürgen Moltmann relates this seriousness and self-forgetfulness to worship:

> …the person who worships and adores becomes in his self-forgetfulness part of the worshipped and adored counterpart. Adoration and worship are the ways in which created beings participate in the eternal life and eternal joy of God and are drawn into the circular movement of the divine relationships.[38]

It is in self-forgetfulness or losing one's self in worship that one is embraced in the life and joy of the perichoretic Trinity. Catherine LaCugna concurs: "Union with God and communion with each other are actualized through doxology."[39] It is in doxology as perichoretic play that we both lose and find ourselves in perichoretic relationship with God and one another.[40]

Worship in emerging ministries included in this study reflected the characteristics of play: in their seriousness as they worshipped in particular times and places, in the creativity expressed in designing worship experiences and creating music and liturgy from the heart and for their community, in the sacred and festive moods of worship, and

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[36] Johan Huizinga, *Homo Ludens: A Study of the Play-Element in Culture* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1955), 132.

[37] Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, 103.

[38] Moltmann, *The Spirit of Life: A Universal Affirmation*, 304-05. This quotation was used earlier in this thesis on page 23.

[39] LaCugna, *God for Us: The Trinity and Christian Life*, 345. This quotation was used earlier in this thesis on page 24.

[40] Short of doxology, worship is work and discipleship is a list of things to do.

in self-forgetfulness as participants lost their sense of time and self in worship. Play was evident in the prayer and praise singing, dancing, hand praise, and 'amens' of the black church tradition at St. Barnabas'. It was evident in the neomonastic contemplative practices of "Open Space" in worship at St. Benedict's. It was evident in the experiences of ritual and liturgy in several of the ministries, including St. Mary Magdalene's.[41] It was evident in the intentional and sometimes-absurd play incorporated in worship at St. Gregory's.

Children rehearse possible futures when they play. Moltmann suggested that we too are "increasingly playing with the future in order to get to know it."[42] Perhaps those eternal moments of perichoretic play in which we lose our sense of time and self are "advents of the future flowing into the present"[43]—our own playful rehearsal for the moment of eternity to come when the table around which we gather will be a heavenly banquet; when all who are 'welcome' will actually be present; when the God whose glory we experience now in timeless eternal moments will be eternally present, face-to-face, and the glory of the Lord will be revealed and all people will see it together (Isaiah 40:5), and play.

Soli Deo Gloria!

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[41] Keifert, *Welcoming the Stranger: A Public Theology of Worship and Evangelism*, 116. Keifert affirms that "ritual can and does remain the potential source of adult play. Anderson, *Worship and Christian Identity: Practicing Ourselves*, 103. Byron Anderson suggests that "ritual practice is the 'being-played' as the past is encountered in the context of the present." Both authors advocate the significance of ritual in worship as participants lose themselves in liturgy.

[42] Moltmann et al., *Theology of Play*, 13.

[43] Niels Henrik Gregersen, "Emergence: What Is at Stake for Religious Reflection?," In *The Re-Emergence of Emergence*, ed. Philip Clayton and Paul Davies. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006), 299. Niels Henrik Gregersen draws on the work of Jürgen Moltmann from Jürgen Moltmann, *God in Creation: A New Theology of Creation and the Spirit of God* (San Francisco, CA: Harper & Row, 1985).

APPENDIX A

RESOURCES RECOMMENDED BY STUDY PARTICIPANTS

Books

Bliese, Richard H., and Craig Van Gelder. *The Evangelizing Church: A Lutheran Contribution*. Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg Fortress Press, 2005.

Brewin, Kester. *Signs of Emergence: A Vision for Church That Is Organic/Networked/Decentralized/Bottom- up/Communal/Flexible/Always Evolving*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2007.

Gibbs, Eddie, and Ryan K. Bolger. *Emerging Churches: Creating Christian Community in Postmodern Cultures*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2005.

Bolz-Weber, Nadia. *Salvation on the Small Screen? 24 Hours of Christian Television*. New York: Seabury Books, 2008.

Claiborne, Shane. *The Irresistible Revolution: Living as an Ordinary Radical*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2006.

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Gunderson, Gary. *Deeply Woven Roots: Improving the Quality of Life in Your Community*. Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1997.

Jacobsen, Eric O. *Sidewalks in the Kingdom: New Urbanism and the Christian Faith*. The Christian Practice of Everyday Life. Grand Rapids, MI: Brazos Press, 2003.

McLaren, Brian D. *A Generous or+Hodoxy: Why I Am a Missional, Evangelical, Post/Protestant, Liberal/Conservative, Mystical/Poetic, Biblical, Charismatic/Contemplative, Fundamentalist/Calvinist, Anabaptist/Anglican, Methodist, Catholic, Green, Incarnational, Depressed-yet-Hopeful, Emergent, Unfinished Christian*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2004.

Miles, Sara. *Take This Bread: A Radical Conversion*. New York: Ballantine Books, 2007.

Minatrea, Milfred. *Shaped by God's Heart: The Passion and Practices of Missional Churches*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, 2004.

Moltmann, Jürgen. *The Crucified God: The Cross of Christ as the Foundation and Criticism of Christian Theology*. London: SCM Press, 1974.

Nouwen, Henri J. M. *Life of the Beloved: Spiritual Living in a Secular World*. New York: Crossroad, 1992.

Rollins, Peter. *How (Not) to Speak of God*. Brewster, MA: Paraclete Press, 2006.

Shirky, Clay. *Here Comes Everybody: The Power of Organizing without Organizations*. New York, NY: Penguin Press, 2008.

Spellers, Stephanie. *Radical Welcome: Embracing God, the Other, and the Spirit of Transformation*. New York: Church Publishing, 2006.

Events and Conversations

"Emergent Village." Emergent Village. www.emergentvillage.com (accessed April 5, 2011).

 "Greenbelt Festival." UK: Greenbelt Festivals Ltd. www.greenbelt.org.uk (accessed April 5, 2011).

"Wild Goose Festival - 2011." Durham, NC: Wild Goose Festival. www.wildgoosefestival.org (accessed April 5, 2011).

APPENDIX B

INFORMED CONSENT FORM

INFORMED CONSENT FORM
A Doxological Hermeneutic of Mission in Emerging Ministries
in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

You are invited to be in a research study of emerging ministries in the ELCA. You were selected as a possible participant because of your participation in this ministry. We ask that you read this form and ask any questions you may have before agreeing to be in the study.

This study is being conducted by Daniel R. Anderson as a part of my PhD research project at Luther Seminary.
My advisor is Dr. Gary Simpson, Professor of Systematic Theology at Luther Seminary.

Background Information:
The purpose of this study is to learn how God is glorified through emerging ministries in the ELCA and in the lives of their people.

Procedures:
If you agree to be in this study, we would ask you to participate in group discussions and journaling related to this consultation.

Risks and Benefits of Being in the Study:
Risks involved in this study are minimal. With your permission, interviews and focus groups will be recorded for later transcription. Recordings are only for use of the researcher and will not be used publicly. The focus of the interview and focus group conversations will be on the ministries being studied. Personal sharing will be at your discretion and you are welcome to end the conversation at any time.

There are no direct benefits or payments for participation in this study.

Indirect benefits to yourself or the general public of participation are a greater understanding of emerging ministries in the ELCA and the ways they engage their contexts in ministry in the twenty-first century. Other churches may learn from your experiences as emerging ministries. Leaders involved in this study will be connected with other emerging ministry leaders in consultation regarding this study and will learn from those conversations and associations.

Confidentiality:
The records of this study will be kept confidential. I will not include any information that will make it possible to identify you in my dissertation or any other published reports. All data will be kept in a locked file in my home office. Only my advisor, Dr. Gary Simpson, I, and my research assistants will have access to the data and, if applicable, any tape or video recording. If the research is terminated for any reason, all data and recordings will be destroyed.

Tape recordings and videotapes will be transcribed. Only the researcher and his advisor will have access to the original recordings. All research data will be kept in locked files. Raw data will be destroyed by May 2018.

Voluntary Nature of the Study:
Your decision whether or not to participate will not affect your current or future relations with Luther Seminary and/ or with other cooperating institutions, such as the ELCA. If you decide to participate, you are free to withdraw at any time without affecting those relationships.

Contacts and Questions:
The researcher conducting this study is Daniel R. Anderson. You may ask any questions you have now. If you have questions later, you may contact me at 12094 Gantry Court, Apple Valley, MN 55124 or danderson001@luthersem.edu. Phone: 952-239-1201.
Advisor: Dr. Gary Simpson, Luther Seminary, 651-641-3253

Research Consultation: Luther Seminary, November 5-6, 2008
Daniel R. Anderson, researcher

Statement of Consent:

I have read the above information or have had it read to me. I have received answers to questions asked. I consent to participate in the study.

Signature _____ Date_____

Signature of researcher _____ Date_____

I consent to be audiotaped or videotaped:

Signature _____ Date_____

I consent to allow use of my direct quotations in the published thesis document.

Signature _____ Date_____

Please print name:_____

APPENDIX C

RESEARCH CONSULTATION AGENDA

November 5-6, 2008

Wednesday, Nov. 5 – Dinner at Muffuletta – Como Ave - 6:30 – 9:00

     6:30   Gathering – order - welcome – introductions
               Dinner conversation – get to know people and ministries around you.
               Dessert – DA share dissertation process

Thursday, Nov. 6 – Luther Seminary Olson Campus Center Boardroom – 9:00 – 4:00

     8:30   Gathering, nametags, coffee
     9:00   Devotions – Heatherlyn, music / Dan, scripture and reflections
             •   Ex 12:14-20 / Mt 16:6 / Gal 5:9 / Mt 5:13, 14
             •   Welcome to the day – process - intros

     9:30   Individual reflection / journal – Terri to facilitate
   10:00   Sharing in pairs – describe your ministry – listener documents on poster
             paper – switch roles – post descriptions of ministries
   10:30   Groups of 6 (3 pairs) Reflect on focusing questions
   11:15   Large group – Collect data on themes / issues raised / collective
             description of emerging ministry realities
   12:00   Lunch
     1:00   Presentation of data from research – handout
     2:00   Draw notes from morning into conversation with research presentation –
             parallel handouts. Small groups to large group. Terri to facilitate.
     3:00   Implications – yeast image – for emerging ministries, for ELCA, for
             seminary, for church planting, for the body of Christ. Dan and Terri co-
             lead.
     3:45   Benediction – return to pairs – pray for one another. Dan and Heatherlyn
             lead.
             Final blessing and song (Heatherlyn)
     4:00   *Fine* – airport runs.

APPENDIX D

RESEARCH CONSULTATION HANDOUT

A Doxological Hermeneutic of Mission in Emerging Ministries of the ELCA
A Research Consultation
Daniel R. Anderson
Luther Seminary
November 5-6, 2008

Research Process Summary

Phase 1: Identify and develop profiles of emerging ministries in the ELCA.
- Twenty ministries were identified through EOCM and the Emerging Ministry New Start Team.
- Initial profiles were developed through on-line resources and conversations.
- May – July 2008

Phase 2: Site visits
- Six complete site visits (as defined in the dissertation proposal: attending worship or other public gatherings, interviewing leadership, interviewing participants, interviewing bishop or mission developer).
- Two research assistants accompanied the researcher on the site visits.
- Six partial site visits including visiting the site and interviewing the ministry leader(s).
- Six interviews with additional ministry leaders and churchwide staff.
- Three ministries identified in phase 1 resulting in no formal contact.
- August – October 2008

Phase 3: Research consultation
- Thirty -two participants (5 seminary faculty/administration/staff, 1 churchwide staff, 23 emerging ministry leaders, 3 researchers.
- Fifteen emerging ministries represented (12 of those included in the study).
- Luther Seminary, November 5, 2008 from 6:30 – 9:00 PM and November 6, 2008 from 9:00 AM – 4:00 PM.

Dissertation phase
- Analysis of data from phases 1, 2, and 3.
- Writing
- Graduation

Categories and Observations

Contextual:
- Each ministry is unique
  - Coffee shops
  - Theology pubs
  - House groups
  - On-line communities
  - Concert Venues
  - Art galleries
  - Communal living houses
  - Worship gatherings
- Contextual – grows out of the context / location / neighborhood
- Indigenous – comes from the people / gifts and vocations

Indigenous:
- Worship reflecting the gifts, contexts, and worship languages of the participants
- Music and liturgy written by participants
- Service and outreach based upon gifts and passions of participants and community needs
- Ministry based upon gifts and passions of participants and community needs

Lutheran
- Theology
  - Grace (lived grace)
  - Missio Dei
  - Priesthood of all believers
  - Mutual consolation of the saints
  - Simul Justus et peccator (hospitality – all are welcome)
  - Community gathered in Word and Sacrament
  - Article VII – Augsburg Confession regarding ceremonies (worship).
  - Keeping traditions that are useful in God's mission.
  - Incarnational ministry
- Praxis
  - Use of the lectionary
  - Use of traditional liturgical forms
  - Weekly communion
  - Weekly gathering for worship
  - Re-traditioning and ritualizing

Emerging
- Term means different things to different people and contexts
  - Distancing from the word emerging as an adjective
  - Ambivalence about emerging identity
- "Emergent"
  - Distancing from the word, particularly as an adjective.
  - Awareness of "emergent" movement / networks

- Emerging
  - Community
  - Creative
  - Alternative
  - Indigenous
  - Contextual
  - Networks
  - E-community
- We've emerged…

Missional

- *Missio Dei*
- Sense of presence, action, and/or providence of God
- Be church not do church
- Participatory
- Magnetic, not attractional (modern)

Ecclesiology

- Contextual *missiones ecclesiae* – response to *missio Dei*
- Various structures
  - Mission development (entrepreneurial)
  - Monastic
  - Co-op
  - Ministry of…
  - Network
  - Council / Board of directors

Leadership

- Multiple routes to ordination: MDiv, MDiv w/ Lutheran year, CL MDiv, Teem, SAWL, Licensed lay leaders, interns.
- Old reality – break the rules / new reality – rules have changed
- DNA / Gifts / Passion of the leader reflected in the ministry
- Transitions of leadership are few to this point but difficult
- Replacing founding leader is difficult
- Leaders are emerging from the ministries (indigenous leadership)
- Communal leadership
  - Flat structures / entrepreneurial
  - Clergy / lay relationships
  - Emerging leadership (no leader – no ministry)
- Appointed or anointed – gift and need based

Ministry Foci

- Community
- Worship (Word and Sacrament)
- Margins / diversity
- Cultural Creatives

Values and Characteristics
- Authenticity
- No bait and switch
- Creativity
- Gifts based
- Organic
- Humor / irony / sarcasm

Challenges
- Financial independence
- Costs of pastors / costs of buildings
- Support (symbiotic or parasitic)
- Leadership transition
- Weaknesses of the leader
- Transience
  - Spaces
  - Participants
    - Quick to engage
    - Quick to leave
  - Leaders (starters vs. builders)
- Liminality
- Rules to work around

Worship
- Re-traditioning tradition
- Ancient / future
- Each unique / contextual
- Limited or no use of hymnbooks
- Low-tech
- Genres of music varied amongst ministries
- Use of lectionary and church year common but contextual
- Western rite used along with other liturgical forms – 'eclectic religious services'
- Worship is led by worship leaders, sometimes the 'pastor'
- Use of arts (occasionally electronic media)

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