

12-1-2013

The Entrepreneurial Church: Mobilizing the Church to Bring Restoration to a Community in Chattanooga, Tennessee

David J. Burke

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.fuller.edu/dmin>



Part of the [Missions and World Christianity Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Burke, David J., "The Entrepreneurial Church: Mobilizing the Church to Bring Restoration to a Community in Chattanooga, Tennessee" (2013). *Doctor of Ministry Projects*. 123.
<https://digitalcommons.fuller.edu/dmin/123>

This Project is brought to you for free and open access by the School of Theology at Digital Commons @ Fuller. It has been accepted for inclusion in Doctor of Ministry Projects by an authorized administrator of Digital Commons @ Fuller. For more information, please contact archives@fuller.edu.

Please **HONOR** the copyright of
these documents by not
retransmitting or making any
additional copies in any form

(Except for private personal use).

We appreciate your respectful
cooperation.

Theological Research Exchange Network
(TREN)

P.O. Box 30183
Portland, Oregon 97294
USA

Website: www.tren.com

E-mail: rwjones@tren.com

Phone# 1-800-334-8736

ATTENTION CATALOGING LIBRARIANS

TREN ID#

Online Computer Library Center (OCLC)

MARC Record #

Digital Object Identification

DOI #

Ministry Focus Paper Approval Sheet

This ministry focus paper entitled

THE ENTREPRENEURIAL CHURCH: MOBILIZING THE CHURCH TO BRING
RESTORATION TO A COMMUNITY IN CHATTANOOGA, TENNESSEE


Written by

DAVID J. BURKE

and submitted in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Ministry

has been accepted by the Faculty of Fuller Theological Seminary
upon the recommendation of the undersigned readers:



Scott Sherman



Kurt Fredrickson

Date Received: December 1, 2013

THE ENTREPRENEURIAL CHURCH: MOBILIZING THE CHURCH TO BRING
RESTORATION TO A COMMUNITY IN CHATTANOOGA, TENNESSEE

A MINISTRY FOCUS PROJECT
SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF THE
SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY
FULLER THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT
OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE
DOCTOR OF MINISTRY

BY

DAVID J. BURKE
DECEMBER 2013

ABSTRACT

The Entrepreneurial Church: Mobilizing the Church to Bring Restoration to a Community in Chattanooga

David J. Burke

Doctor of Ministry

School of Theology, Fuller Theological Seminary

2013

The purpose of this project is form a team from the Body of Christ to open a grocery store as a restorative act in a “food desert” where the two socioeconomically distinct communities of Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard and University of Tennessee intersect in Chattanooga, Tennessee. Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard (MLK) is the current divider between the University of Tennessee at Chattanooga (UTC) neighborhood and the lower-income, historical African-American MLK neighborhood. The House, a university ministry situated in this intersection, serves as a catalyst for this project. Pastoral partnerships with local churches and with the university, combined with evaluation of the physical need of the MLK community, were the genesis for this initiative. Students from The House, area church members, and community leaders presently work together to steer the project.

This project will be discussed in three parts. Part One describes the two communities. Part Two offers a theological reflection and includes a scriptural exploration of incarnation and restoration, a literature review, and an examination of current church-planting and missional models.

Part Three discusses a strategy and timeline for implementing a pilot project. Initial stages of the project include vision-casting among neighborhood residents, local community foundations, churches, and university administrators. Pertinent steps involve discussing the community’s physical needs and the Church’s entrepreneurial role in meeting those needs. The pilot project entails crafting a business model and plan through a local entrepreneurial group. An assessment of the project strategy and goals is given. This paper concludes with suggesting steps forward to bring the store to fruition.

Content Reader: Scot Sherman, ThM, PhD

Word Count: 260

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	1
PART ONE: MINISTRY CONTEXT	
Chapter 1. THE MARTIN LUTHER KING JR. NEIGHBORHOOD	10
Chapter 2. THE HOUSE AND FIRST CHRISTIAN CHURCH	30
PART TWO: THEOLOGICAL REFLECTION	
Chapter 3. LITERATURE REVIEW: SOURCES OF RESTORATION	56
Chapter 4. ECCLESIOLOGY: CHURCH AS ENTREPRENEURIAL RESTORER	84
Chapter 5. THEOLOGY OF INCARNATION AND RESTORATION	116
PART THREE: MINISTRY STRATEGY	
Chapter 6. PLAN AND STRATEGY	136
Chapter 7. PILOT PROJECT AND ASSESSMENT	163
SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS	190
APPENDICES	198
BIBLIOGRAPHY	207

INTRODUCTION

Bessie Smith used to sing on Chattanooga city streets. Elected to the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame in 1989, the “Empress of the Blues” grew up in Chattanooga, the fourth largest city in Tennessee.¹ Her recording of *Downhearted Blues* sold more than 750,000 copies in 1923.² She and her brother, Andrew Smith, began “busking” (street performing) in front of the White Elephant Saloon near Thirteenth and Elm in the 1920s.³ Near that venue, East Ninth Street—also known as “The Big Nine”—hosted blues, soul, jazz, and clubs dedicated to rhythm and blues that included the Nightcap, the Memo, Behind the Moon, the Palace, and the Log Cabin. Musicians such as Duke Ellington, Count Basie, James Brown, Aretha Franklin, and others came and performed on this street.⁴

Today, those clubs are gone. East Ninth Street is now “Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard.” What used to be a street full of nightlife has empty lots, abandoned buildings, and just a handful of local businesses. In commemoration, the street and its merchants host the annual “Bessie Smith Strut,” part of Chattanooga’s summer music

¹ State Guides USA, “Tennessee’s Top Ten Cities by Population,” <http://tennessee.stateguidesusa.com/answers-to-my-questions/what-are-the-top-10-largest-cities-in-tennessee?/> (accessed November 29, 2012).

² The Red Hot Jazz Archive: A History of Jazz Before 1930, “Bessie Smith,” <http://www.redhotjazz.com/bessie.html> (accessed July 2, 2012).

³ Jennifer Crutchfield, *Chattanooga Landmarks: Exploring the History of the Scenic City* (Charleston, SC: History Press, 2010), 25.

⁴ Charlie Moss, “Bessie Smith Sings the Blues,” Nooga.com, <http://nooga.com/154794/bessie-smith-sings-the-blues/> (accessed October 12, 2012).

festival called Riverbend. However, in the spring of 2012, the mayor's office threatened to move the Strut, because it has had instances of shootings and gang violence. The Strut was going to be moved to a "safer location" along the city's renovated riverfront.⁵ A handful of merchants along Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard petitioned the city with a revised safety plan. Through the generosity of a donor, the Strut was saved and returned to its original location.⁶ Still, the fact that city officials wished to move the Strut reflects a general opinion that the area has deteriorated and does not reflect the pride Chattanooga has in their renewed downtown.

The Body of Christ has an opportunity to instill renewal in this pocket of the city. It can help restore vibrant life for residents, businesses, the African-American community, and the people of greater Chattanooga. In this way, the message of the gospel with all its elements of creation, fall, redemption, and restoration has relevance for this neighborhood. There are eight churches within a three-block radius of Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard. First Christian Church (FCC), a Disciples of Christ congregation, is one of those, having moved to its present location over sixty years ago. FCC finds itself now surrounded by university housing, as the University of Tennessee-Chattanooga (UTC) bought land behind it and built apartments one block away from the boulevard. About five years ago, the leadership of FCC invited the staff of The House to locate our offices and meeting space within the church building. The House is an independent non-profit ministry to college students, supported by several local churches. I serve as its

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ James Harrison, "Anonymous Donor Saves Bessie Smith Strut," Nooga.com, <http://nooga.com/155003/anonymous-donor-saves-bessie-smith-strut> (accessed October 12, 2012).

director. The mission of The House is to bring college-age people in the Chattanooga area to a deeper knowledge and love of Jesus. The focus is on college students at UTC. These are young people with a love of God. Many major in business, design, non-profit management, and sociology. Students within The House are deepening relationships with members of FCC, which is an aging congregation actively involved in ministry in the neighborhood. Students and FCC members walk and drive down Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard every day.

As the university has made a transition from being primarily a commuter campus of seven thousand students to a residential campus of over twelve thousand students, First Christian Church and The House now find themselves surrounded by 1,700 students living in apartment-style housing.⁷ At the same time, the historic Martin Luther King Jr. (MLK) community is changing from a predominantly African-American neighborhood to a mixed neighborhood that includes University of Tennessee-Chattanooga faculty, administration, students, and long-time residents. Despite the increase in residents in the area, MLK Boulevard remains a street with vacant buildings and many empty lots.

The purpose of this project is to expand the ministry of The House by developing relationships in the community to help restore the neighborhood, in order to start a needed business: a grocery store. The project is divided into three parts. The first part explores the changing aspects of the university and MLK communities. It will examine the histories of those two communities as well as demographic factors that make this

⁷ University of Tennessee at Chattanooga, "Our Apartments," <http://housing.utc.edu/index.php/utc-housing/our-apartments> (accessed May 14, 2013).

neighborhood in transition unique. The second part examines the biblical and theological foundations for seeing the local church as an agent of mission. The theological themes of incarnation and restoration are the twin pillars of the foundation in this section. The incarnation of Jesus Christ is God's statement that this world matters. Restoration is a marker of the Church's mission: to restore God's creation until the fullness of His kingdom comes.⁸ Finally, the third part introduces a pilot project that involves forming a business model and plan to develop the grocery store.

This project is extremely important. It has the potential to meet a tangible need for both the university and MLK communities. Moreover, it serves as a critique of current church-planting models which focus merely on new worship services. By beginning with an entrepreneurial mission that serves the community, this project could be an example of what is being called a "Mission-Shaped Church."⁹ Church leaders, especially those working in Britain, are taking this to heart.¹⁰ N. T. Wright, in *Surprised by Hope*, critically assesses what he sees in his own context and in North American churches. He argues that an initial emphasis on creating a worshipping community and resultant programs for its members leaves little energy or time for mission. He also states that a worshipping community and its mission are inextricably intertwined; indeed, it is a reflection of the coming kingdom of God and the new creation. He writes:

⁸ N. T. Wright, *Surprised by Hope: Rethinking Heaven, Resurrection, and the Mission of the Church* (New York: HarperOne, 2008), 202.

⁹ Archbishop's Council on Mission and Public Affairs, *Mission-Shaped Church: Church Planting and Fresh Expressions of Church in a Changing Context* (London: Church House Publishing, 2004).

¹⁰ Ibid.

What you *do* in the present—by painting, preaching, singing, sewing, praying, teaching, building hospitals, digging wells, campaigning for justice, writing poems, caring for the needy, loving your neighbour as yourself—*will last into God's future*. These activities are not simply ways of making the present life a little less beastly, a little more bearable, until the day when we leave it behind altogether. . . . They are part of what we may call *building for God's kingdom*. . . . But let us note . . . that the promise of new creation . . . is not and cannot be simply about straightening out ideas about life after death. It is about the mission of the church. There has been a lot of talk where I work about a “mission-shaped church,” following a report with that title, urging today's church to regard mission not as an extra, something to fit in if there's any time left over from other concerns, but as the central and shaping dynamic of its life.¹¹

N. T. Wright's words here give a theological basis and the practical outworking of that theology for the Church. The fact that the Church's work in this present time will last into the new creation leads communities of God's people to consider tangible acts of restoration within their contexts. Moreover, the admonition to have mission shape their identity and purpose calls each local church to be aware of what can be done in its neighborhood to help build God's kingdom.

There have been several factors that have influenced the formation of this project. First, I have witnessed generations of Christian college students viewing the Church simply as an institution where “spiritual talk” is the product being sold. They do not see it as an active part of the community or the world. Instead, the Church appears to them to be a declining institution in which a certain language, particular teaching, and focused programs are intent on staying within the walls of a congregation's building. There is an increasing social consciousness in today's UTC students, a trend that seems to reflect a greater

¹¹ N. T. Wright, *Surprised by Hope*, 193.

movement among twenty-somethings.¹² They long to serve tangibly as an expression of their belief system. Moreover, there is a disconnection between what they are studying in the classroom and what they are experiencing in worship and small group study. Many Christian students wonder if the gospel has any bearing on the world here and now.¹³

My own studies in Fuller Theological Seminary's Doctor of Ministry program have shaped my thinking as well. I was introduced to the writings of Michael Frost and Alan Hirsch early in my studies, particularly *The Shaping of Things to Come: Innovation and Mission for the Twenty-first Century Church*. Frost and Hirsch argue for innovative ways of being the Church in the world. They offer a critique of the traditional church and call for the "missional" church. A missional church is a local congregation that defines itself by being sent into its community and the world. Frost and Hirsch write:

How much of the traditional church's energy goes into adjusting their programs and their public meetings to cater to an unseen constituency? If we get our seating, our parking, our children's program, our preaching, and our music right, they will come. This assumes that we have a place in our society and that people don't join our churches because, though they want to be Christians, they're unhappy with the product. The missional church recognizes that it does not hold a place of honor in its host community and that its missional imperative compels it to move out from itself into that host community as salt and light.¹⁴

The implication is that merely focusing on Sunday morning services and programs for church members will not work any longer, as it seemed to do when the

¹² Samuel G. Freedman, "Evangelical, and Young, and Active in New Area," *New York Times*, http://www.nytimes.com/2009/11/28/us/28religion.html?_r=0 (accessed May 6, 2013).

¹³ Summer Bible Study participants on "Heaven," The House, Chattanooga, TN, June-July 2011.

¹⁴ Michael Frost and Alan Hirsch, *The Shaping of Things to Come: Innovation and Mission for the 21st Century Church* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 2003), 19.

Church was more central to western society. Rather than thinking it has a “place of honor,”¹⁵ the missional church does not wait for its community to come to its members, but rather they go to their neighbors. Moving into one’s community must be done in a posture of humility and servanthood. “Salt and light” are images that Hirsch and Frost borrow from Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5).¹⁶ Salt was a preservative keeping things from spoiling and is an agent of flavor. Light helped to illuminate dark places and was readily seen. Both of these are helpful in illustrating the role of the church defined by mission.

Additionally, taking N. T. Wright’s class, “The Church as Mission,” certainly gave theological weight to questioning current paradigms of church.¹⁷ As mentioned above, he contends in *Surprised by Hope* that a church must be essentially formed around mission. That book and corresponding lectures recast the biblical vision of the new heavens and new earth into the life of the Church. Since the promise of God is for a new creation, and not simply the destruction of the first creation, it grants value and honor to physical creation. Moreover, it informs the Church’s mission as restoration of brokenness in all its forms.

Finally, my current ministry context helped to illuminate a need. For years, The House has provided a lunch for two dollars for students, faculty, administration, and residents. It was only in the past three years, however, when we moved our location

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ N. T. Wright, “TM716: The Church as Mission” (lecture, Fuller Theological Seminary, Pasadena, CA, 2009).

closer to the MLK neighborhood, that I became aware of a greater need. The lunch opportunity began to draw almost 250 people each week. I befriended one homeless man in particular who taught me much about the area and its needs. Furthermore, I came across a proposal created by Chattanooga-Hamilton County Regional Planning Agency's Master Plan for the MLK Neighborhood,¹⁸ in which local residents identified a grocery store as its most pressing need. I watched every fall as the housing department at UTC drove incoming students twenty minutes away to a Walmart to shop for groceries. Finally, a tour by a long-time resident showed me empty buildings and lots along MLK Boulevard and what used to be there. This man, now elected to the Chattanooga City Council, grew up in the neighborhood and is personally aware of the seasons of MLK Boulevard and the factors that have led to the many changes.¹⁹

Taken together, these influences have formed a vision to help with the restoration of MLK Boulevard. Instead of waiting for developers or government agencies to initiate this renewal, the Church can be the forerunner and the good news of the kingdom in mission. A restored building providing food for the hungry can function as yeast working through the whole batch of dough (cf. Matthew 13:33). Streets once bustling with life by God's grace can be vibrant again.

¹⁸ Karen Hundt et al., *MLK Community Plan: A Look at the Past, Present, and Future* (Chattanooga, TN: Chattanooga-Hamilton County Regional Planning Agency, 2009).

¹⁹ Moses Freeman, interview by author, Chattanooga, TN, June 2011.

PART ONE
MINISTRY CONTEXT

CHAPTER 1

THE MARTIN LUTHER KING JR. NEIGHBORHOOD

This chapter chronicles the changing MLK/UTC neighborhood of Chattanooga. The rapid growth of the University of Tennessee-Chattanooga alongside the decline of the historic Martin Luther King Jr. corridor has left a void of needed businesses and services for the community. Despite the presence of eight longstanding mainline churches in the area, both university students and MLK residents seem to be waiting for someone to treat them like neighbors in one neighborhood instead of ignoring their most obvious needs.

A Brief History of Chattanooga's MLK Neighborhood

When the Civil War began, Chattanooga was a town of 2,545 persons.¹ By November of 1864, 3,893 refugees from the war had settled within the city limits,² greatly expanding the city's population. Shortly after the Civil War ended, a group of African-American entrepreneurs began to purchase property and build homes. In 1867,

¹ Rita Lorraine Hubbard, *African Americans of Chattanooga: A History of Unsung Heroes* (Charleston, SC: The History Press, 2007), 117-118.

² Ibid.

Esquire Flowers became the first African American elected to city government, and John James Irvine became the county clerk.³ In light of the treatment often given to African Americans after the Civil War in Southern cities, this was significant. Chattanooga began to be seen as a progressive city for African Americans.

The center of the African-American entrepreneurship was East Ninth Street. Along this thoroughfare lie several prominent landmarks. One is Walden Hospital, the first African-American teaching hospital. The James Building, which once housed the East Side Pharmacy, was thought to be the largest African-American-owned pharmacy in the South. The Martin Hotel, the largest African-American hotel in the South, had many notable guests, such as Ella Fitzgerald, Fats Domino, Cab Calloway, Nat King Cole, Willie Mays, Satchel Paige, and the original Harlem Globetrotters. Randolph Miller, a former slave, has a marker outside what is now the Bessie Smith Cultural Center. Miller first worked for the Chattanooga newspaper, *The Daily Times*. He then created his own newspaper called *The Blade*. In 1905, as segregationist Jim Crow Laws were enacted, Miller led a streetcar boycott and then established his own bus line to serve the community.⁴

East Ninth Street once boasted seven or eight grocery stores. The “boom” period was 1900 through 1917.⁵ Three African-American churches—Shiloh Baptist, Zion Methodist Episcopal Church, and another Baptist church—marked the area. East Ninth

³ Ibid.

⁴ Raymond Evans and Rita Hubbard. *Historical African American Places in the Chattanooga Area* (Signal Mountain, TN: CASI Publishing, 2009), 94, 108.

⁵ Hundt et al., *MLK Community Plan*, 17.

was called Chattanooga's Harlem, or Chattanooga's Beale Street, after the Memphis street that featured multiple music halls and performance venues.⁶ The street was widened in 1940. It was estimated that 75 percent of the business places on East Ninth Street were operated by African Americans. The first African-American school was located on East Ninth Street.⁷ The *MLK Community Plan* gives a vivid picture of the variety of businesses, services, and entertainment options along the thoroughfare:

At one time, the community had three theaters: the Liberty, the Grand, and the Harlem Theater, which served African American audiences. There were dentist and physician offices, tailoring and shoe repair shops. Also in the community was the O.K. Studio, a recording and photography studio; the Eastside Grill; the Bon Tom Recreation Hall; a YMCA; Stack Confectionary; and G & E Café, a soul food restaurant attracting patrons of many different racial backgrounds.⁸

For African Americans and Chattanoogaans of all races, East Ninth Street was a vibrant area. However, slowly the luster of East Ninth Street started to fade. According to a *Hamilton County Regional Planning Commission Survey* in 1970, the district saw a steady increase in vacant housing and deteriorating and dilapidated buildings over the previous three decades.⁹ MLK merchants also offered their perspective on the history of the street and the causes of the slow downturn along the boulevard:

⁶ "Chattanooga's Harlem: On 9th Street," *Chattanooga Times*, September 20, 1942. (The physical article was cut out in the Hamilton County Library and did not reveal the page number or section.)

⁷ Zeke Lake, "One of Best in South. On East Ninth: Its Fancy Thoroughfare Now," *Chattanooga Times*, October 4, 1942, M2.

⁸ Hundt et al., *MLK Community Plan*, 19.

⁹ Frederick Houser and Steven Leach, "Neighborhood Analysis: District No. 1, City Center," in *Hamilton County Regional Planning Commission Report* (Chattanooga, TN: Hamilton County Regional Planning Commission, October 1977), 18.

In the 1960s, black-white hostility drove away white businesspeople; desegregation allowed black customers to patronize larger white-owned stores. Crime has frightened away businesses and residents . . . neglect by local officials let the area slip into decay. Ninth Street's conversion to a one-way thoroughfare . . . made access difficult. Stricter building codes led to condemned properties which owners never rebuilt. Some bluntly blame racism on the part of lenders who fuel small business.¹⁰

What happened on East Ninth Street was indicative of what was happening in inner cities nationally. John M. Perkins describes in detail the rise of American suburban life and the effect it had on cities. The change in inner-city neighborhoods was swift and devastating. He writes:

Over the last four decades the cities of our nation have experienced a mass migration to the suburbs. There were many reasons behind this exodus—improved mass transportation, fair housing legislation, and the shopping mall phenomenon, to name a few. As the American dream suburbanized, city neighborhoods that were once close, economically viable communities turned into ghettos almost overnight. As homeowners left, real estate values plummeted and properties quickly deteriorated. As educated families moved out, the quality of education declined. As the spiritual and moral leadership withdrew, the churches soon followed. Thriving business districts eventually boarded up as merchants pursued new opportunities in the “edge cities” that sprouted up on the periphery of the city limits. In the end, nearly everyone who had the capacity moved out of the heart of the city, leaving behind the vulnerable and the desperate to fill the vacuum created by the exodus.¹¹

Every single one of these factors that Perkins lists happened to the East Ninth Street community. One particular change that was highlighted by business owners and city planners was the change along East Ninth Street and nearby McCallie Avenue. Once two-directional thoroughfares, they became one-way streets practically overnight. The impact

¹⁰ Michael Davis, “Boulevard Blues: ML King Revival Elusive, Frustrating.” *Chattanooga Times*, June 21, 1993, C1.

¹¹ John M. Perkins, *Restoring At-Risk Communities: Doing It Together and Doing It Right* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1996), Kindle Electronic edition: 76.

was that these areas became “drive-by” neighborhoods, meant to make travel to and from the downtown core more efficient. The effect was that no one took time to stop along East Ninth Street anymore.

The conversion of McCallie Avenue and Ninth Street from thriving two-way streets into a pair of one-way streets also added to the economic decline of the area. The neighborhood gained a reputation for having the highest numbers of crime in the central city, due to its appearance, vacant lots, old and abandoned buildings, and abundance of liquor stores.¹²

By 1978, an article in the *Chattanooga Times* appeared; it was titled “East Ninth Renewal Is Sought” and described the formation of The East Ninth Community Development Corporation (CDC). Four African-American businessmen wanted to encourage new merchants to apply for federal funds through their development corporation to revitalize the area. The East Ninth CDC applied for a \$4 million grant to upgrade bus lanes, improve parking, and create park spaces.¹³ However, the image of being a high-crime area hurt the progress of a comprehensive project.¹⁴

The early 1980s brought the ugly face of racism to light in the city of Chattanooga, and the most obvious example revolved around East Ninth Street. A petition to rename East Ninth Street “Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard” exposed the issue. A prominent white developer named T. A. Lupton said he would abandon a

¹² Hundt et al., *MLK Community Plan*, 19.

¹³ Nancy Hartis. “Alliance of Businessmen: East Ninth Renewal Is Sought,” *Chattanooga Times*, December 23, 1978, A1.

¹⁴ “Barrier of Fear, Image Hurts 9th Street,” *Chattanooga Times*, December 6, 1980, B1.

development in the west half of the street, if it were renamed for Martin Luther King Jr.¹⁵ Not to be outdone, National Association for the Advancement of Colored People president George Key said he would lead an effort to block development if the city commission refused to rename the street.¹⁶ One week later, the city decided not to rename the street but designated an area near East Ninth Street as a memorial plaza for King. The city commission evidently attempted to please both parties, wanting the economic development Lupton offered but also desiring to appease the African-American community and honor King. Outraged by the city commission's decision, marchers gathered in a nearby park to paste MLK bumper stickers over city street signs. City workers quickly removed the stickers, and the issue of renaming the street stayed in the news for the next several months, until black and white ministers formed a coalition to address the city commission. In July of 1981, the city reversed its initial decision and agreed to rename the street.¹⁷ However, the street-naming issue revealed deep-seated racism in the city and did not address the condition of the street.

Just months after the commission's decision to rename, the city was presented with a list of concerns from residents and merchants of the street. "Public drunkenness, loitering, vagrancy, speeding traffic, illegal gambling, dope traffic, undesirable businesses, concentration of liquor stores, littered lots, abandoned cars, garbage dumping,

¹⁵ Pat Wilcox, "Lupton Says Development Endangered," *Chattanooga Times*, April 2, 1981, A1.

¹⁶ Pat Wilcox, "Key Would Halt Project If Street Not Renamed," *Chattanooga Times*, April 3, 1981, B2.

¹⁷ Pat Wilcox, "City Reverses, Renames Ninth Street for King," *Chattanooga Times*, July 15, 1981, A1.

overgrown alleyways, vacant, boarded up buildings, slum lords, and lack of sidewalks” were among the problems listed.¹⁸ Clearly, the grant awarded to the East Ninth Street CDC in 1980 did little to renovate the street, and the image of fear regarding the area prevailed.

In the next few years, the Martin Luther King Boulevard Community Development Corporation (MLKCDC) became active, receiving a federal grant to build a training center for solar energy for the Tennessee Valley Authority.¹⁹ The MLKCDC also applied and was approved for having a portion of the neighborhood designated on the National Register of Historic Places.²⁰ Slowly, pockets of the street experienced revitalization and the city took notice. In 1983 the city’s annual multi-day music festival, called Riverbend, included MLK Boulevard in its offerings by inaugurating the Bessie Smith Strut. The merchants along MLK Boulevard loved the attention that the Strut brought to their businesses, even if it was for only one night.²¹

During the following years, the Inner-City Development Corporation along with the MLKCDC worked to build and renovate housing in the area. The plan was extensive, calling for over \$11 million in city-backed bonds and private investment. Five years later,

¹⁸ “Ninth Street Residents, Merchants Air Concerns,” *Chattanooga Times*, September 25, 1981, B6.

¹⁹ Dave Flessner, “\$1.5 Million Grant OK’d for King Boulevard,” *Chattanooga Times*, September 28, 1982, B1.

²⁰ “Rich in History,” *Chattanooga Times*, February 22, 1983, A6.

²¹ Tim Ensign, “M.L. King Blvd. Business Sees High Flow of Riverbend Cash,” *Chattanooga News-Free Press*, June 17, 1986, B1.

however, the plan was slow in being realized.²² According to Gary Kelley, then the executive director of the MLKCDC, the greatest barrier to the redevelopment was “the public perception of this area. It’s unfounded. There is a focus on the bad elements, but the street is changing.” When asked what services and businesses were needed, he said, “A fast-food restaurant. A retail drug outlet. A dry cleaner. A *midsized grocery store*. Specialty shops. Maybe a movie theater. And, of course, business and professional offices [emphasis mine].”²³ For some, development was not happening fast enough, causing landowners to find other plans and partners worth supporting.

In 1992 the relationship between the MLK neighborhood and UTC began to be strained, when an anonymous donor gave a gift of land worth \$2.6 million to the UTC Foundation. “It’s a slap in the face of the black community,” one business owner said.²⁴ For many long-time residents of the area, such a move signaled the end of the hope that MLK Boulevard again could be a center for African-American culture. Generations of African Americans had held onto memories of what the boulevard once was and envisioned what it could be. The gift of the land appeared to ignore the wishes of many property owners. The vision that MLK Boulevard and the neighborhood would be the haven it once was for African-American entrepreneurs and residents alike was gone.

²² Mary Gabel, “A Better Tomorrow: Downtown Rebuilding Is Slow but Steady,” *Chattanooga Times*, July 5, 1991, A1.

²³ “Talking with Gary D. Kelley,” *Chattanooga Times*, July 7, 1992, B8.

²⁴ Michele Dula Baum, “MLK Merchants Fear Gift of Land Endangers History,” *Chattanooga Times*, January 28, 1992, A1.

What did happen in the neighborhood was the development of housing. The Inner-City Development Corporation built homes in the area in an effort to attract more residents. Eight years after the gift of land to the university, the UTC Place Apartments were completed, which provided housing for 1,700 students.²⁵ A multi-million-dollar building broke ground on MLK Boulevard in late 2004, designed to provide condominiums above a retail space. One resident who has lived in the MLK community for more than fifty years was quoted as saying that “she’d really like to see the [Community Development Corporation] build a *large grocery store* on the street, but she is pleased they are doing something [emphasis mine].”²⁶ Unfortunately, today that building sits empty.

The neighborhood stayed in the local news for the next seven years while city officials, property owners, and real estate developers released plans to restore the area. In late 2008, the Hamilton County Regional Planning Agency’s plan was introduced; but five years later, few of those plans have come to fruition. Several factors have been cited. “Officials say false starts, mistakes and property owners’ unrealistic pricing have left most of the surrounding development at a standstill.”²⁷ The well-intentioned plans of community developers and UTC to put more residents in the area over the span of thirteen years still has left MLK Boulevard relatively untouched. UTC’s growth has shown itself to be a major factor in the neighborhood bordering MLK Boulevard.

²⁵ Kathy Gilbert and Jamie Hancock, “ML King Renewal: Neighborhood Looks to UTC Growth Impact,” *Chattanooga Times Free Press*, January 23, 2000, A1.

²⁶ Yolanda Putman, “Building Plans on ML King Under Way,” *Chattanooga Times Free Press*, August 3, 2004, B1.

²⁷ Ellis Smith, “Ready for Revival: King Boulevard Redevelopment Moving Slowly,” *Chattanooga Times Free Press*, December 31, 2010, C1.

The University of Tennessee at Chattanooga

Like the city of Chattanooga, the University of Tennessee-Chattanooga has reinvented itself after having had many identities. Most recently, its move from being a commuter school to having more of a residential emphasis has moved it closer to the MLK community. UTC originally was a private school called Chattanooga University and was established from a partnership of local residents and the Methodist Episcopal Church in 1886. Just three years later it merged with another church-supported school, East Tennessee Wesleyan University, to form Grant University. Eighteen years later it changed its name to University of Chattanooga. A final merger with a city junior college and the University of Tennessee system in 1969 formed the “University of Tennessee at Chattanooga.”²⁸

In 1998, the University of Tennessee-Chattanooga was described as a commuter school of about 8,500 students.²⁹ Approximately one thousand students lived on campus. Now fourteen years later UTC has over eleven thousand students,³⁰ with nearly four thousand living on campus, and has a master plan to approach eighteen thousand students in the long term.³¹ UTC has been able to draw new students by focusing attention on a few specific departments and developing their reputation. UTC has sought to capitalize

²⁸ University of Tennessee at Chattanooga, “About UTC: History,” <http://www.utc.edu/About/History.php/> (accessed July 2, 2012).

²⁹ University of Tennessee at Chattanooga, *98-99 UTC Catalog*, <http://www.utc.edu/Administration/Records/documents/1998UTCCatalog.pdf> (accessed June 3, 2013), 3.

³⁰ University of Tennessee at Chattanooga, *The University of Tennessee at Chattanooga: Campus Master Plan*, <http://www.utc.edu/CampusMasterPlan/Resources/CampusMasterPlanExecSummary7-25-12.pdf> (accessed June 3, 2013), 6.

³¹ *Ibid.*

on the city's recent recruiting of technological companies and has become one of the first schools to offer a Doctor of Philosophy in Computer Science. Its Physical Therapy Department is extremely competitive, attracting applicants from throughout the Southeast and beyond. Finally, its Business School has been recognized by the *Princeton Review* and was listed in the top one hundred undergraduate business schools in 2007 and 2009 by *Business Week* for "Best Undergraduate Business Schools."³²

Despite its increase in reputation and status, UTC faces a challenge with its physical campus. Since it is close to downtown, there are few areas where the university can expand its holdings. What used to be a field with abandoned houses in 1998 now is home to the UTC Place Apartments, where 1,700 students reside. Those apartments back up to Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard. UTC's new apartment buildings—complete with landscaping, smooth parking lots, and wrought-iron-style perimeter—provides a stark contrast against the overgrown gravel lots and buildings with broken windows, along MLK Boulevard.

Just a few blocks away, Chattanooga's downtown has undergone a renaissance. A partnership of private and public monies has helped to make Chattanooga a tourist destination for families throughout the Southeast. The anchor for this renaissance has been the Chattanooga Aquarium, which has hosted 19.3 million visitors since its opening twenty years ago.³³ Poised on the edge of the Tennessee River, the Tennessee Aquarium

³² BloombergBusinessWeek: Business Schools, "Best Undergraduate B-Schools Ranking History," March 20, 2013, <http://www.businessweek.com/articles/2013-03-20/best-undergraduate-b-schools-ranking-history> (accessed June 3, 2013).

³³ Pamela Perkins, "Urban Transformation," *CityScope Magazine*, June 2012, 62.

spawned development throughout the downtown area. Restaurants, hotels, a new minor-league baseball stadium, and a renovated convention center helped Chattanooga garner national attention in publications such as the *Wall Street Journal* and *U.S. News and World Report*.³⁴

As previously mentioned, in 1992, an anonymous donor sold land in the MLK neighborhood to the University of Chattanooga Foundation to help build UTC Place Apartments. A community outreach center was part of the plan, hoping to link the MLK community to the new UTC development. This was the vision for the center:

The second aspect of the University and Community partnership will be through the Community Outreach Partnership Center, a federally funded facility operated by the University and offering substantive services to the community. Every University department will be encouraged to participate in service delivery from the center. Among the activities offered by the Center will be:

- Community revitalization efforts through organized clean-up projects, a community-based arts project, and development of training in grassroots organizing.
- Establishment of Individual Development Accounts to encourage savings by residents, including matching savings on a 2:1 basis.
- Sports programs to deter youth from drug use, including having UTC athletes serve as mentors.³⁵

The plan also called for involvement of UTC's College of Business Administration and the School of Nursing to provide services for the community. The

³⁴ Dawn Wotapka, "Chattanooga Reinvents Itself, at its Own Pace," *Wall Street Journal Online*, April 17, 2012, <http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424052702303624004577341932764696276.html> (accessed June 3, 2013); Emily Brandon, "10 Affordable Places to Retire," *US News & World Report*, <http://money.usnews.com/money/retirement/articles/2009/03/26/10-affordable-places-to-retire> (accessed August 5, 2013); see also Chattanooga Area Chamber, "The World Is Talking," <http://www.chattanooga-chamber.com/news-media/the-world-is-talking> (accessed June 3, 2013).

³⁵ University of Tennessee at Chattanooga, "Working with the M.L. King Neighborhood," <http://www.utc.edu/Administration/UniversityRelations/newsreleases/expansion/expansion.html> (accessed July 2, 2012).

Community Outreach Partnership Center sponsored two studies in 2006 and 2007. One was entitled *Advancing UTC Student Patronage on MLK Boulevard: A Think Tank Study*.³⁶ The main finding was that MLK Boulevard would have to go through substantial changes to increase student participation in businesses there. The other study was called *Moving Forward: A Study of the Martin Luther King Community*.³⁷ That study focused on the current ownership and occupancy of buildings along the boulevard. After those two studies and the building of the center, funds were exhausted in 2007. The funding primarily came from federal Housing and Urban Development grants, and those grants were not renewed.³⁸ Today the Community Outreach Center sits empty with leftover office furniture from UTC piled up inside. The simple presence of the center on MLK Boulevard is a tangible reminder of promises made and not kept.

Attempts at Redevelopment

Over the course of thirty years, MLK community residents have been approached by city officials, university officials, and development companies wanting to restore the neighborhood. Twenty-four different plans, studies, think tanks, and analyses have been sponsored by a variety of institutions over the last twenty-five years.³⁹ As noted in the

³⁶ Hundt et al., *MLK Community Plan*, 127.

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ Carey O'Neil, "MLK: Once, the Boulevard Bustled. Today the Thrill Is Gone. But Dreams of Revival Live On," *Chattanooga Times Free Press*, <http://www.timesfreepress.com/news/2012/jun/10/chattanooga-once-the-boulevard-bustled-today-the/?print> (accessed May 14, 2013).

³⁹ Hundt et al., *MLK Community Plan*, 126, lists the following key examples as part of its Appendix B: *MLK Boulevard Commercial Corridor Plan*, April 1999; *MLK Urban Retail District Location*

MLK Community Plan, “previous MLK plans often addressed only a singular element, such as housing or the commercial district, but the MLK area needs a more comprehensive plan for redevelopment. Given the direct location and relationship of the MLK community to the Central Business District and the University, it is only fitting that these areas should also be studied as part of the MLK planning process.”⁴⁰ A random flyer posted in 2012 by a local grassroots community group of a MLK community resident simply read: “It’s time to stop talking and start doing.” Clearly, a neighborhood that has received much attention by all of those groups would be anxious to see tangible change. All of these parties have attempted various aspects of community restoration, and the results have been lacking. Consideration of the area’s heritage is vital. Listening to what residents and students say is of equal importance.

There is a desire on the part of long-time MLK community residents to preserve the history of the area. Property owners do not want to simply sell out to the next developer that comes along. Richard Williams, owner of Memo’s restaurant in the heart of MLK Boulevard since 1965, reported the following to the *Chattanooga Times Free Press*: “My children said don’t sell anything. . . . We’re in the process of doing things the right way. At my age, I don’t have to rush. If someone wanted [the property] bad enough, they could buy it. But I’m not going to give it away. I’ve worked too hard and too long.”⁴¹ Williams’ sentiments echo that of several property owners. Williams has seen his business

Analysis, October 2002; and *MLK District Infrastructure Revitalization Strategy and Marketing Plan*, August 2004.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 9.

⁴¹ “ML King Rebirth Slow, Steady,” *Chattanooga Times Free Press*, July 24, 2005, B1.

and property go through eras of prosperity and decline. He has witnessed the recent attention that the downtown area, just a few blocks away, has garnered for developers and city officials. Moreover, with the university's growth, Williams and other property owners know their land will be valuable.

In a later interview, Williams showed an awareness of the need for a comprehensive development plan for the neighborhood. "We're trying to not just do one block; we're trying to arrange some things so it'll look better for the whole area," he said. "We want it to be a benefit to the whole city."⁴² This view of community development can be both a blessing and a curse. It is a blessing because it prevents neighborhoods from being developed piecemeal. An inclusive plan allows residents and property owners to give input and to identify needed services and their locations. History and architectural integrity can be preserved. However, this view also can be a curse. Such development demands the partnership of many parties working simultaneously and an influx of coordinated funds. Agreement among residents, property owners, developers, university administrators, and city officials has been hard to achieve. Any one entrepreneur that wants to place a needed business in the area finds it difficult to locate an affordably priced property, as property owners have been waiting for a comprehensive plan.

In the *MLK Community Plan*, sponsored by the Hamilton County Regional Planning Agency, public responses included grocery stores, cafés, lower-priced restaurants, and drug stores. The public also wanted to see the re-emergence of jazz clubs

⁴² O'Neil, "MLK."

that once marked the area.⁴³ Waiting for a developer to do that might be pointless. At a Healthy Food Access forum, sponsored by the Urban League of Chattanooga, H. María Noel of the Enterprise Center said, “If any of us are waiting for Walmart, Bi-Lo, Food Lion, or even Sav-A-Lot to come in and start a grocery store in these areas, we’re going to be waiting a long time.”⁴⁴ She added that these chains are operated from national offices that simply look at demographic information and financial forecasts to determine locations for new stores. Local knowledge is more accurate and desperately needed in the case of a grocery store in an urban neighborhood.

The Enterprise Center is a comprehensive facility seeking to bring technology and business to Chattanooga. The Enterprise Center’s primary project is a Maglev high-speed train between Chattanooga and Atlanta, yet it also has a community-outreach arm.⁴⁵ Noel’s job has been to recruit grocery stores especially into “food desert” areas.⁴⁶ The MLK/UTC neighborhood falls exactly in the middle of such a food desert. Food deserts are defined as “areas with limited access to affordable and nutritious food.”⁴⁷ When I

⁴³ Hundt et al., *MLK Community Plan*, 130-133.

⁴⁴ Urban League of Chattanooga, “Healthy Food Access” (forum held at the Urban League, 730 MLK Boulevard, Chattanooga, TN, April 18, 2012).

⁴⁵ The Enterprise Center, “Renewal Community,” <http://www.theenterprisctr.org/renewal-community/about.html> (accessed July 2, 2012).

⁴⁶ USDA Economic Research Services, “Food Desert Locator,” United States Department of Agriculture, <http://www.ers.usda.gov/data-products/food-access-research-atlas/go-to-the-atlas.aspx#.Ua1W6is-Zm0> (accessed July 2, 2012).

⁴⁷ USDA Economic Research Service, *Access to Affordable and Nutritious Food—Measuring and Understanding Food Deserts and Their Consequences: Report to Congress*, by Michele Ver Ploeg et al., no. (AP-036) (Washington, DC: United States Department of Agriculture, June 2009), <http://www.ers.usda.gov/publications/ap-administrative-publication/ap-036.aspx#.Ua1XISs-Zm0> (accessed June 3, 2013).

asked Noel about the possibility of a non-profit cooperative grocery store, she affirmed that the model may work.⁴⁸

The MLK neighborhood has had a number of studies done, yet little progress has been made in development. At least one resident had an idea of why. Moses Freeman is seventy-three years old and a long-time resident of the neighborhood. He took me on a driving tour of the neighborhood in the fall of 2011. He showed me buildings that used to house grocery stores, pharmacies, and nightclubs. He pointed out homes that used to belong to long-time residents but now house UTC students, faculty, and administrators. “The neighborhood is a lot different than what people think,” he said. Before my office was just one block away from MLK Boulevard; my impression of the area was based on a few news articles highlighting shootings during the annual Bessie Smith Strut and the obvious physical neglect of many of the buildings and empty lots. Freeman acknowledged that those incidents shaped many Chattanooga’s perceptions of the area.⁴⁹ Now a city council member for the district, Freeman has helped to develop the neighborhood by building six new homes, now occupied by a variety of residents.⁵⁰ In a more recent interview with him, he said that the attention paid to building and renovating homes in the MLK neighborhood was a good start. However, what is needed most are businesses and services for those residents.⁵¹

⁴⁸ H. María Noel, interview by author, Chattanooga, TN, April 18, 2012.

⁴⁹ Moses Freeman, interview by author, Chattanooga, TN, November 10, 2011.

⁵⁰ Jason Reynolds, “Six New Homes Will Add to ML King Neighborhood Revitalization,” *Chattanooga Times Free Press*, April 6, 2003, 11.

⁵¹ Moses Freeman, interview by author, Chattanooga, TN, April 2, 2013.

The University Student Population and Food Options

The businesses and services needed in the neighborhood now have to accommodate a new group of residents: university students. The demographics of the MLK neighborhood have changed drastically in the last few years with the addition of UTC apartments. UTC has added dining options on campus to serve their increased residential population. The student population and the presence of new food choices form unique challenges in how any business, especially those relating to food, can cater to a diverse neighborhood.

One of the difficulties in this neighborhood is that the students, often coming from outside Chattanooga, do not grasp the heritage of the neighborhood and therefore have difficulty relating with the residents. Moreover, students seem to be focused on attending class and going to work. There is a sense of entitlement that the university owes them convenience in all the aspects of college life. The eighteen to twenty-five year olds in this area also have limited disposable income. Many of them are required to have a meal plan at UTC. Their student account is linked to their student identification card. In essence, students can be made to feel as if they are not even spending “real money,” as they swipe their card at the checkout with their trays at the two on-campus dining facilities. After all, the money in their student account is either put on at the beginning of the semester by their parents or by student loans and financial aid.

The student dining facilities at UTC are new and feature a variety of foods. There is a Southern “home-cooking” station, Chick-Fil-A, Quizno’s sandwich franchise, salad-and-wrap bar, sushi station, and a pizza counter. At a recently completed center called “The Campus Connection,” for seven dollars students can eat all they want. The Campus

Connection has a pasta bar, wood-fired pizza, international foods, and a Subway franchise. There is a sharp contrast between what is offered on campus and what is offered along MLK Boulevard. On campus there are at least ten different types of food, prepared fresh daily; food stations are open throughout breakfast, lunch, and dinner. The options along the boulevard are quite different.

Currently, there are only two restaurants along Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard that are open with any sort of regularity and another two with limited hours and an unwelcome appearance. First, Champy's Fried Chicken has attracted attention from residents and downtown workers. The Chattanooga Smokehouse is open with limited hours, featuring traditional Southern barbeque (pulled pork sandwiches, ribs, baked beans, potato salad, and french fries). Second, Memo's, a restaurant run by Williams since the mid-1960s, is mostly closed during the day but offers a limited menu in the evenings. Maggie G's, a small tavern two doors down from Memo's, has bars across its windows. There are signs on buildings of restaurants that have come and gone, representing another time when MLK Boulevard boasted a vibrant nightlife.

The physical appearance of Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard with its empty expanses, parking lots, and abandoned buildings conveys a sense of danger to UTC students. A survey of six hundred UTC students, compiled by the UTC College of Business, revealed that many students simply do not venture down MLK Boulevard or other city streets near downtown, because they seem "dead." The survey was led by Joe Ellis, a business student and local entrepreneur, who offered the following comment to UTC news gatherers:

The student group described these “dead zones” as dark, inactive sections of the city that can occupy a portion of a block or several blocks. “These dead zones are created by parking lots and large buildings that exist on every street between campus and downtown to create a literal barrier between students and downtown life.”⁵²

MLK Boulevard seems to suffer from a perception problem. For long-time residents of Chattanooga, the area is still perceived as a place where crimes have been committed. For students who are not from the city, the dark and empty buildings along MLK Boulevard are a sharp contrast to the new, well-lighted campus buildings. To fill the void between a growing university campus and a vibrant downtown, MLK Boulevard could be restored to provide businesses and services for students and area residents. In the survey, Ellis also was reported as saying, “Students also listed the need for more affordable grocery, dining, and entertainment options.”⁵³

It is apparent that both MLK residents and university students in the area have agreed on what the neighborhood needs: a grocery store, eating establishments, and entertainment venues. Still, developers and entrepreneurs have not engaged the area as of yet. It may be that a new type of entrepreneurial institution could initiate growth along MLK Boulevard. That institution could be the Church, as it seeks to follow Jesus’ command: “Love your neighbor as yourself” (Mark 12:31).⁵⁴

⁵² University of Tennessee at Chattanooga, “Survey Explores Connections between the University and Downtown Chattanooga,” May 16, 2012, <http://blog.utc.edu/news/2012/05/survey-explores-connections-between-the-university-and-downtown-chattanooga> (accessed July 2, 2012).

⁵³ Ibid.

⁵⁴ All Scripture is taken from *Holy Bible: New International Version* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1984), unless otherwise noted.

CHAPTER 2

THE HOUSE AND FIRST CHRISTIAN CHURCH

This chapter tells the story of how an evangelical college ministry found its home within what many considered a “liberal” downtown church and discovered commonality in both mission and vision. The college ministry has grown significantly, leading many staff and alumni to ask if it should become a “church” and to ponder what that might look like. As this question has been explored, it appears as if The House and First Christian Church could combine partnerships with greater unity as the Body of Christ to help redevelop the UTC/MLK neighborhood. Ultimately, this chapter will examine the possible obstacles to the Body of Christ playing a role in community development within the ministry context of Chattanooga.

The House: University Ministries of Chattanooga

The House: University Ministries of Chattanooga only has been in existence since December of 2008. Records of campus organization by-laws show that the Presbyterian Campus Ministry (Presbyterian Church, U.S.A. or PCUSA) has existed on the University of Tennessee-Chattanooga campus since the early 1970s. When I was called here in

1998, it was as the Presbyterian campus minister for the Presbytery of East Tennessee within the PCUSA. Over the years, the ministry has enjoyed growth in the number of students involved as well as growth in the number of churches choosing to partner with the ministry. In 2008, the ministry received financial gifts from local churches within the PCUSA, the Evangelical Presbyterian Church, and the Presbyterian Church in America (PCA). In addition, several non-denominational churches gave gifts.

Once a year, elders and pastors are elected by individual presbyteries (churches gathered together by geographical proximity) to be commissioners at the PCUSA General Assembly. At the Assembly, theological papers are drafted and approved, changes to the denomination's governing books or polity are made, and new initiatives for mission are born. Some of the theological issues and corresponding polity changes discussed at the General Assembly have included the definition of the uniqueness of Jesus as Lord and Savior,¹ language for the Trinity,² and the question of same-sex unions.³ While the point of this paper is not to address those various issues, two will be discussed here briefly to

¹ The 2002 PCUSA General Assembly offered the document "Hope in the Lord Jesus Christ" as recommended study for congregations. Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.): Office of Theology and Worship, *Hope in the Lord Jesus Christ* (Louisville: Office of Theology and Worship, 2002), <http://www.pcusa.org/resource/hope-lord-jesus-christ/> (accessed July 2, 2013).

² The 2004 PCUSA General Assembly offered "The Trinity: God's Love Overflowing" as recommended study for congregations. Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.): Office of Theology and Worship, *The Trinity: God's Love Overflowing* (Louisville: Office of Theology and Worship, 2004), <http://www.pcusa.org/media/uploads/theologyandworship/pdfs/trinityfinal.pdf> (accessed July 2, 2013).

³ The 2008 PCUSA General Assembly sought to appoint a committee to study this issue. Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), "Final Report of the Special Committee to Study Issues of Civil Union and Christian Marriage," <http://www.pcusa.org/resource/final-report-special-committee-study-issues-civil-/> (accessed July 2, 2013).

provide the context for how and why The House changed from being under the umbrella of the PCUSA to becoming its own separate, non-profit ministry.

In 2002, the 214th General Assembly of the PCUSA authored and commended for study a document entitled *Hope in the Lord Jesus Christ*.⁴ Of particular concern for some within the denomination,⁵ those representing more conservative and evangelical voices, was the following statement:

Yet we do not presume to limit the sovereign freedom of “God our Savior, who desires everyone to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth” (1 Timothy 2:4). Thus, we neither restrict the grace of God to those who profess explicit faith in Christ nor assume that all people are saved regardless of faith. Grace, love, and communion belong to God, and are not ours to determine.⁶

This statement on its face may not be that controversial. However, subsequent actions by churches and written responses showed dissatisfaction with this document. *Hope in the Lord Jesus Christ* chose language from the Second Helvetic Confession, which called Jesus “unique” in his saving work.⁷ More orthodox voices were troubled that the word “only” was not chosen. An article published by Matthew Camlin in the *Presbyterian Outlook* called the paper evidence that the denomination was suffering from “Christological amnesia”:

We believe [the PCUSA] will not survive without drastic intervention. We are ready to do something different, TO THRIVE as the Body of Christ. We

⁴ Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), *Hope in the Lord Jesus Christ*.

⁵ Robert A. J. Gagnon, “Is Faith in Christ Optional or an Operating Premise for Salvation?” <http://www.robagnon.net/articles/HopeInChristDocumentFlaw.pdf> (accessed December 6, 2012).

⁶ Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), *Hope in the Lord Jesus Christ*, 11-12.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 11.

call *others of like mind* to envision a new future for congregations who share our Presbyterian, Reformed, Evangelical heritage. If the denomination has the ability and will to move in this new direction, we will rejoice. *Regardless, a group of us will change course, forming a new way for our congregations to relate.*⁸

Camlin implied that *Hope in the Lord Jesus Christ* signaled a drifting away from the orthodox foundations of Christian theology. It is evident that Camlin wished for the denomination to move towards rediscovering its “Presbyterian, Reformed, and Evangelical heritage.”⁹ Almost prophetically, Camlin wrote that a “group of us will change course.” In a few short years, that was indeed the case.

After the release of the *Trinity: God’s Love Overflowing* in the summer of 2006,¹⁰ one of the primary supporters of The House, Signal Mountain Presbyterian Church, began the process of leaving the PCUSA and aligning with the Evangelical Presbyterian Church (EPC). The paper encouraged congregations to adopt the text for study among its members and to consider including new biblical language for the traditional title of the Trinity: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Specifically, it referred to Father, Son, and Holy Spirit as an “anchor” for liturgy and worship.¹¹ However, there was concern that male imagery was exclusive. Alternatives suggested including images from the prophet Isaiah:

⁸ Matthew L. Camlin, “White Paper Is a Symptom of ‘Christological Amnesia,’” *The Presbyterian Outlook*, <http://www.pres-outlook.com/component/content/article/44-breaking-news/11182-white-paper-is-a-symptom-of-christological-amnesia.html> (accessed December 7, 2012).

⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰ Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), *The Trinity*.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 7.

“compassionate mother, beloved child, life-giving womb.”¹² Also suggested were images from the Psalms and Book of Ephesians: “Rock, Cornerstone, and Temple.”¹³

Reactions to the paper were many. The PCUSA website offered a study guide, DVD series, and accompanying materials, saying the text “provides an excellent general introduction to the Trinity and introductions to the three parts of the paper. The DVD can also be used as a stand-alone media piece for confirmation classes, new member classes, and other venues as an introduction to the doctrine of the Trinity.”¹⁴ Other scholars criticized the paper, saying, “We do not need a diluted, metaphorical Trinity; rather, we need our confidence in the Christian doctrine of God restored and to be led, with all the saints, to the truly joyful acclamation of the name of God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, through Jesus Christ our Lord.”¹⁵

It appeared that several congregations within the PCUSA saw this paper as a continual erosion of the traditional essentials of the faith. While Signal Mountain Presbyterian Church was moving toward dismissal, several other PCUSA congregations began to pursue alignment with another Reformed body: The Evangelical Presbyterian Church. The EPC began to see those PCUSA congregations join its ranks. In 2007, the

¹² Ibid., 8.

¹³ Ibid., 9.

¹⁴ Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), “The Trinity: God’s Love Overflowing,” <http://www.pcusa.org/resource/trinity-gods-love-overflowing/> (accessed May 6, 2013).

¹⁵ Andrew Purves and Charles Partee, *Theology Matters* 12, no. 2 (March-April 2006), <http://www.theologymatters.com/MarApr06.pdf> (accessed May 6, 2013), 4.

Evangelical Presbyterian Church had 180 congregations. In 2012, that number had increased to 415, with 182 of those new churches having transferred from the PCUSA.¹⁶

With Signal Mountain Presbyterian's new denominational identity within the EPC in 2007, the support for The House came from three different denominations. The PCUSA carried the bulk of the support as well as the composition of the Board of Directors. EPC and PCA churches also supported The House financially. I perceived that the college ministry had its best opportunity to survive and grow under a partnership among those three denominations. I also believed that The House could serve as a bridge of collaboration among three denominations that historically have been divided and often have animosity toward one another. In this way, The House emerged as a potential unifying force for the diverse Presbyterian factions of the Body of Christ, bonding them together in mission.

When a proposal was given to the executive presbyter of the PCUSA to include leadership from those sister denominations, I was told that the ministry still needed to be "owned" by the PCUSA. I argued that an "ownership model" was not the same as a true partnership. A commission was formed by the East Tennessee Presbytery of the PCUSA to assume leadership of the ministry. I submitted my resignation of the position as Presbyterian campus minister when it became clear that the PCUSA sought to have its own presence on the campus and was not interested in a partnership. Our staff was asked

¹⁶ Ed McCallum, email message to author, January 11, 2013. McCallum serves as assistant stated clerk for the EPC and took these statistics directly from the EPC database.

to vacate the ministry premises in twenty-four hours, and we sought a space to rent or borrow. A conversation with the pastor at First Christian Church led to an agreement to use a coffeehouse space in that congregation's basement.¹⁷ About two years earlier, First Christian had embarked on an endeavor to reach the university community by inviting a coffee shop and café to run its business there. Since the business failed after two years, the beautiful space was just sitting empty and ready for The House to use.

This began a wonderful relationship between The House's college ministry and this downtown church. First Christian had sought numerous ways to minister to university students over the years. Members had begun a contemporary worship service under the leadership of its pastor and a newly hired college minister. The invitation to the coffee shop was another effort. Since neither of those initiatives was effective in the long term, First Christian Church was excited to partner with a fruitful ministry like The House.

First Christian Church

First Christian Church is a congregation pertaining to The Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) denomination. The motto of the Disciples is this: "In essentials, unity; in non-essentials liberty; in all things, charity."¹⁸ It has Presbyterian roots, as the founders of Disciples of Christ—Barton Stone, Thomas Campbell, and Alexander

¹⁷ The Reverend Paul Rebelo, interview by author, Chattanooga, TN, January 2008.

¹⁸ First Christian Church in Chattanooga, "Welcome!" <http://firstchristian-chat.com/welcome.htm> (accessed July 2, 2013).

Campbell—were all Presbyterian. “The founders of the Christian Church hoped to restore Christian unity by returning to New Testament faith and practices.”¹⁹ First Christian Church was first organized with eleven members in 1871 after a city-wide revival. Fifteen years later, the church had grown to 188 members and built its first sanctuary in downtown Chattanooga with the name “Walnut Street Christian Church.” In 1901 the church moved again, just a few blocks away, and adopted the name “First Christian Church.” “From its central location the congregation served the community through the difficult years of two world wars and the Great Depression.” Fifty years later, FCC built and moved to its present location.²⁰

FCC’s current pastor, the Reverend Paul Rebelo, was called in 2005. Around that same time, UTC purchased land surrounding the church and began to build the UTC Place Apartments. Rev. Rebelo remarked that while the church had a few events aimed at ministering to university students, there was no sustained effort. Within a year, Rev. Rebelo initiated the hiring of a university minister, started a worship service, and began conversations with Café Mi Aroma, a coffeehouse/café that had one other location in the Chattanooga area. Unfortunately, Café Mi Aroma closed after two years not only in the church location but in its other location as well. Transition in management and changing business models were cited as the reasons for closing. Also, after approximately two years, the contemporary worship service was discontinued. When asked the reason, Rev.

¹⁹ Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), “History of the Disciples,” <http://www.disciples.org/Home/WhoWeAre/HistoryoftheDisciples/tabid/1116/Default.aspx> (accessed May 8, 2013).

²⁰ First Christian Church in Chattanooga, “Welcome!”

Rebelo said that the task was overwhelming for one person. While the young man was a gifted musician and speaker, those two skills were not enough, and the congregation did not know how to assist him in the new service and ministry.²¹

FCC has continued a legacy of service to the city that began during the years of the Great Depression and both world wars. It was a founding church of the Chattanooga Community Kitchen, a social service agency that provides food, shelter, employment, and health care for the homeless community.²² Likewise, it has had a long-standing commitment to Habitat for Humanity.²³ Additionally, FCC has fostered a relationship with Brown Academy and offers an afterschool program. Now, it is a vital part of the church's ministry and life. Plans are underway to hire an outreach coordinator for the church to organize members into teams to serve in these partner agencies and find other opportunities to bless the Chattanooga community. Essentially, FCC is trying to live up to its motto: to be "a church of service, not lip service."²⁴ Despite its proximity to UTC, FCC's membership consists of older members in their fifties and sixties, most of whom drive from several miles away to attend church. Overall, FCC has discovered that reaching UTC students and twenty-somethings is more difficult than simply starting a new worship service.

²¹ The Reverend Paul Rebelo, interview by author, Chattanooga, TN, May 8-9, 2013.

²² Chattanooga Community Kitchen, <http://www.homelesschattanooga.org/programs.html> (accessed May 8, 2013).

²³ Habitat for Humanity, <http://www.habitat.org> (accessed June 21, 2013).

²⁴ First Christian Church in Chattanooga, "Welcome!"

Twenty-Somethings and the Church in Chattanooga

Over the past fifteen years of pastoring students in Chattanooga, I have witnessed two recurring themes among both students and alumni. One is the difficulty of these two groups to connect with a local church. The other theme is an emerging interest in social justice and community restoration. Observing the emergence of these themes has contributed to a more creative perspective about the Body of Christ in Chattanooga and how both hungers, to connect and to serve, might be satisfied.

The blame for students and young twenty-somethings not connecting with local churches here in Chattanooga does not rest solely on the Church. The onus to learn to put their faith into action is also on these young people. Some of them, having come from large churches in other cities, have certain expectations of what the local church should be. They are used to large crowds, cutting-edge music performed with excellence, and speakers that preach conversationally to their particular life situation.

Moreover, there appears to be a lack of commitment among this age group. This affects not only their choice of church but also life decisions. Robin Henig of *The New York Times* offers the following explanation:

The traditional cycle seems to have gone off course, as young people remain untethered to romantic partners or to permanent homes, going back to school for lack of better options, traveling, avoiding commitments, competing ferociously for unpaid internships or temporary (and often grueling) Teach for America jobs, forestalling the beginning of adult life. The 20s are a black box, and there is a lot of churning in there. One-third of people in their 20s move to a new residence every year. Forty percent move back home with their parents at least once. They

go through an average of seven jobs in their 20s, more job changes than in any other stretch.²⁵

As students hop from job to job, relationship to relationship, they also seem to move from church to church at an alarming rate. They often are attracted to new churches. Over the past five years, I have witnessed many church plants come to Chattanooga. The most common model has been a large church outside Tennessee sending one of its staff members to Chattanooga to plant a new church. The congregation pays for billboard advertising, massive direct-mail campaigns or radio advertising, and launches a worship service.

In 2010, I attended the Velocity Conference as part of my Doctor of Ministry studies. It was a gathering of church planters and held workshops on how to plant a congregation. One such workshop was entitled “Launching Large.” It outlined a strategy for establishing a core group of individuals and families, finding a facility, creating awareness in the community by offering “splash” events that served the local residents followed by advertising. A Texas region of one denomination has created a resource paper following this model.²⁶ It seems that the model being followed by church planters here in Chattanooga is a common method for beginning a worshipping community in the United States. However, several of the speakers at the Velocity conference, notably Hirsch, argued that such methods typically attract those who are already familiar with the Body of Christ. Hirsch’s own context in Australia has revealed that a small percentage,

²⁵ Robin Henig, “What Is It about Twenty-Somethings?” *New York Times Magazine*, http://www.nytimes.com/2010/08/22/magazine/22Adulthood-t.html?pagewanted=all&_r=0 (accessed May 6, 2013).

²⁶ Texas District LCMS: Board of Mission Administration, *Church Planting Steps for Mission Partners*, <http://www.m2ctexas.org/resource/Steps%20to%20planting%20072010%20edition.pdf> (accessed May 6, 2013).

perhaps 10 to 15 percent, is drawn to the contemporary church-growth model. In *The Forgotten Ways*, he writes the following about this approach:

The more successful forms of this model tend to be large, high professionalized, and overwhelmingly middle-class, and express themselves culturally by using contemporary, “seeker-friendly” language and middle-of-the-road music forms. They structure themselves around “family ministry” and therefore offer multigenerational services. . . . Not only is this type of church largely made up of Christian people who fit this profile, the research indicates that these churches can also be very effective in reaching non-Christian people fitting the same demographic description.²⁷

Despite their effectiveness, Hirsch points out how new church plants are competing only for the same small piece of the “church market.” Those churches end up being homogenous and leave various ethnic and socioeconomic groups unreached. Moreover, the model revolves around a worship service and internal structures and programs designed to meet the expressed needs of its members.

This church-planting model reveals the priorities of the new church. The church establishes itself in a community to provide its own services: typically a worship service, children’s ministry, youth ministry, and music ministry. Once those are well attended and funded, if there are resources left over, the church turns its attention to social needs (food pantry, clothing drives, and the like). Since there seems to be an ever-increasing list of needs within the church among its members, mission to the local community and the world often are treated as lesser concerns. Ultimate success in the local church is measured by worship attendance, budget, buildings, and ministry programs.

²⁷ Alan Hirsch, *The Forgotten Ways: Reactivating the Missional Church* (Grand Rapids, MI: Brazos Press, 2006), 34-35.

Having had conversations with several of the church planters here,²⁸ I have noticed how difficult the process can be to start a church. One particular church, having prepared itself for rapid growth by investing in sound and lighting equipment, staff, and rental of facilities, closed after just two years.²⁹ Others, being funded by “mother churches” in the Southeast region, have been given three years to become self-sustaining entities.³⁰ The pressure to become self-funded is overwhelming. Many of these churches have targeted twenty-somethings; but as some of the research listed earlier points out, few of those twenty-somethings choose to commit to the vision and sustainability of a single church.

In the Chattanooga area, I have witnessed a great divide between churches that might call themselves “conservative” or “evangelical” and those that might carry the label “liberal” or “progressive.” These congregations often have very different ways of doing ministry. Soong-Chan Rah argues that an overemphasis on individual salvation has led to this divide. He cites an example from a student who sought to bring about an issue of social justice to her campus and was turned down by the Theology Department of her Christian college. She said, “They [Theology Department] believe that the gospel is about the salvation of the individual and not about a liberal, social gospel. These justice-

²⁸ David Sternberg of Bridge Christian Church, interview by author, Chattanooga, TN, August 5, 2010; Jeff Gonzalez of Origin Church, interview by author, Chattanooga, TN, September 14, 2010. Chris Sorensen of The Mission Chattanooga, interview by author, Chattanooga, TN, December 8, 2009; Daniel Hicks of Scenic City Church, interview by author, Chattanooga, TN, May 30, 2013.

²⁹ Jeff Gonzalez, Origin Church, interview by author, Chattanooga, TN, September 2011.

³⁰ Sternberg, interview; Hicks, interview.

oriented activities distract from the real work of evangelism.”³¹ The result is that the local evangelical church often has focused on the preaching and teaching of the Word of God for individual salvation and discipleship, leaving the “social gospel” to the liberal/progressive church.

Perhaps one of the reasons for the lack of interest and commitment to these churches among twenty-somethings is the rise of social justice as a concern among evangelicals. Historically, evangelical churches have not been known for its interest in social justice. Perkins writes: “The evangelical church—whose basic theology is the same as mine—had not gone on to preach the *whole gospel*. . . . It wasn’t a question of what team to join. In terms of social justice, *evangelicals just didn’t have a team on the field*.”³² The aforementioned emphasis among evangelical churches on church planting and their priority in establishing personal programs left social justice as an afterthought.

Now, an emerging group of young evangelicals is rediscovering the Body of Christ’s mission in social justice. Samuel G. Freedman reports that “without disowning longstanding causes for evangelical activists like opposition to abortion or support for school vouchers, these young evangelicals have taken up issues previously abdicated to secular and religious liberals: climate change, AIDS prevention and treatment, Third

³¹ Soong-Chan Rah, *The Next Evangelicalism* (Grand Rapids, MI: InterVarsity Press, 2009), Kindle Electronic Edition: Location 373.

³² Peter Heltzel, *Jesus and Justice: Evangelicals, Race, and American Politics* (Ann Arbor, MI: Sheridan Books, 2009), 164.

World poverty.”³³ A twenty-six-year-old staffer at World Vision, Matthew Soerens, has authored a book on immigration reform, and said in an interview: “It’s not that we’ve rejected the issues that our parents were concerned about. . . . We’ve widened the spectrum of issues that can be dealt with on a biblical basis and that our Christian faith speaks to.”³⁴ Freedman’s writing reveals that this younger group desires an evangelicalism that moves past an emphasis on individual salvation and a handful of social issues into an engagement with pressing concerns in the world. Jim Wallis, president of Sojourners, whose tagline is “Faith in Action for Social Justice,” writes:

Young evangelicals today aren’t just single- or two-issue voters. They comprehend that issues are connected—“pro-life” has a much fuller meaning today than it did 20 years ago. Pro-life also means caring for the life and dignity of the poor and vulnerable; for the earth, which gives life; and the economy, which sustains life. Many young evangelicals fit the label “Matthew 25 Christians”—deeply thoughtful about how they engage in politics, using their faith as a guide to protect and serve the ones Jesus called “the least of these.”³⁵

Current church-planting efforts need to take into consideration this emerging concern among young evangelicals. Moreover, existing churches seeking to provide a viable community for this group would be wise to make social justice a vital part of their mission.

The landscape of the local church in Chattanooga does not necessarily include many evangelical churches with emphases on social issues. There are currently two exceptions. New City Fellowship, a PCA church located in a historically depressed area

³³ Freedman, “Evangelical, and Young, and Active in New Area.”

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ Jim Wallis, “Young Evangelicals and the ‘Nones,’” Hearts and Minds, entry posted October 18, 2012, Sojourners, <http://sojo.net/sojomail/2012/10/18> (accessed May 6, 2013).

of Chattanooga called Glenwood, has been a longstanding congregation committed to its neighborhood. It has birthed several ministries. This has included Hope for the Inner City, an organization that meets the immediate physical needs of impoverished persons as well as long-term endeavors such as financial counseling, career coaching, and homeownership programs.³⁶ The Mission, a church plant of the Anglican Church in America, has emerged in the Southside neighborhood of Chattanooga with several initiatives as well. It houses a coffee shop, a concert venue, and thrift store; it collaborates with Urban Young Life to provide mentors to high school students in inner-city schools.³⁷ The Mission in particular has garnered support among college students. Whether they choose to attend The Mission due to its commitment to its community or because it combines the rich liturgy of the Anglican tradition with contemporary music is difficult to measure. It is clear that the options are few for finding a church that is socially engaging for young people who describe themselves as evangelical.

A survey done by Sojourners in 2012 called into question the reality of these evangelicals and their engagement in social justice. The rise of social networking gives the appearance that causes such as global poverty, lack of clean water, sex trafficking, child slavery, and food access are primary concerns among this age group. The respondents in the survey identified high confidence in both faith-based non-profits (77 of a “mean confidence score” of 100), and the church (72). Meanwhile, they had low confidence in the media (26), political parties (26), or the government (38). When it came to their own

³⁶ Hope for the Inner City, <http://hope4theinnercity.org/> (accessed May 6, 2013).

³⁷ The Mission Chattanooga, <http://www.missionchattanooga.org/mission/> (accessed July 2, 2013).

participation in civic and justice issues, interesting themes emerged. Young people were more likely to sign an online petition (71 percent), advocate for a cause using Facebook or Twitter (77 percent), and pray for elected officials (89 percent). However, more traditional measures yielded much lower percentages. Only 23 percent engaged in a protest, 21 percent attended a peaceful demonstration, and 21 percent participated in a “buy-cott” in refusing to purchase certain products as a statement to the producer.³⁸

While it appears that young evangelicals are taking up justice causes, the extent of that participation seems limited. The lack of churches engaging in those issues in Chattanooga simply may be an excuse for people ages eighteen to twenty-nine not to attend. There are ample sources detailing the perception of the Church by this group. In 2007, a book by Gabe Lyons and David Kinnaman entitled *UnChristian* outlined research among these young people regarding their views of Christianity and accompanying institutions—namely, the Church.³⁹ Although the book focused on how “outsiders” (those who have not attended church and would not identify themselves as Christians) perceived the faith, the research made some interesting discoveries regarding those that identified themselves as Christians. In a follow-up book entitled *You Lost Me*, Kinnaman describes their findings: “I was shocked that the data [from *UnChristian*] also revealed the frustrations of young Christians. Millions of young *Christians* were also describing

³⁸ Sojourners, *Young Evangelicals in the 2012 Election* (Washington, DC: Sojourners, October 16, 2012), <http://sojo.net/sites/default/files/YEStudyFinal.pdf> (accessed May 6, 2013).

³⁹ Gabe Lyons and David Kinnaman, *UnChristian: What a New Generation Really Thinks about Christianity . . . and Why It Matters* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2007).

Christianity as hypocritical, judgmental, too political, and out of touch with reality.”⁴⁰

Here Kinnaman describes in *You Lost Me* that young people’s perception of Christianity affected their church involvement. He reports that nearly 59 percent of people between eighteen and twenty-nine who identified themselves as having a Christian background had stopped attending church after going regularly. Apparently, the Church has ceased to be relevant to millions of younger believers in Christ. This shows how the Body of Christ is suffering from its own perception problem. Young people profess a deepened concern with social issues and do not see the Church addressing those problems.

You Lost Me points to the need for a reformation of the Church. It is not that people from eighteen to twenty-nine have completely abandoned faith in Jesus Christ. Rather, they are looking at the teachings of Jesus, witnessing the culture addressing issues of justice, and wondering why the Church is not following suit. Kinnaman says that there is a group that has become so discontent with the practices of the Church that they have abandoned faith altogether. This group Kinnaman calls the “Prodigals.” However, there are two other groups for which that is not the case. The “Nomads” are those who have disengaged from the Church but still consider themselves Christians, while the “Exiles” are attempting to continue expressing their faith but are lost between the culture and the Church.⁴¹ Kinnaman claims that most of these young people “are not walking away from faith, they are putting involvement in church on hold. . . . *most young*

⁴⁰ David Kinnaman, *You Lost Me: Why Young Christians are Leaving the Church and Rethinking Faith* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2011), 20.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 25.

*Christians are struggling less with their faith in Christ than with their experience of church.*⁴² Their faith in Christ is robust; their experience of the Church is not. The implication of these findings is that it is possible to connect these young people with a church that is honestly addressing culture and seeking to be an agent of justice.

In reality, The House may be exacerbating the problem of connecting this group with the local church. The ministry provides an age-specific worship service, with teaching geared towards the issues of the college experience. A community is shaped around the common life of a university student. Other opportunities for spiritual growth—such as small groups, retreats, and short-term mission trips—are comprised of mostly students' peers. The House's small groups are led by alumni and older members of the greater church community. However, this may be the only connection the student may have to the local church.

The attraction of this is simply a continuation of what many students experienced in their local church in their hometown. Many churches have adopted a model for their youth ministry of a "church within a church." Beyond a traditional service that attracts families and older adults, often churches add a contemporary service or "youth service" for its younger families and youth. Chuck Bomar writes that this approach has strengths and weaknesses: "The strength of this approach is that typically a large number of people attend this service—often people who aren't attracted to the regular 'traditional service.' But this approach has some real weaknesses as well. It rarely—if ever—involves

⁴² Ibid., 27.

assimilation strategies that serve as bridges to move people from one stage to the next.”⁴³

Students may come to expect that the Church exists to provide a contemporary worship experience for them. The result can be a static worshipping community, comprised of a single age group that measures itself by increasing in attendance. An intergenerational community moving into a neighborhood on mission can be a foreign idea to those who have not witnessed it.

Taken together, these multiple factors call for discernment in exhibiting a new manifestation of God’s kingdom here in Chattanooga. This specific model must take into account the transient nature of twenty-somethings. If a new church is to address social justice concerns and community restoration, it must not address them in a shallow fashion. It cannot use a formulaic approach to church, by seeking to attract a “churched” demographic. It must take care not to perpetuate a “church within a church” model, in order to avoid a divided Body of Christ with different missions.

Working Together for Restoration: The House and First Christian Church

At first glance, a partnership between The House and First Christian Church might seem unlikely. The House is a separate organization, with support mostly coming from Presbyterian churches and foundations. FCC is in the Disciples of Christ denomination, which has a relatively small presence in the Chattanooga area and is only one of three Disciples churches in the greater metropolitan region. To those not familiar with the history, it appears that The House is simply a guest in the building owned by FCC.

⁴³ Chuck Bomar, *College Ministry 101: A Guide to Working with 18-25 Year Olds* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2009), 26.

However, partnerships among churches do not rest solely on denominational identity or numbers. The leadership of The House and FCC share a common desire to do ministry creatively and to reach into their respective mission fields. While The House and FCC may use different language to describe their respective ministry philosophies, the word “missional” could be used to identify this commonality. Hirsch explains:

A proper understanding of *missional* begins with recovering a missionary understanding of God. By his very nature God is a “sent one” who takes the initiative to redeem his creation. This doctrine, known as *missio Dei*—the sending of God—is causing many to redefine their understanding of the church. Because we are the “sent” people of God, the church is the instrument of God’s mission in the world. As things stand, many people see it the other way around. They believe mission is an instrument of the church; a means by which the church is grown. Although we frequently say “the church has a mission,” according to missional theology a more correct statement would be “the mission has a church.”⁴⁴

The language Hirsch uses is important. The Church is not the central theme or end goal; rather, the mission of God is. The Church is the vehicle for God’s mission. A Body of Christ who understands this will exhibit it by sending itself out into its neighborhood.

Both The House and FCC share this ministry philosophy. First, FCC has exhibited an enduring commitment to observe the changing community around it and meet the needs it sees. FCC had tried to reach out to the university campus and students through a variety of means. However, in welcoming The House into its midst, FCC has been able to shift its focus to other areas of ministry. Nearby Brown Academy, an elementary school, is one of those places. FCC members host Brown students in their building for an after-school program several times a week. The church often funds backpacks for students in need. The

⁴⁴ Alan Hirsch, “Defining Missional,” *Christianity Today*, <http://www.christianitytoday.com/le/2008/fall/17.20.html> (accessed May 8, 2013).

pastor of FCC is made aware of financial needs from Brown's principal and often goes to the church to help fund those requests. The church also has frequent opportunities for its members to participate in Habitat for Humanity projects in the city. Narcotics Anonymous, Tai Chi classes, and other after-school programs all find a home within FCC's walls. Despite an aging membership, FCC is dedicated to being a church on mission.

On the other hand, The House has a slightly different story when it comes to its missional emphasis. It has a singular focus on the campus of UTC. While some of its students are involved in things like after-school tutoring, serving at homeless shelters, or building through Habitat for Humanity, there has not been an overarching stress on local mission. Much of that participation was led by particular students or staff that had that passion. The House traditionally has been involved in two mission endeavors. One is its spring break mission trip and its fall break trip. For many years, during spring vacation, The House took between thirty and seventy students to the Dominican Republic to serve among Haitian refugees. That trip lasted seven or eight days. This trip changed location based on need and student leadership, while UTC's fall break occurred in October and was four days long. Fall locations have included New Orleans for hurricane relief and Memphis for urban gardening and community development. The model of The House's ministry was to provide as many opportunities as possible for helping students grow in their relationship with Christ. To The House's leadership, that meant a priority on worship and teaching, small groups, one-on-one conversations, and then activities like retreats and mission trips to engage students more deeply and expose them to God's work in the world.

In the past two years, The House’s ministry staff has noticed some trends among UTC students. There seems to be decreasing interest in international endeavors and more interest in local ministry and community engagement. The possibility for partnership with FCC has an opportunity to deepen, since it has a longer history and experience with local organizations. There have been conversations with FCC leadership about launching a new church in the coming year that combines the communities of The House and FCC. From its beginning, the hope is to instill in the new community a focus on restoration in general and specifically within the surrounding neighborhood. The work toward a grocery store would be but one project that this fellowship could undertake. The restoration of MLK Boulevard in its entirety could be a broader vision.

Barriers to the Church’s Role in Community Development

As mentioned in Chapter 1 of this project, 150 years ago Chattanooga was seen as a progressive city for African Americans. Businesses were begun and sustained for many years, along MLK Boulevard in particular. Chattanooga beyond the African-American community was and continues to be entrepreneurial. Most recently, it has become known as boasting the fastest internet speeds in the country with its fiber-optic network.⁴⁵ Chattanooga’s branch of the Tennessee Business Development Center, the Company Lab, the Urban League, the Gig Tank, and Launch Chattanooga all offer classes for entrepreneurs to help them develop business plans and to partner them with mentors and

⁴⁵ CBS This Morning, “Fastest Internet Service in U.S. Is Found in an Unlikely City,” February 28, 2013, http://www.cbsnews.com/8301-505363_162-57571753/fastest-internet-service-in-u.s-found-in-an-unlikely-city/ (accessed May 8, 2013).

investors.⁴⁶ Due to these organizations, and the growing presence of UTC and Chattanooga State Community College,⁴⁷ Chattanooga has found its way onto a list for the thirty best cities for entrepreneurs; it is ranked as the number one small city with populations between 100,000 and 250,000.⁴⁸ There is definitely an “entrepreneurial spirit” here.

Local foundations, begun by many families with roots in Chattanooga, have been at the heart of community development. The Maclellan Family Foundations, Lyndhurst Foundation, and Benwood Foundation all were begun by families who made tremendous financial gains through bringing the first independent Coca-Cola bottling company to Chattanooga.⁴⁹ Those families were also part of local churches. The Maclellan Family Foundations in particular has continued a Christian emphasis, supporting missionary endeavors all over the world as well as many local ministries.⁵⁰ The benevolence of these foundations has led to a trend in community development within the city. They often are the first place where entrepreneurs and developers go to ask for support.

⁴⁶ Tennessee Small Business Development Center, “What Is the Tennessee Small Business Development Center?” <https://www.tsdbc.org/DocumentMaster.aspx?doc=1012> (accessed June 24, 2013); Co.Lab: The Company Lab, “What We Do,” <http://colab.is/what-we-do/> (accessed June 24, 2013); Urban Leage of Greater Chattanooga, “Programs and Services,” <http://www.ulchatt.net/programs> (accessed June 24, 2013); The Gig City, “Why GigTank?” <http://www.thegigcity.com/gigtank/why-gigtank/> (accessed June 24, 2013); Launch Chattanooga, “Programs,” http://www.launchchattanooga.org/programs?doing_wp_cron=1372099943.3208520412445068359375 (accessed June 24, 2013).

⁴⁷ Chattanooga State Community College, <http://www.chattanoogastate.edu> (accessed June 24, 2013).

⁴⁸ “Chattanooga Named in List of Best Cities for Entrepreneurs,” March 20, 2013, Nooga.com, <http://nooga.com/160622/chattanooga-named-in-list-of-best-cities-for-entrepreneurs/> (accessed May 8, 2013).

⁴⁹ The Benwood Foundation, “History,” <http://www.benwood.org/pages/History/> (accessed July 2, 2013); Lyndhurst Foundation, “About the Foundation: Foundation History,” <http://www.lyndhurstfoundation.org/about-the-foundation/> (accessed July 2, 2013); The Maclellan Family Foundations, “History,” <http://www.maclellan.net/family-foundations/maclellan/history> (accessed June 24, 2013).

⁵⁰ The Maclellan Family Foundations, “History.”

The renaissance of the city has come through these foundations, through the existence of the River City Development Corporation and the partnership of public and private funding.⁵¹ The River City group gained visibility under the leadership of Bob Corker, who eventually became mayor of the city and now is a United States senator. Under Corker's initiative, Chattanooga's downtown reinvented itself as a tourist attraction with a redesigned riverfront and family-based activities. The River City Development Corporation continues its efforts in restoring downtown, taking entire blocks to encourage businesses to locate there.

When Chattanoogaans think of community development, their minds go to these sources first. The idea that the local church could be an entrepreneur and initiator in community development may be difficult to convey. It is not simply that a church would provide financial resources but also the gifts and talents of its people, sent out on mission to the city. The vision of this project is to mobilize a group of people representing the Body of Christ to initiate tangible change in the MLK/UTC community. This is the practical outworking of the idea of being missional. The tangible change starts with the entrepreneurial endeavor of meeting the community's greatest need of a grocery store. The project vision stems from the concept of restoration, which can be found in a variety of sources and is the focus of Chapter 3.

⁵¹ River City Company, "Who We Are," <http://www.rivercitycompany.com/new/about> (accessed June 24, 2013).

PART TWO
THEOLOGICAL REFLECTION

CHAPTER 3

LITERATURE REVIEW: SOURCES OF RESTORATION

The language of the Church being “sent on mission” is not new. There are both classical writings and more recent authors that seek to recapture this focus of the Church. Some call followers of Jesus Christ to re-examine biblical texts, while others highlight recent demographics and cultural changes. The following literature review looks at a number of sources in order to lay a solid foundation upon which to cast the vision for this project.

The Church being sent on mission has a goal of restoration. Restoration involves the mending of something that has been broken. Furthermore, it means a return to an original state.¹ The thing being restored may be a relationship or something material. The sources below share this common theme of restoration, though different words may be used. Words such as “reconciliation,” “rethinking,” and “rediscovery” all carry with them the connotation of restoring something to a prior time or shape. These sources call for restoration of the mission of God, the purpose of the Church, and the life of a community.

¹ *The Concise Dictionary of Christian Theology*, 2001 ed., s.v. “Restorationism.”

The Mission of God: Unlocking the Bible's Grand Narrative,
by Christopher J. H. Wright

The Mission of God is a comprehensive look at the biblical narrative. Christopher J. H. Wright examines each genre of Scripture in detail and argues that there is an overarching story of God that weaves its way through each book. Specifically, the theme of restoration is preeminent. That restoration includes reconciliation between God and people. Although essentially a spiritual phenomenon, that reconciliation has ripple effects that make their way into the world.

C. Wright's chapter on "God's Model of Restoration" focuses on the Old Testament concept of "jubilee" found in Leviticus 25.² C. Wright shows how God's restoration with Israel not only involved forgiveness of sin but also had certain commands for economic justice. These jubilee concepts carry through Scripture into prophetic material. Jesus announces His public ministry with words from Isaiah 61, which C. Wright argues has jubilee overtones. Finally, the Book of Acts paints the picture of the early Church embodying jubilee ideals of "mutual economic help."³

C. Wright is adamant that Christians should consider the ethical implications of the jubilee in today's world. The emphases on justice and mercy contained within this Old Testament law should inform the Church's mission. He particularly looks at the command on distribution of land in the year of jubilee. The wider principle is that God is the creator of the whole earth and human beings are to act as stewards of it. The returning

² Christopher J. H. Wright, *The Mission of God: Unlocking the Bible's Grand Narrative* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2006), 289-323.

³ *Ibid.*, 302.

of land to families reflects God’s heart that there is equitable distribution of what is already His. This aspect of the jubilee “still has a point to make in modern Christian approaches to economics,” says C. Wright when he explains:

The jubilee did not, of course, entail a *redistribution* of land, as some popular writings mistakenly suppose. It was not a redistribution but a restoration. It was not a free handout of bread or charity but a restoration to family units of *the opportunity and the resources to provide for themselves again*. In modern application, that calls for some creative thinking as to what forms of opportunity and resources would enable people to do that, and to enjoy the dignity and social involvement that such self-provision entails. The jubilee then is about restoring to people the capacity to participate in the economic life of the community for their own viability and society’s benefit. There is both ethical and missional relevance in that.⁴

There is perhaps no more important quote that has helped formulate this project than the one listed above. The biblical command for the year of jubilee is not simply part of a narrative to a people that lived thousands of years ago. Instead, it reflects the heart of God for the world and helps formulate the mission of the people of God. Therefore, as C. Wright says, “creative thinking” is needed for the Church to help be an agent of this jubilee restoration.

C. Wright is also careful to point out that the social and economic implications of jubilee are not to be separated from evangelism. He stresses that some of the Israelites who experienced the redemption of God in social and economic ways still went and worshipped other gods.⁵ Moreover, Paul and the writer of the Book of Hebrews used this example to exhort believers in Jesus Christ to obey and believe (1 Corinthians 10:1-5; Hebrews 3:16-19). C. Wright also shows that evangelism should not be separated from

⁴ Ibid., 297.

⁵ Ibid., 185.

social action. For believers in Jesus, this often means that the gospel is presented purely as the promise of forgiveness of sins and eternal life in heaven. C. Wright argues the same thing happened with the Israelites, who attended to the sacrifices demanded in worship in the temple but neglected the poor.⁶ He seeks to caution believers to keep to a balanced definition of mission:

Mission that claims the high spiritual ground of preaching only a gospel of personal forgiveness and salvation without the radical challenge of the full biblical demands of God's justice and compassion, without a hunger and thirst for justice, may well expose those who respond to its partial truths to the same dangerous verdict [that God gave in Malachi 1:10: "I have no pleasure in you, says the Lord of hosts, and I will not accept an offering from your hand" (ESV)]. The epistle of James seems to say as much to those in his own day who had managed to drive an unbiblical wedge between faith and works, the spiritual and material. If faith without works is dead, mission without social compassion and justice is biblically deficient.⁷

C. Wright is alluding to the fact that the complete narrative of God's mission has not been taught fully. Individual salvation has been emphasized over the social and economic ramifications of God's mission to the world, and the Church's mission has focused on preaching personal restoration with God. The work of the Church includes but is much deeper than that singular focus.

The Mission of God sets a biblical framework for rediscovering the mission of the local church and sets forth how the mission of the Church is tied to the mission of God Himself. That mission incorporates the principles of the jubilee and has economic implications. Despite its thorough analysis of the biblical narrative, what *The Mission of*

⁶ Ibid., 287-288.

⁷ Ibid., 288.

God does not offer is specific suggestions on creatively implementing that mission in a local context.

The Forgotten Ways: Reactivating the Missional Church,
by Alan Hirsch

The Forgotten Ways is a critique of current church-planting efforts, a reflection on Hirsch's own church-planting experiments in Australia, and an examination of the centrality of the person of Jesus in the missional church. Hirsch concludes by proposing a model which recaptures the "apostolic genius" of the early Church. This "apostolic genius" frees individuals within the church to use their gifts and talents in creative ways in the world. Hirsch calls it the "built-in life force and guiding mechanism of God's people."⁸

Hirsch asserts that current church-planting efforts revolve around an "attractional model."⁹ That is, churches put forth services and programs designed to bring people to their church. He argues that this model of church planting is based on an outdated view of where Christianity is within today culture.¹⁰ Such a model may have been successful in bringing people in the past, but now it is not as effective. The assumption of the attractional model is that the church is still central to its surrounding culture. Not only in his context, but in North America, this is not the case.

⁸ Hirsch, *The Forgotten Ways*, 18.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 34.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*

Hirsch calls Christians to rediscover what he calls a “missional-incarnational” model that was prevalent in the early Church—in particular, because it continues to be effective in other cultures where Christianity is not the dominant religious tradition.¹¹ In combining two biblical concepts, Hirsch strives to describe the outgoing movement of the early Church (missional) and the deep personal planting within the culture in that culture’s own forms and expressions, so that the gospel may be engaged meaningfully (incarnational).¹²

Hirsch’s own community undertook this experiment successfully and, for this reason, has greatly informed this project. He describes the culture of downtown Melbourne, Australia, as one that revolved around food and eating out. The leadership team of Hirsch’s worshipping community purchased a building seeking to establish a restaurant that would become a “proximity space,” a term Hirsch defines in this way: “A proximity space is not a church; rather, it involves the creation of places and/or events where Christians and not-yet Christians can interact meaningfully with each other—effectively a missional space. We called the café-bar Elevation.”¹³ Hirsch said the experiment was positive for its community members, because it was a creative way to do mission and to learn about their surrounding culture. Unfortunately, the restaurant did not survive due to cost overruns and bad management decisions. Still, Hirsch maintained that

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Ibid., 285.

¹³ Ibid., 38.

the vision was good and conversations around Jesus and spiritual dialogue far exceeded what might be expected through an attractional church-planting effort. Hirsch writes:

The driving desire of the project was to engage people in a meaningful dialogue around Jesus and spirituality in a meaningful and organic way. To do this we ran art classes, interactive drama groups, philosophy discussion groups, guitar workshops, CD launches, book launches and discussions, and open mic nights. . . . These were in addition to a regular offer of a large menu of good-value meals and hospitality, which formed the economic engine room of the project.¹⁴

Hirsch's team sought to enter the culture of the Melbourne downtown population with the restaurant. Within that culture and the work of the business, the South Melbourne Restoration Community then brought the words of Jesus into contexts that were natural. Rather than create an artificial environment of attractional church, Hirsch's leaders created a comfortable environment that fit the downtown culture.

This idea of a common space to foster spiritual conversation, initiated by the Church, is the genesis for this project. Looking at what the MLK/UTC community needs and wants, and the possibility that a grocery store, which includes common space attached to it for activities like the ones Hirsch mentioned, is truly a missional-incarnational endeavor. It is missional in the sense that it is sending out the people of God into its community. It is incarnational because a store with a gathering space allows for personal involvement in the lives of one's neighbors. The obvious corrective is to be wise about expectations and business models, so that the effort is not short-lived. Both Hirsch's own experience and FCC's attempt at something similar with Café Mi Aroma are instructive. These life experiences in being missional highlight the importance of partnership.

¹⁴ Ibid.

The Doctrine of Reconciliation: Volume 4 of Church Dogmatics
by Karl Barth

Church Dogmatics is a massive work written by Karl Barth; and within this project, Barth's words have tremendous value for the discussion.¹⁵ In particular, Section 72 proves helpful and has four parts: "The People of God in World-Occurrence," "The Community for the World," "The Task of the Community," and "The Ministry of the Community." The latter three will be dealt with here, because they specifically state the purpose and work for the people of God.

Barth lends a critique against views of the Church which define it simply as the institution established by God over and against the world. Early patristic and reformed writers sometimes emphasized the holy separation needed between the Church and the world. Specifically, Barth puts forth John Calvin's definition of the Church and finds one missing component: "The fact that the Church exists for the world and not for itself does not appear at all [in Calvin's classical doctrine], let alone the fact that it does so originally and essentially. Was it for this reason that in the 16th and 17th centuries the Protestant world was characterized by that pronounced lack of joy in mission, and even unreadiness for it?"¹⁶ Barth seems to say that "originally and essentially" the Church had an outward focus, yet developments in ecclesiological writings moved away from that focal point.

¹⁵ Karl Barth, *The Doctrine of Reconciliation*, vol. 4 of *Church Dogmatics* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1961).

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 767.

Moreover, the “unreadiness” that he speaks of implies that the Church was not equipped to deal with the societal changes that emerged in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.

Barth argues vehemently that the Church exists for the world. He writes: “The true community of Jesus Christ is the community which God has sent out into the world in and with its foundation. As such it exists for the world.”¹⁷ As such, it places itself in the world as God’s divine representation. Despite the fact that the representation will be flawed (cf. 2 Corinthians 4:7), God has ordained the Church to be a manifestation of His likeness and the bearer of the kingdom reality. Barth explains:

The Christian community can and should understand itself . . . as a likeness. As such it is a subsequent and provisional representation of the divine-human reality distinct from itself. . . . The reality distinct from itself which it denotes and portrays as this likeness is the kingdom of God . . . and the kingdom of God is the establishment of the exclusive, all-penetrating, all-determinative lordship of God and His Word and Spirit in the whole sphere of His creation.¹⁸

Barth is asserting that the Church should not be viewed as an end in itself. Rather, it is pointing beyond itself. It is reflecting the reality of the kingdom of God and its all-encompassing power.

This subsequent likeness of the Christian community could be called “incarnational,” to borrow language from Hirsch. Just as Israel was created and blessed by God to be a blessing to all nations, similarly the Church is to be recognized by the nations. Barth writes: “The true community of Jesus Christ does not exist invisibly and

¹⁷ Ibid., 768.

¹⁸ Ibid., 792.

esoterically but rather visibly and exoterically, so that it may be noted by the world around.”¹⁹ An internally focused church that uses insider language and makes knowledge of God only available to its members, according to Barth, is not a “true” community of Jesus Christ. A true community is outwardly focused and makes the love of God easily known to those on the outside.

Barth goes on to claim those outside the Church do not know it is the power of the Holy Spirit and constraining love of Jesus Christ which gives them the ability to know the world as it truly is. The role of the Church is to realize with compassion that people may have a warped view of reality apart from that power and love. Should the Church wish to introduce people to that power and love, it must be done carefully. Since the Church is a likeness of God, the way in which it carries out its mission must be reflective of Jesus’ own incarnation. Barth writes that the approach of the Church towards its neighbors will show God’s love, grace, mercy, and power:

[What is crucial is] the manner in which the community comes to them, acts towards them, thinks of them and speaks to and concerning them, and finally in the manner in which it discharges its commission to them. It necessarily emerges in the being and activity of the community . . . it necessarily impresses itself upon them, causing them to consider that in the community it has to do with a society of men who are at least honestly attempting, and are also able, to see and understand them in their own place and manner, their wordliness. They cannot possibly be seen and judged and addressed and treated by the true community of Jesus Christ as strangers by strangers, but rather as those who are well acquainted.²⁰

Here Barth contends that the means by which the Christian community comes to the world is of vital importance. It must show a “well-acquainted” knowledge of the people it

¹⁹ Ibid., 772.

²⁰ Ibid.

is trying to reach. That knowledge must translate into an action, which thus causes people to recognize an honest effort. Consequently, such generosity makes people outside the Church wonder about its source.²¹ Barth is arguing that the action of the Christian community done with integrity and honesty does cause the neighborhood to inquire as to the source of its action. This seems to mitigate the concern that deeds done by the Church will never lead to people knowing God.

The community of Jesus Christ has an obligation to bear the likeness of God into its neighborhood and to keep open eyes to see its need and brokenness. It must have a willingness to enter into that brokenness and use the resources given by God to meet the needs and restore. Barth uses the analogy of the Good Samaritan (cf. Luke 10:30-37) and calls the Church not to pass by those waiting to receive mercy:

All those who are without are waiting not only for the understanding and solidarity and participation, but for the helping action of the Christian community, for that which it alone in the whole world can do for them. . . . It is a profoundly hungry world . . . [that] waits for a Good Samaritan to appear within it who will not act for himself . . . who will relieve it of the burden of being left to itself and having to save and preserve itself.²²

Barth's section on the "Task of the Community" is instructive.²³ Barth writes plainly that the task of the community is to witness, attest, and confess the Word of God. Jesus is the Word of God made flesh, God's "Yes" to the world. The ministry of the

²¹ Ibid.

²² Ibid., 778-779.

²³ Ibid., 795.

community is “orientated by His ministry. It continually orientates itself by it.”²⁴ The ministry of Jesus included teaching on the kingdom of God (Mark 4:1-31), restoring brokenness by healing and casting out demons (Matthew 4:24), feeding the five thousand (Luke 9:10-17), and confronting the religious establishment (Matthew 23:1-39). Essentially, Jesus was teaching His disciples to do what He was doing (cf. Luke 10:1-9). Likewise, the community of faith today should do the same.

Barth’s work on the Church was written nearly fifty years ago. Since that time, there have been monumental changes in North American culture. The Church has lost its place of cultural prominence and influence. Nevertheless, the fact that Barth’s words in an earlier time are being echoed today point to his wisdom. It suggests that the current emphases on the incarnation and mission of God are not simply passing trends. *The Doctrine of Reconciliation* adds a prior voice to other contemporary voices in describing the purpose of the Church. It does not, however, give specific illustrations as to how a faith community should do that. It is up to individual congregations and followers of Jesus Christ to observe their neighborhood and neighbors to engage their needs wisely.

***God’s Missionary People: Rethinking the Purpose of the Local Church,*
by Charles Van Engen**

Charles Van Engen echoes the work of Barth in *God’s Missionary People*, which serves as a corrective for some of the emphases of the Reformation.²⁵ For instance, the

²⁴ Ibid., 831.

²⁵ Charles Van Engen, *God’s Missionary People: Rethinking the Purpose of the Local Church* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1991).

preaching of the Word and administration of the sacraments rightly could be viewed as highly internal practices of the Church. However, when these are seen as the primary marks of the Church, the natural tendency could be to focus on how faithfully these are being performed by and for the church's members. Van Engen's overall assertion is that what gets lost is the external witness to the world.

Van Engen uses biblical texts to inform the purpose of the local church. The Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5-7) serves as the basis for disciples of Jesus to live out their faith in the world. The focus is not what happens within the walls of a church but what is manifested in the surrounding community. According to Van Engen, the images of salt and light are two examples of Jesus' teachings that illuminate a church's mission:

Goals of an emerging church take on the incarnational perspective in the Sermon on the Mount. The special role, calling, sacrifice, and lifestyle of the disciples is described by their Lord; yet Jesus continually reminds his hearers that discipleship will be lived out in the world of the surrounding cultural and socio-political environment. To illustrate this Jesus combined the ideas of "salt" and "light." Both these elements must be dispersed to be effective.²⁶

Van Engen goes on to write that, even as the salt is dispersed into the world, it must not lose its saltiness. That is, the teachings of Jesus must be so embedded in the lives of His followers that it is not unrecognizable in the world it serves to purify and preserve.²⁷ By identifying the purpose of the Church with the Sermon on the Mount, Van Engen argues for an internal transformation that has an external mission.

²⁶ Ibid., 134.

²⁷ Ibid.

God's Missionary People uses the Book of Ephesians as well to inform the identity of the Church. According to Van Engen, Paul uses word pictures to describe the Church. The most common ones are “saints” (Ephesians 1:1), “body” (Ephesians 4:4), “soldier with armor” (Ephesians 6:10-18), and “wife” (Ephesians 5:22-24). The significance of these is that they are human pictures. The Church is people. It is not a mechanism, a movement, or an institution. The Book of Ephesians also is the place where individual members of the Church are made aware of their gifts and their purpose. It is also where leaders in the Church are given their purpose: “It was he who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers, to *prepare God's people for works of service* [emphasis mine]” (Ephesians 4:11-12). The word for “service” in the NIV translation is *diakonia*, which means “service” or “help.”²⁸ Essentially, the teaching of Ephesians 4 is that the Church is a body, and each individual is a member with gifts given by God to serve the Church and the world.

In light of this reality, Van Engen argues that the Church should examine its priorities and reframe them. The paradigm of Church-kingdom-world is offered.²⁹ That is, the Church's role is to show the world a community ruled by the King.³⁰ The Church is the central place in which the King's rule is maintained, and its mission is to proclaim the rule of the King. Therefore, the paradigm of Church-kingdom-world is that the

²⁸ This concept will receive more attention in Chapter 4.

²⁹ Van Engen, *God's Missionary People*, 114.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 109.

Church is the agent of the King proclaiming the rule of the kingdom of God, and the people of the Church are to live in the world as “a force to transform society to more closely resemble the kingdom of God.”³¹

Van Engen also presents the idea of “missionary congregations” to give language to the outward focus needed by today’s Church. He defines missionary congregations as “God’s missionary people in a local context.”³² By defining churches as “missionary people,” it takes attention away from the Church as institution and centers it on its people, taking cues from the images in Ephesians. In addition, by adopting the word “missionary,” he brings the practices of a traditional missionary into view. Just as a cross-cultural missionary would have to do, it is important for a missionary congregation to be aware of the particular culture around it. Moreover, it must realize that human culture changes quickly, so the missionary church must be willing to adapt its mission goals and to reform itself according to a changing environment.³³

Van Engen’s contribution among the literature reviewed here is in recognizing that the Church is comprised of people who are given specific gifts. Those gifts are not simply to serve the internal structures of the Church. As individuals are transformed through discipleship, they are scattered into the world. For The House and its partnership with FCC within the city of Chattanooga, this means that helping individuals discover

³¹ Ibid., 115.

³² Ibid., 27.

³³ Ibid., 143.

those gifts and moving them into the surrounding community is essential. Unfortunately, Van Engen does not offer much in the way of how to help people discover their gifts. He does suggest some characteristics of what leaders could look like, drawing upon the character of Nehemiah.³⁴ Still, the fact that The House is made up primarily of college students provides some unique challenges for fostering individuals' gifts. The development of these young people's faith and discipleship is still at the early stages of maturation, as many are newly removed from parents' influence and their home church. Moreover, since the population is transitory, the time needed to develop their gifts is limited. It is vital that a partnership with FCC and other local congregations be encouraged, so that older members can model and mentor these younger followers.

***The Next Christians: How a New Generation Is Restoring the Faith,*
by Gabe Lyons**

Whereas Van Engen shows the purpose of the Church as found in the Scriptures, Lyons takes a sociological approach in *The Next Christians*.³⁵ Lyons' first book, *UnChristian* co-authored with Kinnaman, looked at research accumulated from conversations with sixteen to twenty-nine year olds outside the Body of Christ, on the view of Christians within the Church. After that research, Lyons penned *The Next Christians* to continue the conversation with Christian leaders from around the United States and presented a broader collection of data. Lyons claims that there is a growing

³⁴ Ibid., 171.

³⁵ Gabe Lyons, *The Next Christians: How a New Generation Is Restoring the Faith* (New York: Doubleday, 2010).

group of young people who are actively engaging the culture with their faith, and he provides concrete examples of this.

He argues that one of the primary reasons why the Church has lost a place of cultural relevance in today's world is that certain streams of it have removed themselves from the changing culture. Lyons calls this group "the Separatists."³⁶ Another reason is that other streams of the Church have catered to the culture so that it is no longer identifiable as a community that proclaims a gospel of love, mercy, grace, and truth. Lyons calls these "Cultural Christians."³⁷ Lyons describes another group emerging, "the Restorers."³⁸ These thoughtfully engage with culture and yet hold to strong beliefs in the power of the gospel. Lyons points to the example of Paul in Athens (Acts 17) as a model for this cultural engagement.³⁹ In this passage, Paul literally walks around the city, observing the many gods and idols Athenians were worshipping. He also calls upon one of the poets of the people to articulate the story of Jesus.

The Next Christians contributes much to this project's ministry context, because college students are exhibiting much of this restoration behavior. On UTC's campus, the Restorers are a group that is indeed growing. Students from within The House have been joining campus clubs, fraternities, sororities, social justice groups, and sports teams as they seek to bear witness to the gospel in those places. In the past, students seemed to

³⁶ Ibid., 31.

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ Ibid., 47.

³⁹ Ibid., 85-87.

eschew campus groups fearing that they would compromise their faith there. While still an issue among young people, more recently enrolled students at UTC seem to be less afraid.

Two particular student groups within The House exemplify this “Restorer” mentality. One group of students several years ago began a Habitat for Humanity chapter at UTC. They coordinated volunteer work days, raised funds, and engaged the campus in the issue of affordable housing for the poor. The other example is the International Justice Mission chapter at UTC. Now having metamorphosed into the Social Justice Network, this was also a group initiated by a small group of students from within The House. This social justice organization has held rallies and created awareness on the campus regarding the issues of sex trafficking and human slavery.

Lyons says that the foundation for this restorative work comes from a retelling of the narrative of the gospel. Previous generations focused on the gospel being the solution to the problem of the Fall. Restorers, Lyons claims, seek to tell the fuller narrative. Genesis is the story of creative creation. The Fall describes the prevalence of sin, not just in individual lives but in all of creation. Redemption comes through the cross of Jesus Christ. Finally, Jesus’ teachings on the kingdom of God and John’s Book of Revelation point toward the future promise of the restoration of all things.⁴⁰

The recovery of God’s promise of restoration has consequences for God’s Church. Rather than simply being consumers of the church’s programs, people are invited to look at the world differently. As God’s Restorers they are invited to see the brokenness around

⁴⁰ Ibid., 50-51.

them, which “gives them a job to do.”⁴¹ In *The Next Christians*, Lyons highlights the work of the Imago Dei Church in Portland, Oregon. Instead of measuring worship attendance on Sunday, leadership at Imago Dei point to how many are engaged in restoring the city of Portland through participation in various committees, councils, and projects.⁴²

In a summary of recommendations for the Church, Lyons says that there are first and second things to be recovered. The first is a rediscovery of the full story of the biblical narrative. If the narrative can be told as a four-chapter story, the initial chapter of creation and the final chapter of restoration must be emphasized.⁴³ Those chapters have received less attention, as a focus on individual salvation has limited the narrative to the problem of the Fall and the redemption offered by the cross of Jesus Christ. The second thing is that people must be valued as part of God’s good creation. People are valued as such and not just as objects to be evangelized. Good deeds and social justice must be grounded in the gospel.⁴⁴ Works of creation and restoration flow from the biblical narrative. Lyons asserts that the Church must engage the culture, looking for evidence of God’s good creation in its midst yet not lessen the demand for beauty, truth, and love. Ultimately, God’s people are invited to consider their work as vocation and not simply career.⁴⁵

⁴¹ Ibid., 60.

⁴² Ibid., 160-161.

⁴³ Ibid., 192.

⁴⁴ Ibid., 196.

⁴⁵ Ibid., 190.

Lyons's research is helpful in that it highlights a growing segment of the Body of Christ that is immersing itself in the world. That immersion is seeking to restore the brokenness in individual communities, recognizing that each context will provide a different mode of being the Church. The grounding of that restoration is the gospel of Jesus Christ, which is defined more fully under that overarching narrative of creation, Fall, redemption, and restoration. In this call to renew the world, God's people are invited to take part in their vocations and see their day-to-day work as having great value in building the kingdom of God.

The Next Christians informs and educates the Church about the concerns of this group of followers of Jesus Christ. However, Lyons does not address how the Church can mobilize these Restorers, nor does he offer suggestions as to how the Church might center itself on the engagement of culture and restorative work.

***Mission-Shaped Church: Church Planting and Fresh Expressions of Church in a Changing Context*, by Archbishop's Council on Mission and Public Affairs**

The Church is comprised of people from every nation and is not limited to its expression in North American contexts. *Mission-Shaped Church* is a report and recommended study of the Church of England penned by multiple authors. This source was included in the review, because understanding churches in other countries that are further along in the post-Christendom journey may be helpful for identifying new ways of thinking about being the Church within the Chattanooga context. According to *The Washington Post*, by at least one study conducted by the British Parliament in 2012, England saw a decrease of 8 percent in the number of Christians, while most all other

religious groups increased. Muslims saw an increase of 37 percent; Hindus, 43 percent; Buddhists, 74 percent; and atheists, 49 percent.⁴⁶ How exactly the Church is addressing this changing context could be informative to North American ministry leaders.

Mission-Shaped Church offers a critique of traditional church planting and insists that simply forming new communities in new locations, based on what is being done in the “mother parish,” will not be effective. The DNA of the church must be an unwavering commitment to seeing the kingdom of God flourish in a different context. Otherwise, “what is planted will prove to be sterile.”⁴⁷ *Mission-Shaped Church* coins the phrase “fresh expressions” to describe movements within the Anglican community. These are different than “church plants,” which the working group of *Mission-Shaped Church* defines as “new communities of Christian faith as part of the mission of God to express God’s kingdom in every geographic and cultural context,” while “fresh expressions” arise from existing parishes embarking on creating a “more missionary form of church.”⁴⁸

Mission-Shaped Church draws upon a work by Philip Richter and Leslie Francis, entitled *Gone but Not Forgotten*,⁴⁹ which offers statistics regarding the Church in England upon which the Archbishop’s Council on Mission and Public Affairs relies.

⁴⁶ Al Webb, “Atheists Likely to Outnumber Christians in England in 20 Years.” *The Washington Post*, March 9, 2012, http://articles.washingtonpost.com/2012-03-09/national/35450164_1_christians-number-great-britain (accessed May 30, 2013).

⁴⁷ Archbishop’s Council on Mission and Public Affairs, *Mission-Shaped Church: Church Planting and Fresh Expressions of Church in a Changing Context* (London: Church House Publishing, 2004), Kindle Electronic Edition: Location 994-996.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, Location 176-178.

⁴⁹ Philip Richter and Leslie Francis, *Gone but Not Forgotten* (London: Darton, Longman & Todd Ltd., 1998).

Mission-Shaped Church reports regular attenders of church, defined as attending monthly, as making up 10 percent of the population. Fringe attenders were those that attend less than monthly and make up 10 percent as well. Two groups are described. One is “de-churched,” meaning that these people once attended church but no longer did. One subsection of the de-churched was “open” to attending in the future and open to conversations about God and spirituality. Another group was “closed” to attending any church at all. Each of these de-churched groups comprised 20 percent. Finally, the largest group in England included those that were “non-churched.” These comprised 40 percent of the population and included those who had never attended church.⁵⁰

Those findings had tremendous implications for the way that the *Mission-Shaped Church* team began to think about church planting and fresh expressions of the Church. The cultural landscape had changed so significantly that past assumptions about what was lacking within congregations were no longer relevant. The focus could no longer be on “fixing” what was wrong within the church to bring people back.

Thus it must be accepted that any approach at evangelism or community involvement that assumes we can “bring people back to the church” can only—at best—be effective for a diminishing proportion of the population. For most people, “church” is either an utterly foreign culture, or one that they have decided to reject. For the Church in England, the stark reality of this situation should be a cause for profound repentance and renewed missionary endeavour. . . . All people are God’s people, but it is an illusion to assume that somehow the population of England is simply waiting for the right invitation before they will come back and join us. The social and mission reality is that the majority of English society is not “our people”—they haven’t been in living memory, nor do they want to be. The

⁵⁰ Archbishop’s Council on Mission and Public Affairs, *Mission-Shaped Church*, Locations 1081-1082.

reality is that for most people across England the Church as it is peripheral, obscure, confusing or irrelevant.⁵¹

The traditional ways of being the Church are reaching a smaller percentage of the population. The call by the authors of *Mission-Shaped Church* is for a confession that the Church of England has apparently ignored a growing reality. It has fundamentally misjudged the place it had in English society and made false assumptions about what was keeping people from attending a local church. Moreover, it acknowledges the goal must no longer be to simply return people to church buildings.

Mission-Shaped Church asserts that it is not enough to adjust a style of worship or preaching in order to bring up attendance at church, nor is it enough to encourage the people of God to invite more of their friends.⁵² The large number of those who are de-churched informs us that the entire concept of the Church has alienated some. In the case of the non-churched there is no frame of reference at all for the Church. For the authors of *Mission-Shaped Church*, true fresh expressions of the people of God are needed. This is especially a reality in urban settings.⁵³

Those called to mission in such contexts know that invitations to worship or attendance at church have little impact. Surrounded by situations and people experiencing significant need, the mission response has been to engage with the local community and allow local people to set the agenda for what can best help rebuild or regenerate that community.⁵⁴

⁵¹ Ibid., Locations 1131-1134, 1138-1141.

⁵² Ibid., Location 1133.

⁵³ Ibid., Location 1127.

⁵⁴ Ibid., Location 1568.

Enabling local residents to set the agenda for the local church reveals a servant posture. Asking those residents how their community might be restored can establish trust. Instead of assuming that the Church has the solution for a community by merely offering worship services, seeking to meet the needs based on residents' responses honors that community.

In the MLK community context, the residents did "set the agenda." There were five groups identifying a grocery store as the greatest need.⁵⁵ Given the eight churches within walking distance of the MLK neighborhood, *Mission-Shaped Church* confirms that an invitation to church may not be very effective. The sheer number of people in church pews in Chattanooga on a Sunday morning, compared with the total population of 168,393,⁵⁶ show that there are large numbers of non-churched or de-churched people in Chattanooga as well. The Church would do well to listen to its brothers and sisters from England, who encourage the Body of Christ to let people within their communities set the agenda for community regeneration.

Mission-Shaped Church offers an honest look at another culture's failures and new efforts to respond to the Church's waning influence. It emphasizes that observing, listening, and learning from one's community is integral to a fresh expression of the Church. The context of post-Christendom England is much different, however, than that of Chattanooga. The challenge is to integrate the needs of the de-churched, non-churched, and those who are involved in the local church in one mission.

⁵⁵ Hundt et al., *MLK Community Plan*, 13.

⁵⁶ City-Data.com, "Hamilton County," <http://www.city-data.com/city/Chattanooga-Tennessee.html> (accessed July 3, 2013).

Restoring At-Risk Communities: Doing It Together and Doing It Right,
by John M. Perkins

As a community activist, Perkins brings years of experience in calling for restoration of neighborhoods. He spent many years in Pasadena and established the Harambee Family Christian Center, whose purpose is to “to nurture and equip leadership that will holistically minister to the community by sharing biblical truths, in order to achieve the re-building of urban neighborhoods through relocation, reconciliation and redistribution.”⁵⁷ When Perkins returned to his roots in rural Mississippi, he continued in Mendenhall the same community development work and initiated likeminded projects: afterschool tutoring, arts camps, internship programs, and a housing ministry focused on single mothers.⁵⁸ In *Restoring At-Risk Communities*, Perkins brings biblical language to cast a vision for the restoration of cities.⁵⁹

Incarnation, which he redefines as “relocation,”⁶⁰ is pivotal to Christian community development. The goal is restoration, in order to glimpse the kingdom of God here on earth. Perkins explains:

Christian community development should help us attain a mental image of how our community will look in the future when God is in control, when his kingdom has come “on earth as it is in heaven.” We should not just have goals and objectives or a set of isolated programs we are operating for the betterment of

⁵⁷ Harambee Ministries, <http://www.harambeeministries.org/> (accessed June 24, 2013).

⁵⁸ Mendenhall Ministries, http://mendenhallministries.org/?page_id=6 (accessed July 3, 2013).

⁵⁹ John M. Perkins, *Restoring At-Risk Communities: Doing It Together and Doing It Right* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1996).

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 21.

society. We should have an overall picture of what God wants to do in the inner city, based upon his desire for his people as revealed in the Word of God.⁶¹

The biblical language that Perkins employs is drawn from a number of places. He argues that God has a particular concern for cities, that all of biblical history points to cities, from prophets delivering their messages there to God one day descending in a city to be with His people.⁶²

Essentially, God's concern for cities informs the Church's mission. What is particularly helpful for this project about Perkins' approach is his insistence on economic development as part of that mission. The task of Christians living in an urban community is to take seriously the gifts and the assets that each community has. In a precursor resource, *Beyond Charity*, Perkins also asserts this same premise: "Economic development then becomes asset management. Asset management finally grows into developing an enterprise that you own. The challenge for Christian community-based economic development, then, is to enable the people of the community to start local enterprises that meet local needs and employ indigenous people."⁶³ The essential first step, according to Perkins, is to discern the gifts latent in the community. As Van Engen called for the empowering of God's people within the Church to use their gifts in mission, Perkins calls for Christians to help their communities discover their own gifts to help restore their neighborhood.

⁶¹ Ibid., 28.

⁶² Ibid., 57.

⁶³ John M. Perkins, *Beyond Charity* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1993), 43.

Similar to *Mission-Shaped Church*, in *Restoring At-Risk Communities*, Perkins stresses the importance of involving the members of the community. He says that the Church should not be the ones parachuting in with help. Rather, Christians who are living among their neighbors should help enable their neighbors and partner with them in starting businesses that can benefit the entire community. “In other words, the mission of the Messiah—and our mission—is not complete until we have empowered those living in the devastated places, the ruined cities, to restore and rebuild their own community.”⁶⁴

That empowerment and restoration, according to Perkins, intertwine with starting and drawing in new businesses. The presence of multiple businesses ensures not only that a variety of products and services are offered to a neighborhood but also that those products and services are offered at reasonable prices. It is implicit in Perkins’ writing that an individual, or group of individuals, take an initial risk to develop that first business. If such a business is successful, it likely will encourage other development and begin the process of community restoration. Perkins writes:

A community will not remain healthy if it is not economically viable. To cut through the rhetoric of nonprofit economic development, a community that cannot attract and harness market forces is not economically viable. The best measure of viability is the capacity to attract competing for-profit businesses that provide affordable goods and services (such as national food chains and branch banks).⁶⁵

Perkins asserts that the development and survival of businesses within a community is the best indicator of its possible future growth. Also, the nonprofit model is discarded.

⁶⁴ Perkins, *Restoring At-Risk Communities*, 31.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 80.

What is challenging about these words for this project is Perkins' opinion that for-profit businesses are the markers of healthy communities. In fact, initial models of this project included thoughts of a non-profit store. However, Perkins' words as well as counsel from local leaders have moved the strategy for this project toward a for-profit endeavor. The possibility for a successful non-profit in this city has decreased. Chattanooga was once home to over 1,800 non-profits; but in 2012, Internal Revenue Service reported that in the Hamilton County area this number had dropped to only 960. The major reason cited is that private foundation monies have diminished significantly.⁶⁶ A for-profit model makes the most sense based on that factor and Perkins's experience.

Perkins seems to assume that a stable group of Christians living in an urban environment can launch and manage self-sustaining enterprises. Since The House has a population that is fairly transitory, this could impact the ability to sustain a missional endeavor over time. While some college students remain in the area after their graduation from UTC, many do not. Any missional project that will be viable and sustainable necessitates a partnership with the larger Body of Christ. More importantly, that larger Body of Christ must be willing to embrace its missional identity.

⁶⁶ Joan McClane, "Hundreds of Nonprofits Close Shop, Rethink Ways to Serve," *Chattanooga Times Free Press*, <http://www.timesfreepress.com/news/2012/jun/16/chattanooga-mapping-service-needs-tennessee/> (accessed July 3, 2013).

CHAPTER 4

ECCLESIOLOGY: CHURCH AS ENTREPRENEURIAL RESTORER

The phrase “entrepreneurial restorer” may not be one normally associated with the Church. These exact words are absent from Scripture and classical writings on the nature and purpose of the Church. While the terminology may be absent, the principles they represent are not. Much like the first-century followers of Christ, entrepreneurs locate themselves virtually or physically in a community to learn customers’ needs and undertake risk to accomplish their specific mission. The concept of biblical restorer refers both to humanity’s restoration of relationship with God and the restoration of all things as the mission of God in the world.

This chapter will look first at biblical sources of God’s overarching mission for the world and the part that the Church plays in accomplishing that mission. Both the Old Testament and New Testament reveal the character of God as one who cares for those in the midst of God’s people. His people are to be creative agents that care for their neighbors.

The second section of this chapter will examine some of the emphases of the Reformation. The Reformers sought to study Scripture to recapture the identity of the

Church. The strengths of that tradition included how the community of believers is formed around the proclamation of God's Word and the sacraments that are frequently practiced, reminding them of their identity. This section also will explore some unintended consequences of focusing on Word and Sacrament and what they may have meant for the mission of the Church.

Finally, a proposed merger of the principles of Scripture, the teachings of the Reformers, and social research will be offered here. Already, missionaries in international contexts and church leaders in North American contexts are seeking to help restore the communities in which they live. They are acting in entrepreneurial ways in initiating businesses and services that are desperately needed in their neighborhoods. Drawing upon their examples, this project will present a model of a church acting as an entrepreneurial restorer.

Scriptural Portraits of God's People as Restorers

God chooses people for the purpose of reflecting His mission to the world. That mission is one of restoration by proclaiming good news to the poor, binding up wounds and bringing healing to the broken-hearted, and proclaiming freedom and the year of the Lord's favor (cf. Isaiah 61:1-2; Luke 4:18-21). The mission is carried out by a chosen people who rebuild, restore, and renew ancient ruins and cities (Isaiah 61:4).

God's act of one group being chosen to bless the world appears as early as Genesis 12. From one person comes a nation called "Israel." God calls Abram to leave his homeland and says, "I will make you into a great nation and I will bless you; I will make your name great, and you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and

whoever curses you I will curse; and all peoples on earth will be blessed through you” (Genesis 12:2-3). The purpose of God expressed here is that from one family will spring a people, and those people will bless all other peoples on earth. The people of Israel experienced seasons of prosperity, followed by years of slavery (Exodus 2:23-24). However, not even centuries of slavery could thwart God’s intention to have His people be an agent for His mission. The Book of Exodus chronicles the deliverance of God’s people from the empire of the Egyptians.

As C. Wright points out in *The Mission of God*, the act of rescue in Exodus revealed the character of Yahweh—specifically that Yahweh is incomparable, sovereign, and unique. He expresses Himself as King, not simply for Israel but for all nations and over all creation. C. Wright shows some insight into the reasons behind this rescue of Israel in the Book of Deuteronomy, a book written after the events of the Exodus. Regarding Deuteronomy 10:14-19, C. Wright argues that the act of God shows some surprising truths about Him and the response for the people of God.¹

According to C. Wright, the passage is structured like a hymn with a doxology, surprise, and response. Deuteronomy 10:14 and 10:17 form the hymn/doxology for the purpose of extolling God above all others and in whom all things find their existence. It is the “surprise” and response that informs the purpose of God’s people. God is concerned about the fatherless, the widow, and the alien, and likewise the people of God are to love the fatherless, the widow, and the alien. The surprise is taken from Deuteronomy 10:15

¹ C. Wright, *The Mission of God*, 76.

and 10:18: “Yet the Lord set his affection on your forefathers and loved them, and he chose you, his descendants, above all the nations, as it is today,” and “He defends the cause of the fatherless and the widow, and loves the alien, giving him food and clothing.”

C. Wright points to this as a surprise because the Lord setting His affection on a group of people does not entitle them to a life of privilege. Rather, it demands a response. The response in Deuteronomy 10:19 is this: “And you are to love those who are aliens, for you yourselves were aliens in Egypt.”² These verses reveal the overarching purpose of God for choosing a people to make Himself known. Since God loves the poor in very practical ways, providing food and clothing, so too the people of God are to love this way.³

To summarize the Old Testament portraits, the Hebrew Scriptures contain the story of the people of God living out of that deliverance in Exodus, as that event formed their identity as a people and revealed the character of Yahweh whom they worshipped. Despite desiring to have an earthly king to be like the nations around them, God continued His covenant. Enduring exile from foreign kingdoms, God continued to form His people through suffering. The prophets were the voice of Yahweh calling His people to live out their purpose of blessing all nations, by worshipping the only one true God and being agents of justice and mercy in the world (cf. Micah 6:8)

The New Testament likewise reveals the purpose of the people of God. One example of how exactly God accomplishes the mission to the nations is found in the

² Ibid., 79.

³ See Chapter 3 of this discussion for further details regarding C. Wright’s work in identifying the “grand narrative” of Scripture.

ministry of Jesus. Jesus employs a strategy with His disciples in Luke 10:1-23. Jesus sends out seventy-two of His disciples, two by two, into surrounding towns and villages to proclaim the news that the kingdom of God has come. He tells His disciples to enter a house, declaring, "Peace be to this house" (Luke 10:5). Jesus then says, "If a son of peace is there, your peace will rest on him." The disciples are to remain in the house of "peace," receiving the hospitality of the host while healing the sick and preaching the good news of the kingdom (Luke 10:6-9). The healing of the sick and proclamation of the kingdom message are both examples of restoration. The healing of the sick announces God's intention to physically restore brokenness. The proclamation of the kingdom restores people's brokenness with God. The words of Jesus imply that there are people in these towns, "people of peace," who will welcome the mission of the disciples. In addition, it is in the discovery of "people of peace" that the mission will spread. The people of peace become the first to hear and witness the message of God's kingdom, lived out under their roofs by the disciples. When the disciples leave, they remain in their communities to continue the proclamation of that message. Jesus confers on the disciples His authority and power to do what He does in His earthly ministry. In fact, He proclaims to them, "Very truly I tell you, whoever believes in me will do the works I have been doing, and they will do even greater things than these, because I am going to the Father. And I will do whatever you ask in my name, so that the Father may be glorified in the Son" (John 14:12-13).

The biblical source of the gathered Church of Jesus Christ starts with Acts 2:42-47. Lloyd Ogilvie calls it the “birth of the church.”⁴ As the author of the Book of Acts, Luke gives a summary of the activities of the Church in this passage. Teaching, food, fellowship, and sharing with those in need are all marks of the early community of believers. The followers of Jesus dedicate themselves to the apostles’ teaching, the breaking of bread, the fellowship, and the prayers (Acts 2:42). While the sharing of food is present at the birth of the Church, commentators disagree as to whether the “breaking of bread” refers to a community meal or the Lord’s Supper. William H. Willimon writes:

Eating together is a mark of unity, solidarity, and deep friendship, a visible sign that social barriers which once plagued these people have broken down. Whether this “breaking of bread” is a reference to our Eucharist or Lord’s Supper is a matter of debate. Probably, Peter’s church of Luke’s day would not know our distinction between the church *merely* breaking bread and the church breaking bread as a sacramental religious activity.⁵

Luke goes on to describe the sharing that occurs among the members of the fellowship. “And all who believed were together and had everything in common. Selling their possessions and goods, they gave to anyone as they had need” (Acts 2:44-45). In this way, the early Church was marked by an awareness of the needs in the community and sacrificial giving to alleviate those needs.

Paul adds his voice to aspects of the Church in both 1 Corinthians 12 and 2 Corinthians 5:18. In 1 Corinthians 12, the chapter starts with a claim that there are a

⁴ Lloyd Ogilvie, *Acts: The Preacher’s Commentary* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1983), 72.

⁵ William H. Willimon, *Acts: Interpretation, a Bible Commentary for Teaching and Preaching* (Atlanta, GA: John Knox Press, 1988), 41.

variety of gifts, given by one Lord. Furthermore, those gifts are given for “the common good” (1 Corinthians 12:7). What follows is a list of various gifts. This list is not meant to be exhaustive, as elsewhere Paul mentions other gifts (cf. Romans 12). It is evident that many of the gifts Paul references deal with the workings of a church. Apostles, prophets, teachers, those speaking in tongues, and those interpreting those tongues are people who form the Body of Christ and have their gifts used primarily within the church. However, Paul mentions one gift that is especially relevant to this topic. That is the Greek word *antilēmpsis*, translated by the New International Version as “those who help others” (1 Corinthians 12:28). The word is described here:

[In New Testament Greek], [*antilēmpsis* is] used like the verb *antilambánomai* (482), to receive in return for, render assistance, help. It is in this way that we must understand the meaning of the word “helps” as one of the gifts of the Spirit (1 Cor. 12:28), implying duties toward the poor and sick even as the deacons were appointed to give attention to (Acts 6; Rom. 16:1).⁶

Consequently, within the early Church, Paul argues that churches are made of many parts, with many gifts given by one Lord and one of them being a duty to help the poor. This is foundational to this project. A wide breadth of experience and resources can be employed by the people of Christ. Moreover, that gathering is called to a mission that involves helping the poor.

In 2 Corinthians 5:18, Paul makes the case that people’s own reconciliation with God through Christ gives them the ministry of reconciliation. Both the words translated “ministry” and “reconciliation” have significance here. “Ministry” is the word *διακονία*.

⁶ *The Complete Word Study Dictionary*, 2000 electron. ed., s.v. “*antilēmpsis*.”

“In the NT *διακονία* means 1. ‘waiting at table,’ or in a rather wider sense ‘provision for bodily sustenance.’”⁷ This was an issue the early Church dealt with in Acts 6. There the Hellenistic Jews complained, because their widows were being overlooked in the distribution of food (*διακονία*) (Acts 6:1). The word in New Testament writing developed into a description of Paul’s ministry (1 Timothy 1:12) and an office in 1 Timothy 3:8. The fact that the New Testament writers took a Greek word that meant service of food to describe the Church’s role is interesting. It clearly has come to mean more than that. Local churches call and ordain deacons not only to serve food but rather to help meet the physical needs of its members and the local community, yet the root of “ministry” was service of food.

“Reconciliation” is the word *καταλλαγή*. It is part of a series of words that comes from one root, *καταλλαγή*, meaning to change.⁸ As Paul expounds upon this idea in 2 Corinthians 5, the source of human reconciliation with God comes through Jesus Christ. Reconciliation does mean that the guilt of sin is taken away. Paul writes in Romans: “For if, while we were God’s enemies, we were reconciled to him through the death of his Son, how much more, having been reconciled, shall we be saved through his life!” (Romans 5:10). However, the thought here is not simply the removal of human guilt or the appeasement of the wrath of God. The word is also an object of reconciliation, as Paul writes: God in Christ was reconciling the world to Himself (2 Corinthians 5:19).

⁷ *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, 1964 electronic ed., s.v. “*diakonia*.”

⁸ *Ibid.*, s.v. “*allassō*.”

Reconciliation for Paul refers to the removal of guilt between man and God, but it is much more. The reconciliation that Paul is referring to has many layers. This reconciliation is ongoing and seeks to restore the brokenness in all of creation: “Since the *διακονία* [*diakonia tēs katallagēs*] has not yet come to an end, and the world has not yet heard . . . [*logos tēs katallagēs*] in all its members, reconciliation itself must not be thought of as concluded.”⁹ Here there is a picture that God’s reconciliation ultimately leads in the Book of Revelation. It is revealed in the picture in Revelation 21-22, where John sees a new heaven and new earth and the holy city of Jerusalem. After a detailed description of the city, with its walls, gates, and foundations, there is this image of the fruitfulness of the city:

Then the angel showed me the river of the water of life, bright as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb through the middle of the street of the city; also, on either side of the river, the tree of life with its twelve kinds of fruit, yielding its fruit each month. The leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations. (Revelation 22:1-2, ESV)¹⁰

As is found in other biblical passages, the presence of food here in Revelation 22:1-2 is a marker of God’s community and restorative justice. The new heavens and new earth are a place of abundance. Moreover, the leaves on the fruitful trees point to the mission of God: the healing of the nations.

In summary, God’s creation of a people always had an impact on the community outside. In Israel and the New Testament Church, the people of God were not the

⁹ Ibid., s.v. “καταλλάσσω.”

¹⁰ *Holy Bible: English Standard Version* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2001).

dominant cultural influence. Their presence within the culture and service to the community was still noticeable. Certain streams of the Church, however, slowly began to drift away from that outward witness and look inward. Unfortunately, the Reformed tradition could be accused of this very thing.

The Reformed Tradition

It is the intent of this section to look briefly at some of the foundations of the Reformed tradition, because the tenets of the Reformation include foundations for a missional view of the people of God. For instance, the emphasis on the preaching of the Scriptures can inform and guide a congregation into the overarching mission of God to restore all things. Also, the priesthood of all believers dignifies the work of all Christians in exhibiting and building up the kingdom of God in the world. Given my pastoral background and the many Presbyterian churches supporting the ministry of The House, Reformed Presbyterianism will be the most useful lens here.

The primary source for Reformed Presbyterianism is Calvin. His monumental work, *The Institutes*, was written in 1536, and still has influence on Reformed polity and doctrine. The Evangelical Presbyterian Church's *Book of Order* draws phrases from Calvin's work.¹¹ The quoted material below is an example of Calvin's definition of the Church.

Wherever we see the word of God sincerely preached and heard, wherever we see the sacraments administered according to the institution of Christ, there we cannot have any doubt that the Church of God has some existence, since his promise

¹¹ "The Church finds her visible yet imperfect, expression in local congregations where the Word of God is preached in its purity and the sacraments are administered in their integrity." Evangelical Presbyterian Church, *The Book of Order* (Livonia, MI: Evangelical Presbyterian Church, 2012), iii.

cannot fail, “Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them” (Mt. 18:20). But that we may have a clear summary of this subject, we must proceed by the following steps:—The Church universal is the multitude collected out of all nations, who, though dispersed and far distant from each other, agree in one truth of divine doctrine, and are bound together by the tie of a common religion.¹²

Church as place of Word and Sacrament has become the prevailing definition of the Reformed Church. The teaching of the Bible is paramount in the life of the Body of Christ. The universal Church, according to Calvin, also must be unified in doctrine.

While *The Institutes* comprises a massive work, it is only phrases and mottos that often are remembered. When further exposition of those phrases is neglected, the result is a narrower definition of the Reformed Church.

The emphases upon Word and Sacrament and purity of doctrine also are found in subsequent documents of the Reformed Church. The sole confession for the Evangelical Presbyterian Church is *The Westminster Confession of Faith*.¹³ It was the result of a five-year process to provide a unifying document to reform the Church of England in 1646. A paragraph regarding the Church describes its purpose as “gathering and perfecting the saints.”¹⁴ It speaks of the purity and unity of the Church and again stresses right doctrine: “This catholic Church hath been sometimes more, sometimes less visible. And particular Churches, which are members thereof, are more or less pure, according as the doctrine of

¹² John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion* (Bellingham, WA: Logos Bible Software, 1997), IV.1.9.

¹³ Evangelical Presbyterian Church, *Book of Order*, iv.

¹⁴ M. H. Smith, *Westminster Confession of Faith*, electronic ed. (Greenville SC: Greenville Presbyterian Theological Seminary Press, 1996), ch. 25, para. 3.

the Gospel is taught and embraced, ordinances administered, and public worship performed more or less purely in them.”¹⁵ The witness of the Church and its purity are tied to Calvin’s same marks. *Westminster* adds the performance of public worship. Despite an entirely different context, the elders who penned *Westminster* recognized the importance of Word and Sacrament.

The Institutes and *The Westminster Confession of Faith* lay out some of the activities of the Reformed Church. Members gather together to worship and hear the Bible taught and preached. The Word of God is essential in the life of local churches, and members within those churches carry that teaching into their daily lives. The frequent celebration of the sacraments reminds members of the sacrifice of Jesus so that the cross becomes integral in the minds of individual believers. The sacrament of the Lord’s Supper also gives a glimpse to the coming reign of Jesus Christ and the wedding supper of the Lamb of God (Revelation 19:6-9).

Also integral to the Reformation was the role of church leadership in ensuring the right preaching of the Word and administration of Sacrament. Martin Luther was especially important in this regard. In 1517, Luther nailed *95 Theses* on the door of the Castle Church in Wittenburg, Germany. He was protesting the sale of indulgences, a practice of the Roman Catholic Church that granted absolution from sin in exchange for monies given to the Church. Some historians mark that event as the spark that ignited the

¹⁵ Ibid., ch. 25, para. 4.

Reformation.¹⁶ While Luther originally sought to reform the Catholic Church, what instead developed were entirely new ways of writing and thinking about the Church along with the roles of leaders within it. “Luther perceived seven priestly functions: proclamation of the Word of God, baptizing, blessing and administering the Lord’s Supper, granting or withholding absolution, offering the sacrifice of prayer and praise, interceding, and making doctrinal judgments.”¹⁷

The functions of priests, according to Luther, were activities for and within the Church. Word and Sacrament were also central to his thinking. It is apparent that Luther also wanted to put the authority and ministry of God’s people in the hands of their shepherds and not an elected Pope or the institution of the Church. Forgiveness of sins, prayers of praise and intercession, and doctrine all fell within the purview of a priest’s responsibilities.

Luther is also credited with championing the idea of the priesthood of all believers. He claimed that through baptism, followers of Christ are all consecrated priests.¹⁸ This was to recapture the teaching of 1 Peter 2:9, which states: “You are a chosen people, a royal priesthood.” While some argue that Luther never used the words

¹⁶ “The 95 Theses, which [Luther] delivered on 31 October 1517 and which led, inexorably, it seems, to that whole phenomenon that we know as the Reformation.” Michael A. Mullett, *Martin Luther* (New York: Routledge, 2004), 67.

¹⁷ *The Encyclopedia of Christianity*, 2005 ed., s.vv. “Priest, priesthood.”

¹⁸ Martin Luther, *The Babylonian Captivity of the Church*, trans. by A. T. W. Steinhäuser (1520; repr., Project Gutenberg Self-Publishing Press, http://self.gutenberg.org/uploads/pdf/20110830030704_babylonian_captivity.pdf, accessed August 7, 2013), 65.

“priesthood of all believers,”¹⁹ the doctrine sought to recognize the callings of all believers as doing the work of ministry in the world.

In Luther’s writings, the doctrine of *vocatio*, Latin for “call” or “calling,” received special attention.²⁰ Followers of Jesus Christ have been given a particular place in society and have meaningful service to give to their communities. Love for God and love of neighbor are intertwined. Believers exercise their faith in God by performing the duties of their common lives, with love of God as their foundation. Steven A. Hein writes:

Luther maintained that when the Christian shopkeeper sweeps the sidewalk, the householder does the laundry and the parent helps the child with schoolwork out of trust in Christ and love for those served, faithfulness to the call of God is rendered. Indeed, it is a glorious wonderful service that glorifies God and for which the heavenly hosts are praising God. Faithfulness flows from the heart of faith and love as we are about the full range of duties and tasks that arise from our ordinary commitments of life. The outward works of worldly service are seen and perceived by all. But faith in Christ and fear, love and trust in God—these are hidden. The Christian’s living in God’s *vocatio* from faith to faithfulness in the world, as with Christ and his saving work, is both hidden and revealed.²¹

What is important to recognize is that Luther believed that the lives of individual Christians and their work had an impact on the building of God’s kingdom. Ordained priests were not the only ones doing the work of God. Indeed, work done outside the Church in daily life by believers exhibited God’s glory and was seen by all, though at the same time it had a hidden aspect to it.

¹⁹ See Timothy Wengert, “The Priesthood of All Believers and Other Pious Myths,” http://www.valpo.edu/ils/assets/pdfs/05_wengert.pdf, (accessed May 23, 2013).

²⁰ Martin Luther, *Table Talk* (1626; repr., Christian Classics Ethereal Library, <http://www.ccel.org/ccel/luther/tabletalk.v.xlv.html> (accessed August 7, 2013).

²¹ Steven A. Hein, “Luther on *Vocatio*: Ordinary Life for Ordinary Saints,” *Issues, Etc.*, <http://www.mtio.com/articles/aissar17.htm> (accessed May 29, 2013).

The priesthood of all believers and *vocatio* are important tenets of the Reformation. Their reclamation from Scripture sought to eliminate the hierarchy found between the clergy and laity within the Church in the time of Luther. Similarly, those two tenets had an outward emphasis to the world. The continuation of 1 Peter 2:9 reads: “A royal priesthood . . . that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light.” The implication is that being called priests by God is so His followers display God’s work to the world around them.

Unintended Consequences of the Reformation

In looking at the above foundations of the Reformed tradition, it is possible to discern that the Church unintentionally could have begun to turn its eye inward. Voices of fifty years ago, such as Barth, were calling for a reformation and return to an outward witness for the Church. Voices today, such as Hirsch, are calling for a rediscovery of apostolic genius so that an outward mission can be rediscovered.²² If these voices then and now are calling for similar changes, it is possible that the mission of the Church was compromised.

Nowhere in the definitions of the Church offered by Calvin and *Westminster* is there language of sending out or engaging in mission to the world. Language is centered on the gathering of saints for preaching, teaching, and serving sacraments. Emphasis is on purity of belief and doctrine. This is understandable, given the historical context. The Reformers were protesting what they saw as the impurity of the Church, given its abuses

²² See Chapter 3’s literature review for a complete discussion.

of power. Moreover, they witnessed changes in doctrine to suit the purposes of those in church leadership. Still, the evidence is that the Reformers were focused so much on the institution of the Church that they may have begun to miss its mission.

Even the emphasis on recapturing the priesthood of all believers may not have yielded its intended results in accomplishing God's mission to the world. Some believe that the view of the "universal priesthood" began to lose its vigor as the Church became organized and other voices joined the Reformation camp: "With the organizing of territorial churches the importance of the universal priesthood waned. The office of public preaching came under theological direction. Preaching and administering the sacraments were now privileges of pastors, who were ordained to their office."²³ It appears that the emphasis on Word and Sacrament became so integral to the life of congregations that they demanded theologically trained pastors to perform these tasks. With a well-meaning intention to maintain purity of doctrine and correct administration of the sacraments, the attention to all believers and their priesthood suffered.

The lack of outward focus may have been an unintended consequence of the Reformation emphases. The thinking may have been that the institution of the Church needed to be reformed first and that purity among the leadership had to be recaptured. Then the Church would be able to reach out to the world again. Van Engen states that these emphases resulted in four *notae*, or marks. These were based on the Apostle's Creed: "one," "holy," "catholic," and "apostolic." Despite the attention paid to these marks, they did not bear the fruit intended. Van Engen writes:

²³ *The Encyclopedia of Christianity*, 2005 ed., s.vv. "Priest, priesthood."

Soon after the Reformers, the Reformation “marks” themselves became means for destroying unity, true holiness, and catholicity. . . . Sadly, the children of the Reformation stressed the . . . darker side of these marks—their introverted, exclusivistic tendency . . . later Reformed churches used the marks to signify the *place* where certain things were done, rather than the *tasks* to be carried out in the world.²⁴

While the Reformers like Luther and Calvin may not have intended this “dark side” of the marks of the Church, their later followers certainly turned their attention to purifying the Church from within. Van Engen uses the term “proclamation” and “witness” to argue that the priority must not be in reforming the internal workings of the church first before mission:

Proclamation witness as a mark of the Church attempts to restore the outward and upward direction of the Church. Proclamation witness takes place, most profoundly, in the world, where the Church is a witness of Jesus Christ. This serves as a corrective to the Reformation’s highly internalized use of preaching, sacrament, and discipline as something done within the midst of the Church, where the presence of Christ is manifested through the “marks” understood introvertedly. Whereas the Reformation perspective on the marks was essentially inward-looking, proclamation witness directs the marks outward.²⁵

Van Engen’s words reveal that the Reformation’s marks of the Church were seen as focused inwardly. The world is the stage on which the mission of a church is to be played. “Proclamation” witness does not diminish the tasks of preaching, serving sacraments, and discipline; rather, it recognizes that those marks have a purpose in the world. Van Engen speaks of the importance of a balance of *diakonia* (service), *kerygma* (preaching or proclamation), *martyria* (testimony or witness), and *koinonia* (fellowship). The latter, *koinonia*, is the foundation on which the others flow. That is, they stem from

²⁴ Van Engen, *God’s Missionary People*, 63.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 81.

loving fellowship and the gathering of disciples of Jesus. However, too much emphasis on *koinonia* can have unhealthy results: “The absence of *diakonia*, *kerygma*, or *martyria* may mean that the Church has turned inward upon itself to such an extent that there is no longer the kind of *koinonia* of which Jesus spoke. We cannot forget that *all people* will know if the disciples love each other within the Church, because this love is to be *externalized*.”²⁶ Here Van Engen is arguing that Church as Word and Sacrament that manifests itself only as *koinonia* of believers should not be the ending place. Rather, it should be the starting place from which service and witness flow. Believers in Jesus Christ gather and are equipped to be sent out into the world.

Harvie Conn echoes this external emphasis of Van Engen in *Evangelism: Doing Justice and Preaching Grace* and calls upon similar categories (*kerygma*, *koinonia*, *diakonia*, and adds *leiturgia*, or worship).²⁷ However, Conn pays special attention to *diakonia*, claiming it is “the most important in dealing with the largest category of the unchurched.”²⁸ For Conn, service is integral to evangelism. Unfortunately, the Reformed church has often ignored this essential aspect of witness. Regarding the mindset of “Corpus Christianum,”²⁹ Conn writes: “Still circling within the orbit . . . the church of the

²⁶ Ibid., 91.

²⁷ Harvie Conn, *Evangelism: Doing Justice and Preaching Grace* (Phillipsburg, NJ: Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing, 1982), 41.

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Conn refers to the concept of the state church, where the empire of government and church were partners. Calvin in particular held this view, according to Hermann Weber: “Calvin held to a more theocratic theory of the state, in essence remaining true to the medieval concept of the *corpus Christianum*.” See *Encyclopedia of Christianity*, 2005 ed., s.vv. “Church and State.”

Reformation creeds is a static, rather quiet corner in the world. It is busy, to be sure, with its own housecleaning, but it has little concept of inviting in the neighbors to gossip the gospel.”³⁰ Conn’s strong critique of a Reformed church in particular is careful not to divorce the message of the gospel in favor of service. He argues that “the gospel words are not minimized. The idea is that service must maximize them.”³¹ Moreover, this service is not simply a program of the Church. It is the people of God in their daily work serving the world as witness.

As mentioned earlier, Luther’s attention to the doctrine of *vocatio* earnestly attempted to link each Christian’s job and place in society to individual calling as the people of God. Of the marks of the Reformation, this may be one that did not bear lasting fruit. In *The Missional Entrepreneur*, Mark L. Russell reports on a study he performed on a large church in the Southeastern United States. The questions revolved around this integration between one’s faith and calling or job. Russell writes:

The results showed that 74 percent of the respondents saw little to no connection between their faith and their job. Of those who saw a connection, 64 percent were employees of a religious institution. Only 11 percent of respondents with a job in a nonreligious organization saw a connection between their faith and their employment. Furthermore, even those 11 percent reported a lack of confidence and fulfillment in their ability to integrate their faith at work.³²

Clearly, *vocatio* did not make its way into the lives of those respondents. Despite a renewed emphasis on the Word of God and a rediscovery of believers’ identity as priests

³⁰ Conn, *Evangelism*, 35.

³¹ *Ibid.*, 38.

³² Mark L. Russell, *The Missional Entrepreneur: Principles and Practices for Business as Mission* (Birmingham, AL: New Hope Publishers, 2010), Kindle Electronic Edition: Location 139-143.

for the world, the Reformation did not fully restore the mission of the Church to be a blessing to all nations. Moreover, as was argued by Van Engen, it unintentionally focused itself inward.³³

With roots in the biblical narrative and in the writings of the Reformers, certainly it is possible to speak of a Reformed church that has reformed itself in mission. In the words of C. Wright, that mission of the Church is the mission of God: “to restore his whole creation to what it was intended to be—God’s creation, ruled over by redeemed humanity, giving glory and praise to its Creator.”³⁴ That restoration of the world shall be added to the marks of the Church.

Church as Entrepreneurial Restorer

A Reformed church that has rediscovered this mission of God to restore creation incorporates and integrates its biblical roots and its heritage from the Reformers into an outward emphasis of service to its neighborhood. Its marks of preaching and administration of sacraments are not ignored. Rather, those marks are directed toward the surrounding community.

The Scriptures point to a church’s role in providing a “ministry of reconciliation” (2 Corinthians 5:18). Ministry, *diakonia*, literally means to serve and provide for bodily sustenance. Reconciliation, *katalage*, carries with it a forgiveness of guilt between humanity and God and also a move toward the restoration of all creation. Scripture also

³³ Van Engen, *God’s Missionary People*, 63.

³⁴ C. Wright, *The Mission of God*, 165.

calls the Church the “body of Christ” (1 Corinthians 12:27), and its members are given gifts to accomplish the ministry of reconciliation. Here Scripture and the Reformed tradition can be joined in emphasizing the priesthood of all believers. If all members of a church are indeed priests, they show the character of God to the world through the gifts given to them by God. The link between their work and their lives of faith is reconnected.

In *Surprised by Hope*, N. T. Wright offers a perspective on the Church as it seeks to reform its mission. His biblical emphases include the resurrection of Jesus and the promise of the new heavens and new earth. These two focal points reveal the foundations for the Church:

The mission of the church is nothing more or less than the outworking, in the power of the Spirit, of Jesus’s bodily resurrection and thus the anticipation of the time when God will fill the earth with his glory, transform the old heavens and earth into the new, and raise his children from the dead to populate and rule over the redeemed work he has made.³⁵

The past event of Jesus’ resurrection and the future anticipation of the new heavens and new earth give the Church its identity and purpose. N. T. Wright argues that both of these mean that God cares about the reclaiming of space, time, and matter.³⁶ Moreover, the Church is invited into a partnership with God of anticipating and working for His coming kingdom.

³⁵ N. T. Wright, *Surprised by Hope*, 264-265.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 257.

That kingdom will be evidenced by “justice,” “beauty,” and “evangelism.”³⁷ Regarding “justice,” N. T. Wright writes that it is “shorthand for the intention of God, expressed from Genesis to Revelation, to set the whole world right.”³⁸ That “setting of the world right” means working for freedom for slaves, as God showed His heart for His people in Exodus (Exodus 2:23-25). It means caring for the poor, as shown in the prophets (Isaiah 58:6-7). This image of the new creation forms the basis for the Church’s mission for “beauty.” N. T. Wright calls for painters, composers, sculptors and poets to creatively form culture, shaped along the promise of what God will do.³⁹ “Art at its best,” he says, “draws attention not only to the way things are but also to the way things will be, when the earth is filled with the knowledge of God.”⁴⁰ Finally, “evangelism” is at the center of justice and mercy, which N. T. Wright defines as simply the “personal call of Jesus to every child, woman, and man.”⁴¹ The call of Jesus is the announcement of good news: that God’s kingdom has come, and is coming in fullness.

If a church is . . . actively involved in seeking justice in the world, both globally and locally, and if it’s cheerfully celebrating God’s good creation and its rescue from corruption in art and music, and if, in addition, its own internal life gives every sign that new creation is indeed happening, generating a new type of community—then suddenly the announcement makes a lot of sense.⁴²

³⁷ Ibid., 230.

³⁸ Ibid., 213.

³⁹ Ibid., 223.

⁴⁰ Ibid., 225.

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² Ibid., 228.

Particularly with respect to evangelism, N. T. Wright is quick to point out that this is not simply the social gospel reinvented. The movement prevalent in the early 1900s, championed by Walter Rauschenbusch and others, while accomplishing much good work, he says, “isn’t the full answer.”⁴³ In that same vein, this project does not seek to do a good work in providing a grocery store in a neighborhood while divorcing that from the preaching of the good news of the kingdom of God. Rather, this project proposes that the preaching of the Word and the administration of Sacrament within the Church to its members be given a tangible mission in which to engage. The challenge is how the proclamation of God’s kingdom will come in word and deed.⁴⁴

In this way, a church formed around the mission of God will take risks and be entrepreneurial. In thinking about the risks that an entrepreneurial church might take, revisiting Hirsch’s work, *The Forgotten Ways*, is helpful. Hirsch draws upon the work of anthropologist Victor Turner to help Christian communities resist an inward focus, engage risk, and reach out into the world.⁴⁵ Turner looked at rituals among African people groups and offered the term “liminality” to describe the transition from one stage of development to another. These rites of passage often involved tests, where individuals were taken from their ordinary place of being, were subjected to strange environments, and forced to survive for lengthy periods of time. “*Liminality* . . . applies to that situation

⁴³ Ibid., 83.

⁴⁴ Chapter 6 containing this project’s strategy will explore this further.

⁴⁵ Victor Turner, *The Forest of Symbols: Aspects of Ndembu Ritual* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1967).

where people find themselves in an in-between, marginal state in relation to the surrounding society, a place that could involve significant danger and disorientation, but not necessarily so.”⁴⁶ That experience of liminality then forms a bond among people that Turner calls “*communitas*,” which “happens in situations where individuals are driven to find each other through a common experience of ordeal, humbling, transition, and marginalization.”⁴⁷ These two ideas show that engaging risk and stepping into the unknown actually form a deeper sense of connectedness.

The North American Church certainly finds itself in a situation of liminality, of being in-between and marginal in relation to society. *Communitas* is possible as members of the Church are willing to experience something difficult in order to move into a place of more maturity. Hirsch writes the following about these two ideas:

[They] describe the dynamics of the Christian community inspired to overcome their instincts to “huddle and cuddle” and to instead form themselves around a common mission that calls them onto a dangerous journey to unknown places—a mission that calls the church to shake off its collective securities and to plunge into the world of action, where its members will experience disorientation and marginalization but also where they encounter God and one another in a new way. . . . *Communitas* . . . describes that unique experience of *togetherness* that only really happens among a group of people inspired by the vision of a better world who actually attempt to do something about it.⁴⁸

The risk a community undertakes to work toward that better world does not simply bless the world. It blesses the Christian community in fostering togetherness. However, the

⁴⁶ Hirsch, *The Forgotten Ways*, 220.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 221.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*

work that is begun by church members does not come from selfish motives but from an ardent belief that God has called them to work for a renewed creation.

This risk is reminiscent of what entrepreneurs in current society face. According to Harvard business professor Howard H. Stevenson, in an interview with William Maloney, entrepreneurship is the “pursuit of opportunity beyond resources you currently control.”⁴⁹ One point of clarification in the definition is needed. Thomas Eisenmann, also of the Harvard Business School, says that beyond resources currently controlled means that resources are constrained. Start-up businesses limit expenditures, and entrepreneurs invest copious amounts of time and sometimes personal funds until the venture is self-sustaining. As a result, entrepreneurial endeavors carry risk.

Eisenmann discusses three types of risk that are particularly relevant here. “Demand risk” involves whether the customers will actually purchase the product(s) or, as Eisenmann words it, “adopt the solution offered by the entrepreneur.”⁵⁰ “Execution risk” refers to the ability of the entrepreneur to draw resources and partners to execute the plan. Finally, “financial risk” deals with the availability of capital to further the project. Eisenmann outlines four tools that entrepreneurs use to minimize those risks. One tool is scaling the project so that the idea can be tested before implementation. A second tool is scaling investment, so that donors to the project are being asked only to help implement

⁴⁹ William Mahoney, “Entrepreneurship’s Wild Ride,” *Lessons from the Classroom*, May 30, 2000, Harvard Business School, <http://hbswk.hbs.edu/item/1541.html> (accessed August 6, 2013).

⁵⁰ Thomas Eisenmann, “Entrepreneurship: A Working Definition,” Harvard Business Review Blog Network, entry posted January 10, 2013, Harvard Business Review, <http://blogs.hbr.org/hbsfaculty/2013/01/what-is-entrepreneurship.html> (accessed June 3, 2013).

the next stage. The third tool is partnering with other organizations. Eisenmann says the final tool is storytelling. This last tool is directly applicable to the biblical story, for Eisenmann says that the task of the entrepreneur is “conjuring a vision of a better world that could be brought about by their venture.”⁵¹ The vision of the new heavens and new earth, as portrayed in the Book of Revelation and echoed by N. T. Wright, is very much in this sense “a vision of a better world.”

Like a business entrepreneur, an entrepreneurial church must be singularly focused on its mission to see an opportunity in its community to manifest the kingdom of God. Additionally, it must be realistic regarding its current and perhaps limited resources while simultaneously believing in the God who has formed all of creation. The entrepreneurial church must undertake risk and use the tools of wise stewardship and partnership with other believers to tell the story of a better future.

It is a more recent rediscovery that the Church could pursue opportunities to bless and restore the communities in which they live. The word “rediscovery” is carefully chosen, because it has been an aspect of the Church in its past. In *To Transform a City: Whole Church, Whole Gospel, Whole City*, authors Eric Swanson and Sam Williams show that local churches initiating projects to bless their cities has been a part of the Church’s history. In the 1800s, as New York City saw a tremendous influx of immigrants, the Church also saw a rise of social problems as housing was scarce. The Church emerged as a creative entrepreneurial restorer to those problems.

Immigration was also seen by church leaders as an invitation to ministry. This ministry often took the form of settlement houses where churches created,

⁵¹ Ibid.

financed, and staffed outreach programs to help the most marginalized inhabitants of the inner cities. These churches formed Bible classes, established kindergartens, and organized industrial schools, clubs, loan banks, job bureaus, dispensaries, reading rooms, and other programs that laid the groundwork for later reforms.⁵²

In that era, the Church observed the social problems around it as opportunities to engage in God's call to restore creation. The initiatives of Christians helped their communities address those issues, and they were not limited to one area of society. Education, medicine, and finance were all affected by the Church's mission.

Contemporary voices also are calling for the Church to embrace this model of entrepreneurial restorer, especially in issues of poverty. One such work is *When Helping Hurts: How to Alleviate Poverty Without Hurting the Poor and Yourself*. Authors Steve Corbett and Brian Fikkert are professors at Covenant College, located about twenty minutes away from Chattanooga. They also co-direct the Chalmers Center for Economic Development, "a research and training organization that equips churches with economic development strategies that holistically empower people who are poor."⁵³ They add theological insights to the role of the Church in addressing societal issues and argue that Israel was sent into captivity not only due to idolatry but because God's people failed to care for the poor and oppressed.⁵⁴ *When Helping Hurts* provides valuable insights into why a church-initiated business might be the most effective way of assisting a particular community. Typically, Fikkert argues, how poverty is defined determines how people

⁵² Eric Swanson and Sam Williams, *To Transform a City: Whole Church, Whole Gospel, Whole City* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2010), 38.

⁵³ The Chalmers Center, "Who We Are," <http://www.chalmers.org/about/who> (accessed June 5, 2013).

⁵⁴ Steve Corbett and Brian Fikkert, *When Helping Hurts: How to Alleviate Poverty Without Hurting the Poor and Yourself* (Chicago: Moody Publishers, 2009), 40.

address the issue. If they believe that the primary cause of poverty is a lack of knowledge, then educating the poor is the solution. If they believe poverty is caused by oppression by the powerful, then those same individuals will work for social justice. If poverty is caused by the sins of the poor, then evangelism and discipleship become the answer. Finally, if poverty is seen merely as the lack of material resources, then giving material resources becomes the response.⁵⁵

Corbett and Fikkert contend that a biblical framework is needed to redefine the Church's understanding of poverty. Human beings were created primarily to have a relationship with God and relate among themselves, because they were made in the image of God. Through this, people reflect that reality to the world around them. For this reason, humanity has a stewarding relationship with the rest of creation. Corbett and Fikkert write that "these foundational relationships are the building blocks for all of life. The way that humans create culture—including economic, social, political, and religious systems—reflect our basic commitments to God, self, others, and the rest of creation."⁵⁶ Understanding these relationships, and the fact that the Fall of Genesis 3 affected all of these and not just the poor, is instrumental in how the Body of Christ addresses impoverished situations.

While food pantries, clothes closets, financial assistance for rent and utility payments, and other similar efforts are needed, Corbett and Fikkert say these are not enough. Deeper relationship and more well-rounded ministries are crucial. They write:

⁵⁵ Ibid., 55.

⁵⁶ Ibid., 58.

The four key relationships highlight the fact that human beings are multifaceted, implying that poverty-alleviation efforts should be multifaceted as well. If we reduce human beings to being simply physical—as Western thought is prone to do—our poverty-alleviation efforts will tend to focus on material solutions. But if we remember that humans are spiritual, social, psychological and physical beings, our poverty-alleviation efforts will be more holistic in their design and execution.⁵⁷

Corbett and Fikkert share case studies of churches that lose their enthusiasm for “mercy ministries” where handouts of clothes, food, and toys are given on a regular basis. The enthusiasm wanes because the situation of those the church is trying to help does not seem to change. The underlying attitude from those “giving the gifts” is that the receivers of those gifts should be inspired to change from their example. Echoing the language of Lesslie Newbigin, *When Helping Hurts* insists that Christians need to embrace their own brokenness, and not approach neighborhoods from a place of superiority but the “lowliness” of the incarnation.⁵⁸

Perhaps the best resource that has witnessed the entrepreneurial opportunity of the Church is Russell’s *The Missional Entrepreneur*. Russell introduces the term “Business as Mission,” which he describes as an “emerging term and developing concept.”⁵⁹ His own travels to over seventy countries and experience in working for Hope International, a microfinance organization, led him to conduct a multi-year doctoral research project in Thailand in this area. Russell notes that missionaries in foreign contexts have established

⁵⁷ Ibid., 60.

⁵⁸ Ibid., 64.

⁵⁹ Russell, *The Missional Entrepreneur*, Location 247.

businesses as a means to support themselves, develop relations with locals, and provide a platform for spiritual conversations. Sometimes those businesses are mere shells for missionaries to obtain visas. Russell warns against this latter model, calling it “business as a cover for mission.”⁶⁰ Another model he calls “business as a platform for mission.”⁶¹ Russell has witnessed missionaries start businesses as a platform but get frustrated because it keeps them from “real ministry,” which they define as church planting and evangelism. In North American contexts, some church members engaged in business may see the only value of their business in God’s eyes as the vehicle for funding ministry, which he calls “business for mission.”⁶²

Instead, he defines “business as mission” and sees “business as a vehicle of the mission of God in the world.”⁶³ Russell claims that seeing business as mission helps prevent the Church’s tendency toward dualistic thinking about things “spiritual” and things “material.” Ministry is not reduced to evangelism and church planting, as under the “business as a platform for missions” model. The endeavor of business is approached with integrity as a blessing by God and for God’s kingdom, instead of a lesser means to a greater agenda.

Russell’s research has some valuable findings for entrepreneurs that begin with a “business as mission” approach. With those missionaries Russell interviewed, they

⁶⁰ Ibid., Location 293.

⁶¹ Ibid., Location 4148.

⁶² Ibid.

⁶³ Ibid., Location 297.

reported that their business gave them “legitimacy” in their city and neighborhood. “The legitimacy they gain through [business as mission] is appreciated at even the most basic levels, such as interaction with one’s neighbors. Many cite that this legitimacy also creates opportunities to influence societal elites who oversee large companies or government offices.”⁶⁴ Second, business as mission practitioners report greater “relationship development.”⁶⁵ For over forty hours per week, business owners have interaction with a core group of people who are their employees. In a business run well, that group is retained for a lengthy period of time, allowing owners to be in relationship with their employees through family celebrations and sorrows. Third, business as mission enables people within the Church to “use their gifts effectively.”⁶⁶ Russell mentions that thinking that “real ministry” only involves evangelism or preaching a sermon discounts those people who have a gift for administration and running a business. By teaching the value of business in the scope of God’s kingdom work, it honors those gifts.

The last finding is extremely important to highlight. Russell was able to identify unifying attributes of businesses that were effective in their particular contexts. A business as mission seeks to bless employees, suppliers, customers, and the broader neighborhood by providing its service and products with the greatest integrity. It is open

⁶⁴ Ibid., Location 2073.

⁶⁵ Ibid., Location 2101.

⁶⁶ Ibid., Location 2245.

about its identity and purpose. It partners with existing institutions that God has put in place. It studies its surrounding culture and adapts itself to it.⁶⁷

There is precedent and an emerging movement in seeing business as an outworking of God's mission in the world. An entrepreneurial ministry would launch a business that blessed all with whom it came into contact, especially honoring the heritage and culture of its surrounding neighborhood. It would call upon the local church as partners in the enterprise. Ultimately, its faithfulness to its mission not only would be in meeting a profit margin but in restoration of the neighborhood.

The Book of James calls believers in Jesus Christ to be aware of and address the needs of those around them. It calls the Church not only to speak comfort to those in need but to act. The fruit of faith, James argues, is shown by what one does.

What good is it, my brothers, if someone says he has faith but does not have works? Can that faith save him? If a brother or sister is poorly clothed and lacking in daily food, and one of you says to them, "Go in peace, be warmed and filled," without giving them the things needed for the body, what good is that? So also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead. But someone will say, "You have faith and I have works." Show me your faith apart from your works, and I will show you my faith by my works. (James 2:14-18, ESV)

The church as entrepreneurial restorer is based on the principles of Scripture. It is the agent of God's mission to the world in restoring all of creation. It gathers people under the Word of God to equip them for their ministry to their neighbors. The church as entrepreneurial restorer resists the temptation to stay in comfortable fellowship but instead looks outward into the surrounding community. It undertakes the risk of an entrepreneur in seeking to bless its neighborhood.

⁶⁷ Ibid.

CHAPTER 5

THEOLOGY OF INCARNATION AND RESTORATION

This chapter integrates two theological themes that are vital to this project: incarnation and restoration. It is important to show how the vision of the project is linked to God's purposes in Scripture, if local congregations in the Chattanooga area are to partner in a restorative effort. This chapter will be formed by biblical theology, as opposed to other streams of thought, such as systematic or dogmatic theology. *The Encyclopedia of Christianity* defines "biblical theology" in this way:

Biblical theology, which is descriptive and historical, seeks to state the theology implied by the biblical books themselves, while dogmatics is normative and seeks to define what is to be believed. . . . In contrast to theologies of OT or NT, or of particular strata such as the Prophets, apocalyptic or Paul, biblical theology is understood as showing the unity of the Bible and the necessary interdependence of its various component parts.¹

In biblical theology, the Scriptures are seen as one overarching narrative. Moreover, as the above definition states, the books depend and build on one another. There are themes that emerge repeatedly. The themes of incarnation and restoration weave their way

¹ *The Encyclopedia of Christianity*, 2005 ed., s.vv. "biblical theology."

through the overall narrative of Scripture. The Old Testament gives glimpses of the coming of the Messiah (cf. Psalm 2); it also instructs the people of God to forgive debts, care for the poor, and set slaves free (cf. Deuteronomy 15:1-18). The New Testament fulfills the promise of God in the incarnation of Jesus and points to Him as the one through whom all things will be reconciled (Colossians 1:20). The incarnation and the restoration of all things provide both the means and the end of God's mission in the world. The Church is informed by these two foundations in carrying out that mission.

Incarnation

The incarnation is found in a variety of genres within Scripture. In short, incarnation is “the belief that God has disclosed the divine self in human reality in the person and work of Jesus of Nazareth (Lat. *incarnatio*, lit., “take on flesh”).”² The Gospels, Paul's letters, and the Book of Acts all yield insights as to how the incarnation relates to the life and mission of the Church. Moreover, both classical and more contemporary authors see the incarnation as fundamental to the Church's identity.

John 1:1-14 is one of the clearest statements of the incarnation. The teaching from John 1 about the incarnate Jesus reveals at least three things that are particularly relevant here to the project. First, these verses from John 1 view Jesus as Creator. “All things were made through him; and without him was not anything made that was made” (John 1:3, ESV). Jesus is the person through whom God's creative work was and is accomplished. A study of His life and ministry reveals the creativity of God. Second, the Word-made-

² *Eerdmans Dictionary of the Bible*, 2000 ed., s.v. “incarnation.”

flesh is given authority. Through receiving and believing in His name, Jesus gives people the right to become children of God. (John 1:12, ESV). As children, they reflect the image of God to the world and carry the authority bestowed upon an heir. Finally, the incarnation shows the desire of God to dwell with His people. John 1:14 states: “And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us” (ESV). This desire for God to be with His people was evidenced in the Old Testament in the Tent of Meeting (Exodus 33:7) and is foretold in Revelation 21:3. Ultimately, these three teachings from John 1 reveal the desire of God to be with His people and to confer upon His people His creativity and authority as bearers of His image.

While John 1 reveals the creativity, the authority, and the desire for relationship of God towards the world, it also illuminates the mission of the Church. The order in which those three aspects appear in John 1 is not necessarily important. What is crucial is that the Church must show a desire for relationship and then creativity before it has any authority in a community. First, for a church to show a desire for relationship in its community, it must embody the love of Jesus in the manner in which God did. The incarnation reveals the movement of God toward the world (John 1:14). God does not deliver a message from a distance. Perkins explains:

How did Jesus love? “The Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth” (John 1:14). Jesus relocated. He became one of us. He didn’t commute back and forth to heaven. Similarly, the most effective messenger of the gospel to the poor will also live among the poor.³

³ Perkins, *Restoring At-Risk Communities*, 21.

The incarnation gave Perkins the foundation for his work as a community developer. He moved back to the area of his upbringing and, in living among his neighbors, was able to identify with and discover the needs there.

A second aspect of the incarnation in John 1 involves creativity. The Word was present at creation, and all things were made through him (John 1:3). Genesis 1 illustrates that all of creation emerged from nothing. Similarly, the Church can look at its neighborhood to locate where there is nothing and create something vital. In creating things needed for the community from nothing, the Church reflects the creativity of God (Genesis 1:1-27; Isaiah 45:18).

Finally, the first chapter of John says that all who receive and believe in the name of Jesus will be called children of God. This speaks to the authority given to Jesus by the Father (cf. Matthew 28:18; John 5:27) and the desire to create a family through Jesus that carries out His mission (Acts 1:8). The Church can demonstrate its desire for relationship through love and its ability to create in a neighborhood. The proclamation of the name of Jesus and His coming kingdom has a context rooted in love, as shown by the incarnation.

A Scripture revealing how God partners incarnation with restoration is found in Colossians 1:15-20. The apostle Paul is writing to the church at Colossae, and some scholars think he was attempting to refute some arguments that sought to draw Colossian believers away from identifying Christ as creator and sustainer of all things.⁴ This is found in Colossians 2:8, where Paul warns: “See to it that no one takes you captive by

⁴ *The HarperCollins Bible Dictionary*, 3rd ed., s.vv. “Colossians, Letter of Paul to.”

philosophy and empty deceit, according to human tradition, according to the elemental spirits of the world, and not according to Christ” (Colossians 2:8, ESV). Likewise, Paul opens his letter with a clear statement about the identity of Jesus Christ:

He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation. For by him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things were created through him and for him. And he is before all things, and in him all things hold together. And he is the head of the body, the church. He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in everything he might be preeminent. For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, making peace by the blood of his cross. (Colossians 1:15-20, ESV)

Here the language echoes that of John 1:3, where Paul says that all things were created through Jesus. Paul adds the statement that Jesus is “the head” of the Church, presenting the doctrine of the incarnation linked to the relationship with the Church. The word κεφαλή literally means the physical head but also “in the case of living beings, to denote superior rank.”⁵ Essentially, Jesus has authority over His Church.

This, as Peter T. O’Brien writes below, is an organic relationship:

Paul had repeatedly spoken of the church as the body of Christ. His headship over the church could easily be conceived as an organic relationship in which he exercised the control over his people that the head of a body exercises over its various parts. The living relationship between the members is thereby kept in view (so 1 Corinthians and Romans), while the dependence of the members on Christ for life and power as well as his supremacy is reiterated against a heresy that called such matters into question.⁶

⁵ *A Greek-English lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, 3rd ed., s.v. “κεφαλή.”

⁶ Peter T. O’Brien, *Colossians, Philemon*, vol. 44 of *Word Biblical Commentary* (Dallas: Word, Inc., 1998), 49-50.

O'Brien points out that the Body of Christ is the dominant image that Paul uses to describe the Church (cf. Romans 12:4-5; 1 Corinthians 12:27; Ephesians 1:23; 4:12; Colossians 1:18). As such, Jesus directs the function and mission of the Church. If the purpose of the incarnation of Jesus according to Colossians 1 is to "reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven" (Colossians 1:20, ESV), then the Church engages in that same mission.

There is an historical account in Paul's life recorded in the Book of Acts that shows his passion for proclaiming Jesus as the author of creation and His supremacy over other gods. Acts 17:15-16 shows Paul waiting for his companions, Silas and Timothy, as they seek to join him in Athens. He reasons both with Jews in the synagogue and Gentiles in the marketplace (Acts 17:17). Epicurean and Stoic philosophers talk with him (Acts 17:18). When they become confused about what Paul is teaching, he is invited to the Areopagus to speak further (Acts 17:19). The Areopagus could either refer to the place where Paul stood, the physical hill directly above the marketplace, or the Council of Athens that held trials for those expounding religious or philosophical ideas.⁷

Acts 17:22-31 records the event like this:

So Paul, standing in the midst of the Areopagus, said: "Men of Athens, I perceive that in every way you are very religious. For as I passed along and observed the objects of your worship, I found also an altar with this inscription, 'To the unknown god.' What therefore you worship as unknown, this I proclaim to you. The God who made the world and everything in it, being Lord of heaven and earth, does not live in temples made by man, nor is he served by human hands, as though he needed anything, since he himself gives to all mankind life and breath and everything. And he made from one man every nation of mankind to live on all the face of the earth, having determined allotted periods and the boundaries of

⁷ *The Eerdmans Bible Dictionary*, 1975 ed., s.v. "Areopagus."

their dwelling place, that they should seek God, and perhaps feel their way toward him and find him. Yet he is actually not far from each one of us, for ‘In him we live and move and have our being’; as even some of your own poets have said, ‘For we are indeed his offspring.’ Being then God’s offspring, we ought not to think that the divine being is like gold or silver or stone, an image formed by the art and imagination of man. The times of ignorance God overlooked, but now he commands all people everywhere to repent, because he has fixed a day on which he will judge the world in righteousness by a man whom he has appointed; and of this he has given assurance to all by raising him from the dead.” (Acts 17:22-31, ESV)

There are several profound things about this event. First, Paul was able to be physically present in the city of Athens. In his letters to churches, he realizes the importance of physical presence in discussing his teaching (cf. 1 Corinthians 5:3, Colossians 2:5). His physical presence enabled him to observe the city, discuss the story of Jesus with both Jews and Gentiles in different contexts, and learn of the Athenian culture. Moreover, Paul’s speech shows his knowledge of Athenian poetry. It is the observation of and engagement with Athenian culture that formed a large part of the rhetorical argument. Acts 17:34 showed the fruit of his effort, that some joined him and believed.

What is interesting is that Paul does use the image of temple to describe the Church. He hints in his speech to the Athenians that God does not live in temples. Nevertheless, as a Jew, Paul did know the history of God dwelling in the Temple in Jerusalem (cf. 1 Kings 8:10-13). The implication is that Paul believes that dwelling place to have changed. The metaphor of temple appears in Ephesians 2:19-22:

So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone, in whom the whole structure, being joined together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord. In him you also are being built together into a dwelling place for God by the Spirit. (Ephesians 2:19-22, ESV)

Looking upon the city of Athens and seeing altars, temples, and idols, Paul wanted to communicate the fact of God's dwelling within His people. This concept is important to Paul. "The metaphor is based upon the concept of the Jerusalem Temple as God's dwelling. The Church is to become the larger Incarnation of Christ, a body corresponding to the body he had on earth."⁸ This is a clear statement that the incarnation illuminates the model on which the Church is based.

Newbigin offers an added dimension to thinking about incarnation and its relation to the Church. In *The Gospel in a Pluralist Society*, he writes of the "lowliness of the incarnation."⁹ Newbigin is discussing in this section the tension that the disciples experienced, and that the Church now is experiencing, in seeing a kingdom being ushered in but not fully formed. He argues that God wisely revealed the resurrection to a few, so that the message of the kingdom remained hidden. It is this hiddenness, and the lowliness of the incarnation, that makes possible the spread of the message to all nations and informs the authority with which the Church should carry out its mission. Newbigin writes:

This hiddenness is what makes possible the conversion of the nations. The unveiling of the glory of God's kingdom in all its terrible majesty could leave no further room for the free acceptance in faith which Jesus called for. Only when that glory was veiled in the lowliness of the incarnation could it call out freely given repentance and faith. When the Church tries to embody the rule of God in the forms of earthly power it may achieve that power, but it is no longer a sign of the kingdom.¹⁰

⁸ Glenn H. Graham, *An Exegetical Summary of Ephesians*, 2nd ed. (Dallas: SIL International, 2008), 188.

⁹ Lesslie Newbigin, *The Gospel in a Pluralist Society* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1989), 108.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*

This is an important warning for the Church. It is in servanthood, lowliness, and refusing to adopt the ways of earthly power that the Church witnesses to the reign of God.

Additionally, it provides encouragement to be patient in the outworking of the kingdom of God in this world. In Jesus' parables of the mustard seed and yeast (Matthew 13:31-33), Jesus says that the kingdom of God is like that smallest of seeds as well as yeast in a large amount of dough. In the parable of the mustard seed, that smallest of seeds yields a plant in which the birds of the air can perch. The yeast works itself through the whole batch of dough. As an outpost of the kingdom of God, the Church can trust that it will witness God fulfilling His promise of His coming kingdom.

Contemporary authors have taken these Scriptures and Newbigin's work to inform their writing about the purpose of the Church. Some of the works mentioned in the literature review in Chapter 3 give special treatment to the idea of incarnational mission or incarnational ministry. Van Engen says that the incarnation informs the Church's mission. He writes: "The biblical theology of the Word-made-flesh, Jesus Christ, contains the concept of 'sentness.' The incarnation was a sending forth. John 1 teaches us that Jesus Christ as the Word was sent into the world as light in darkness."¹¹ Van Engen points out that the fact of the incarnation was not simply an historical event. Instead, this act of God reveals something about His character and provides a model for the Body of Christ as His people.

¹¹ Van Engen, *God's Missionary People*, 78.

Hirsch also emphasizes the idea of incarnation, dedicating an entire chapter to what he calls the “missional-incarnational impulse.”¹² There are four dimensions of the incarnation of God that form this impulse for the Church: “presence,” “proximity,” “powerlessness,” and “proclamation.”¹³ The incarnation shows that God is fully present with humanity and has chosen to be close in living physical life with His children. Furthermore, it also demonstrates God’s willingness to take the form of a servant (cf. Philippians 2) and in that form proclaim the kingdom of God.¹⁴ This is an important idea for Hirsch. Elsewhere, in *The Shaping of Things to Come*, Frost and Hirsch identify “incarnational” as one of the essential marks of the missional church. “The missional church . . . will be incarnational. It will leave its own religious zones and live comfortable with non-church-goers, seeping into the host culture like salt and light. It will be an infiltrating, transformational community.”¹⁵ It is apparent that both Frost and Hirsch believe that the Church has settled into its own comfortable environments and needs to be called out again into life with those around it. No population should remain untouched by the transforming power of the gospel.

Mission-Shaped Church also uses the language of incarnation to describe its recommendations for the Church in England. It adds the words “embody” and

¹² Hirsch, *The Forgotten Ways*, 127.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 132-134.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 132.

¹⁵ Frost and Hirsch, *The Shaping of Things to Come*, 30.

“inculturate” to further define the presence of their churches in their contexts.¹⁶ These are important words to include, because they mimic the work of Paul in Athens in Acts 17. Enculturation is an approach that Paul uses in his writing “to make the new creation in Christ present as a liberating and transforming agency within the old creation order (enculturation).”¹⁷ This is exactly what Paul does in Athens as well. *Mission-Shaped*

Church asserts the following:

Any principle based on Christ’s incarnation is inherently counter-cultural, in that it aims at faithful Christian discipleship within the new context, rather than cultural conformity. The gospel has to be heard within the culture of the day, but it always has to be heard as a call to appropriate repentance. It is the incarnation of the gospel, within a dominantly consumer society, that provides the Church of England with its major missionary challenge.¹⁸

Paul used in Athens the language and poetry of Athenian culture to proclaim the gospel message. Similarly, instead of inviting the neighborhood to adopt the Church’s cultural norms, the incarnational church seeks to embody itself into the surrounding cultural context. Together with this, the teachings of Jesus and the proclamation of the kingdom message of “repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come near” (Matthew 3:2) remain vital.

The Church as the embodiment of Jesus finds its way into other writings as well. Moreover, the Church is called to reflect the person of Jesus in his entirety. Corbett and Fikkert write:

¹⁶ Archbishop’s Council on Mission and Public Affairs, *Mission-Shaped Church*, Location 179.

¹⁷ A. F. Johnson, *1 Corinthians. The IVP New Testament Commentary Series*, vol. 7 (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2004), 182.

¹⁸ Archbishop’s Council on Mission and Public Affairs, *Mission-Shaped Church*, Location 191-194.

In the New Testament, God’s people, the church, are more than just a sneak preview of King Jesus. The church is the body, bride, and very fullness of Jesus Christ (Eph. 1:18-23; 4:7-13; 5:32). When people look at the church, they should see the very embodiment of Jesus! When people look at the church, they should see the One who declared—in word and deed to the leper, the lame, and the poor—that His kingdom is bringing healing to every speck of the universe.¹⁹

The Church is the incarnation of Jesus, whose mission is to restore all of creation. The ministry of the Church reflects the ministry of Jesus.

It is important to distinguish between the uniqueness of the incarnation of the Son of God and incarnational principles applicable to the ministry of the Church. J. Todd Billings in *Union with Christ: Reframing Theology and Ministry for the Church* stresses that it is only the incarnation of Jesus that is redemptive for humanity.²⁰ Billings concedes that looking at the incarnation and its ramifications for the Church are helpful. Incarnational ministry often encourages a movement away from program-driven ministry to relationships that lead to discipleship.²¹ Billings also recognizes Perkins’ insistence that incarnation means relocation into a neighborhood and learning the community’s culture.²² However, Billings maintains that practitioners of incarnational ministry must guard themselves against thinking that their mere presence in a community would enable people to see the living Christ. Instead, he emphasizes that believers are united to Christ as a worshipping community of faith which together imitates Jesus’ ministry on earth:

¹⁹ Ibid., 41.

²⁰ J. Todd Billings, *Union with Christ: Reframing Theology and Ministry for the Church* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2011), Kindle Electronic Edition: Location 2332.

²¹ Ibid., Location 2308.

²² Ibid., Location 2313.

The incarnation should set our focus directly upon Jesus Christ, the servant, to whom Christians have been united. Moreover, the ministry outcomes sought by “incarnational ministry” can be realized and refined through seeing that the imperative to have “the same mind” as “Christ Jesus” (Phil. 2:5) fits within Paul’s matrix of union with Christ. As ones united to Christ, we participate in the Spirit’s ongoing work of bearing witness to Christ and creating a new humanity in which the dividing walls between cultures are overcome in Christ.²³

Billings does provide an important corrective to those that may assume that being incarnational simply means being present in a community or culture and that their presence is somehow redemptive. Moreover, by emphasizing that it is a community of faith that is united to Christ, Billings challenges any “individualistic attempts to ‘make Christ incarnate’ in the world.”²⁴ Individual believers are freed from believing they must “be Jesus” in their living amongst their neighbors. Billings prefers the term “participation in Christ” or “union with Christ,” to guard against such thinking: “Our participation in Jesus Christ entails nothing less than entering into an ethic of humble service that reflects the obedient servanthood of Christ.”²⁵ It is our service to others, in a posture of lowliness that will point to the true servant, Jesus Christ.

A classic work on the doctrine of the incarnation that echoes Billings’ insistence on the uniqueness of the redemptive work of Jesus Christ comes from Athanasius of Alexandria in *On the Incarnation of the Word*. He begins his discussion of the importance of incarnation with the creation. Echoing the thoughts expressed in John 1

²³ Ibid., Locations 2305-2308.

²⁴ Ibid., Location 2335.

²⁵ Ibid., Location 2766-2767.

and Colossians 1:15, the incarnate Word was present at creation. Moreover, the passage below shows the purpose is the renewal of creation through Jesus, who was the creator:

It is, then, proper for us to begin the treatment of this subject by speaking of the creation of the universe, and of God its Artificer, that so it may be duly perceived that the renewal of creation has been the work of the self-same Word that made it at the beginning. For it will appear not inconsonant for the Father to have wrought its salvation in Him by Whose means He made it.²⁶

Athanasius goes on to argue that the solution for the decay of the human condition was the incarnation, ministry, suffering, redemptive death, and resurrection of the Word of God, Jesus Christ. In the translator's introduction to *On the Incarnation of the Word*, A. T. Robertson goes further to highlight the work of restoration in incarnation: "But the idea of *Restoration* is most prominent in his [Athanasius'] determination of the necessity of the Incarnation. God could have wiped out our guilt, had He so pleased, by a word: but human nature required to be healed, restored, recreated."²⁷ Therefore, the Church as the Body of Christ is called to "incarnate" itself into places of decay. As illustrated by these examples, this was God's way throughout biblical history.

Restoration

While the incarnation of Jesus was to bring about restoration between humanity and God, Jesus' teaching on the kingdom of God pointed towards the restoration of all things. The incarnation of the Church proclaims the good news of a restored relationship

²⁶ Athanasius of Alexandria. *On the Incarnation of the Word*, in *A Select Library of the Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church, Second Series*, vol. 4 of *St. Athanasius: Select Works and Letters*, eds. P. Schaff and H. Wace and trans. A. T. Robertson (New York: Christian Literature Company, 1892), 36.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 33–34.

between humanity and God and seeks to join God in His mission of restoring all of creation. This section presents three examples in Scripture of this restorative theme as discovered by Nehemiah, the prophet Isaiah, and the Book of Revelation in order to show the scope of God's mission.

The Book of Nehemiah shows how the restoration of a city can lead to the restoration of relationship between God and His people and help God's people discover their obligation to minister to the poor. Nehemiah is an Israelite exile who mobilizes the people of God to restore the walls of Jerusalem in approximately 444 BC. It begins with Nehemiah, the cupbearer to Babylonian King Artaxerxes, hearing a report from a group from Jerusalem about the state of the city. He weeps over what he hears: the walls are in ruins, and the people are living in shame (Nehemiah 1:3-4).

The rest of the book chronicles Nehemiah's plan to rebuild the walls surrounding Jerusalem. He takes an enormous risk in asking King Artaxerxes to lend support and finance the project (Nehemiah 1:7-8). In order to effect restoration in his community, Nehemiah overcomes conflict with the people of God and from outside the community (Nehemiah 4:1-10). Along the way, Nehemiah is made aware of issues of hunger and slavery within God's people (Nehemiah 5:1-5). Nehemiah gathers the nobles and officials and confronts them (Nehemiah 5:7-8). He calls them to return the lands to those they have enslaved and stop charging them interest on debts (Nehemiah 5:10-11). The assembly responds, "We will restore these and require nothing from them. We will do as you say" (Nehemiah 5:12, ESV). Ultimately, Nehemiah's reforms include restoration of temple

worship and the practice of Sabbath (Nehemiah 10:28-39). What started as a construction project spilled over into the reformation of worship and the addressing of poverty.

What is significant about the Book of Nehemiah is that it is the restoration of something physical that leads to a flourishing of God's people. The broken physical walls were an outward manifestation of more brokenness. Behind the broken wall was a people enslaving one another and forgetting the God who had called them together as a people. Nehemiah's leadership in addressing the broken walls led to the other reforms. Ultimately, the Nehemiah narrative is but one example of many where something broken is restored, and the result is a new chapter in God's story for His people.

The theme of restoration is also found in prophetic literature, notably in the Book of Isaiah. Biblical scholars divide Isaiah into three parts, with the latter chapters 56 through 66 being titled "Isaiah of the Restoration."²⁸ These are messages from the prophet to Jewish exiles returning to Jerusalem. Jerusalem holds a primary place in God's plan for the world. While much of Isaiah concerns the judgment of Jerusalem based on the sins of God's people, the restoration of the city and the relationship of His people are foretold.²⁹

Isaiah 58 in particular has relevance for this project. It carries themes found elsewhere in the Book of Isaiah. It denounces the people of God for their sins (Isaiah 58:1). Specifically, it convicts the house of Jacob for their fasts while they practice

²⁸ *The HarperCollins Bible Dictionary*, 3rd ed., s.vv. "'Isaiah, book of.'"

²⁹ *Ibid.*

oppression of workers (Isaiah 58:3), ignore the hungry and homeless, do not clothe their neighbors, and even refuse to help their own families (Isaiah 58:7). However, when the people begin to free workers, feed the hungry, provide for the homeless, then the promises are many (Isaiah 58:8-12). God promises that upon His people His light will shine, healing will come, and the Lord will protect as a rear guard protects an army (Isaiah 58:8). Isaiah paints a portrait of a flourishing garden that is well watered and a spring that is constantly flowing (Isaiah 58:11). It is the final promise in this section that is most relevant (Isaiah 58:12): “And your ancient ruins shall be rebuilt; you shall raise up the foundations of many generations; you shall be called the repairer of the breach, the restorer of streets to dwell in” (Isaiah 58:12, ESV). The restoration of the city and specifically the streets for people to inhabit are the result of Israel doing acts of righteousness for the poor. A series of “if-then” statements links the practice of charity and works of righteousness to the restoration of God’s relationship with His people and the restoration of the city.

The emphasis on the city is not isolated to one section in Isaiah. Isaiah 65 as well points toward the fulfillment of God’s promise of the rebuilding of all creation with the city of Jerusalem being its focal point: “For behold, I create new heavens and a new earth” (Isaiah 65:17, ESV). God then proclaims through Isaiah, “I create Jerusalem to be a joy, and her people to be a gladness” (Isaiah 65:18, ESV). Mark Gornik uses the text of Isaiah 65 to speak of how God’s *shalom*, or peace, is centered on urban restoration:

In Isaiah 65:17-25, the city stands for the peaceable world of God. Isaiah’s hope-filled image, a response to very real suffering and injustice (2:1- 5), paints an urban picture that includes the health and safety of children, the honoring of every year for older adults, the exercise of work that brings a just return, and the

physical world in right relationship to the needs of human beings. Isaiah's message, in short, is that God will redeem the world; the new creation is characterized as the holy city of God.³⁰

Gornik sees biblical warrant for emphasizing the mission of the Church to be focused on the city, as it is portrayed as the place for God's presence in the new heavens and new earth.

The image of the restored city of Jerusalem, abundant and flowing, comes to its fulfillment in the Revelation 21 and 22. There is a new heaven and new earth (Revelation 21:1). John sees the new Jerusalem, the holy city, coming down from heaven, like a bride adorned for her husband (Revelation 21:2). At the heart of the vision is a restored and redeemed city. God is in the midst of the city, and God will dwell with His creation (Revelation 21:3). Death, crying, and pain are all taken away; all things are made new (Revelation 21:4-5). As N. T. Wright has argued in *Surprised by Hope*, this picture informs the mission of the Church in what it does today.³¹ Restored cities now are a glimpse of what is to come.

John then is taken by an angel to view this city, which is called "the Bride, the wife of the Lamb" (Revelation 21:9). The implication is that Jesus has been preparing this place for His followers to live. A beautiful city is the culmination of the Bible. Rather than an immaterial heaven, John glimpses a tangible city. This affirms that the physical creation of God is good and has eternal significance. What follows is a description of the physical dimensions and attributes of the new Jerusalem. The materials used and the

³⁰ Mark Gornik, *To Live in Peace: Biblical Faith and the Changing Inner City* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2002), Kindle Electronic Edition: Location 1329-1332.

³¹ N. T. Wright, *Surprised by Hope*, 264-265.

numbers employed point to perfection and are given symbolic meanings. Readers and hearers of this vision can see that both the twelve tribes of Israel and the twelve apostles of Jesus are recognized in the foundations and walls of the city. Images that make their appearances throughout the pages of Scripture are brought together in one vision. Water of life, the tree of life, trees bearing abundant fruit, the light of God, the face of God—they all are found in the city. Whereas cities throughout Scripture earlier fought against famine, crumbling walls and temples, and dryness, here all is restored. The image of this glorious city casts a vision for God's people. It is the place that believers can look forward to living in as well as the place for which they are working.

PART THREE
MINISTRY STRATEGY

CHAPTER 6

PLAN AND STRATEGY

Part Three of this project will integrate the context explained in Part One with the insights drawn from the literature review, biblical examination, and theological foundations from Part Two in order to develop a strategy for implementation. The beginning of this chapter will briefly review the theological concepts of incarnation and restoration. In addition, an analysis of the concept of Church as Entrepreneur is offered. Together, these will paint a picture of a preferred future for The House and its partner churches. The rest of the chapter will outline goals and strategy for the creation of the grocery store as an act of restoration in the MLK/UTC community. Chapter 7 will follow up this discussion by detailing the implementation process and assessing expected outcomes.

Church as Incarnational Agent of Restoration

Chapter 5 examined the theological foundations of incarnation and restoration in forming a picture of the Church. The doctrine of the incarnation reveals God's heart for the world. He came and lived among humanity in the person of Jesus Christ (John 1:14)

and will dwell here again in the restored holy city of Jerusalem (Revelation 21:3). As several Scriptures and writers point out, it also informs the mission of the Church. The Church must be present in the world. The examination of John 1 argued that local churches must show their presence by desiring relationship with their neighbors and creatively addressing the needs of those neighbors; only then are they able to proclaim with authority the message of the kingdom. In addition, all of this must be done, according to Newbigin, in a posture of servanthood and “lowliness.”¹ One final summary of this thought comes from Hirsch and Darryn Altclass in *The Forgotten Ways*

Handbook: A Practical Guide for Developing Missional Churches:

John 1:1-18 describes the incarnation of Jesus, when he took human form and moved into the neighborhood in an act of humble love the world had never known. The central thrust of the incarnation was that by becoming one of us, God was able to achieve redemption for the human race and radical identification with all that it means to be human. If God’s way of reaching his world was to incarnate himself in Jesus Christ, then our way of reaching the world should likewise be incarnational.²

The incarnational aspect is a particular challenge to the churches located in the MLK/UTC neighborhood. First Christian Church in particular has most of its membership living a fifteen-minute drive away from the neighborhood.³ Despite the physical location of the church building, the members do not live among the people of that community. The desire for relationship is being communicated through a number of

¹ Newbigin, *The Gospel in a Pluralist Society*, 108.

² Alan Hirsch and Darryn Altclass, *The Forgotten Ways Handbook: A Practical Guide for Developing Missional Churches* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2009), Kindle Electronic Edition: Location 1307-1311.

³ Rev. Rebelo, interview.

programs that involve the children of the community. While these are not ineffective efforts, incarnation calls for a deeper investment in the neighborhood. University students who are involved in The House are the ones who actually live in the community. Unfortunately, as mentioned earlier, students have not engaged their community and are more focused on their studies and securing future employment. If, however, those students were given opportunities to serve and work in the neighborhood, their interactions with the neighborhood would increase.

Eugene Peterson's paraphrase of John 1 provides an interesting perspective on the incarnation. He translates John 1:14 as follows: "The Word became flesh and blood, and moved into the neighborhood" (John 1:14, *The Message*).⁴ Such a move into the neighborhood can be an actual relocation, as Perkins suggests.⁵ University students are already in the neighborhood. A call could be made to FCC members, as well as partner church members and House alumni, to consider relocating to the neighborhood. A new worshipping community could form and make this neighborhood its home, with its members sharing daily life with the MLK/UTC community.

However, relocation is not the only option. The desire for relationship could be shown through a moving toward the neighborhood. Here, existing churches can begin to refocus their efforts into the community around them. Already, in the MLK/UTC area, this is beginning to happen. At a meeting with the elders of the historic First Presbyterian

⁴ Eugene Peterson, *The Message* (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 2002).

⁵ Perkins, *Restoring At-Risk Communities*, 21.

Church, located one block from MLK Boulevard, there was much discussion about redoubling efforts to reach both the university, one block to its north, and the MLK community, one block to its south.⁶ This is an important change under the church's new pastor, the Reverend Timothy Tinsley, who is entering his fourth year of leadership. At that meeting, one elder expressed that the church could no longer “rest on its former glory”⁷ that attracted the city's elite through its doors. Rather, the growth of the university around it and the impending changes to the neighborhood demanded that the church examine its mission.

The second theological foundation is that of restoration. As was outlined in a variety of Scriptures, God seeks to restore all of His creation. The people of God, according to Isaiah 58, will be called “the restorer of streets” (Isaiah 58:12, ESV). The goal of the incarnation was to bring restoration: first, between humanity and God; and second, between humanity and all of creation. The mission of God is one of restoration. These two concepts form cornerstones to paint a picture of a rebuilt church. The incarnation and restoration must remain together. It is not enough for a church to be an agent of restoration from afar. This is sometimes done through the generous gift of finances. However, without the element of relationship there is a hindrance to the overall message of proclamation of the kingdom of God. Similarly, it is not enough for a church to just be incarnational, or present, without working towards a goal of transformation.

⁶ First Presbyterian Church Elders and Deacons, *Meeting Minutes* (Chattanooga, TN: First Presbyterian Church, Chattanooga, April 22, 2013).

⁷ Ibid.

The preferred future of the Church in the MLK/UTC neighborhood is that it would be an incarnational agent of restoration. This means the Church would be visible in the community as acting for the benefit of its neighbors. This definition is important, not only because it links the two concepts of incarnation and restoration. Specifically, it recognizes that it is only one agent among many. There are already several people working for the betterment of the MLK/UTC area, including city planners, university administrators, entrepreneurs, developers, and residents who have grown up in the streets surrounding MLK Boulevard. This project seeks to integrate the Church into this group of active agents. It seeks to mobilize the people of God's unique blend of talents and experiences, combined with God's mission, to meet a need that perhaps the other activists listed above cannot. The definition is also important because the purpose of the Church is to act for the benefit of its neighbors, calling to mind the warning of Newbigin that the Church should be incarnational in servanthood.⁸ It acts not from a place of superiority or privilege but rather as a neighbor among neighbors.

Church as Entrepreneur

To enable the community and the city to see the Church as an incarnational agent of restoration, the Body of Christ must be an entrepreneur. In Chapter 4, the definition verbalized by Stevenson in an interview with the Harvard Business School was offered:

⁸ Newbigin, *The Gospel in a Pluralist Society*, 108.

“Entrepreneurship is the pursuit of opportunity beyond resources you control.”⁹ In that chapter, further explanation was given for what “beyond resources controlled” meant in the missional context. In short, it meant the willingness to take on various types of risk.¹⁰

Further exposition of this definition is informative here and helps to set a foundation for the strategy. Eisenmann works from the definition to explain that the pursuit of opportunity implies a “singular, relentless focus. . . . entrepreneurs have a sense of urgency seldom seen in established companies.”¹¹ The Church as Entrepreneur has a singular focus on the mission of restoration, carrying out that mission with urgency by working diligently toward meeting a neighborhood’s need.

The Church has been seen by communities as pursuing opportunities in the past, but the impression is that the pursuit involves only proselytizing. In other words, the people of the community are the “opportunity,” and that opportunity is only the saving of souls or filling the pews. This is reflected in findings from Kinnaman and Lyons in *UnChristian*,¹² who report that outsiders see this as the “con of conversion.”¹³ One respondent said, “Christians are too concerned with converting people. They are insincere. All I ever hear is ‘Get saved!’ I tried that whole ‘Jesus thing’ already. It didn’t

⁹ Mahoney, “Entrepreneurship’s Wild Ride.” See also Eisenmann, “Entrepreneurship.”

¹⁰ See Chapter 4 for further details.

¹¹ Eisenmann, “Entrepreneurship.”

¹² See Chapter 3 of this discussion for further details.

¹³ Kinnaman and Lyons, *UnChristian*, 70.

work for me before, and I am not interested now.”¹⁴ To avoid such stereotypes, the Church must be careful not to cultivate this perception any further in entrepreneurial endeavors.

Opening a needed business in a neighborhood mitigates the perception of only being interested in proselytizing. Russell’s work in the *Missional Entrepreneur* is helpful. Russell claimed that “business is a vehicle of the mission of God in the world.”¹⁵ In his research, businesses that sought to bless their neighborhood and partner with existing institutions gained legitimacy among their neighbors, greater relationship development with them, and enabled people within the Church to use their gifts effectively.¹⁶ If the Church were to undertake this entrepreneurial project, a profound message would be sent to the neighborhood and the city. That message would be that God and His people care about the neighborhood in concrete ways and are not simply interested in conversion.

A church-initiated, neighborhood-involving business is a more holistic approach to meeting something that is absent in a community. Not only does a concrete need become tangibly met; jobs also are created and the possibility for attracting further development is increased. Perkins states: “A community will not remain healthy if it is not economically viable.”¹⁷ A grocery store can be common ground for people of

¹⁴ Ibid., 67.

¹⁵ Russell, *The Missional Entrepreneur*, Location 297.

¹⁶ See Chapter 4 for discussion on Russell’s findings.

¹⁷ Perkins, *Restoring At-Risk Communities*, 80.

different races and socioeconomic classes, because access to food is a universal need. Moreover, a grocery store is a place where frequent interaction can occur; and relationships can develop among customers, employees, and managers.

Hirsch's own project with the Elevation Café in downtown Melbourne, Australia,¹⁸ showed some interesting data about the sheer numbers of people that frequented their business and how many of those could have developed into deeper relationships and conversations. Hirsch and his fellow community members estimated sixty thousand customers per year at the restaurant. Of those customers, 50 percent may have made an attempt to find out more about discussion groups and forums that Elevation Café offered. Again, an estimate of only half may have come once and then half again become actively involved. Hirsch estimated about four thousand in this last group.¹⁹ Within those community and activity groups, deeper relationship and conversation could happen. If a grocery store could combine a café and meeting space, the potential for a similar or higher number of people to be engaged in relationship is great. People shop at grocery stores more than they frequent one particular restaurant, so there is a profound opportunity for this dynamic to occur. The Church acting as an entrepreneur in meeting a neighborhood's need, conducting business with integrity, and inviting further conversation is being an incarnational agent of restoration.

The vision for the strategy is that churches in Chattanooga would embrace the opportunity to incarnate the Body of Christ in their neighborhoods through acts of

¹⁸ See Chapter 3 on Hirsch's book, *The Forgotten Ways*.

¹⁹ Hirsch, *The Forgotten Ways*, 38.

restoration. One grocery store in one neighborhood is a good start. However, there are other neighborhoods with pressing issues that may or may not be met with a business model but need an entrepreneurial agent that seeks to bless the neighborhood. In addition, people within the Church could creatively begin to see their current vocations as having relevance for God's mission in the world. People with training and experience in a variety of fields could be called to engage in mission with their neighbors, uniting around a common need.

Goals and Strategy

The goals and strategy of this project seek to incorporate the theological principles of incarnation and restoration, modeling the diligence and urgency of an entrepreneur and employing the strategy of Jesus in instructing His disciples to find "people of peace" (Luke 10:6). The common theme linking all of the goals is to announce that God is a God of restoration who seeks to restore all things. The deed of actually opening the store proclaims restoration. The training of members of the Church through teaching and their being sent out into various spheres of society to proclaim that message does as well. The hearers of the message are not only those in the MLK/UTC neighborhood but include those within the Church who must embrace this truth to begin to act out of that truth.

There are four goals set according to the theological foundations and priority of the neighborhood. Ultimately, the most important goal would be to see the grocery store and café open and further restoration to happen along MLK Boulevard. The second goal would be that the Church could begin to see itself as a legitimate partner in community development and more deeply incarnate itself in the neighborhood and in the city at large. The third goal would be training the people within churches in the idea of church as

mission. Finally, the fourth goal would be witnessing people use their individual gifts and experiences to accomplish more neighborhood restoration.

The primary goal of opening the store is an act of restoration. Restoration is a “return to a previous state of well-being. . . . the final redemption of all creation.”²⁰ As was mentioned in Chapter 1, MLK Boulevard used to boast three or four family-owned stores.²¹ Opening a store would be restoring what once was along the street and would be a glimpse of God’s mission of restoration of all creation. It echoes the rebuilding of the wall in Nehemiah.²² The ways in which the store could be restorative are many. While its physical presence signals restoration, what happens inside and through the store breeds even more restoration. Families, students, widows, and employees of nearby institutions and businesses are fed. Different elements of society interact in a common space around a similar need. With the inclusion of a café on the premises, conversation among those people can happen. Jobs for university students and members of the community are created. Despite all of the potential, there remains one possible obstacle. The store must make a profit to survive. A store open for only a short time can send a message of another failed attempt to bring life to MLK Boulevard, and the Church would be added to the long list of entities that could not fulfill promises. Careful planning and expertise are necessary to ensure the store’s survival. Despite that obstacle of sustainability, the possibilities for far-reaching restoration in the neighborhood are too great to ignore.

²⁰ *The Concise Dictionary of Christian Theology*, 2001 ed., s.v. “Restorationism.”

²¹ Moses Freeman, interview by author, Chattanooga, TN, June 2011.

²² See Chapter 4 for further details.

Seeing the Church deeply embody itself in the neighborhood and engage in community development is the second goal. As the incarnation announced the love of God for the world and proclaimed the good news of the kingdom, the Church's incarnation in its neighborhood should do the same. In the process of living out this strategy over the last two years, I have been able to proclaim the message of God's heart to restore and care. As the store begins to approach its opening, other partners can continue that proclamation by involving themselves in different aspects of the store. Those aspects may include the financing, the design, the building, and the offering of programs within it. Moreover, the Church can continue to be the presence of Christ in its neighborhood by asking for feedback after the store opens to show its continued care and by asking if there are additional needs that it could meet in the future. If there is a lingering perception that the Church has a narrow interest only in proselytizing or is concerned only in its own mission, the process of being involved in community development can lessen that perception.

One perception problem that already exists is that I am white and many of the churches I have relationship with are predominantly white in leadership and membership. An important aspect in accomplishing this goal is creating partnership with the fuller Body of Christ, representing African-American churches in the area especially. To mitigate the appearance that this is an effort on behalf of only white churches to help an ethnically diverse neighborhood, this must be—in the words of Perkins—done right and

done together.²³ Both in the process of developing the store and in subsequent relationships after the store is underway, the Church can more fully be a neighbor in its neighborhood.

The third goal is teaching the Body of Christ to see the Church as an agent in the mission of God. An agent sees itself as being under authority. The authority belongs to Jesus Christ as the head of the Church (Ephesians 1:21-23). An agent is also one moving as the authority directs to accomplish the purpose of the mission. The Church already has been given instructions for mission in passages such as Matthew 28:18-20 and Acts 1:8. The message is that God's mission is far-reaching, encompassing all nations and peoples. Furthermore, the mission's message is one of reconciliation, as the Church is an agent of God reconciling all things to Himself (2 Corinthians 5:18-19). The message comes through preaching and teaching. This is found in the model of Jesus (Matthew 4:17), the early Church (Acts 5:42), and the apostle Paul (1 Corinthians 1:17-23).

Pastors are trained in preaching and teaching as essential ways of communicating a message to move a body of believers towards maturity and mission. The primary venue for this preaching and teaching has been and will continue to be through The House. However, since the project requires partnership with many churches, relationships developed through initial stages of the teaching strategy must persist. There are hindrances to seeing this goal realized. First, preaching and teaching do not always bring about the transformation needed to move to action. Second, as was discussed in Chapter

²³ Perkins' subtitle in *Restoring At-Risk Communities: Doing it Right and Doing it Together* says it clearly. See Chapter 3 for a review of this work.

4, Reformed churches especially may have turned inwardly in focus as they see the Church primarily as the place of Word and Sacrament and pastors as being trained to essentially perform those activities. The teaching and preaching ministry should point members to tangible acts of mission to live out the words taught from Scripture. Pastors and leaders can risk stepping outside the comfort of their training, to learn and serve alongside their members and neighbors in their community. As a result of focusing the teaching and preaching on the idea of Church as an agent of mission, hopefully leaders will observe increased enthusiasm in the life of the Church as incarnation and restoration become new marks for evaluating the Body of Christ's faithfulness to its mission.

The final goal is to see people in the Church use vocational abilities to further the mission of God in their neighborhood. Drawing upon Luther's concept of *vocatio* and the priesthood of all believers,²⁴ followers of Jesus Christ can see their daily work as kingdom building. A single mother whose college training was in design can lend her expertise to the creation of marketing materials for the store. A mortgage loan officer can witness through his job and help provide fair financing for the missional endeavor. A resident of the MLK neighborhood and a UTC student looking for part-time work can work together at the store, and both can see their hours as part of the mission of restoring the community. For younger persons and university students, their experience at the store could encourage them to consider careers in social entrepreneurship, seeking to provide other innovative ways for communities to address their needs and problems. For that to

²⁴ See Chapter 4 for further details.

happen, however, sustainability of the store is vital, as is running the business with excellence and integrity. A failed store, or a store run poorly that exploits workers or customers, could deter younger persons from considering such endeavors. However, a viable store run with excellence that meets the needs of the community and constantly adapts itself to its changing community could serve as an inspiring model for young people to imitate in their particular fields. It also may serve as a model for other churches in similar situations.

Of the four goals listed above, three are more directly pointed at the Church. The first goal of restoration for the neighborhood can come when the grocery store and café open. Those that frequent the store will come from inside and outside the Church. The latter three goals focus on the Church, because it is the vehicle through which the mission is to be accomplished. It is the group of people to be mobilized to help make the store a reality. The strategic content that follows shows a similar emphasis upon the Church.

Overview of Strategy

The strategy consists of mobilizing the Church in the MLK/UTC neighborhood toward missional engagement as an incarnational and restorative act of Christ in Chattanooga's food desert. That act will be to open a grocery store and café to meet a tangible need and foster further incarnational relationships in the community. The components of the strategy are tied to each of the goals listed in the previous section. The overarching theme of those goals is the announcement of the truth that God restores.

The strategy that Jesus employed with sending His disciples out in Luke 10 is the model for this project.²⁵ Just as Jesus instructed His disciples to find people of peace, it is essential to find such people in the Chattanooga community. “Finding people of peace” is critical in a variety of spheres of society in order to accomplish the goal of opening the store. Over a two-year period, the news was spread; and one-on-one interviews were conducted with people from the neighborhood, city representatives, foundation administrators, entrepreneurial groups, UTC personnel, and pastors in the Chattanooga area.²⁶ For these persons and institutions outside the Church, these personal conversations sought to incarnate the message of God’s restoration through offering the vision of the store. For those persons within the Church, the conversations served to incarnate that same message among leaders and members in their respective communities, hopefully casting a vision for change, much like yeast in a batch of dough (Matthew 13:33). A preaching and teaching series and individual sermons were given revolving around the idea of Church as restorative agent to various groups.²⁷ The intent was to create awareness of the project and to offer a new vision of God and His purpose for the local church. The teaching and preaching topics also discussed the role of individuals, like Nehemiah, in accomplishing the restorative purposes of God. The hope was to empower individuals to discover gifts and experience that had relevance for kingdom-building. Ultimately, the attempt to find “people of peace” was to create a team of partners committed to seeing the store become a reality.

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ See Appendices A and B.

²⁷ See Appendix A.

Finding People of Peace in the City

Through some relationships with members of local churches and ministries, contacts were made with persons who were outside the network of the Church. This was an attempt to find the people of peace in the city. The search was for individuals who would be supportive of the idea of the store and had history, relationship, or influence in the neighborhood, development corporations, or entrepreneurial incubators. Beyond initial support, the hope was that they could offer expertise as the plans for the store developed and invite other partners into the project.²⁸ An Executive Summary of the project outlining the theology of why the Church can initiate a business as well as demographic, financial, and marketing data helped to paint a picture for the project. This Executive Summary is found in Appendix C. It announces the desire of God to restore, which is the overarching theme of the strategy goals. This Executive Summary was given to each person or group either in advance of the personal meeting or at the meeting itself.

The first person of “the city” was contacted through the network of the church where I serve. Kim White is the president of the River City Development Corporation. This organization was briefly mentioned in Chapter 1. River City is credited with much of the downtown development in Chattanooga and is continuing revitalization efforts throughout the city. White is a member of Signal Mountain Presbyterian Church, which afforded me an opportunity to briefly mention the idea after worship one Sunday and have a more lengthy conversation about it later. In August 2011, I shared with her the

²⁸ See Appendix B for details.

Executive Summary of the Entrepreneurial Church. That same day, she took me from her office to meet with the founders of the Lamp Post Group, a group of entrepreneurs that have launched a number of businesses in the Chattanooga area.²⁹ The founders of the Lamp Post Group acknowledged the need for such a store in the area, especially with the impending growth of the university. They mentioned particular challenges, such as the high cost of property along MLK Boulevard. The group did not see a direct link with their current efforts, as Lamp Post is focused on technology-based businesses and would not be a partner on this particular endeavor. However, they did remark that going through the Company Lab class in helping develop a business plan would be fruitful.³⁰ At the time, I felt the class would not be necessary, but that later proved not to be the case. Still, at this early stage, both the support of White and the founders of the Lamp Post Group encouraged the project to move forward.

It was essential to test the idea with someone who was intimately tied to the MLK community. Through a UTC graduate student, I was introduced to Freeman in November of 2011 (also mentioned earlier in Chapter 1). Freeman was and continues to be instrumental in helping me with the history of the neighborhood as well as navigating through particular institutions in the city that are involved in community development. At our first meeting in November of 2011, he affirmed that a grocery store was desperately needed. He did warn against the profitability of such a store, given the demographics of

²⁹ For a list of companies that this group has helped launch, see Lamp Post Group, <http://www.lamppostgroup.com/> (accessed August 6, 2013).

³⁰ See Chapter 7 for a more detailed explanation of the Company Lab. The attendance at the class and resulting business model forms the basis for Chapter 7.

the area and the usual low profit margin of grocery stores. Still, he believed that a store combined with a café or deli could be an anchor for further development along MLK Boulevard.³¹ Freeman mentioned several people and groups that he felt were necessary to test the idea, and these formed another group of people that heard the vision.

Although a more complete list and timeline of people met with are found in Appendix B, these three are mentioned here due to the weight of their opinion and experience. Freeman's insight as a neighborhood resident was crucial. White and the Lamp Post Group are in the area of business development, have long years of experience in start-up businesses, and are privy to development plans and the inner workings of Chattanooga. Moreover, for two of the three, presenting the vision was my first attempt at communicating the theological basis for this endeavor, not knowing the faith backgrounds of Freeman or the founders of the Lamp Post Group. Clearly articulated on the Executive Summary is the belief that God is a "restoring God" (Isaiah 58) and that the Church would be the initiator of the project. Being able to communicate that message and be received by these people was a first step forward. By pursuing these conversations with people in the city, a minor act of incarnation was taking place. Sitting personally with these individuals offered not just the idea of a store but introduced the idea that God and the Church cared about neighborhoods.

³¹ Freeman, interview, November 10, 2011.

Finding People of Peace in the Church

People of peace in the Church include pastors, ministry leaders, and church members who allow opportunity to share the vision of the project and encourage further conversation and involvement. Here, the goal of teaching the Body of Christ the concept of Church as an agent of incarnation and restoration was addressed. The first opportunity to find people of peace came through an invitation from Signal Mountain Presbyterian Church (SMPC). I was invited by SMPC's senior pastor to share with the elders the substance of my doctoral project in June of 2012. I presented the Executive Summary and proceeded to explain the genesis of the idea. I referred to a recent sermon I had preached which focused on Isaiah 58, where the people of God will be called "the restorer of streets." The need for the store and the possibilities for incarnational ministry were discussed through this lens.

The feedback from this group, many of whom are involved in leadership of business in the city, was extremely helpful. In short, comments included re-examining income projections for the store, assuring others of the safety of the neighborhood, and making clear the link between "word and deed" in the project. Several elders showed excitement at the idea, and subsequent conversations and emails encouraged me by providing new points of contact with those doing similar work. In addition, connections with more "people of peace in the city" were made due to individual elders' relationships with them.

The primary group to whom I preach and teach is the college students at The House. Two preaching series tied in what I had been studying for this project with what our staff saw as necessary for students' development in their understandings of God and

Scripture. In the fall of 2012, we created a series entitled “Story,” which looked at the overall narrative of Scripture. I examined what I called four chapters of God’s story in Scripture: Creation, Fall, The Rescue, and The Restoration. I argued that each of our individual stories can follow a similar pattern at different stages of our lives. A call was made in the final weeks of the series to encourage students to be a part of God’s restoration plan for the world and to see how their particular studies might tie into a profession to help fix brokenness in the world. Our staff, who spends a majority of their time in one-on-one discussions with students, reported that the theme of restoration found its way into conversations with students attempting to discern their field of study and career.³²

More recently, I taught through the Book of Nehemiah in a series in the spring semester of 2013. This is specifically where I outlined the vision of the grocery store. I emphasized that Nehemiah heard and observed a need, mobilized people to meet that need, overcame obstacles, and spurred further reform through the rebuilding of the wall. The creation of a store along MLK Boulevard could follow that same pattern. After one of the worship services, an opportunity for a smaller group of students to ask questions was offered. It was here that I witnessed enthusiasm for the idea, with students offering relevant experience from their studies, internships, and personal work experience. Design students, nutrition majors, and students who for years have worked in a grocery store all approached me to express interest.

The most recent teaching experience came with a men’s Bible study with First Presbyterian Church (FPC), which is located directly between the UTC campus and MLK

³² Staff meeting with The House interns and full-time staff, Chattanooga, TN, November 30, 2012.

Boulevard. In September of 2012, I had been invited by Rev. Tinsley as senior pastor to a monthly luncheon that included several campus ministers whom the church supports. Through hearing about my project, Rev. Tinsley then invited me in February 2013 to share the vision at the men's Bible study he was teaching entitled "For the Welfare of the City."³³ Approximately eighty to a hundred men attended this weekly luncheon study. I again handed out the Executive Summary, briefly provided an exposition of Isaiah 58 and then proceeded to share the vision of a grocery store along the street. The response from the men there was overwhelmingly positive. One MLK neighborhood resident offered to host an event in his home to rally support. A family member of one of the community foundations in Chattanooga said he would encourage Rev. Tinsley to adopt this project as a mission of the church. Rev. Tinsley then invited me to a subsequent meeting of FPC's elders and deacons, to dream about how FPC could implement the idea of doing ministry "for the welfare of the city." Due to its location and resources, both financial and in terms of the business acumen of many of its members, FPC will be a key partner in the project. This last teaching opportunity seemed to generate the most interest, as the leadership of FPC is currently exploring creative ways of being a church of mission in the community.

The church entities mentioned here included a fellowship of college students, a more traditional Presbyterian church in a similar denomination (Presbyterian Church of America) located in the MLK/UTC neighborhood, and a traditional Presbyterian church in my own denomination (Evangelical Presbyterian Church) located fifteen minutes away

³³ The study was based on Bruce Winter, *Seek the Welfare of the City: Christians as Benefactors and Citizens: First-Century Christians in the Graeco-Roman World* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1994).

from downtown. These were the first churches that provided an opportunity to teach, as relationships existed here due to my work at The House. Further partners will be needed, but these three communities will be essential to include for the progress of the project.

Finding People of Peace in Community Foundations

As mentioned in Chapter 2, community foundations historically have played a major role in the development of the city. Each of the foundations mentioned—Lyndhurst, Benwood, and Maclellan—not only regularly support local non-profits but also initiate wide-ranging community restoration efforts. Their access to financial resources and ability to create awareness on a regional scale make them very effective at bringing about change in the Chattanooga area. Three key interactions with individuals and groups within these foundations was another necessary step to finding persons of peace.

The first conversation was with Sarah Morgan, who at the time of the first meeting in July of 2012 was with the Lyndhurst Foundation. At the time of this writing (July 2013), Morgan is the current president of the Benwood Foundation. At the initial meeting, she shared with me her personal work in trying to revitalize the MLK neighborhood in years past. Despite the opportunity for development along the street, Morgan cited the lack of willingness on the part of some property owners to sell for reasonable prices. She was forced to shift her attention to another part of the city. While with the Lyndhurst Foundation, Morgan was able to purchase several empty buildings and lots along Main Street, which is about one mile away from MLK Boulevard. Today, Main Street boasts new restaurants, boutiques, a resource center for environmental sustainability called GreenSpaces, loft-style apartments, and much more. However, the

housing options, services, and businesses now on the street have catered to white customers. The zip code that contains Main Street and the surrounding area had the highest rate of gentrification in the United States between the 2000 and 2010 Census.³⁴ Nearly one thousand African Americans moved from the neighborhood in the ten-year period, and five hundred whites moved into the neighborhood.³⁵ The desire of this project for the MLK/UTC neighborhood is to be sensitive and honoring to the historic and cultural significance of MLK Boulevard as a center for the African-American community. The end result on MLK Boulevard will hopefully be different than neighboring Main Street, yet the involvement of foundations there do give an example of what can happen if partners can work together for restoration. Morgan continues to stay in contact with me regarding the progress of the grocery store project and recently has asked for a business plan. Her comments along with the input of the Lamp Post Group provided the impetus for that plan.³⁶

I was able to present to a second foundation just a month after the conversation with Morgan. It was a group of pastors and ministry leaders called together by the Maclellan Foundation. The House has received funding from the Maclellan Foundation since its inception. Tom McCallie, the executive director of the Maclellan Foundation, invited me to be a part of a series of meetings for the “College of Elders.” These were approximately

³⁴ Judy Walton, “Census Data Notes Racial Shifts in Chattanooga Neighborhoods,” *Chattanooga Times Free Press*, <http://www.timesfreepress.com/news/2012/jun/23/census-data-notes-neighborhood-reshaping-southside/> (accessed July 19, 2013).

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ Sarah Morgan, phone interview by author, June 3, 2013.

twenty pastors who have had long-tenured positions of ministry within the city.

Approximately half were African American, and the other half were white. Each of us was asked to present our heart and vision for the city. I was able to share the vision of the Church being involved in business development, starting with the MLK neighborhood. The response was again positive, with several of the African-American pastors sharing that the African-American Church historically has been a place of community development.

One particular ministry leader who has done just this very thing is Lurone Jennings Sr., founder of the Bethlehem Center. The Bethlehem Center functions as a community center, hosts two different businesses within its walls, and has an after-school program to encourage literacy.³⁷ Due to his influence within the city and the African-American church community, “Coach” Jennings’ words to me that day were a tremendous encouragement. He said, “Business development is exactly the kind of thing the Church should be involved in, and the Maclellan Foundation could help. It could help us buy empty lots and buildings, and form a group like ours [The College of Elders] to help decide what communities might need in terms of businesses and services.”³⁸ Jennings has since been appointed by the Mayor’s office of Chattanooga to head up the Department of Youth and Family Development.³⁹ This speaks to the respect and influence he carries within the city for the work he has done through the Bethlehem

³⁷ See Bethlehem Center, <http://www.thebeth.org/> (accessed June 10, 2013).

³⁸ Lurone Jennings Sr. at the Maclellan Foundation “College of Elders” Meeting at the Bethlehem Center, Chattanooga, July 25, 2012.

³⁹ Cliff Hightower, “Chattanooga Mayor Andy Berke Names Jennings, Bailey, and McKissic to Key City Hall Roles,” *Chattanooga Times Free Press*, April 26, 2013, <http://www.timesfreepress.com/news/2013/apr/26/chattanooga-mayor-andy-berke-names-jennings-bailey/> (accessed June 10, 2013).

Center. As with other conversations, Jennings' words at the Maclellan meeting carried tremendous weight in moving the project forward.

The final foundation representative, Jeff Pfitzer of the Benwood Foundation, provided the most challenge to the vision. I first met Pfitzer in December of 2012. After the initial conversation with Morgan at the Lyndhurst Foundation several months before, she suggested I contact Pfitzer. Pfitzer helps coordinate two initiatives within the Benwood Foundation. One is "Gaining Ground," a program to encourage Chattanoogaans to buy from local farms, spur the formation of farmers' markets, and highlight local restaurants using regional foods. The other initiative is the "Mobile Market," which provides eighty-plus items via a semi-trailer to eleven different food deserts throughout Chattanooga. When I shared the vision of the store, Pfitzer was concerned due to the first experience of the Mobile Market that previous summer. The start-up and operating costs exceeded income, and Pfitzer suggested that a store would incur even greater losses as a result of overhead and increased inventory. He shared that within food deserts such as the MLK/UTC neighborhood, there are many barriers to healthy eating. Price, convenience, and skills in preparing those foods are all important.⁴⁰

Despite the many warnings, Pfitzer did make suggestions on how a store in the area could possibly work. If the store started small, with low-rent or free space, and with a plan to lose money initially, it could survive. Outside assistance may be needed for several years to keep it afloat.⁴¹ Pfitzer's insights were difficult to hear but extremely

⁴⁰ Jeff Pfitzer, Benwood Foundation, interview by author, Chattanooga, TN, December 18, 2012.

⁴¹ Ibid.

valuable. He had constructed the Mobile Market program based on months of research and was able to launch only through the financial support from a local foundation. His experience there made him extremely capable of making an accurate assessment of the feasibility of a store in a food desert community.

However, a more recent conversation with Pfitzer was enlightening. I met with him in May of 2013, wondering how a grocery store along MLK Boulevard could help him with his mission at the Mobile Market. I shared with him that I had consulted a map of the different neighborhoods he was trying to reach with the Mobile Market and discovered that the MLK neighborhood was roughly in the center of those communities. Knowing from our previous conversation that part of his challenge was storage of the mobile market items and parking for the trailer, I asked him if a central hub that was linked to a store was a possibility. We discussed other ideas, and he remarked that he was “inspired” because I had not given up on the vision of the store and was asking the tough questions that needed to be asked.⁴² As one who had a wealth of knowledge of food access issues within food deserts, Pfitzer’s comments provided strong encouragement to keep going with the project.

Summary

After the various conversations and teaching opportunities as part of the strategy, several conclusions were drawn. First, all parties agreed that a grocery store with an accompanying café would be a viable project if done with the right partners. Those partners

⁴² Jeff Pfitzer of Cadence Coffee Company, interview by author, Chattanooga, TN, May 10, 2013.

must include members that live in and have history with the MLK community. These partners must be willing to commit to the project, because the model for the store demands more time to become sustainable. Second, there was a positive view of the project, despite the fact that a pastor was initiating the work on behalf of the larger Church community. Third, “people of peace” were found who were open to meeting and discussing the idea. In fact, of the twenty-six people contacted, only two did not reply to a call and email. The remaining twenty-four individuals have continued to stay in touch with the progress of the project, and more than one-third have met with me more than once.

One instance of a “person or group of peace” becoming an ambassador for the message bears mentioning here. At the men’s Bible study at First Presbyterian Church, I was introduced to a staff member of the Maclellan Foundation. As the conversation developed and I told him I would be sharing this vision of the Church initiating a store later in the month, he told me that he had already heard of this idea from people at the Foundation and was fascinated to hear more.⁴³ Although the strategy did not yield a formal team actively working together to bring the vision to reality, the project is still in its infancy. However, the conversations and teaching opportunities hopefully have prepared the ground for bearing fruit at a later time. A consistent recommendation from the conversations did emerge, and that was the formation of a business plan. The necessary process of developing that plan and assessing the goals and strategy outlined here form the discussion in Chapter 7.

⁴³ Randy Kennedy of First Presbyterian Church Men’s Bible Study, interview by author, Chattanooga, TN, February 2013.

CHAPTER 7

PILOT PROJECT AND ASSESSMENT

This final chapter involves the formation of the pilot project: the business plan for a grocery store and café to be an act of restoration for the MLK/UTC food desert and to be a missional opportunity for incarnational ministry for the Church. This plan will be used in partnership with donors, foundations, churches, commercial realtors, and development companies to launch the store. As this was not the original pilot project from the beginning of the proposal, preliminary discussion offers an explanation of how this developed. The initial, middle, and final phases of the pilot project are outlined. The assessment will be focused on the goals and strategy outlined in Chapter 6. Recommendations for how the business plan will move the project forward will be presented as well.

Pilot Project: Initial Phase

The initial pilot project of this thesis involved the creation of two working groups. One was intended to plant a church in the MLK/UTC area. The other was to launch the grocery store as the primary mission of the new church. In this initial conception of the project, linking a worshipping community—whose primary purpose was to be involved

in mission in the MLK area—seemed to be a significant developmental step. However, two influences informed a reconsideration of the creation of the two groups.

The first influence was Arlene Inouye, final projects coordinator with the Doctor of Ministry program at Fuller Seminary. She expressed concern that creating two groups working simultaneously would be too daunting. As an alternative, she suggested choosing one group.¹

The second influence was an event held at my home that included over twenty people from various aspects of my ministry and personal life; they helped refocus the project. In April of 2012 I invited co-workers and alumni from The House, friends, pastors with whom I was serving at Signal Mountain Presbyterian Church, and church members to ask them to help discern this vision and plan. I presented both the idea of the grocery store and a church plant, using the passage from Isaiah 58 as a basis of biblical teaching. The feedback from that evening was enlightening; and more importantly, a handful of people emerged who committed to pray for me and with me through the long-term development of this project. Most people could see the need and mission behind the grocery store but were not convinced that the church plant was necessary now. Others were not sure exactly how the church plant tied in with the mission of the store and that work was needed to clarify the connection. With both the feedback from this group and the suggestion of Inouye at Fuller, I reformed the pilot project.

After the April 2012 meeting, initial conversations with people in the city, the Church, and foundations seemed to point in the direction of needing marketing data to

¹ Arlene Inouye, interview by author, Pasadena, CA, November 28, 2011.

justify the store. A meeting in June 2012 with SMPC elders raised questions about demographics in the neighborhood, the likelihood of a successful store, and whether long-time residents would shop at the store. A concern surfaced around the idea that one store would meet the needs of both UTC students and MLK residents.² As a result of this feedback, part of the pilot project considered including a marketing survey of those two groups in order to ascertain whether a store could be viable.

Through ensuing research, it was discovered that such data already existed. The UTC Business School in partnership with the Chattanooga Chamber of Commerce, the River City Development Corporation, and others had surveyed over six hundred students in April of 2012. One of the key findings was that students desired affordable dining and grocery options closer to campus.³ For MLK residents, multiple surveys and studies have been done. The most comprehensive study was done in 2007, by the Chattanooga Hamilton County Regional Planning Agency. Entitled *Briefly Speaking: Downtown Groceries for Chattanooga*, the document looks at census data, number of occupied housing units in the greater downtown area, the buying power of the residents in them, and the grocery stores closest to those residents. The case was made in the study that demand exists for a grocery store of approximately forty thousand to sixty thousand square feet to serve the downtown and MLK areas.⁴ In addition, the 2009 *MLK*

² Signal Mountain Presbyterian Church Elders, *Meeting Minutes* (Signal Mountain, TN: Signal Mountain Presbyterian Church, Chattanooga, June 13, 2012).

³ University of Tennessee at Chattanooga, "Survey Explores Connections."

⁴ Yuen Lee and Jim Sanks, *Briefly Speaking: Downtown Groceries for Chattanooga* (Chattanooga, TN: Chattanooga-Hamilton Country Regional Planning Agency, December 2007), Chattanooga-Hamilton

Community Plan lists a grocery store as the top priority of the working groups that participated in the public forums.⁵ In that same study, a grocery store was put under the category of “Major New Projects” as the anchor for the entire neighborhood.⁶ Having understood that the MLK community already had participated in a number of studies over the years,⁷ and seeing that data existed for the UTC community as well, I was saved much time and energy. The existence of a food desert already had been established, and the community’s desire for that need to be met had been expressed.

Another possibility for the pilot project was the creation of one working group, whose primary purpose would be to work on launching the grocery store. Unfortunately, this idea was derailed as well. Several of the people who would be instrumental and necessary for the project all were going through transitions. First, Freeman had just run and won the seat for City Council District 8.⁸ Second, James McKissic, formerly on staff at the Urban League, was named to work with the Chattanooga Mayor’s Office.⁹ Noel, who provided key information to me at the Urban League’s Healthy Food Access Forum

Country Regional Planning Agency, http://www.chcrpa.org/Divisions_and_Functions/Information_and_Research/Policy_Research_and_Studies/DT%20Grocery_email%20version.pdf (accessed June 10, 2013).

⁵ Hundt et al., *MLK Community Plan*, 13.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 64.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 127. Hundt et al. list twenty-four plans over a twenty-one year period.

⁸ “Moses Freeman wins over McGary in District 8,” *Chattanooga Free Times Press*, March 5, 2013. <http://www.timesfreepress.com/news/2013/mar/05/moses-freeman-wins-over-mcgary-district-8/> (accessed June 11, 2013).

⁹ Cliff Hightower, “Chattanooga Mayor Andy Berke names Jennings, Bailey, and McKissic to key City Hall roles,” *Chattanooga Free Times Press*, April 26, 2013, <http://www.timesfreepress.com/news/2013/apr/26/chattanooga-mayor-andy-berke-names-jennings-bailey/> (accessed June 10, 2013).

in April of 2012, moved from the Enterprise Center to the Chattanooga City Chamber of Commerce.¹⁰ These three individuals are all important influencers in the African-American community and were vital to the creation of a working group.

Finally, the announcement of the retirement of Dr. William Dudley from Signal Mountain Presbyterian Church in the fall of 2014, after twenty-five years of ministry there, caused the leadership there to focus on the search for interim or permanent leadership rather than undertake a new missional endeavor. Each of these people and the leadership at SMPC likely will support the grocery store initiative at a later stage. Since these individuals have expressed interest in the project, meetings with them and updates on progress will continue. It seems a key aspect of restorative partnership is simply timing.

Many pilot projects were considered, explored, and determined to be unnecessary or not viable at that time. The best pilot project is creating a business model and plan. Earlier in the project, the importance of such a plan did not seem apparent. However, while executing the initial stage of the strategy several interested parties asked if a business plan had been developed. These people included Morgan of the Benwood Foundation, the Lamp Post Group, Jonathan Bragdon who has served as a business mentor in the Company Lab, and a property owner along MLK Boulevard named Bill Raines.¹¹ Through these connections, it was discovered that a business plan is vital to start-up business endeavors in particular.

¹⁰ Chattanooga Area Chamber, "Maria Noel Is New Chamber Director of Minority Business Assistance," <http://www.chattanoogachamber.com/news-media/news/2012/6/maria-noel-is-new-chamber-director> (accessed June 11, 2013).

¹¹ See Appendix B for a timeline of when these persons were contacted.

An article by Tim Berry of *Entrepreneur* magazine argues that a business plan helps entrepreneurs make several decisions, such as buying versus leasing space or equipment. The plan also helps define what the business will do and what it will not do, a concept that Berry calls “displacement.”¹² Displacement helps small businesses in particular focus their product and services. Finally, Berry says a business plan helps develop partnerships, make hiring decisions, seek investors, and find approval for business loans.¹³ In the same way a pastor may use a sermon to cast vision for the direction of a church, an entrepreneur uses a plan to paint a picture of the new business. It is a necessary form of communication in the business world. The language of business must be learned if the Church is to enter this arena. Since I have been working within the Church, which has its own language and methods for bringing transformation, this discovery of needing a new vocabulary and framework regarding for-profit ministry affected how the pilot project needed to move forward.

Pilot Project: Middle Phase

The middle phase of the pilot project involved an analysis of the conversations and vision-casting opportunities that already had taken place. In effect, this phase was a pause in the project, in order to assess problems with the strategy and how future meetings and presentations could be improved. The challenge that emerged was translating the language and ministry of the Church into the language and action of

¹² Tim Berry, “15 Reasons You Need a Business Plan,” *Entrepreneur*, March 13, 2006, <http://www.entrepreneur.com/article/83818> (accessed June 11, 2013).

¹³ *Ibid.*

business. This translation was and is necessary in order to incarnationally share the message of God’s heart for the restoration of all things through the launching of the store and café. As a pastor who was seeking to engage missionally in the MLK/UTC context to address the existing need of the food desert, this involved additional training and learning on my part. Originally, my hope was that a couple of people with experience in creating business models and plans already would have emerged from the conversations and teaching opportunities. Ideally, individuals would see their gifts as being tied into the mission of God, which was one of the goals of the strategy in Chapter 6. However, this person did not emerge. Consequently, it seemed appropriate for me to enter this context.

The Language of Church versus the Language of Business

In the life of an organization, language is extremely important. Common language helps communicate ideas, purpose, methods, and activity. Church and business use different languages and often employ similar words to communicate different things. For instance, while the word “evangelist” has been in existence in the Church as early as Paul’s letter to the Ephesians (Ephesians 4:11),¹⁴ it has begun to be used more frequently in the business world. Businesses such as Microsoft hire “Business Evangelists” who are tasked with being so knowledgeable and passionate about Microsoft technologies that partners in a variety of fields will adopt Microsoft products to solve their changing

¹⁴ A personal confession: In the last two presbyteries in which I have served, there have been ordained “Evangelists.” Admittedly, I was never quite sure what it was they did, for their work was not emphasized by presbytery leadership.

needs.¹⁵ Despite some commonalities, there are many different connotations of words used in the Church and in business. Since common language often refers to dissimilar practices, the next section explores some of those differences. These include vision-casting versus business-planning, teaching-preaching versus customer-listening, biblical language versus industry language, and clergy-driven versus team-based leadership.

While a local church and a business may both cast vision, the process by which the vision is cast is often different. In business, it is the accompanying data, planning, and strategy that make a compelling vision. Frequently, pastors can cast a vision for a congregation through a study and exegesis of Scripture followed by encouraging their community to apply scriptural principles. A program or ministry is offered to help church members or community members take action.

For a business, strategic planning and research are of vital importance before the vision is given. The environments in which I have served in ministry have not used the language of planning and strategy. Planning does exist in a limited way for particular events to help meet an expressed need of the body of believers that the ministry is attempting to serve. In some cases, in attempting to invite those outside the body within the community, other events are planned. However, it has been my experience that these planning sessions are short-term practices. If those events are deemed successful (though this word is often exchanged for words like “faithful” or “fruitful”), then they become a

¹⁵ Microsoft, “Business Evangelist Job,” <http://www.microsoft-careers.com/job/Business-Evangelist-Job/2604439/> (accessed July 20, 2013); see also Kim T. Gordon, “Become a Business Evangelist,” *Entrepreneur*, September 1, 2006, <http://www.entrepreneur.com/article/165864> (accessed July 20, 2013).

part of an annual schedule of ministry programs. Long-range planning and strategy have not been emphasized. That is perhaps a fault of my own leadership, combined with the environments in which I have served.

While some local churches regularly use careful planning, research, and strategy before casting a vision, this method is the norm in the business world. Marketing surveys, strategic plans, and demographic research all factor into a business model. Failure to recognize this crucial difference in language and method did have an impact on the strategy. While I continued to pursue opportunities to cast vision through conversation, sermons, and teaching opportunities, the project could have moved forward earlier if attention had been given to a business plan. With a business plan in place, a vision has more credence in the eyes of those in the business community. The business plan includes a clear communication of the problem the business is attempting to solve, the needs of the customer, likely competitors, financial data, and other relevant factors which all support the passion of the entrepreneur who is casting the vision.

The second difference that became evident through the outworking of the strategy was the teaching-preaching versus customer-listening divide. Teaching and preaching are the preferred method for communication within the Church. The seminary training I received revolved around the study of Scripture, theology, and church history, communication theory, the practice of preparing sermons, counseling, planning worship and the administration of Sacrament, and some local church administration. The seminary curriculum sends a message to pastors that Word and Sacrament are essential to their

calling; and being equipped to teach church members theology, history, and Bible is fundamental.

Meanwhile, the business world does not place as much importance on the business leader as simply a communicator or teacher. Communication is critical, but the skill of listening to the customer comes first. A business leader uses communication to motivate employees or make changes to the product based on hearing what customers are saying their needs are. Customer service, customer satisfaction, customer experience, and customer intimacy are terms that are common business language.¹⁶ Using the word “customer” in the Church would not be received well. The implication would be that the message of the gospel and a church’s programs were the products being sold. However, the Church does speak of its members and non-members in similar ways as the business world, which refers to customers. Church leaders speak of the needs of the members and the community and how the congregation might best meet those needs. To help bridge the gap between Church and business in this area, being able to communicate to the business world that people are primary as well in the Church allows for the potential of mutual understanding.

A third difference that will be mentioned briefly is simply the difference of words. Each industry has a particular jargon, and the grocery business is no exception. I have

¹⁶ Brad Power writes: “While a focus on lowering costs, improving quality, and providing consistent, reliable service will continue to be important, I see a shift in the coming decade to combining operational excellence with customer intimacy: tailored solutions for individual customers based on a deep understanding of their needs.” Brad Power, “Operational Excellence, Meet Customer Intimacy,” Harvard Business Review Blog, entry posted March 29, 2013, Harvard Business Review, http://blogs.hbr.org/cs/2013/03/operational_excellence_meet_cu.html (accessed July 21, 2013).

learned the meaning of terms “total basket” and “center-aisle items,” just two words that help communicate the model of grocery store and focus of items being offered there.¹⁷ It has been and will continue to be necessary to adopt a posture of learning the language used. Like a cross-cultural missionary who spends time to learn the native language, it honors the culture and people by being able to speak clearly and effectively.

Pastors are comfortable with biblical language to communicate to their members and those outside the Church. For instance, in a conversation with a grocery store executive who asked about one of my primary job responsibilities, it would be natural for me to say “disciple my staff.” I would be referring to a series of teachings and experiences meant to bring maturity in the life of that staff member. However, if that executive were not familiar with the term, the meaning would be lost. Being able to use a phrase like “train my staff through teaching and experiential learning and by delegating authority and projects” could allow the executive to see that skills in ministry leadership are directly applicable to other contexts. By understanding that the language of the Church is often foreign, and by seeking to learn the language of business, the goal of incarnation into the business context is coming closer to reality.

In summary, there are at least three lessons being learned by engaging in conversations over the past two years regarding the differences between the Church and

¹⁷ “Total basket” refers to the desire for a grocery store to have customers shop for all items needed for a particular meal. For instance, the entrée, side items, beverages, and even utensils, plates, napkins could be found at one store. “Center-aisle items” refer to items such as canned goods, cereals, and non-perishables, which are typically grouped in the center of stores. Profit margins on these items are small, as almost all stores carry these items. Ronnie Chandler, interview by author, Chattanooga, TN, March 20, 2013. Chandler is regional operations manager for Food Lion.

business. First, planning and strategy are of utmost importance—hence the need to form a business plan for this project. Second, teaching and preaching are not the common modes of communication in the business world. Public speaking and clear communication skills are necessary; but they are partnered with data, analyses, and written plans. Casting vision that can inspire is critical in the business world, as the definition mentioned earlier by Eisenmann showed,¹⁸ yet the vision stems from detailed research. Third, knowing and using the language of one’s particular business interest—in this case, the grocery business—brings legitimacy to the project.

Theologically, I see that participating in community forums, meeting with persons with grocery expertise, and learning how to write a business plan is incarnating myself into the business world. As with Paul in Athens, I am observing the language, customs, and culture of the entrepreneurial business world. By this process, and by executing the plan well, further legitimacy will be given to the project. That legitimacy, as Russell speaks of in *The Missional Entrepreneur*, is vital.¹⁹ With a finished product of a business model and plan, the possibility of the launch of the store is greatly enhanced.

The Company Lab and Creation of a Business Model and Plan

The Company Lab has helped launch many new businesses throughout its history. Restaurants, moving services, smartphone applications, custodial services, art galleries,

¹⁸ Eisenmann, “Entrepreneurship,” reminds entrepreneurs that their task includes “conjuring a vision of a better world that could be brought about by their venture.”

¹⁹ Russell, *The Missional Entrepreneur*, Location 2527.

and more have all found their beginnings at the Company Lab.²⁰ The Company Lab offers a class called “SpringBoard” to small business owners and entrepreneurs in the city several times each year.²¹ The following section will include the timeline of the class as well as initial reactions to the project from fellow entrepreneurs.

As was mentioned earlier in the chapter, the SpringBoard class was suggested to me early in the process by the founders of the Lamp Post Group and then again by several other individuals.²² In May of 2013, I submitted an application to the program, sharing the essentials of the business idea. I was accepted into the program of twelve participants. On June 17, 2013, I began a nine-week process of writing a business plan. The SpringBoard class met weekly for three hours and was facilitated by graduates of the class whose business ideas had been launched and were thriving. The class included twelve individuals with a variety of business ideas. Interestingly, many participants were former UTC students, several were African-American entrepreneurs familiar with the area, and one had an African-American family-owned development company with property along MLK Boulevard. Each week, participants were asked to report successes and failures in the development of their business idea. The assignments included talking with potential customers, shadowing business owners in similar areas, researching competitors’ pricing, and learning about possible legal structures for the business.

²⁰ Co.Lab: The Company Lab, “Startups,” <http://colab.is/startups/> (accessed June 12, 2013).

²¹ Co.Lab: The Company Lab, “Springboard” <http://colab.is/what-we-do/springboard/> (accessed June 27, 2013).

²² Bragdon, Morgan, and Raines. See Appendix B for details.

The response to the business idea of the grocery store and café was overwhelmingly positive. The language that I used frequently to communicate the intent of the store was that it was to meet the greatest need of the neighborhood and simply to seek to bless the community. I acknowledged that the Church in Chattanooga was not thought of as being an entrepreneur and that could change with this project. Interestingly, the class participants did not see, or at least did not verbalize, an incongruity between the Church and business world. The idea that a group of churches could partner together to help start a business seemed like a legitimate one. In fact, during the week that we were to begin thinking of names and marketing and branding strategies, it was evident that most of the class understood the mission of the store. I told the class that the name would be “King’s Market and Café,” to honor Martin Luther King Jr. and was about to add something when one of my classmates said, “And for the King of Kings!”²³ The class laughed, seemingly knowing the reference. Despite not knowing the faith backgrounds of my fellow entrepreneurs, it was encouraging to witness in that moment a lack of resistance to the Church being involved in the business world.

The Components of a Business Plan and Relevance to the Strategy

The concept of a business plan follows common language and format in the business world and is essential for start-up companies.²⁴ Consequently, this section will outline various components and language used in business plans. In addition, the section

²³ SpringBoard Class at the Company Lab, Chattanooga, TN, June 24, 2013.

²⁴ Berry, “15 Reasons You Need a Business Plan.”

will explore how those elements and concepts are linked to the theological foundations of the project strategy. Finally, a brief analysis is offered of how the strategy actually informed the development of the business plan.

Each week of the SpringBoard class added a different component needed by entrepreneurs to develop their business plans. Participants were asked to put together a “canvas” to paint the picture of the completed business plan to be presented during the final week.²⁵ In this project’s case, the canvas started with identifying the potential customers for the store and café, the problem they faced, and how the start-up business would solve that problem. Other pieces of the canvas included what competitors exist and the benefits and advantages that the concept had over those competitors. Finally, the plan included how the messages of the store would reach prospective customers to invite them in and how products would be delivered to them. Typical business plans also contain estimated start-up costs, ongoing operating expenses, and revenue projections.

Almost every element of the business plan can be associated with the theological foundations of the strategy and its intent. For instance, to fully understand prospective customers, it is essential to personally talk with them to understand their lives and needs. Each week, we were asked to talk with more customers individually. One exercise asked us to chart out what a day in the life of our customer would be like.²⁶ In essence, knowing the customer in this way requires an incarnational mindset. After discovering the primary

²⁵ The Company Lab, *“Canvas” Template* (Chattanooga, TN: Springboard, 2013).

²⁶ The Company Lab, *“Day in the Life” Template* (Chattanooga, TN: Springboard, 2013).

problem a customer faces, attempting to solve the problem by creating a new business is an example of restoration.

Additional elements of the business plan have relevance to the strategy of this project. To answer the question of what competitors exist and how other businesses are meeting their customers' needs, further incarnation into the grocery business world is necessary. We were encouraged by the facilitators of the SpringBoard class to interview an owner of a business in our particular field. As described briefly in Appendix B, I had the opportunity to talk with someone whose family has successfully run independent grocery stores for three generations.²⁷

The remaining components of a business plan, marketing and pricing, similarly require incarnation and restoration. Effective marketing to draw in customers means talking with customers and understanding what motivates them. Marketing and branding of one's business is also the primary way of communicating the message of the store. Prior to beginning SpringBoard, I had ample opportunity to share the vision and purpose of the store. I had learned what messages brought about positive reactions and what messages elicited indifference. Finally, pricing of one's product can be an attempt to help solve a problem of high prices reducing access to needed food. Lack of affordable food was listed as a primary barrier for residents in Chattanooga's food deserts.²⁸ A store created to help address that pricing problem can be restorative.

²⁷ See Appendix B for description of conversation with Chuck Pruett.

²⁸ Urban League of Greater Chattanooga, *Healthy Food Access in the Greater Chattanooga Area* (Chattanooga, TN: Urban League of Greater Chattanooga, April 18, 2012), <http://www.ulchatt.net/images/>

The initial parts of the strategy found in Chapter 6 focused on finding people of peace to determine the feasibility of the store and to recruit possible support. Through many of those first interactions, I discovered I already had much of the information needed to develop the business plan. The parts of the plan I was not able to complete then allowed me to go back to some of those same people to learn from them again. This provided further opportunities for incarnational interaction and began to bridge the gap between Church and business. The business plan, having itself come through a process of incarnation for the purpose of restoration, will be a critical piece of information needed to recruit support for the concept and assemble a team.

Pilot Project: Final Phase

The business plan will be completed after the SpringBoard class concludes the week of August 17, 2013. Already one of the class assignments has been to create a “One-Page Business Plan,” which is found in Appendix D. The one page plan covers the vision of the store, likely customers, what problem it will solve, methods of payment, marketing, financial metrics, and obstacles. The conversations with individuals in the city²⁹ combined with initial customer feedback as part of the SpringBoard class have led to the concept of a for-profit community grocery store with an attached café that will serve food and beverages.

stories/pdfs/urban%20league%20of%20greater%20chattanooga%20-%20healthy%20food%20access%20paper%20full%20version.pdf (accessed July 22, 2013).

²⁹ See Appendix B for a complete list of individuals that provided feedback.

The intent is to contact the “people of peace” in the city, the Church, and community foundations that were mentioned in Chapter 6 and present the plan in the fall of 2013. The plan will provide these individuals and institutions the concrete information needed to collaborate in the project. A formal invitation to become a partner will be given. To most effectively move the endeavor toward opening a store, a working team must be formed. The anticipated time when the working team will begin meeting is the spring of 2014.

After the working team begins meeting, individuals will be tasked with researching two of the essential needs for launching the store: location and leadership. The Location Team will assess what properties are currently available and whether renovation of an existing building or building on an empty lot is the best step forward. The Leadership Team will seek to recruit persons with grocery store experience to manage and operate the store.

Further teams will be required to launch the store once these two teams accomplish their work, though finding a store manager with previous experience will assist with each of these teams. Based on content learned so far through the SpringBoard class, marketing, purchasing, financing, and legal teams are essential to the creation and sustainability of a store.³⁰ It is difficult to assess the time needed to decide location and leadership. As has been stated earlier in this paper,³¹ the issue of location is an obstacle

³⁰ The Company Lab, “SpringBoard” (lecture, The Company Lab, Chattanooga, TN, 2013).

³¹ See Chapter 1 of this discussion for details; see also Ellis Smith, “Ready for Revival: King Boulevard Redevelopment Moving Slowly,” *Chattanooga Times Free Press*, December 31, 2010, C1.

due to property owners' unrealistic pricing of the land. However, there are existing buildings available in substantial disrepair, and the Location Team will simply need to determine whether those buildings can be retrofitted to accommodate the grocery store and café concept. In addition, a viable location might be needed first in order to recruit an effective manager to lead the store and its employees.

Assessment of Goals and Strategy

At this time, it is somewhat difficult to assess the effectiveness of the entire project, as it is ongoing. The business model and plan, to be completed in August of 2013, will hopefully open doors for the store to be realized. The opening of the store as an act of restoration was and is the primary goal of the project. The remaining goals included the incarnation of the Church into entrepreneurial community development, training the Church in the idea of mission, and witnessing individuals discover their gifts in kingdom work; these are all able to be assessed, because steps were taken to address each of these.

The first goal is launching the grocery store to proclaim that God restores and that His Church is an agent of that restoration. The fulfillment of this vision will enable residents to see that the Church can be a group of people who “stop talking, and start doing.”³² A fully functioning grocery store has the potential to act as the anchor described

³² Flyer posted along MLK Boulevard, placed by Mark Making, a local public arts project whose mission is “empowering individuals and transforming communities through professionally led public art projects, with a focus on the underserved.” Mark Making, “Mission,” <http://markmaking.org/mission-public-art-chattanooga/> (accessed June 12, 2013).

in the *MLK Community Plan* and to encourage further restoration.³³ Clearly, that goal has not yet been achieved. However, the awareness by city officials, foundation representatives, university administration, and local church leadership are helping move this project towards becoming a reality. Also, the creation of the business plan is a critical step forward in enlisting the support of community members, property owners, and investors.

The next project goal was to become involved in community development as an incarnational act of Christ. If incarnation is partly defined as “moving into the neighborhood” of a particular context (cf. John 1:14, *The Message*), then this project has helped to do that. The conversations mentioned in Chapter 6, as well as the others listed in Appendix B, were many and involved different sectors of society. Intentional effort was required to set up meetings, develop the Executive Summary, and concisely describe the project to communicate the vision. More informal ways of bringing the presence of the Church into the neighborhood involved eating more at the two existing establishments along MLK Boulevard, having conversations with their owners, and attending the Urban League and UTC Master Planning Events. At each of these, I introduced myself, my role in the community, and the idea of the grocery store and café.

Despite the fact that Chattanooga is considered to be in the “Bible Belt,” where attending a church may be a part of the cultural norm,³⁴ there was still skepticism

³³ Hundt et al., *MLK Community Plan*, 64.

³⁴ Data states 50 percent of Tennesseans describe themselves as “very religious,” combining church attendance and how important religion is in daily life, according to Frank Newport, “Mississippi Maintains Hold as Most Religious U.S. State: Vermont Is Least Religious,” Gallup, <http://www.gallup.com>

expressed by foundation representatives and entrepreneurial groups about the ability of the Church to be involved in community development of this kind. Certainly, the Church and Christian foundations in Chattanooga have been known typically to be generous in supporting a variety of ministries and social programs. However, beginning a business of this type is a unique endeavor for the Church in this particular area.

A similar dynamic of skepticism existed when the greater Church community of Portland, Oregon approached the mayor of that city in 2008 to propose serving the city's greatest needs. A group of churches asked the city official how they could help. In partnership, they wanted to collaborate with the city to address issues like homelessness, poverty, public schools, hunger, and trafficking.

Sam Adams, the proudly liberal mayor of Portland, said his initial reaction to this request was anxiety. "Would this be about missionary work?" he admits to wondering. "And could a liberal city like Portland pull it off?" Church leaders promised the mission was not to proselytize but rather to serve the needs of the city. Though Adams admits feeling reticent, he said the needs of the city were too great to decline. Affected by the economic recession and struggling to fund social improvement projects, Portland was "desperate" for this kind of help.³⁵

The reticence experienced here in Chattanooga may not have the same intensity as that of the mayor of Portland, but the Church's tendency to introduce itself as only interested in

/poll/160415/mississippi-maintains-hold-religious-state.aspx?ref=more (accessed June 12, 2013). Religion Facts, "Church Attendance by State," http://www.religionfacts.com/religion_statistics/church_attendance_by_state.htm (accessed June 12, 2013) reports that 52 percent of Tennesseans attend a church regularly.

³⁵ Q Ideas for the Common Good, "Restorers: How the Church Can Change a City," <http://www.qideas.org/blog/how-the-church-can-change-a-city.aspx> (accessed June 12, 2013).

proselytizing is a barrier.³⁶ This likely occurs because the language and values of the Church and business do not always align.

Chapter 5 emphasized how incarnation as described in John 1 points to God's desire for relationship, creativity, and authority. If the Church is to be incarnational, it must show His desire and creativity in order to have any authority to proclaim the good news of the kingdom of God in its context. While the idea for the Church to start a business may show some creativity, evidence of desire for relationship must be cultivated over a long period of time. Therefore, any authority to proclaim that good news will come after showing deep love within a community and creating within its context. The time frame of this particular project does not yet have the longevity needed to show whether the Church has truly embodied Christ as an agent of community development and restoration.

The strategy included many different opportunities to teach on the idea of a church as mission. Sermons given over the course of a year at Signal Mountain Presbyterian Church dealt with themes of incarnation, provision of physical needs as a sign of God's care for the world, and being generous with good works. A brief list of these sermons is found in Appendix A. Additionally, a focused time of teaching was given at a meeting of the elders of SMPC on this entire project.

The assessment of this strategy in regards to SMPC is that it did not achieve measurable results in either the leadership or people of SMPC. As discussed earlier, the

³⁶ Kinnaman and Lyons, *UnChristian*, 67.

announcement by SMPC's senior pastor of his upcoming retirement has focused congregational attention to what the future holds for the church. Moreover, my position at SMPC is that of one minister among five. I am the least involved in the life of SMPC on a day-to-day basis, as the senior pastor and elders understand that my primary call is to pastor and direct The House. I am not involved in staff meetings or regular programs of the church. My weekly participation consists of assisting in worship on Sunday mornings, leading prayers, the commitment of tithes and offerings, and the reading of Scripture. I am given the opportunity to preach every five to six weeks. However, shaping the direction of the church, and launching a new initiative of mission is truly something that has to be championed by senior leadership and the elders as a whole. It is understandable with the impending transition at SMPC that the idea of launching a new missional endeavor is not wise at this present time. When SMPC has completed its new pastoral selection process, there will be another window of opportunity to mobilize a missional response.

The ministry context in which I have senior leadership is at The House. Briefly mentioned in Chapter 6 and seen in Appendix A are two fourteen-week sermon series that I taught at The House. The "Story" series focused on the narrative of Scripture as four chapters: Creation, Fall, Rescue (Redemption), and Restoration. The Book of Nehemiah series in the spring of 2013 dealt extensively with the idea of the restoration of a city as forming mission for the people of God. The response to these was mixed. The feedback I received about the "Story" series is that students were left wondering how their individual stories tied in with the story of God. While the intent was to talk about

how God's story invites us to be a part of the rescue and restoration of the world, students seemed to struggle instead with making sense of their particular story at the time.

The presentation of the idea of the store in the midst of the Nehemiah series, combined with the question and answer session that followed, was met with excitement. Several students expressed to me how they wanted to work at such a store and help in whatever way possible. They also offered ideas for connection with non-profit organizations within the city that they were currently serving. However, eighteen- to twenty-two year olds are hindered in what they can bring at the outset of a project like this. Financial resources are limited, and influence within the community is as well. At this stage of life, young adults are discovering their gifts and passions. Their work experience is likewise limited. Nevertheless, their enthusiasm was helpful in moving forward despite the difficulty in grasping how much exactly this group understood the idea of church as mission.

The two other groups to whom I had opportunity to present were the First Presbyterian Church Men's Bible Study and the Maclellan "College of Elders." Once again, the issue of not being in senior leadership was evident. At the FPC study, had I been the senior pastor introducing the idea as an opportunity for that church's mission, there would have been follow-up opportunity to develop plans among the leadership. Instead, I was a "guest speaker" sharing a missional idea as an illustration of what a church could do. I am extremely grateful for the opportunity and believe that FPC can be a key partner in the endeavor. However, since I am outside the leadership of that

particular church, the chance to exert influence over the direction of the church's mission is minimal. Partnership takes patience.

The same dynamic is true within the Maclellan "College of Elders." As a pastor primarily known as ministering to college students, the influence I carry within the greater Church leadership in Chattanooga is often relegated to that particular age group. In one meeting, I was introduced by the leadership of the Maclellan Foundation as being invited "to help represent campus ministers in the area."³⁷ Within those meetings, it is apparent that there are some pastors who are considered "pillars" of influence in the community. The apostle Paul referred to this dynamic when he presented his mission of preaching to the Gentiles to Peter, James, and John in Galatians 2:9.³⁸ This is understandable, given the longevity of several of these leaders' pastorates and commitment to change in the city. Despite the fact that the vision of a Church-initiated grocery store was deemed a viable and exciting endeavor, another path was chosen. The "pillar" pastors argued that the greatest need in their particular communities was literacy. At the times of those meetings, a newly formed Chattanooga Gang Task Force was beginning a literacy initiative, citing that gang involvement was tied to that issue.³⁹ It was decided at two meetings in the summer and fall of 2012 that the churches of Chattanooga

³⁷ Maclellan Foundation, "College of Elders" (meeting held at The Bethlehem Center, Chattanooga, TN, July 25, 2012).

³⁸ "James, Cephas, and John, those esteemed as pillars, gave me and Barnabas the right hand of fellowship when they recognized the grace given to me. They agreed that we should go to the Gentiles, and they to the circumcised" (Galatians 2:9).

³⁹ Rachel Bunn, "Law firm supports Chattanooga Gang Task Force Literacy Effort," *Chattanooga Times Free Press*, November 29, 2012, <http://www.timesfreepress.com/news/2012/nov/29/law-firm-supports-chattanooga-gang-task-force/> (accessed July 21, 2013).

would join in this effort. Already, over eighteen churches have begun after-school literacy programs for children in their neighborhoods. It was acknowledged that helping spur economic development in Chattanooga neighborhoods was a need, but it would be a future initiative. Later, projects like this one may be at the top of the agenda for this group of ministry leaders.

The overall assessment of the strategy outlined in Chapter 6 and in this chapter is that there were several factors beyond control. The timing of several persons transitioning to different positions hindered movement forward in the development of a working team. The adoption of other priorities for entities like SMPC and the Maclellan Foundation is understandable, which placed this project at secondary importance at best.

However, there is one discovery from attempting this strategy that revealed a personal bias for how transformation can take place. Almost the entire scope of the strategy involved preaching and teaching. My underlying assumption was that casting a vision through sermons and speaking would generate acceptance of the project and coordinate leadership to drive the vision to fruition. To incarnate the Church into the business world, more than words are needed. The realization of this has made me reevaluate what I expect in day-to-day ministry within The House as well. To assume that preaching sermons and teaching alone will fulfill a vision is misguided.

The incarnation of Jesus did not simply include teaching. Certainly, teaching and preaching were integral to the announcement of God's kingdom reign. However, living among the people (John 1:14), healing and casting out demons (Matthew 4:24), and confronting religious structures (Matthew 23:1-39) were all aspects of Jesus' earthly

ministry. Ultimately, the incarnation led to the sacrifice of Jesus on the cross, paving the way to restoration of all things. Incarnational ministry, then, must be more than simply offering words.

Unfortunately, the strategy of this project did not take that into serious consideration. A tension emerges through a project like this. In attempting to offer a reformation of the Church by refocusing attention on an act of restoration, long held beliefs and assumptions about the Church's role are unearthed. The tension of balancing word and deed will be explored more in detail in the Summary and Conclusion of this project.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

“So when does the church start?”¹ This was a question asked by an elder of one of the churches when I presented the vision of a grocery store being an act of mission by the Church. Her question reveals one of the major conclusions out of this entire project. That is, there is a narrow view in this city of the Church’s purpose and mission. What that particular church elder meant was this: “If the grocery store gets off the ground, then when does a worship service or worshipping community get formed from that effort?” Several people within the Church in Chattanooga and as well many non-believers share that same view of what “Church” is. As I approached business leaders, I often had to make clear that the agenda would not be to convert or get grocery shoppers in order to come to a worship service. As I approached church leaders, I had to clarify that the end goal was not getting new people in the local church but that the Church would enter the world in a creative way in order to fulfill God’s mission of the restoration of all things.

This miscommunication between the two worlds of Church and business also was highlighted in a conversation with Jonathan Mansfield. Mansfield is an alumnus of UTC and was an active member of The House community while a student. He received the John C. Stophel Distinguished Student Award,² recognizing students in the business school. Since graduation, Mansfield has taught classes through The Company Lab to help

¹ Priscilla Caine, interview by author, Chattanooga, TN, June 13, 2012.

² University of Tennessee at Chattanooga, “John C. Stophel Distinguished Student Award: 2011-2012,” <http://www.utc.edu/Academic/Business/DistinguishedStudents2012.php> (accessed June 14, 2013).

entrepreneurs move their business from idea to reality. He also has begun his own business called D+J Brand Consulting and has introduced a “font” for the city of Chattanooga.³ When I explained the difficulty in communicating the vision of the store to both church leadership groups and entrepreneurial groups, he said, “The problem might be that each group thinks you’re coming from the other one’s camp. The Church thinks you’re coming from the business camp, and the business camp thinks you’re coming from the Church.”⁴

This is reminiscent of the biblical story in Judges 12. The story is told there that the tribe of Gilead of Israel was fighting against the people of Ephraim. They determined who was truly of their own clan by asking the Ephraimites to say the word “Shibboleth.” One of the primary dynamics of this project is similar in that there seem to be two tribes, each with its own language and “Shibboleth.” The challenge is to communicate the vision in such a way that there is full acceptance by both tribes. As the business model and plan is completed, it should be easier to gain entryway into the business community. In the Church community, combining the teaching with a missional experiment is required to see how the mission of the Church and the mission of a business can align. One possibility would be to research a “business as mission” that Russell refers to in *The Missional Entrepreneur* and invite church members to witness the business in that community. This would entail traveling to another city or another county to talk with the

³ Marketplace Life, “Tennessee Sets Its Sights on Its Very Own Typeface,” <http://www.marketplace.org/topics/life/tennessee-city-sets-its-sights-its-very-own-typeface> (accessed June 14, 2013).

⁴ Jonathan Mansfield, interview by author, Chattanooga, TN, June 13, 2013.

owners of the business as mission and interview their customers. Such a missional experiment could provide inspiration and a model for an entrepreneurial endeavor in Chattanooga.

The theology of incarnation and restoration is extremely important to communicate in order for the Church to take a risk like starting a business in a neighborhood. Hirsch suggests that the North American Church in particular has focused for years on an “attractional model,” where the local church creates programs with expectations that people from the neighborhood will come to them.⁵ The shift to a “missional-incarnational” model will take time. A rediscovery of God’s mission to the world including the restoration of all things is vital.

The question “When does the Church start?” can be phrased a different way. That is, when the Church actually acts as an initiator and what it initiates is crucial. Within my own ministry context, The House has initiated within its sphere of influence. We try new ministry programs to students, occasionally serve the campus community, and are entrepreneurial only in terms of things usually associated with ministry: worship, study, fellowship, and service. To think of stepping outside that sphere and become entrepreneurial in the sense of initiating a business to spur restoration seems foreign. It involves risk and stepping into a completely new sphere. To be entrepreneurial means to learn from a community, invest in it, and serve in a way that is most needed.

⁵ Hirsch, *The Forgotten Ways*, 34.

A tension exists because acts of service in the biblical narrative serve to proclaim the coming kingdom of God. As Jesus performed miracles, such as the feeding of the five thousand (Luke 9:11-17), it did not just provide food for hungry people. It announced His identity and the power of the kingdom for change (cf. Matthew 14). His ministry was one of word and deed, and He commanded His disciples to do good deeds and see the work of the Father through them (cf. Matthew 5:16). In the Old Testament, God commanded His people to care for the poor through deeds of mercy, so that God would be known as the one true God (cf. Leviticus 19:10).

In the original conception of the project, a church plant and grocery store were to launch simultaneously. This was to help resolve the tension of emphasizing deed over or against word. The church plant would begin with its primary mission to restore MLK Boulevard. Its worship, teaching, and offerings would be centered on that mission. Invitations would be given to help participants in the community to lend insight, experience, and talents to making the grocery store a reality as well as encourage further development along the Boulevard.

Though the church plant was not a part of this project, it is beginning organically. Discussions between the pastor of First Christian Church and me, and the desire of First Christian to be a “church of service, not lip service,” have led to a recent hiring of Jonathan Hyde, the spouse of one of The House staff members and an ordained pastor. Hyde’s main responsibilities include connecting The House students and First Christian’s membership and beginning a Sunday night worshipping community with the intent of focusing the mission on restoration of the neighborhood.

As this new worshipping community develops, it will be those community members who proclaim the message of God's kingdom to those they interact with in the neighborhood. The goal is not necessarily to bring those who shop at the grocery store, or those who may be involved in other restoration efforts in the neighborhood, to the worship service. Instead, it will be through intentional relationship, and perhaps some community members relocating to the neighborhood, that proclamation of the Word of God will come. Through that welcoming presence of God's people in the neighborhood and the accompanying message of grace and truth, some may become members of the worshipping community. However, that is not the end goal. The goals include mobilizing the people of God to be incarnational and to be agents of restoration, to live their faith in such a tangible way that it serves as salt and light to a hurting community.

Mobilizing a cross-section of the Body of Christ in Chattanooga is not a simple task. The history of The House and its very structure have meant that I as a leader, and the alumni of the ministry, have developed relationships with a variety of churches. Several of those churches include members who carry influence over development in the city. We have enjoyed a reputation of fruitful ministry in the lives of college students, and that has been reflected in invitations to those churches to share our story and in those churches' financial support. I believed that my reputation and the ministry's heritage might give legitimacy of this project to the leadership of those churches. I also assumed that our ministry being the initiator of the project would not be seen as a threat to those churches, in that we were trying to "steal members" or garner more attention for ourselves. By inviting those churches into collaboration, I thought I was giving an

opportunity for them all to share in the execution of what I still believe is an exciting vision.

What I underestimated is the fact that I do not lead any one of those churches. With the exception of First Christian Church and First Presbyterian Church, both one block away from MLK Boulevard, it has been difficult to convince pastoral and elder leaders that they should undertake this mission. Moreover, as a relatively younger pastor, combined with the fact that college ministry is often misunderstood, the legitimacy for my leadership on the project was not as great as I had hoped.

I also underestimated the importance of one congregation leading the way and the role of a pastor within the congregation. I overestimated the effectiveness of trying to mobilize those churches under one mission simply by teaching and preaching. A restorative effort like this would be a powerful statement of unity in the Body of Christ. This unifying mission could still happen, but it will take time. The above reflections have led to this tri-fold conclusion: restoration takes patience, partnership, and incarnation.

An endeavor like this clearly does not happen quickly. The process of gathering data, researching the history of previous development efforts, and meeting key people in the various spheres of influence has taken longer than initially expected. The method of preaching and teaching the concepts of incarnation and restoration within the churches where I have spoken similarly takes time and is only part of what helps to mobilize people to action. In addition, the fact that several of those churches are facing challenges of changing membership and leadership add to the difficulty of a new vision being adopted.

Relationship that leads to partnered action takes trust. Trust is needed to undertake what may seem like a risky endeavor. The move from an informal networking meeting to an invitation into partnership is a long process but a necessary one. The mobilization of a group of people involves a number of individuals working together to create momentum. Beginning any sort of project of this nature cannot happen with one person. Many partners bringing experience, gifts, and resources are necessary to accomplish a new project such as this.

There are two final conclusions that bear mentioning. The first is that this project now means that I must incarnate myself more fully into the business world. I must understand the language and customs of this world in order for this project to gain legitimacy and to overcome any preconceived ideas about the Church being involved as an entrepreneur. Second, an incarnation of a new Body of Christ is necessary. The possibility that a new worshipping community could adopt this mission at its outset is greater than simply adding this to the already full agenda of an existing church. Certainly the new worshipping community will need the partnership of existing churches. However, a new worshipping community can equip its members to be a missional church more effectively if that is its DNA from the beginning. Moreover, by linking the teaching of the church to mobilize its members to be agents of proclamation of the kingdom of God, the integration of word and deed is preserved.

The entrepreneurial church may serve as a model for local congregations in particular contexts. While in this particular instance in Chattanooga it appears a new incarnation of the Body of Christ is necessary, in other contexts existing churches willing

to undertake a similar act of mission could do so. Established churches could begin to more deeply incarnate themselves into their communities, discovering the needs of their neighbors. Drawing upon the foundation that God seeks to restore all of creation, these fellowships can issue a call amongst their members to creatively use their gifts to initiate a solution to their neighbors' needs. This project also may encourage new models of church planting, as planters are invited to examine the expressed needs of the neighborhoods before initiating ministry. By doing so, the emerging congregations would be acting incarnationally for the mission of God's restoration from their very beginnings. Instead of simply providing a worship service, these new expressions of Church could gather for worship to provide service to the greatest issues facing their community. The work of this project is humbly offered here to help the Church rediscover its incarnational, entrepreneurial, and restorative mission. For the Body of Christ in Chattanooga, it is respectfully presented as a fervent call to help open the doors of King's Market and Café as an act of God's mission to make all things new (Revelation 21:5).

APPENDIX A

SERMONS AT THE HOUSE: UNIVERSITY MINISTRIES OF CHATTANOOGA

Sermon series at The House: Fall of 2012

Title: “Story: Creation, Fall, Rescue, and Restoration:”

This fourteen week series included Scriptures such as Genesis 1, John 1, and Colossians 1 on Creation, Genesis 3 and Romans 7 on the Fall, Exodus 14 and John 3 on the Rescue/Redemption, and Isaiah 58 and Revelation 21 and 22 on Restoration. Concurrently with this series, I taught our staff more deeply on these chapters of the grand narrative of Scripture, and we discussed how incarnation and restoration affect ministry to the campus.

Sermon Series at The House: Spring of 2013

Title: Nehemiah

This series focused on the theme of restoration as found throughout the book of Nehemiah, as well as the character of Nehemiah himself. Individual sermons within the series highlighted the importance of prayer to Nehemiah, his perseverance through opposition, and willingness to address other issues such as poverty in the midst of the rebuilding project. On one particular evening, I introduced the grocery store project to students and held a Question and Answer session afterwards.

Sermons at Signal Mountain Presbyterian Church

Date: June 3, 2012

Title: “City Crashers.”

Scripture: Isaiah 58

Theme: The mission of the church is one of restoration, as God tells Israel they will be called the “restorers of city streets.”

Date: July 22, 2012

Title: “Lifestyles of the Rich and Jesus.”

Scripture: 1 Timothy 6:17-18

Theme: Preached from the perspective of Timothy. Paul’s admonition is that the wealthy are to do good, be generous and ready to share. The mission of the Church is to work to help the poor.

Date: September 2, 2012

Title: "Still the Greatest Story."

Scripture: Psalm 107:7-9

Theme: The overall narrative of Scripture found in Psalm 107. The city mentioned in Psalm 107:7 is fully realized in Revelation 22 at the restoration of all things.

Date: October 28, 2012

Title: Mighty Acts of the Father: Hungry

Scripture: Matthew 14:13-21

Theme: The feeding of the 5,000 by Jesus revealed God's concern for our daily bread, and that physical provision is the sign of His care for us and the world.

Date: December 16, 2012

Title: "So Close."

Scripture: Matthew 2:13-18

Theme: This sermon was changed due to the massacre in Newtown Connecticut. I preached on the slaughter of the innocents in Matthew 2. God's response in evil is incarnating Himself into a violent world.

Date: April 7, 2013

Title: "Unless..."

Scripture: John 20:24-29

Theme: The importance of the physical presence of Jesus in addressing Thomas' questions and doubts. Similarly, the importance of our presence in others' lives as addressing them in their suffering.

APPENDIX B

A SEARCH FOR PEOPLE OF PEACE: CONVERSATIONS

The following lists a timeline and brief description of one-on-one meetings, group meetings, forums, presentations, and phone calls throughout the two years of the project. In one-on-one conversations and small group meetings, the Executive Summary found in Appendix C was handed out or sent beforehand via email attachment to introduce the project. For the first meeting, individuals' titles and descriptions are given. Subsequent meetings simply list the date of meeting.

August 5, 2011. Kim White, President of RiverCity Development Corporation and Ted Alling, Jack Studer, and Allan Davis, founders of the Lamp Post group, Lamp Post offices. Presented project and asked for feedback and ideas.

October 25, 2011. Monika Groppe, UTC Graduate Student and staff member at Mark Making. Groppe's graduate work has consisted of helping develop community gardens in the MLK area, proposing a restaurant business along MLK Boulevard, and in urban renewal projects through Mark Making, a public art initiative.

November 2, 2011. UTC Master Plan meeting with members of the MLK neighborhood, Bessie Smith Hall, MLK Boulevard. Members of the UTC administration presented plans to the public for projected growth on campus and how those plans would affect the MLK Boulevard. Briefly spoke with Richard Brown, Vice-Chancellor of UTC about the project.

November 10, 2011. Moses Freeman, MLK resident, community developer, and City Council member. Freeman shared the history of the neighborhood, his own efforts at development in the area, and took me on a driving tour of the neighborhood to show changes in the neighborhood in terms of demographics.

December 15, 2011. Chattanooga Rotary Club: Forum on Urban Growth. Learning experience in listening to a presentation given by members of the Ochs Center for Metropolitan Studies on issues facing Hamilton County (<http://www.ochscenter.org/>).

February 22, 2012. Community Lunch on Food Access Issues, GreenSpaces offices. Listened to a presentation via Skype by members of the West Side community in Chicago who are addressing food desert problems.

April 18, 2012. Healthy Food Access Forum hosted by the Urban League of Chattanooga, MLK Boulevard. Listened to a panel of presentations from city officials, private foundations, university professors, and community developers on the problem of food access. Participated in a working group concerning Local Policy and Meeting City Needs. (<http://www.ulchatt.net/images/stories/pdfs/urban%20league%20of%20greater%20chattanooga%20-%20healthy%20food%20access%20paper%20full%20version.pdf>)

April 20, 2012. Hosted a prayer and discernment meeting with ministry colleagues and friends at our home. Taught briefly through Isaiah 58 and gave a brief outline of the project and possible pilot projects. A portion of this group continues to be a source of prayer support for the project.

May 2012. Met with James Moreland, community developer for the East Chattanooga Neighborhood. Learned from Moreland who has been working on community issues in East Chattanooga, also a food desert, for over 20 years.

June 8, 2012. Met with Joe Ellis, Company Lab staff member. Discussed Ellis' study conducted at UTC concerning students' need for groceries, as well as asked for input on the Executive Summary.

June 13, 2012. Signal Mountain Presbyterian Church Elders' Meeting. Presented substance of project to the leadership at the church.

July 11, 2012. Sarah Morgan, Benwood Foundation. Discussed Morgan's past attempts at MLK development, current development efforts in the Southside of Chattanooga, and asked for input regarding the project.

July 12, 2012. Follow-up meeting with Moses Freeman.

July 25, 2012. Maclellan Elders' Meeting at Bethlehem Center. Discussed pressing issues in Chattanooga communities, and presented vision to this group of fifteen pastors and Maclellan staff.

August 7, 2012. Gary Purdy and Lane Ford, pastors at North Shore Fellowship, Chattanooga. Presented idea to local pastors who were seeking similar missional opportunities for their congregation in the north section of Chattanooga.

August 21, 2012. Heather Ewalt, co-founder at Causeway. "Causeway is a civic engagement hub—a platform for pairing worthy causes with ways to address them. Our goal is to support civic entrepreneurs—the civic equivalent of the scrappy, hard-working small businessperson who sees an opportunity to make something work better. And in this case, the community is the one who profits." (per <http://www.causeway.org/about>). Ewalt offered to help support the cause of the store once the project gets more developed.

October 21, 2012. Jeff Jeremiah, Stated Clerk of Evangelical Presbyterian Church. Presented idea of the store as a model for missional endeavors as the EPC seeks to find creative models for being the Church.

November 28, 2012. Karen Shore, The Food Trust. (<http://thefoodtrust.org/>). Shore helps communities seek solutions for healthy food access by providing consulting. A ninety-minute interview helped me discern the benefits of a non-profit cooperative versus a for-

profit store. Subsequent email correspondence provided me with additional resources on maps of data that the Trust uses to place farmers' markets and stores and a list of materials for the existing supermarket campaign in Tennessee.

December 11, 2012. H. Maria Noel, Chattanooga Chamber of Commerce. Followed up on the project after discussing it with her at the Healthy Food Access forum at the Urban League in April.

December 14, 2012. Jonathan Bragdon, mentor with the Company Lab. Asked for best next-steps in the project as Bragdon has been involved in several start-ups as helps advise new entrepreneurs.

December 18, 2012. Rick Mathis, Director of the Ochs Center for Metropolitan Studies. Discussed project as well as studies the Center has conducted on the issue of food deserts.

December 18, 2012. Jeff Pfitzer, Benwood Foundation. Pfitzer's work with the Mobile Market initiative in eleven food deserts in Chattanooga was extremely helpful in identifying issues for the project.

February 2013. First Presbyterian Church of Chattanooga men's Bible study, "For the Welfare of the City." Had the opportunity to present the Executive Summary and briefly provide an exposition of Isaiah 58 to cast vision for the Church as an Entrepreneurial Restorer.

March 20, 2013. Ronnie Chandler, Food Lion Operations Manager. Chandler taught me important terms and issues in the grocery store business, helping to clarify what kind of store this was to be.

April 2, 2013. Moses Freeman, following his election to City Council.

April 17, 2013. Chuck Pruett, founder/owner of GreenLife grocery store. Tremendous affirmation from a Pruett who is part of a three-generation family-owned store. Pruett thought a grocery store/café concept would be viable in the area.

April 19, 2013. Anne Najjar, commercial realtor. Najjar is the leasing agent for several properties on MLK Boulevard and the surrounding area. Presented the idea and met with one property owner to view a possible location for the store.

April 22, 2013. First Presbyterian Church of Chattanooga elders' meeting. As a follow-up to presenting the vision at the men's Bible study, I was invited to listen and speak again on future mission endeavors for the church.

May 10, 2013. Jeff Pfitzer, Benwood Foundation.

May 11, 2013. Chris Sorensen, pastor at The Mission Chattanooga. This new church plant has incorporated a coffee shop and café, performance venue, clothing store into its daily operation as a missional experiment in the southern part of downtown Chattanooga.

May 17, 2013. Bill Raines, property owner along MLK Boulevard. Inquiry phone call about a property available.

May 31, 2013. Seth Champion, owner of Champy's Restaurant on MLK Boulevard. Phone conversation regarding Champion's recent purchase of two lots along the Boulevard. Presented the idea of the store and café, which he loved. He had previous experience in running a deli for eight years and expressed interest in creating something similar. He invited me to a meeting the following week with the Benwood Foundation and other MLK property owners.

May 31, 2013. Sarah Morgan, Benwood Foundation. Phone call to communicate Champion's invitation. Morgan informed me that it was a private meeting for the Foundation Board to discuss vision for the store. However, she expressed interest in seeing a business plan to move the project forward.

June 4, 2013. Bob Bosworth, President of Hamico Foundation. Shared vision with Bosworth, who has relationships in the city with other foundation directors. He showed great enthusiasm in the idea, and said he would follow up with other foundation representatives to gauge interest in the idea. Wanted to stay updated and was interested in further involvement.

APPENDIX C

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Entrepreneurial Church: Mobilizing the Church to Bring Restoration to a Community in Chattanooga

Thesis: The purpose of this project is to help bring restoration to the University/Martin Luther King, Jr. area by taking an existing college ministry called The House, and facilitating businesses and services to the neighboring community, beginning with a grocery store.

The Vision: Because our God is a restoring God (Isaiah 58), we as the Church have the opportunity to meet a tangible need in a community, restoring what has been broken down and destroyed. As the Church of Jesus Christ is exploring what it means to be a Church being sent out, the grocery store is a tangible mission in the people of God can serve. This is akin to a missionary serving in a foreign context who begins with providing a business or service not present in the community.

What: A non-profit cooperative or a for-profit grocery store. A cooperative could enable students, faculty, and MLK residents could be members of the cooperative, helping to steer inventory to meet the needs of this diverse community. The non-profit could move to a for-profit business after 3-5 years. The grocery store would include a café, performance venue (for concerts, lectures, etc.), and teaching kitchen.

How: Initial capital investment could come from community foundations, churches, and individuals. Initial leadership can come from a steering committee made up of MLK residents, foundation representatives, local church pastors, and university faculty and/or administrators. A model based on the Fellowship Initiative (www.thefellowshipinitiative.com) would take 8-12 recent college graduates, have them live in community, and do 1-2 year internships in various aspects of the store: management, marketing, finance, etc. These Fellows would be partnered with local business mentors.

Where: There are currently a number of empty lots for sale along MLK Blvd. The most central location for the UTC and the MLK communities is the corner of MLK and Douglas.

Why: In a Hamilton County Regional Planning Agency planning document released in 2008, a grocery store was identified by MLK residents and UTC administrators as the number one community need. A recent study conducted by the UTC College of Business revealed that 80% of students drive 15-20 minutes away from campus for their groceries. Buehler's Market, on Market Street downtown, is the nearest grocery store. It currently does annual sales of approximately 2 million.

The Numbers: From a Forum at the Urban League on "Healthy Food Access": H. Maria Noel, Former Manager of the Renewal Community, The Enterprise Center. She is now with the Chattanooga Chamber of Commerce.

A grocery store serving 10,000 residents, with the median income less than the national average:

1. A 10-15,000 square foot store costs \$1.2 million to build
2. \$900,000 will be spent on equipment

3. \$300,000 will be spent to stock it with groceries
4. \$2-3 million to open it (includes salaries, benefits, marketing, etc.)

Annual operating expenses: \$2 million

The present UTC/MLK community has 5,000 residents (2010 Census data)

Main barriers: Some lots and buildings along MLK are being held by property owners who are asking large sums for their buildings. UC foundation members, developers, and entrepreneurs have all run into this obstacle. In addition, the racial issue of African-Americans being promised things by whites to “help them” must be handled with sensitivity. Partnership with the African-American church and community leadership is key. Unfortunately, UTC has burned some bridges with the MLK community. A faith-based initiative, giving community members ownership, is the best model to move forward.

APPENDIX D

SPRINGBOARD CLASS BUSINESS PLAN EXERCISE



The One-Page Business Plan

Answer each question with one or two short sentences.

OVERVIEW

What will you sell?
Groceries: including fresh produce, meats, etc.

Attached cafe will be a deli and coffee shop

Who will buy it?
MLK residents, UTC students, downtown

employees, Brown Academy parents

How will your business idea help people?
The UTC/MLK area is a food desert: people do

not have access to groceries within 1 mile

KA-CHING

What will you charge?
The market will cater to lower-income persons

and college students

How will you get paid?
Cash, credit, debit, WIC and EBT

How else will you make money from this project?
Deli/Coffee shop, T-shirts,

will be other sources of income

HUSTLING

How will customers learn about your business?
Word of mouth, residential/campus marketing,

signage, online, social media, news releases

How can you encourage referrals?
Weekly specials for MLK residents and UTC

students, and downtown employees

SUCCESS

The project will be successful when it achieves these metrics:

Number of customers
390 customers a week spending \$100 will

cover operating expenses of \$2million/year

or

Annual net income
Break-even after 3 years, profitable in 4th year

(or other metric)

OBSTACLES / CHALLENGES / OPEN QUESTIONS

Specific concern or question #1
Price of land and building/renovation cost

Proposed solution to concern #1
Networking with local property owners to

communicate value of this business for the blvd

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Ammerman, Nancy, Jackson Carroll, Carl Dudley, and William McKinney. *Studying Congregations: A New Handbook*. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1998.
- Anderson, Ray. *An Emergent Theology for Emerging Churches*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2006.
- Archbishop's Council on Mission and Public Affairs. *Mission-Shaped Church: Church Planting and Fresh Expressions of Church in a Changing Context*. London: Church House Publishing, 2004.
- Athanasius of Alexandria. *On the Incarnation of the Word*. In *A Select Library of the Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church, Second Series*. Vol. 4 of *St. Athanasius: Select Works and Letters*, edited by P. Schaff and H. Wace and translated by A. T. Robertson. New York: Christian Literature Company, 1892.
- Barth, Karl. *The Doctrine of Reconciliation*. Vol. 4 of *Church Dogmatics*. Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1961.
- Billings, J. Todd. *Union with Christ: Reframing Theology and Ministry for the Church*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2011. Kindle Electronic Edition.
- Bomar, Chuck. *College Ministry 101: A Guide to Working with 18-25 Year Olds*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2009.
- Calvin, John. *Institutes of the Christian Religion*. Bellingham, WA: Logos Bible Software, 1997.
- Carson, D.A. *The Gospel According to John: The Pillar New Testament Commentary Series*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1991.
- Carter, Matt and Darrin Patrick. *For the City: Proclaiming and Living Out the Gospel*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2010.
- Collins, Jim. *Good to Great and the Social Sectors*. New York: HarperCollins, 2005.
- The Company Lab. *"Canvas" Template*. Chattanooga, TN: Springboard, 2013.
- _____. *"Day in the Life" Template*. Chattanooga, TN: Springboard, 2013.
- _____. *"SpringBoard." Lecture, The Company Lab, Chattanooga, TN, 2013.*

- Conn, Harvie. *Evangelism: Doing Justice and Preaching Grace*. Phillipsburg, NJ: Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing, 1982.
- Corbett, Steve and Brian Fikkert. *When Helping Hurts: How to Alleviate Poverty Without Hurting the Poor and Yourself*. Chicago: Moody Publishers, 2009.
- Cray, Graham, Moira Astin, John Clark, Lyle Dennen, Damian Feeney, Robert Freeman, Sally Gaze, Graham Horsley, George Lings, Chris Neal, and Gill Poole. *Mission Shaped Church: Church Planting and Fresh Expressions of Church in a Changing Context*. London: Church House Publishing, 2004.
- Crutchfield, Jennifer. *Chattanooga Landmarks: Exploring the History of the Scenic City*. Charleston, SC: History Press, 2010.
- Dale, Tony, Felicity Dale, and George Barna. *The Rabbit and the Elephant: Why Small Is the New Big for Today's Church*. Brentwood, TN: Barna Group, 2009.
- Dennison, Jack. *City Reaching: On the Road to Community Transformation*. Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library, 1999.
- Evans, Raymond and Rita Hubbard. *Historical African American Places in the Chattanooga Area*. Signal Mountain, TN: CASI Publishing, 2009.
- Evangelical Presbyterian Church. *The Book of Order*. Livonia, MI: Evangelical Presbyterian Church, 2012.
- First Presbyterian Church Elders and Deacons. *Meeting Minutes*. Chattanooga, TN: First Presbyterian Church, Chattanooga, April 22, 2013.
- Frost, Michael and Alan Hirsch. *The Shaping of Things to Come: Innovation and Mission for the Twenty-First Century Church*. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 2003.
- Gornik, Mark. *To Live in Peace: Biblical Faith and the Changing Inner City*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2002. Kindle Electronic Edition.
- Graham, Glenn H. *An Exegetical Summary of Ephesians*, 2nd ed. Dallas: SIL International, 2008.
- Halter, Hugh. *The Tangible Kingdom: Creating Incarnational Community*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, 2008.
- _____ and Matt Smay. *AND: The Gathered and Scattered Church*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2010.

- Hatmaker, Brandon. *Barefoot Church: Serving the Least in a Consumer Culture*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2011.
- Hawkins, Greg and Cally Parkinson. *Move: What 1000 Churches Reveal about Spiritual Growth*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2011.
- Heltzel, Peter. *Jesus and Justice: Evangelicals, Race, and American Politics*. Ann Arbor, MI: Sheridan Books, 2009.
- Hirsch, Alan. *The Forgotten Ways: Reactivating the Missional Church*. Grand Rapids, MI: Brazos Press, 2006.
- _____ and Darryn Altclass. *The Forgotten Ways Handbook: A Practical Guide for Developing Missional Churches*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2009. Kindle Electronic Edition.
- _____ and Dave Ferguson. *On the Verge: A Journey into the Apostolic Future of the Church*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2011.
- Houser, Frederick and Steven Leach. "Neighborhood Analysis: District No. 1, City Center." In *Hamilton County Regional Planning Commission Report*, 1-47. Chattanooga, TN: Hamilton County Regional Planning Commission, October 1977.
- Hubbard, Rita Lorraine. *African Americans of Chattanooga: A History of Unsung Heroes*. Charleston, SC: The History Press, 2007.
- Hundt, Karen, Pamela Glaser, Emily Garrigus, and Nikki Jones. *MLK Community Plan: A Look at the Past, Present, and Future*. Chattanooga, TN: Chattanooga-Hamilton County Regional Planning Agency, 2009.
- Johnson, A. F. *1 Corinthians. The IVP New Testament Commentary Series*. Vol. 7. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2004.
- Kärkkäinen, Veli-Matti. *Introduction to Ecclesiology: Ecumenical, Historical and Global Perspectives*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2002.
- Kinnaman, David. *You Lost Me: Why Young Christians Are Leaving Church and Rethinking Faith*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2011.
- Lancaster, Lynne and David Stillman. *The M-Factor: How the Millennial Generation Is Rocking the Workplace*. New York: HarperCollins, 2010.

- Ledwith, Margaret. *Community Development: A Critical Approach*. 2nd ed. Portland, OR: The Policy Press, 2011.
- Lightfoot, J. B. *Colossians and Philemon: The Crossway Classic Commentaries*. Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 1997.
- Luther, Martin. *The Babylonian Captivity of the Church*. Translated by A. T. W. Steinhäuser. 1520. Reprint, Project Gutenberg Self-Publishing Press, http://self.gutenberg.org/uploads/pdf/20110830030704babylonian_captivity.pdf, accessed August 7, 2013)
- _____. *Table Talk*. 1626. Reprint, Christian Classics Ethereal Library, <http://www.ccel.org/ccel/luther/tabletalk.v.xlv.html> (accessed August 7, 2013).
- Lyons, Gabe. *The Next Christians: How a New Generation is Restoring the Faith*. New York: Doubleday, 2010.
- _____ and David Kinnaman, *UnChristian: What a New Generation Really Thinks about Christianity . . . and Why It Matters*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2007.
- MacLellan Foundation. "College of Elders." Meeting held at The Bethlehem Center, Chattanooga, TN, July 25, 2012.
- Malphurs, Aubrey. *A New Kind of Church: Understanding Models of Ministry for the Twenty-First Century*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2007.
- McNeal, Reggie. *Missional Renaissance: Changing the Scorecard for the Church*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, 2009.
- Meyers, Eleanor Scott, ed. *Envisioning the New City: A Reader on Urban Ministry*. Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1992.
- Michaels, J. Ramsey. *Revelation: The IVP New Testament Commentary Series*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1997.
- Moore Steve. *Who Is My Neighbor? Being a Good Samaritan in a Connected World*. Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 2010.
- Mullett, Michael A. *Martin Luther*. New York: Routledge, 2004.
- Newbigin, Lesslie. *The Gospel in a Pluralist Society*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1989.

- O'Brien, Peter T. *Colossians, Philemon*. Vol. 44 of *Word Biblical Commentary*. Dallas: Word, Inc., 1998.
- Ogilvie, Lloyd. *Acts: The Preacher's Commentary*. Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1983.
- Packer, J.I. *A Passion for Faithfulness: Wisdom from the Book of Nehemiah*. Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 1995.
- Perkins, John M. *Beyond Charity*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1993.
- _____. *Restoring At-Risk Communities: Doing It Together and Doing It Right*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1996. Kindle electronic edition.
- Perkins, Pamela. "Urban Transformation." *CityScope Magazine*, June 2012.
- Rah, Soong-Chan. *The Next Evangelicalism*. Grand Rapids, MI: InterVarsity Press, 2009.
- Rainer, Thom. *Essential Church? Reclaiming a Generation of Dropouts*. Nashville: Broadman and Holman Publishing, 2008.
- Richter, Philip and Leslie Francis. *Gone but Not Forgotten*. London: Darton, Longman & Todd Ltd., 1998.
- Roxburgh, Alan. *Missional Map-Making: Skills for Leading in Times of Transition*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, 2010.
- _____. *Missionary Congregation, Leadership, and Liminality*. Norcross, GA: Trinity Press International, 1997.
- Rusaw, Rick and Eric Swanson. *The Externally Focused Church*. Loveland, CO: Group Publishing, 2004.
- Russell, Mark L. *The Missional Entrepreneur: Principles and Practices for Business as Mission*. Birmingham, AL: New Hope Publishers, 2010. Kindle Electronic Edition.
- Schaller, Lyle, ed. *Center City Churches: The New Urban Frontier*. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1993.
- Signal Mountain Presbyterian Church Elders. *Meeting Minutes*. Signal Mountain, TN: Signal Mountain Presbyterian Church, Chattanooga, TN, June 13, 2012.

- Smith, M. H. *Westminster Confession of Faith*. Electronic ed. Greenville SC: Greenville Presbyterian Theological Seminary Press, 1996.
- Stetzer, Ed. *Planting Missional Churches*. Nashville: Broadman and Holman Publishing, 2006.
- Swanson, Eric and Sam Williams. *To Transform a City: Whole Church, Whole Gospel, Whole City*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2010.
- Taylor, Adam. *Mobilizing Hope: Faith-Inspired Activism for a Post-Civil Rights Generation*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2010.
- Turner, Victor. *The Forest of Symbols: Aspects of Ndembu Ritual*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1967.
- Urban League of Chattanooga. "Healthy Food Access." Forum held at the Urban League, 730 MLK Boulevard, Chattanooga, TN, April 18, 2012.
- Van Engen, Charles. *God's Missionary People: Rethinking the Purpose of the Local Church*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1991.
- Watts, John D.W. *Isaiah 34-66*. Vol. 25 in *The Word Biblical Commentary*. Dallas: Word Books, 1987.
- Willimon, William H. *Acts: Interpretation Commentary Series*. Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2010.
- Winter, Bruce. *Seek the Welfare of the City: Christians as Benefactors and Citizens (First-Century Christians in the Graeco-Roman World)*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1994.
- Wright, Christopher J. H. *The Mission of God: Unlocking the Bible's Grand Narrative*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2006.
- Wright, N. T. *Surprised by Hope: Rethinking Heaven, the Resurrection, and the Mission of the Church*. New York: HarperOne, 2008.
- _____. "TM716: The Church as Mission." Lecture, Fuller Theological Seminary, Pasadena, CA, 2009.

Websites

- The Benwood Foundation. "History." <http://www.benwood.org/pages/History/> (accessed July 2, 2013).

Berry, Tim. "15 Reasons You Need a Business Plan." *Entrepreneur*, March 13, 2006. <http://www.entrepreneur.com/article/83818> (accessed June 11, 2013).

Bethlehem Center. <http://www.thebeth.org/> (accessed June 10, 2013).

BloombergBusinessWeek: Business Schools. "Best Undergraduate B-Schools Ranking History," March 20, 2013. <http://www.businessweek.com/articles/2013-03-20/best-undergraduate-b-schools-ranking-history> (accessed June 3, 2013).

Brandon, Emily. "10 Affordable Places to Retire." *US News & World Report*. <http://money.usnews.com/money/retirement/articles/2009/03/26/10-affordable-places-to-retire> (accessed August 5, 2013).

The Chalmers Center. "Who We Are." <http://www.chalmers.org/about/who> (accessed June 5, 2013).

Chattanooga Area Chamber. "Maria Noel Is New Chamber Director of Minority Business Assistance," <http://www.chattanoogachamber.com/news-media/news/2012/6/6/maria-noel-is-new-chamber-director> (accessed June 11, 2013).

_____. "The World Is Talking." <http://www.chattanooga-chamber.com/news-media/the-world-is-talking> (accessed June 3, 2013).

Chattanooga Community Kitchen. <http://www.homelesschattanooga.org/programs.html> (accessed May 8, 2013).

Chattanooga State Community College. <http://www.chattanoogastate.edu> (accessed June 24, 2013).

Christian Church (Disciples of Christ). "History of the Disciples." <http://www.disciples.org/Home/WhoWeAre/HistoryoftheDisciples/tabid/1116/Default.aspx> (accessed May 8, 2013).

City-Data.com. "Hamilton County." <http://www.city-data.com/city/Chattanooga-Tennessee.html> (accessed July 3, 2013).

Co,Lab: The Company Lab. "Springboard." <http://colab.is/what-we-do/springboard/> (accessed June 27, 2013).

_____. "Startups," <http://colab.is/startups/> (accessed June 12, 2013).

_____. "What We Do." <http://colab.is/what-we-do/> (accessed June 24, 2013).

- Eisenmann, Thomas. "Entrepreneurship: A Working Definition." Harvard Business Review Blog Network. Entry posted January 10, 2013. Harvard Business Review. <http://blogs.hbr.org/hbsfaculty/2013/01/what-is-entrepreneurship.html> (accessed June 3, 2013).
- The Enterprise Center. "Renewal Community." <http://www.theenterprisectr.org/renewal-community/about.html> (accessed July 2, 2012).
- First Christian Church in Chattanooga. "Welcome!" <http://firstchristian-chat.com/welcome.htm> (accessed July 2, 2013).
- The Gig City. "Why GigTank?" <http://www.thegigcity.com/gigtank/why-gigtank/> (accessed June 24, 2013).
- Gordon, Kim T. "Become a Business Evangelist." *Entrepreneur*, September 1, 2006. <http://www.entrepreneur.com/article/165864> (accessed July 20, 2013).
- Habitat for Humanity. <http://www.habitat.org> (accessed June 21, 2013).
- Hamilton County, "Age-Sex breakdown. Tennessee-Hamilton County, Census Tract 124, Block Group 3." *Hamilton County*. <http://2010.census.gov/2010census/popmap/> (accessed July 2, 2012).
- Harambee Ministries. <http://www.harambeeministries.org/> (accessed June 24, 2013).
- Hein, Steven A. "Luther on *Vocatio*: Ordinary Life for Ordinary Saints," Issues, Etc. <http://www.mtio.com/articles/aissar17.htm> (accessed May 29, 2013).
- Hirsch, Alan. "Defining Missional." *Christianity Today*. <http://www.christianitytoday.com/le/2008/fall/17.20.html> (accessed May 8, 2013).
- Hope for the Inner City. <http://hope4theinnercity.org/> (accessed May 6, 2013).
- Hundt, Karen, Pamela Glaser, Emily Garrigus, and Nikki Jones. *MLK Community Plan: A Look at the Past, Present, and Future*. Chattanooga, TN: Chattanooga-Hamilton County Regional Planning Agency, February 2009. Chattanooga-Hamilton County Regional Planning Agency. http://www.chcrpa.org/Projects/MLK_Plan/MLK%20Plan%20Final%202002.19.09.pdf (accessed August 1, 2011).
- Lamp Post Group. <http://www.lamppostgroup.com/> (accessed August 6, 2013).
- Launch Chattanooga. "Programs." http://www.launchchattanooga.org/programs?doing_wp_cron=1372099943.3208520412445068359375 (accessed June 24, 2013).

- Lee, Yuen and Jim Sanks. *Briefly Speaking: Downtown Groceries for Chattanooga*. Chattanooga, TN: Chattanooga-Hamilton County Regional Planning Agency, December 2007. Chattanooga-Hamilton County Regional Planning Agency. http://www.chcrpa.org/Divisions_and_Functions/Information_and_Research/Policy_Research_and_Studies/DT%20Grocery_email%20version.pdf (accessed June 10, 2013).
- Lyndhurst Foundation. "About the Foundation: Foundation History." <http://www.lyndhurstfoundation.org/about-the-foundation/> (accessed July 2, 2013).
- The Maclellan Family Foundations. "History," <http://www.maclellan.net/family-foundations/maclellan/history> (accessed June 24, 2013).
- Mahoney, William. "Entrepreneurship's Wild Ride." *Lessons from the Classroom*, May 30, 2000. Harvard Business School. <http://hbswk.hbs.edu/item/1541.html> (accessed August 6, 2013).
- Marketplace Life. "Tennessee Sets Its Sights on Its Very Own Typeface." <http://www.marketplace.org/topics/life/tennessee-city-sets-its-sights-its-very-own-typeface> (accessed June 14, 2013).
- Marking, Mark. "Mission." <http://markmaking.org/mission-public-art-chattanooga/> (accessed June 12, 2013).
- Mendenhall Ministries. http://mendenhallministries.org/?page_id=6 (accessed July 3, 2013).
- Microsoft. "Business Evangelist Job." <http://www.microsoft-careers.com/job/Business-Evangelist-Job/2604439/> (accessed July 20, 2013).
- The Mission Chattanooga. <http://www.missionchattanooga.org/mission/> (accessed July 2, 2013).
- Newport, Frank. "Mississippi Maintains Hold as Most Religious U.S. State: Vermont Is Least Religious." Gallup. <http://www.gallup.com/poll/160415/mississippi-maintains-hold-religious-state.aspx?ref=more> (accessed June 12, 2013).
- Power, Brad. "Operational Excellence, Meet Customer Intimacy." Harvard Business Review Blog. Entry posted March 29, 2013. Harvard Business Review. http://blogs.hbr.org/cs/2013/03/operational_excellence_meet_cu.html (accessed July 21, 2013).
- Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). "Final Report of the Special Committee to Study Issues of Civil Union and Christian Marriage." <http://www.pcusa.org/resource/final-report-special-committee-study-issues-civil-/> (accessed July 2, 2013).

Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.): Office of Theology and Worship. *Hope in the Lord Jesus Christ*. Louisville: Office of Theology and Worship, 2002. <http://www.pcusa.org/resource/hope-lord-jesus-christ/> (accessed July 2, 2013).

_____. "The Trinity: God's Love Overflowing." <http://www.pcusa.org/resource/trinity-gods-love-overflowing/> (accessed May 6, 2013).

_____. *The Trinity: God's Love Overflowing*. Louisville: Office of Theology and Worship, 2004. <http://www.pcusa.org/media/uploads/theologyandworship/pdfs/trinityfinal.pdf> (accessed July 2, 2013).

Purves, Andrew and Charles Partee. *Theology Matters* 12, no. 2 (March-April 2006):1-4. <http://www.theologymatters.com/MarApr06.pdf> (accessed May 6, 2013).

The Red Hot Jazz Archive: A History of Jazz Before 1930. "Bessie Smith." <http://www.redhotjazz.com/bessie.html> (accessed July 2, 2012).

Q Ideas for the Common Good. "Restorers: How the Church Can Change a City." <http://www.qideas.org/blog/how-the-church-can-change-a-city.aspx> (accessed June 12, 2013).

Religion Facts. "Church Attendance by State." http://www.religionfacts.com/religion_statistics/church_attendance_by_state.htm (accessed June 12, 2013).

River City Company. "Who We Are." <http://www.rivercitycompany.com/new/about> (accessed June 24, 2013).

Sojourners. *Young Evangelicals in the 2012 Election*. Washington, DC: Sojourners, October 16, 2012. <http://sojo.net/sites/default/files/YEStudyFinal.pdf> (accessed May 6, 2013).

State Guides USA. "Tennessee's Top Ten Cities by Population." <http://tennessee.stateguidesusa.com/answers-to-my-questions/what-are-the-top-10-largest-cities-in-tennessee?/> (accessed November 29, 2012).

Tennessee Small Business Development Center. "What Is the Tennessee Small Business Development Center?" <https://www.tsbdc.org/DocumentMaster.aspx?doc=1012> (accessed June 24, 2013).

Texas District LCMS: Board of Mission Administration. *Church Planting Steps for Mission Partners*. <http://www.m2ctexas.org/resource/Steps%20to%20planting%20072010%20edition.pdf> (accessed May 6, 2013).

University of Tennessee at Chattanooga. *98-99 UTC Catalog*. <http://www.utc.edu/Administration/Records/documents/1998UTCcatalog.pdf> (accessed June 3, 2013).

_____. "About UTC: History." <http://www.utc.edu/About/History.php/> (accessed July 2, 2012).

_____. "John C. Stophel Distinguished Student Award: 2011-2012." <http://www.utc.edu/Academic/Business/DistinguishedStudents2012.php> (accessed June 14, 2013).

_____. "Our Apartments." <http://housing.utc.edu/index.php/utc-housing/our-apartments> (accessed May 14, 2013).

_____. "Survey explores connections between the University and downtown Chattanooga." <http://blog.utc.edu/news/2012/05/survey-explores-connections-between-the-university-and-downtown-chattanooga> (accessed July 2, 2012).

_____. *The University of Tennessee at Chattanooga: Campus Master Plan*. <http://www.utc.edu/CampusMasterPlan/Resources/CampusMasterPlanExecSummary7-25-12.pdf> (accessed June 3, 2013).

_____. "Working with the M.L. King Neighborhood." <http://www.utc.edu/Administration/UniversityRelations/newsreleases/expansion/expansion.html> (accessed July 2, 2012).

Urban League of Greater Chattanooga. *Healthy Food Access in the Greater Chattanooga Area*. Chattanooga, TN: Urban League of Greater Chattanooga, April 18, 2012. <http://www.ulchatt.net/images/stories/pdfs/urban%20league%20of%20greater%20chattanooga%20-%20healthy%20food%20access%20paper%20full%20version.pdf> (accessed July 22, 2013).

_____. "Programs and Services." <http://www.ulchatt.net/programs> (accessed June 24, 2013).

USDA Economic Research Services. *Access to Affordable and Nutritious Food—Measuring and Understanding Food Deserts and Their Consequences: Report to Congress*, by Michele Ver Ploeg, Vince Breneman, Tracey Farrigan, Karen Hamrick, David Hopkins, Phillip Kaufman, Biing-Hwan Lin, Mark Nord, Travis A. Smith, Ryan Williams, Kelly Kinnison, Carol Olander, Anita Singh, and Elizabeth Tuckermanty, no. (AP-036). Washington, DC: United States Department of Agriculture, June 2009. <http://www.ers.usda.gov/publications/ap-administrative-publication/ap-036.aspx#Ua1XISs-Zm0> (accessed June 3, 2013).

_____. "Food Desert Locator." United States Department of Agriculture,
<http://www.ers.usda.gov/data-products/food-desert-locator/go-to-the-locator.aspx>
(accessed July 2, 2012).

Wengert, Timothy. "The Priesthood of All Believers and Other Pious Myths."
http://www.valpo.edu/ils/assets/pdfs/05_wengert.pdf, (accessed May 23, 2013).

Wotapka, Dawn. "Chattanooga Reinvents Itself, at its Own Pace." *Wall Street Journal Online*, April 17, 2012. <http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424052702303624004577341932764696276.html> (accessed June 3, 2013).