

THE EFFECTS OF LAITY MINISTRY INVOLVEMENT
ON TRANSFORMATIONAL DISCIPLESHIP

by

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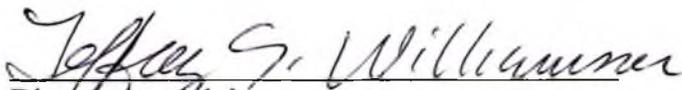
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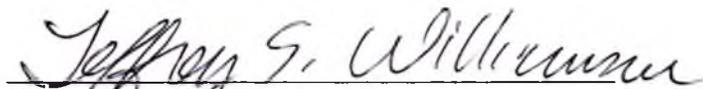
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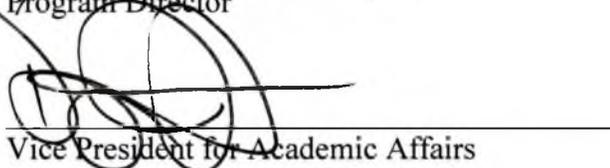
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DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to my beautiful wife Janelle and our two beautiful daughters, Olivia and Ava. You have all sacrificed greatly as I worked through this research process, and your smiles and laughter kept me going when I was ready to give up. Thank you for your support in this process! I certainly could not have completed a project of this magnitude without your love and support. I pray that the benefits of what I have learned can apply to my own discipleship journey so that through this dissertation research I can be a much better husband and father!

ABSTRACT

This study sought to determine the impacts of *The Place Assessment* process within four congregations that are a part of The Church of the Nazarene in central and Eastern Iowa. *The Place Assessment* process included structured teaching, completing a comprehensive assessment online, and structured coaching. The results of this process showed measurable increases in the areas of discipleship engagement and discipleship transformation.

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CHAPTER 1.

INTRODUCTION

This chapter will provide an overview of the historical and theological problem facing the church in America today in addition to a background section, research questions, description of terms, significance of study, and a process to accomplish.

In 1778 John Wesley preached a message entitled *The Work of God in North America*. In this message, Wesley spoke against the simplistic Christianity that had been gaining traction in the Colonies through the work of George Whitefield. Wesley was very direct in his assessment of the situation:

Those who were more or less affected by Mr. Whitefield's preaching had no discipline at all. They had no shadow of discipline; nothing of the kind. They were formed into no societies. They had no Christian connection with each other, nor were ever taught to watch over each other's souls. So that if any fell into lukewarmness, or even into sin, he had none to lift him up. He might fall lower and lower, yea, into hell, if he would; for who regarded it? (Wesley, 1872)

Wesley's words are very prophetic as we look at the condition of the church in North America today. Church attendance in America, prior to Whitefield's revivals through the present time, has shown great fluctuation. Church attendance under the Puritan control was mandatory. Once the era of Puritan control came to an end, church attendance plummeted to between five and 10% (Shelley, 1995). Church attendance was impacted by a series of revivals or awakenings. Over the past 40 years, scholars have

disagreed as to the number of awakenings, and to the measurable impacts of these revivals (Gordon-McCutchan, 1983; Hammond, 1983; McLaughlin, 1983; Smith, 1983; Wilson, 1983). Much of the disagreement is based on the reality that quantitative statistical data from early American history is impossible to adequately evaluate because records were kept inconsistently, if at all (McLaughlin). The main source of qualitative data during the early awakenings were religious periodicals. Rogers (2010) listed 10 such periodicals that reported the stories of the Great Awakening.

Knoll (1992) defined the Great Awakening as taking place between 1700 and 1750. The Great Awakening had two main preachers: George Whitefield and Jonathan Edwards. Connecticut church records indicate that during the Great Awakening church membership was increasing by an average of 33 new members per year, compared to the eight member per year increase experienced prior to The Great Awakening. However, shortly after the peak, the numbers fell below the average of eight that were joining prior to the revival. Proportionally, church membership numbers did not show long-lasting growth. The fires of revival sparked fast and furious, but failed to show sustained impact. The coming revolution served to distract the masses from spiritual concerns as they sought to fight for and then establish a new nation (Knoll).

According to Knoll (1992) the second great awakening was carried out by the newly founded Methodists rather than their Calvinistic counterparts who had led the charge on the first Great Awakening. The Wesleyan theology espoused by the Methodists combined with the organizational structures from John Wesley helped retain more of the growth from the Second Great Awakening than had the first (Knoll). The fervor of the revival once again was interrupted by the political division as the nation prepared for the

Civil War. The two main proponents of the Second Great Awakening were Francis Asbury and Charles Finney (Knoll).

Rogers (2010) reported that church attendance in the Burned Over District, an over evangelized area, in New York grew at more than twice the population growth rate during the period of the Second Great Awakening. The preaching ministry led to many converts, but inadequate discipleship. Moreland (1997) pointed out the dangers of revival without discipleship:

One tragic result of this was what happened in the so-called Burned Over District in the state of New York. Thousands of people were ‘converted’ to Christ by revivalist preaching, but they had no real intellectual grasp of Christian teaching. As a result, two of the three major American cults began in the Burned Over District among the unstable, untaught ‘converts’: Mormonism (1830) and the Jehovah’s Witnesses (1884), Christian Science arose in 1866 but was not connected with this area. (p. 23)

The cults that developed out of the Burned Over District shows clearly that converts who are not discipled are very susceptible to teachings that take some truth and combine it with lies. Converts who are not adequately discipled are unable to discern the lies and head down destructive paths (Moreland).

A third awakening began in the 1880’s (Adie, 2002). Leaders such as Dwight Moody and Billy Sunday traveled and held revivals across America. During this same time period the Holiness movement came of age as well, and Phineas F. Bresee planted the first Church of the Nazarene in downtown Los Angeles, California (Smith, 1962). Several key challenges hit the church at this time, cooling the revival fires for many: the

Darwinian Theory of Evolution became widespread, the industrial revolution sent multitudes of people to the cities, replacing the rural mindset, and higher criticism of Scripture divided the church (Shelley, 1995).

A fourth awakening began to develop in America following the Second World War. Led by the southern Billy Graham, the evangelical movement swept across America aided by the technological advances of amplification for large crusades as well as television (Shelley, 1995).

In all of the awakening movements, conversion was viewed as the goal, not discipleship. The result was large crowds attending church, but a small percentage who actually understood the truths of Christianity. Christian researcher Barna Group (2009) conducted a longitudinal study geared at determining the worldview beliefs of Americans. The surveys, conducted in 1995, 2000, 2005, and 2008 revealed that the overwhelming majority of Americans do not hold a biblical worldview. Barna found that only nine percent, or 90 of the 1000 Americans surveyed, agreed with all six essential statements of a biblical worldview. The research conducted in 2008 was consistent with research conducted in prior years with one notable exception, the young adult response. According to Barna Group, less than one half of one percent of the adults surveyed between the ages of 18-23 reported having a biblical worldview (The Barna Group).

The decline now felt by the church is showing itself to be as significant, if not more significant, than the decline felt at the conclusion of the First Great Awakening. Rainer and Rainer (2008) summarized the effects of the crisis as it is played out in church attendance. The American population has surpassed three hundred million; however, almost every denomination in the United States is showing a decline in conversions.

Although 52% or one hundred fifty-seven million Americans claim to be a part of a Protestant church, only 28%, or eighty-five million are actively attending church (Rainer & Rainer). In a decade-long study beginning in 2000 and ending in 2010, Roozen (2011) found that “worship attendance of your typical congregation dropped from 130 to 108” (p. 14). Barna Group (as cited in Kinnaman, 2011) researchers have found that the church is currently losing approximately 43% of young adults permanently. Lifeway Research has found that 70% of all young adults drop out of church for a minimum of a year between the ages of 18 and 22 (McConnell, 2007).

The Barna Group (2012) conducted a study to determine the impact of church on the lives of attendees. Of the 1,000 people surveyed, only 66%, or 660 attendees, reported connecting with God while at church. Barna researchers discovered that 46%, or 460 participants, reported that church was not transformative for them. Researchers also discovered that 61%, or 610 of those surveyed could not report gaining any spiritual insights on their last visit to church (Barna, 2012).

Statement of the Problem

The problem, clearly stated, is the failure of the church to accomplish its God-given mission which is to make disciples. While American history is full of episodes of mass conversions, the failure to make disciples has left little to show for the overall growth of the Kingdom.

A multitude of theories exist as to the cause of the current decline in the American church. Weems (2010) pointed to aging members and the lack of regular commitment among younger members. Underwood (2010) pointed to politics, narrow-mindedness, judgmental attitudes, and irrelevance. Jenkins (2010) recognized the damaging effects of

church scandals in the decline of the church. Willard (2006) reflected on the tendencies in the church to focus on a multitude of noble causes, but to fail to focus on the essential truths of discipleship. Kinnaman (2011) summarized the root cause: the failure to engage The Great Commission.

Jesus gave The Great Commission to his disciples before he ascended into heaven. The apostle Matthew recorded Jesus' commissioning statement: "Therefore, go and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. Teach these new disciples to obey all the commands I have given you" (Matthew 28:19–20 New Living Translation). The American church has made discipleship optional, focusing instead on a simplistic conversion process (Willard, 2006). The New Testament picture of discipleship shows that true discipleship is chiefly concerned with heart transformation – transformed lives that reflect the image of God to the world around them. The church in America has focused instead on the dissemination of biblical information resulting in behavior modification. The dissemination of biblical information is necessary for transformation to occur; however, it does not constitute discipleship. Likewise, behavior modification is a part of discipleship, but is also not the primary aim (Geiger, Kelley, & Nation, 2012).

A theology of transformational discipleship has a Trinitarian foundation: God as creator, Christ as incarnation, and Spirit as enabler. Through the example of the early church, one can see these three components coming together in powerful ways to fulfill the mission given by Christ to His disciples as he ascended into heaven.

The biblical record recounted the creation of humans in the first chapter of Genesis: "So God created human beings in His own image. In the image of God he

created them; male and female he created them” (Gen 1:27, New Living Translation). The theme continues throughout the Old Testament and into the New Testament with Paul mentioning the call to reflect the image of God multiple times in his letters. James and John also mention this theme in their letters. The Old Testament presents the image of God as foundational to humanity (Gen 1:26-28, Gen 5:1-3). The New Testament presents the image of God as a part of humanity that was damaged in the fall, yet through the sacrifice of Christ on the cross, this image can be restored (Eph 4:22-24, Col 3:9-11).

Scripture contains many examples of diversity. One quickly discovers that from the beginning, God did not create robots that were designed to simply do His bidding. The image of God is reflected in the diversity of all whom He created. One person does not fully represent the image of God, but the combined diversities of His creation reflect the fullness of His character.

The second member of the Trinity is Jesus Christ. In developing a theological foundation of discipleship, one should look at the diversity of the disciples Jesus chose to accomplish His mission. Some were very dominant in their personalities: Peter was the first to speak when Jesus would ask a question (Matthew 16); James and John were nicknamed by Jesus the sons of thunder (Mark 3:17); Matthew was a tax collector, and the writing style represented in his Gospel indicates that he was an analytical thinker. Jesus rebuked the disciples for their selfishness, sinfulness, and lack of faith. He did not, however, rebuke the disciples for their diversity.

The Holy Spirit was described by the apostle Paul as the one who gave the spiritual gifts to the church (1 Cor 12). Paul instructed the churches to appreciate the diversity of the gifts, as all were necessary to the greater good. The Holy Spirit, according

to the New Testament narrative, was given to empower the early church to accomplish the mission of making disciples. The members of the early church recognized the importance of their mission and were successful in evangelizing at least one tenth of the Roman Empire before Christianity was legalized in the fourth century (Schaff & Schaff, 1910).

The purpose of this study is to determine the effectiveness of a comprehensive assessment which evaluates personality, spiritual gifts, abilities, passions, and life experiences combined with structured coaching in order to increase discipleship engagement, transformation, and improve the local church's ability to make disciples.

Background

A review of the literature reveals many challenges to discipleship. Pastoral burnout can too easily result from a lack of congregational engagement, motivation, and superficial faith that does not lead to transformation while undermining the primary goals of discipleship.

Pastoral burnout is a sad reality facing church leadership today. Pastors tend to work excessive hours to meet the needs presented within their congregations. Kelly (2010) detailed the findings of a study aimed at determining the negative effects of excessive work hours by pastors. Kelly stated that full-time senior pastors work an average of 55 hours per week, with 42%, or 420 of the 1000 pastors surveyed, reported working more than 60 hours per week. As a result, 54% of pastors, or 540 of the 1000 pastors surveyed, reported spending less than 20 hours a week with their families, and 10%, or 100 of the 1000 pastors reported spending less than nine hours with family each week.

The excessive hours worked by pastors typically come from the unrealistic expectations of laity. Meek et al. (2003) detailed the findings from two studies designed to determine the best ways for psychologists to help clergy. The survey administered through Fuller Institute of Church Growth revealed that unrealistic expectations are causing significant stress for clergy and their families with over 80%, or 318 out of 398 clergy surveyed, reporting that ministry had affected their families in negative ways, and half dropped out of full-time ministry after serving five years or less. Participants were asked to answer several questions including the number of roles that they fulfilled on a regular basis as a pastor. Of a possible 13 roles, the average pastor fulfilled 8.2 on a regular basis. The results of the combined research showed that intentionality was an integral part of health for clergy. The choices of balancing roles and to intentionally seek connecting relationships were essential for clergy health.

Avoiding pastoral burnout is of utmost importance. Parker and Martin (2009) detailed the findings of a study aimed at identifying the contributing factors of clergy burnout. According to Parker and Martin, pastoral ministry has an extremely high attrition rate. Burnout impacts clergy and their families negatively in nearly every area of functioning.

Parker and Martin (2009) made use of a quadripolar model of need achievement with four types of motivation as the measurement: success-oriented individuals, overstrivers, self-protectors, and failure accepters. According to Parker and Martin, success-oriented individuals and failure-acceptors experienced the least reports of burnout while overstrivers and self-protectors reported statistically significant proclivity towards burnout.

Lay involvement is key to avoiding pastoral burnout, and to accomplishing the goals of discipleship. Motivation for involvement is the next research focus. Grant (2008) detailed the findings of two studies designed to clarify the synergistic role of prosocial and intrinsic motivation. According to Grant, prosocial motivation applies the desire to help others to persistence, performance and productivity. Prosocial motivation can have moral roots, but it does not require them.

Grant (2008) reported two distinct studies with varying populations to test his hypothesis that “intrinsic motivation moderates the relationship between prosocial motivation and persistence, performance, and productivity” (p. 50). The first study involved 58 full-time firefighters from a Midwestern community. Those who reported both prosocial and intrinsic motivation volunteered for significantly more overtime than those who ranked themselves lower on either scale. The second study was conducted with 140 paid fundraising callers as participants. Callers who reported both intrinsic and prosocial motivation raised considerably more money within a two-month period than those who reported lower scores in either category.

Grant and Berry (2011) detailed the results of three studies designed to discover the necessary components for intrinsic motivation to fuel creativity. According to Grant and Berry, intrinsic motivation was defined as “the desire to expend effort based on interest and enjoyment of the work that was being performed” (p. 74). Grant and Berry sought to determine the role that prosocial motivation plays on intrinsic motivation. Prosocial motivation was defined as “the desire to expend effort based on a concern for helping or contributing to other people” (p. 77).

Grant and Berry (2011) performed three different research projects in order to test the role that prosocial motivation plays in intrinsic motivation towards creativity.

According to Grant and Berry, the first study surveyed 90 security force officers and their supervisors. The second study surveyed 111 water treatment plant employees and their supervisors. The final study involved 100 undergraduate college students in a controlled lab environment. The findings were that intrinsic motivation was significantly related to prosocial motivation in all three studies. When prosocial motivation was listed as high, intrinsic motivation was rated high as well. When prosocial motivation was reported as being low, intrinsic motivation was also reported as being low.

Hardy (2006) studied the role of moral identity in the process of moral motivation. According to Hardy, prior research focused on moral motivation stemming from a moral reasoning and/or moral emotion. However, moral reasoning and moral emotion were not sufficient predictors of moral behavior. Therefore, Hardy sought to determine if moral identity, combined with moral reasoning and moral emotion, could help predict moral behavior. Moral identity was “conceptualized as the degree to which moral virtues are central and important to one’s identity” (p. 208). After analyses, Hardy concluded that the relationship between prosocial identity and prosocial behaviors are statistically significant. According to Hardy, prosocial identity was highly predictive of the choices and behaviors.

A lack of prosocial motivation among laity creates a significant challenge for clergy. While the Great Awakenings stirred laity to prosocial causes, lay energies were not cultivated with a continual spiritual foundation. Therefore church attendance and involvement began to decline. Much of the rapid decline in the church following periods

of revival have to do with a lack of true transformation. The concept of transformational learning has much to say about the process of transformation in the life of the disciple.

Brock (2010) detailed the findings of a study aimed at measuring the importance of the steps to transformative learning as outlined by its founder, Jack Mezirow. According to Brock, Mezirow had indicated that all steps were not necessary for transformative learning to take place. Researchers have focused much attention on the concept of transformative learning, but have spent little time on the ten steps outlined by Mezirow.

Brock (2010) discovered that students who experienced more of the steps to transformative learning were more likely to remember the process than those who experienced less steps. The average person who reported transformative learning averaged 5.6 steps. The only step reported by all students was that of a disorienting dilemma.

Choy (2009) detailed the findings of a study designed to discover the opportunities and implications of transformational learning in the workplace. Choy believed that the workplace offers an ideal location for transformational learning.

Choy (2009) established a case study focusing on 12 key leaders of a non-governmental agency in Australia. Choy reported that transformational learning did indeed take place through this case study. According to Choy, as learners sought to develop meaning out of the course, the process of critical reflection started. Transformative learning continued as the participants were able to intentionally learn, causing them to challenge their previously held positions on several key issues. The

process of transformative learning also involved learning to accept and process the input of others, regardless of role or title.

Duarte (2010) detailed the findings of a study aimed at addressing student cynicism of business ethics through transformative learning. The research conducted by Duarte involved surveys completed by 119 third-year students in a Bachelor of Business Management program. Students were asked two open-ended questions and one multiple choice question. Duarte discovered that 95%, or 114 of the 119 students agreed that it was important to study ethics, and 84%, or 100 of the 119 students felt that they had benefited from the study of ethics, 42% of students, or 50 of the 119 students, agreed with a statement indicating that ethics are important, but that a company's bottom line was more important.

Malkki (2012) reported the findings of a study seeking to understand the role of crises in reflection as it pertains to transformative learning. According to Malkki, reflection was well established as a necessary component of the learning process. Reflection is "at the core of adult learning, transformation, autonomy, and empowerment" (p. 208). Recognizing the importance of reflection, those concerned with transformative learning seek to understand what factors precipitate reflection, and thus transformation. The focus of this research was to determine the effectiveness of non-academic crisis in creating transformative learning.

Malkki (2012) concluded that the crisis of involuntary childlessness was sufficient to precipitate the reflection necessary for transformative learning. According to Malkki, reflection was deemed necessary to the process of finding meaning in the chaotic reality of involuntary childlessness.

The Place Assessment seeks to identify strengths and weaknesses in personality, spiritual gifts, abilities, passions, and life experiences. By understanding strengths, disciples are better able to find places of service within the local church (McSwain, 2000).

Lo, Helwig, Chen, Ohashi, and Cheng (2011) detailed the findings of their study to determine the self-enhancing and self-critical tendency differences between Eastern and Western cultures. According to Lo et al., East –Asian cultures are typically viewed as collectivistic, while European and American cultures are typically viewed as individualistic. Lo et al. hypothesized that self-assessment would show that Eastern cultures focus more on weaknesses and Western cultures focus more on strengths.

Lo et al. (2011) discovered that Eastern cultures do not focus more on their weaknesses than on their strengths. According to Lo et al., Eastern cultures viewed themselves in a more balanced manner. Western cultures viewed strengths slightly more important than weaknesses, but reported being much more self-critical than hypothesized.

Rust, Diessner, and Reade (2009) detailed the findings of a study to determine the benefits of focusing solely on strengths compared to focusing on strengths and weaknesses. According to Rust et al., a review of psychology literature since 1887 revealed articles that focused on negative aspects of humanity outnumbered those focused on a positive concept at a rate of 17 negative for every one positive. Positive psychology has attempted to counter the neglect by encouraging the primary attention to be on positive attributes rather than on the negative.

Rust et al. (2009) reported that the difference of life satisfaction between groups one and two were very minimal. However, the difference between the groups that were

asked to focus on something compared with the group that was not asked to focus was statistically significant.

Research Questions

1. In what ways does a comprehensive assessment which evaluates personality, spiritual gifts, abilities, passions, and life experiences combined with structured coaching increase discipleship engagement?

2. In what ways does a comprehensive assessment which evaluates personality, spiritual gifts, abilities, passions, and life experiences combined with structured coaching encourage transformation in the life of a disciple?

3. In what ways does a comprehensive individual assessment which evaluates personality, spiritual gifts, abilities, passions, and life experiences combined with structured individual coaching impact the church as an organization to better make disciples?

Description of Terms

Biblical Worldview. As defined by the Barna Group (2009), Biblical worldview is based on a system of belief that accepts the core beliefs communicated through the Bible: God as creator and sustainer of the universe; Jesus Christ as the way to salvation through His death on the cross and the sinless life he lived; Satan is a real force, not just symbolic of evil; absolute truth exists, and salvation comes through faith and cannot be earned (Barna Group).

Discipleship. Is the decision, whether conscious or unconscious, to follow after someone and learn from them. Discipleship is the act of following and learning. Everyone is a disciple of someone (Geiger et al., 2012). For purposes of this study, the

researcher defines discipleship as: A life-long transformational journey that engages the whole person, flows out of a personal relationship with Jesus Christ, and is fulfilled through participation in biblical community, intentional biblical engagement, and sacrificial service to others.

Journey of Discipleship. The process of spiritual maturity within the life of the disciple. The concept of a journey is reflective of a process rather than a single decision to follow Christ. Engaging the journey is a choice, God does not force transformation (Barna, 2011). There are many ideas to the number of stops on the journey, as well as to the substance of each stop.

Spiritual Formation. The “process of being conformed to the image of Christ for the sake of others” (Mulholland, 1993).

The Place Assessment. A comprehensive assessment that looks at a person’s personality, spiritual gifts, abilities, passions, and life experiences. The assessment is designed to be given with teaching and followed by personal coaching (McSwain, 2000).

Transformational discipleship. Assertion that discipleship is not a destination, but the journey on which God takes us to make us like Him (Barna, 2011a). The dissemination of biblical information is necessary for transformation to occur; however, it does not constitute discipleship. Likewise, behavior modification is a part of discipleship, but is also not the primary aim (Geiger et al., 2012).

Transformational learning. A theory of learning that recognized individuals must face a disorienting dilemma, or crises to force the transition of deeply held beliefs (Malkki, 2012).

Significance of the Study

Both evangelism and discipleship are important to the Church of the Nazarene. In fact, the mission statement of the global Church of the Nazarene is making Christlike disciples in the nations. However, The Church of the Nazarene has not been exempt from the decline being felt throughout the church in America. The Iowa District Church of the Nazarene has experienced a 29% decline over the last decade. The annual reports filed with The Church of the Nazarene show that over a ten year period, only 12%, or nine of 71 churches reported any growth. The past decade has witnessed 24%, or 17 of the 71 churches being closed or declared inactive, and eight more are in danger of closing.

According to the *Annual Statistics from the General Secretary's Reports* published by the Nazarene church for 2002-2012, the U.S./Canada Region of the Church of the Nazarene is not reporting as significant of a decline as the Iowa District but is still reporting a decline of five percent over the last decade. During this same time period U.S. Census data shows almost a 10 percent increase in population.

The primary weapon of The Church of the Nazarene to combat the decrease in numbers has been a focus on new church planting. Denominational leaders recognize that churches have a life cycle and have tried to plant new churches at a similar pace of closing dying churches. In Iowa, six churches have been planted in the last decade, clearly short of the 17 closed or declared inactive. In addition to planting churches, many programs have been proposed, both from within the denomination as well as from other sources, to attempt to resurrect or re-focus dying churches. However, the statistics show that the efforts are not proving successful.

The reality of the decline in churches is much deeper than simply the numbers that appear on statistical reports. Each number reflected in the decline represents a life that has been altered by the loss experienced when one leaves a church. The loss is more than just driving to a different location, as many who leave churches do not find another place to worship (Kinnaman, 2011). Many who leave churches lose the support systems that have been in place, often for one's entire life (Kinnaman). Some who leave the church also chose to walk away from their faith, which has eternal implications.

The researcher recognized the limitations of one study to fix the greater problem, as there is no simple solution to church growth or church health. The researcher also recognized that attendance numbers do not tell the full story, and church growth does not always represent growth and transformation in discipleship. However, the limitations should not be a cause for inaction. Rather, the staggering crises facing the church should motivate the church to determine steps that can be taken to accomplish the divine mission of making disciples.

Process to Accomplish

Population

The population selected for this research project was Nazarene church attendees from selected churches in Eastern Iowa. The researcher drew from his own church as well as three additional churches. The four churches involved in the study range in attendance from the mid-thirties to four-hundred. The population of the churches involved represented nearly 1,000 Nazarene church attendees from Eastern Iowa.

Sampling

The population of the 1,000 Nazarene Church attendees in Eastern Iowa was developed on a voluntary basis. Pastors were asked to promote the participation in the research project within their congregations. Churches were assigned a number of complimentary assessments in accordance with the size of the congregation. Out of the population of 1,000 Nazarene Church attendees, the researcher sought 5-10% participation for a minimum sample size of 50-100.

Methodology

Design

This research project was a mixed-method approach with quantitative results gathered through pre- and post-research *Spiritual Growth Assessment* published by Lifeway Resources (see Appendix A). The *Spiritual Growth Assessment* is a 60 question instrument that measures participant's self-perceptions in six categories of spiritual growth. Areas of self-reporting include: Abiding in Christ, living in the Word, praying in faith, fellowship with believers, witness to the world, and ministry to others. Each category of spiritual growth contained 10 questions with responses ranging from one to five, with five being the highest score. Discipleship engagement data, as sought for research question one, was collected from the following categories: Fellowship with believers, witness to the world, and ministry to others. Discipleship transformation data, as sought for research question two, was collected from the following categories: Abiding in Christ, living in the Word, and praying in faith.

Qualitative results were collected through focus group discussions with trained coaches and pastors from participating churches. In the researcher's church, where the researcher and his wife conducted the coaching, a focus group discussion was conducted

by the church board. All four churches also participated in concluding focus group discussion conducted by the researcher. The coaching sessions utilized narrative inquiry to guide participants into an understanding of their personality, spiritual gifts, abilities, passions, and life experiences. The narrative structure also focused on how the identity revealed in the assessment impacts spiritual formation (Gay, Mills, & Airasian, 2012).

Qualitative data for research question three was collected in interview sessions with the senior pastors from each church. In the two larger churches, interviews were also conducted with the church leaders responsible for the coaching process. Interviews were recorded, transcribed, and evaluated to discern themes that developed pertaining to the impact of *The Place Assessment* on the church as an organization (Gay et al., 2012).

Variables

Measuring discipleship engagement, transformation in the life of the disciple, and improvement in the church's ability to make discipleship is very difficult. The independent variables were structured instruction, *The Place Assessment*, and structured coaching. Variables were measured both quantitatively, through the *Spiritual Growth Assessment* pre-posttest instrument as well as qualitatively through the structured coaching and focus groups.

Procedure

Participants received a structured instructional time. At the beginning of this time, they completed the *Spiritual Growth Assessment* pre-test to determine current engagement levels as well as to discern approximate spiritual maturity. Upon the completion of the pre-test, participants were given an instructional time encompassing aspects that would be measured in the assessment process, such as personality, spiritual

gifts, abilities, passions, and life experiences. Following the instructional time, participants were supplied with complimentary copies of *The Place Assessment* which was completed in written or computer form. Participants were asked to complete the assessment prior to attending coaching sessions which were scheduled for completion after the instructional time.

Following the instructional time and the completion of *The Place Assessment*, participants met for a coaching session with the researcher and a pastoral representative from the participant's local church. The coaching time consisted of structured open-ended questions designed to guide the participant in the synthesis of personality, spiritual gifts, abilities, passions and life experiences. Coaching sessions lasted approximately one hour.

After the coaching session, participants were assembled with participants from their local church for focus group discussions. Discussions were guided by the researcher with open-ended questions focused on what difference the teaching, assessment, and coaching had on their personal lives. Prior to the focus group discussion, participants were asked to complete the *Spiritual Growth Assessment* post-test. pre-posttest were numerically coded to properly match test results.

Analyses

Quantitative data was collected and evaluated through the use of the *Spiritual Growth Assessment* and analyzed through a Paired Samples *t*-test. Qualitative data was gathered through the initial coaching and through the focus group discussions.

Discussions were recorded, transcribed, and evaluated to discern themes that developed in the areas of engagement and transformation.

Data was analyzed through a Paired Samples *t*-test to determine the impact of *The Place Assessment* combined with structured coaching on discipleship engagement and transformation. Data from *Spiritual Growth Assessment* pre-posttest, coaching sessions, and the focus group discussions were analyzed through a Paired Samples *t*-test to determine if there was a change over time in the areas of engagement and transformation.

Summary

The rapid decline experienced on the Iowa District over the last ten years reveals the necessity of action on behalf of Iowa Nazarene pastors. If this rate of decline is not stopped, the life expectancy of The Church of the Nazarene in Iowa is approximately 20 years. The eternal implications presented by the ineffective churches should lead to more introspective leadership.

This dissertation added to the body of research on discipleship engagement and transformation. The reported transformation and increased engagement by participants indicate significant possibilities for impacting the disciple making opportunities for The Church of the Nazarene in Iowa. In the following chapter, a more detailed literature review will reveal the need for this study in the scholarly realm.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Introduction

The purpose of this chapter was to review the literature in three applicable areas. The first area is the ministry of the church in America: its current effectiveness, its historical effectiveness, the core mission of discipleship, and the prevalence of burnout among clergy. The second area of research focus is that of Transformation. While transformation is difficult to quantifiably measure, the emerging field of Transformative Learning will give insights into the concept of Christian transformation. Attention will also be given to research conducted by the Barna Group (2011) on transformation as well as research conducted by Lifeway Research on transformational discipleship. The final area of study will be that of the DiSC assessment tool. The DiSC assessment seeks to determine behavioral tendencies as well as educate for more balanced leadership and service. The available scholarly research in the area of discipleship is significantly lacking, thus a wider base was required.

The Church

In order to measure the effectiveness of the church one must establish an acceptable measure of success. Stetzer and Rainer (2010) identify the three B's that have typically been used: Bodies, Budgets, and Buildings (p. 26). McDonald (2007) classified the score card as the ABC's: Attendance, Buildings, and Cash (p. 3). Barna (2001) goes more in-depth in suggesting that the church has typically focused on program driven

ministry, an emphasis on building consensus, recalling Bible stories, concern with quantity (people, programs, square footage, dollars), unrelated ministry efforts, conveying knowledge, and feel-good activities (p. 8-9). The measurements mentioned clearly do not accurately gauge the mission given by Christ of making disciples (Barna; McDonald; Stetzer & Rainer).

Rainer and Rainer (2008) detailed some unsettling results from their research project: although the United States population has exploded, the church is losing ground. In the Southern Baptist denomination, one of the largest Protestant denominations in the United States, the number of baptisms reported have not increased since 1950 (p. 8). Winseman (2006) reported that Presbyterians, Methodists, Disciples of Christ, United Church of Christ, Episcopalians, and most other denominations have seen membership decline for over 25 years; with some denominations declining as much as 50%.

Winseman (2006) specified that the United Methodists have gone from 11 million U.S. members in 1968 down to 8.1 million members in 2003. Peck (2011) reported that the membership for the United Methodist had declined to under 7.6 million members by 2011. These numbers appear more troubling when compared with the attendance numbers. According to the 2010 U.S. religion census: religious congregations and membership study compiled by the Association of Statisticians of American Religious Bodies. United Methodist churches reported actual attendance numbers of just over three million, less than half of the reported membership numbers (Association of Statisticians of American Religious Bodies, 2010). Peck recognized that the United Methodist church had shown continual decline since its formation in 1968, but the decline rapidly accelerated since 2000. The decline felt by the United Methodist Church is evident in

most of the mainline Protestant churches (Winseman; Association of Statisticians of American Religious Bodies; Association of Religion Data Archives, 2010).

The decline of the mainline Protestant denominations is likewise being felt by the Southern Baptist convention, the largest evangelical Protestant denomination in the United States. According to Winseman (2006), the Southern Baptist church has declined by more than half in the period from 1995-2005. The Association of Statisticians of American Religious Bodies (2010) shows that although nearly 20 million Americans surveyed claim adherence to the Southern Baptist Convention, attendance figures reflected just over 6.2 million, or one third of adherents actively attending.

A growing trend in church attendance is the mega church. A mega church is a Protestant church averaging over 2,000 in weekly attendance (Thumma & Travis, 2007; Dart, 2010; Wilson, 2010). In 1970 there were only 50 Protestant churches averaging over 2,000 in weekly attendance in the United States, but as of 2007 there were over 1,250 (Wilson, 2010). Dart estimated that nine percent of American churchgoers worshipped at a mega church. Winseman (2006) also addressed the mega church growth by reporting that although specific churches are growing, there does not appear to be an increase in Americans claiming to be Christian which indicates that mega churches are growing through transfer growth rather than an increase in new believers.

While the 2013 Central Intelligence Agency World Fact book reports that 51% of the population considers themselves Protestant (Central Intelligence, Agency World Fact book). The number reported to actually attend is arguable, as evidenced by Hadaway, Marler, and Chaves (1993) stated that Americans over-report church attendance at a rate of twice as much as they actually attended when surveys were utilized to determine

attendance rates rather than attendance records from local churches. The *halo effect* causes American Christians to report based on intentions rather than based on their actual attendance (Olson, 2008). Hout and Greeley (1998) and Woodberry (1998) challenged the findings of Hadaway et al. (1993) on the basis of the non-scientific way that churches typically register attendance. The disagreements in findings reveal an inconsistency in determining actual numbers for church attendance, however there is no disagreement that 51% of the population is not in church each week. Olson noted the long-lasting difficulty in establishing reliable numbers for church attendance. According to Olson, poll numbers reported by Gallup and Barna, show a fluctuation between 35-48% of those surveyed reported attending church within the last week. However, the actual attendance numbers reported by churches were half the self-reported numbers.

Olson (2008) reported that the American Church Research Project found that in 2005, 17.5% of the American population actually attended an evangelical, mainline, or Catholic Christian church on any given weekend. When nonorthodox Christian churches such as Jehovah's Witnesses, Church of Jesus Christ Latter Day Saints, and Community of Christ and non-Christian religions were added to the mix, the percentage jumped to 19.5%. Olson sought to determine what percentage of Americans attended church on a somewhat regular basis, finding a combined total of 23% of the US population attending an orthodox Christian church more than once per month. To finalize the research, Olson also asked what percentage of people attended less than once a month, but could nonetheless still be considered as active participants. The combined total of these weekly, monthly, and less than monthly attendance numbers was found to be 37%.

The United States population has grown at a rate of approximately 18% in the period between 1990 and 2006 (Rainer & Rainer, 2008; Olson, 2008). Olson reported that church attendance declined in all 50 states during this same time period. Rainer and Rainer compared the United States to Western Europe where churches have served as the central point of communities for centuries and are now reduced to charging tourist admission fees to cover their operating costs (Olson).

The focus of the research conducted by Rainer and Rainer (2008) was the rate at which young adults are leaving the church. They discovered that nearly 70% of young adults dropped out of church between the ages of 16 and 22. Kinnaman (2011) determined that 43% of those leaving the church never return. Rainer and Rainer found ten common reasons for leaving through the research (pp. 4-5):

- Simply wanted a break from church
- Church members seemed judgmental or hypocritical
- Moved to college and stopped attending church
- Work responsibilities prevented me from attending
- Moved too far away from the church to continue attending
- Became too busy though still wanted to attend
- Did not feel connected to the people in my church
- Disagreed with the church's stance on political or social issues
- Chose to spend more time with friends outside the church
- Was only going to church to please others

As Rainer and Rainer (2008) pointed out, all of these reasons can be summarized by concluding that church was not essential in their lives. While this concept seems very

obvious the church has failed to engage with younger generations. Kinnaman (2011) recognized that the young adults leaving the church did not attend church less as children than previous generations, but they did not feel that the attendance was beneficial to them once they reached their twenties. Shook and Shook (2013) described the problem of accepting a second-hand faith that was passed down from generation to generation rather than experiencing God first-hand through true discipleship.

One common misconception of why young adults walk away from their faith centers on the humanistic philosophy present in many colleges and universities. According to Regnerus and Uecker (2007), the common perception that college education is detrimental to one's faith does not play out in the research. Regnerus and Uecker went deeper to distinguish that young adults with a college education leave the church at a rate of approximately 64%, while those who do not attend college leave the church at a rate of 76%. Regnerus and Uecker also asserted that those with a college education are more likely to return to the church than those who do not attend college.

Kinnaman (2011) stated that the church is currently structured for traditional young adults who follow the traditional path of graduating high school, going to college, finding a job, getting married and finally having children. However, the traditional path is becoming increasingly rare in today's culture. Kinnaman has found that in 1960, 77% of women and 65% of men had completed the traditional path prior to the age of 30, while in 2011, 46% of women and 31% of men had completed this path by the same age. Kinnaman also recognized in regards to the traditional path, five percent of children in 1960 were born to unwed mothers whereas in 2010, 41% of children were born to unwed mothers.

Rainer and Rainer (2008) pointed out seven sins of churches that were failing to be essential: doctrine dilution, loss of evangelistic passion, failure to be relevant, few outwardly focused ministries, conflict over personal preferences, priority of comfort, and biblical illiteracy. Kinnaman (2011) recognized six areas of disconnection for young adults: overprotective, shallow, anti-science, repressive, exclusive, and doubtless. Kinnaman and Lyons (2007) found six themes in their research on perceptions of outsiders on the church: hypocritical, too focused on getting converts, anti-homosexual, sheltered, too political, and judgmental (pp. 29-30).

According to Rainer and Rainer (2008), Kinnaman (2011), and Kinnaman and Lyons (2007) the sins within the church, the disconnection with the culture around us, and the perceptions of those outside the church has led to a failure to make disciples: “to be blunt, God has converted our children, but we have failed to disciple them” (Rainer & Rainer, p. 30). Kinnaman recognized that the dropout problem is a result of the church missing its essential mission: to make disciples. Willard (2006) confirmed that the church has failed to take seriously the command to make disciples for the last several decades, and most problems in the modern church can be traced back to this failure.

Recognizing the problems faced in the modern American church encourages one to look at the historical patterns of the American church. Are the problems currently faced unique or is the church following a precedent?

According to Boston (2003), colonists came to America for a variety of reasons. Some came for religious reasons, while others came for financial opportunities. Regardless of their motivations for coming, colonists settled in areas with those who shared a similar religious background. Prior to the establishment of the U.S. Constitution,

religious groups battled against one another, often leading to destruction of property and even death of groups who had slightly different beliefs.

The roots of this violent behavior towards those of different theological perspectives did not start in the American Colonies, they were deeply ingrained into the minds of colonists. Persecution based on differences of beliefs began almost as soon as the church was approved by The Roman Emperor Constantine in 312 CE. The Roman church eventually developed into the religious authority, putting to death most who had varying beliefs. Religious persecution accelerated throughout the Dark Ages, and attempted to squelch the Protestant Reformation (Shelley, 1995). The discovery of North America opened the doors for groups wishing to escape religious persecution to develop their own world. One must remember, however, that not all Colonists came for religious reasons. Many Colonists chose to come to America to pursue land ownership and other business opportunities that were not possible in Europe (Boston, 2003).

According to Hill (2006) The First Great Awakening reached across the Atlantic Ocean from Great Britain to the British Colonies in America. The major proponent of this revival in the American colonies was Jonathan Edwards. The major proponents in the homeland were George Whitefield and John Wesley. Hill described Jonathan Edwards as combining the best of the enlightenment intellectualism with a most earnest Christian zeal (p. 329). In Great Britain, Whitefield found himself banned from preaching in the Anglican churches and so chose to take his preaching outdoors (Henderson, 1997). Henderson stated that after getting outdoor congregations started, Whitefield felt a yearning to go to America. Rather than leave his fledgling congregations without a

leader, he introduced John Wesley to them. Although skeptical at first, Wesley accepted the leadership position and began to make it his own.

Henderson (1997) detailed John Wesley's journey that led to the development of the three level system that promoted spiritual growth. First was the society, which was the general gathering of a congregation. Second was the class, which was a diverse group that met regularly to raise funds as well as to be accountable for spiritual growth. The third group was that of the band. The band was made up of two or three people of similar age, socioeconomic status, and gender that met for individual accountability. Shelley (1995) stated that "Whitefield had no real taste for organization, but Wesley was an administrative genius" (p. 338). This administrative or organizational genius allowed Wesley to not only see conversions, but to ensure that those converted were able to grow as disciples. At the end of his life, Whitefield is reported to have stated "my brother Wesley acted wisely – the souls that were awakened under his ministry he joined in class, and thus preserved the fruits of his labor. This I neglected, and my people are a rope of sand" (McTyeire, 1884, 204).

According to Hampel (2007) The Second Great Awakening in America led to revival that swept across the Western world. As news from New York spread across the Atlantic, revival spread to Ireland, Wales, Scotland, and finally to England (pp. 34-37). Hampel reported that revival movements were started by prayer and resulted in thousands gathered to hear and experience something supernatural from God. Moreland (1997) stated that seeds were planted in the First Awakening that fully grew in the Second Awakening: a trend towards anti-intellectualism in the church. The revival movements of

the 1800's focused on an immediate personal conversion that was based on the emotion of the moment, not based on careful, thoughtful, study of the claims of Christ (p. 23).

Fogel (2000) outlined four periods of American history, connecting the revivals, or awakenings with the political and social changes in American society. According to Fogel, the First Great Awakening, which lasted from approximately 1730-1760, led to the Revolutionary war. The Second Great Awakening, which lasted from approximately 1800-1840, led to the Civil War and the temperance movement. The Third Great Awakening, which lasted from approximately 1890-1930, led to the women's rights and the civil rights movement. Carpenter (2001) while recognizing the general truth of Fogel's paradigm, also recognized that the awakening movements led to periods of apostasy for the church in America. What started as religious movements ended up being political movements. Rogers (2010) sought to establish the specific populations involved in the Awakening movements. Early 20th century scholars had classified the participants in the revivals as being "poor, illiterate, lazy, and uncivilized" (p. 697). Rogers found, however, that the revivals took place among a combination of agricultural and developing urban populations that were industrious and fairly educated. Gordon-McCutchan (1983) sought to clarify arguments as to the cyclical nature of the Awakenings. Arguments against the significance of the Awakenings include a lack of major change reported in the lives of those supposedly affected. One of the major changes reported in the second Awakening was an increase in anti-slavery societies. Fogel's paradigm reflects that the American Civil War was an outcome of the second Awakening, which when combined with the measurability of the increase in anti-slavery societies in areas impacted by the Awakening would indicate that the revivals were not as effective spiritually as they were

politically. Gordon-McCutchan clarified that the effects of the revival movement appeared to be a motivation to social causes based on a “historical faith” rather than a transformation as understood by a “saving faith” (pp. 90).

The literature reveals that the revival movements that were so influential in the history of American Christianity failed to adequately make disciples. Therefore, there has been much fluctuation in church effectiveness. Watson (2009) wrote that “praying the sinner’s prayer is not the end goal of the Christian life. Praying one prayer, or having one experience of God’s grace, is not the fullness of what God hopes for us” (p. 29). The foundation for Christianity established by the anti-intellectualism of the revival movements (Moreland, 1997) must be challenged by a biblical understanding of discipleship. In the following sections, the writer will define discipleship and identify the core concepts of discipleship.

Wiseman (1981) defined discipleship as being a follower or pupil of Jesus. The responsibility of the church, according to Wiseman, is to not just to introduce people to Christ, but to help them mature through baptizing and teaching them. Chan and Beuving (2012) defined discipleship as being a follower of Jesus who takes the term *follower* literally. Hull (2006) accepted the definition of a learner or follower committed to a significant master. Geiger et al. (2012) stated that “transformation is the bottom-line result of true discipleship” (p. 12). Barna (2001) defined discipleship as “becoming a complete and competent follower of Jesus Christ” (p. 17). Stetzer and Putman (2006) define discipleship as “living like Jesus lived, loving what Jesus loved, and leaving behind what Jesus left behind” (p. 76). Ogden (2007) defined discipleship a “one who responds in faith and obedience to the gracious call to follow Jesus Christ. Being a

disciple is a lifelong process of dying to self while allowing Jesus Christ to come alive in us” (p. 24).

The defining of discipleship is clarified by understanding what it is not as much as understanding what it is. Barna (2001) reported that one of the reasons that the church is failing to make disciples is that “we have defined ‘discipleship’ as head knowledge rather than complete transformation” (p. 85). Chan and Beuving (2012) explained that reading the New Testament clearly shows the passion Jesus disciples demonstrated for making disciples. “The surprise comes when we look at our churches today in light of Jesus’s command to make disciples” (p. 30).

Barna (2001) stated that “Almost every church in our country has some type of discipleship program or set of activities, but stunningly few churches have a church of disciples” (p. 20). Hull (2006) associated the lack of discipleship with what he called the American gospel. According to Hull, the American gospel focuses on an individual faith that does not transform lives. Stetzer and Putnam (2006) stated “Defining disciple is one thing; the bigger issue is how to intentionally develop people who become devoted followers of Jesus” (p. 128). The literature on the historical trends within American Christianity confirms that the modern church is continuing to focus on areas other than the development of disciples (Barna, 2001; Moreland, 1997; Rainier & Rainer, 2008).

There is little agreement in the literature on what measurable attitudes reflect discipleship. Barna (2001) listed six fundamentals of discipleship: 1. Disciples must be assured of their salvation by grace alone; 2. Disciples must learn and understand the principles of the Christian life; 3. Disciples must obey God’s laws and commands; 4. Disciples must represent God in the world; 5. Disciples must serve other people; 6.

Disciples must reproduce themselves in Christ (pp. 20-23). Hull (2006) listed six areas where transformation is necessary in the life of a disciple: 1. transformed mind; 2. transformed character; 3. transformed relationships; 4. transformed habits; 5. transformed service; and 6. transformed influence (pp. 130). Glover and Lavy (2006) mapped out four stages of discipleship: 1. invitational discipleship; 2. instructional discipleship; 3. relational discipleship; and 4. servant discipleship (pp. 103). DeNeff and Drury (2011) asserted that the discipleship journey involved seven discernable shifts in perspective: 1. from me to you; 2. from slave to child; 3. from seen to unseen; 4. from consumer to steward; 5. from ask to listen; 6. from sheep to shepherd; and 7. from me to we.

The literature reveals that there is little agreement in the expectations of disciples. The confusion in the literature is equally played out in the church. For the purposes of this study, discipleship will be measured through four areas: (1) a personal relationship; (2) involvement in a biblical community; (3) biblical engagement; and (4) service to others.

Anytime an institution struggles to meet its priorities, the natural inclination is to question the ability and efforts of the leadership. Recognizing the problems facing the church in America, one must look at the leadership within the church. A significant part of the challenge for church leaders is the drastic changes in expectations. Rainer (2013) addressed seven significant ways that the role of the clergy has changed in the 30 years since his personal ministry began: the level of esteem afforded the pastor by the community has significantly declined, as has the respect afforded a pastor by the members of his or her own congregation. Pastoral ministry now requires a high level of leadership skills and interpersonal skills. Pastors must now lead congregations to reach

out into their community rather than simply being available as a place of refuge, and the receptivity of the culture to the message of the Gospel has decline tremendously.

Additionally, the advent of the internet and social ministry have been game changers for pastoral leaders. The attempts to keep up with the growing demands of the pastoral role in an increasingly secular and materialistic culture leads many clergy to burnout (Cordeiro, 2009; Lehr, 2006; London & Wiseman, 2003).

Maslach (2003) defines burnout as “a psychological syndrome that involves a prolonged response to stressors in the workplace” (p. 189). Maslach stated that burnout is frequently a result of a poor fit between the worker and the job. Although burnout has just recently received attention from researchers, it was identified much earlier by social workers. According to Maslach, much of the early research was dismissed because it appeared to be “flimsy popular psychology” (p. 190).

Many studies have been done to try to discern character flaws that might encourage burnout among clergy. Francis, Robbins, Rolph, Turton, and Rolph (2010) sought to determine if recalled self-esteem in childhood had any impact on burnout among clergy. Randall (2007) sought to determine if age was the determining factor in burnout. Barnard and Curry (2012) sought to determine if self-compassion was a significant deterrent to burnout. Miner (2007) tried to determine if the personality and belief style would prove to be significant to pre-determining burnout within the first year of ministry. Hendron, Irving, Taylor (2012) sought to determine the impact of secondary trauma on clergy as it relates to burnout. While the results of these studies were mixed, no single cause was found to link burnout to a character flaw. As Maslach and Leiter

(1997) found, burnout is not a matter of a character flaw, but is a result of an organizational flaw.

Although the examination of phenomenon of burnout started in the human service and health care fields and soon expanded to education, the research has now turned to the general population (Maslach, 2003). Maslach and Leiter (1997) described the crisis currently facing workers in nearly every field in America: “the workplace today is a cold, hostile, demanding environment, both economically and psychologically. People are emotionally, physically, and spiritually exhausted” (p. 1). Maslach and Leiter focused on changes in the workplace that has lessened the intrinsic worth of humans: respect for employees and businesses is being exchanged for short-term stock performance; corporations are no longer focused on providing opportunities for employees to earn an honest living, but are instead focused on the quickest payoff possible; businesses are no longer committed to providing services and employment in the United States when they can pay substantially less salaries in developing countries; technology has also changed the way that business is done, as machines do work at a much faster pace than humans are able to.

The impacts of these rapid changes have led to more stress and burnout as employees are less able to stand up for their rights or needs (Leiter et al, 2012; Maslach & Leiter, 1997). The recognition that companies can and do move businesses to developing nations to cut costs causes employees to take on additional responsibilities and accept pay cuts just to keep their jobs (Maslach, 2003; Maslach & Leiter). At the same time, Maslach and Leiter point to a devaluing of employees by laying them off

while CEO's are making unprecedented salaries for making decisions that help the immediate bottom line.

According to Maslach (2003), burnout results in extreme exhaustion, cynicism, detachment, a sense of ineffectiveness, and a lack of accomplishment. The relationships between exhaustion and cynicism have been consistently found in the research. Maslach and Leiter (1997) emphasized that burnout has a significant foundation in the mismatch between the nature of the person and the nature of the job. According to Maslach and Leiter, the ability to find a job that fits the person is not nearly as important as maintaining an income in the current economy. Therefore, the impact of burnout is increasing in all career fields. Maslach (2003) and Maslach and Leiter (1997) identified six key areas of mismatch: workload, control, reward, community, fairness, and values. All six key areas contribute greatly to the burnout phenomenon among clergy.

Workload management by clergy is compounded by the number of responsibilities that they are expected to fulfil in a given week. Meek et al., (2003) identified 13 roles that clergy typically filled: preaching, administration, teaching, counseling, visitation, financial oversight, church growth planning, clerical, evangelism, small group leadership, time in prayer, custodial, worship leading (p. 340). Of the 13 roles listed, pastors reported a mean number of 8.2 that they regularly oversaw. For many pastors in smaller churches, the number would likely be much higher. Chandler (2009) recognized the inordinate time demands and unrealistic expectations of clergy. Schaefer and Jacobsen (2009) identified thirteen skills required by clergy:

a great one-on-one counselor, a skilled presence in large public gatherings, and erudite scholar, an innovative teacher, a disciplined contemplative, a wise group

leader, an astute financial manager, an effective fundraiser, a competent supervisor of staff and volunteers, a prophetic voice in world affairs, a facility manager who knows how to light the pilot light in every heater –and someone who effortlessly leads a model personal and family life. (p. 40)

Doolittle (2007) reported that the United Church of Canada research showed that 75% of clergy felt that they had too much work to do, and 60% reported that they were unable to properly contemplate their role because of the work load. Kelly (2010) detailed the amount of time spent weekly by pastors in a variety of roles: meetings, electronic correspondence, counseling, visitation, and sermon preparation. According to Kelley, 65%, or 650 of the 1,000 pastors surveyed reported working more than 50 hours per week. Kelly reported that the results of this survey were skewed by participation from bivocational pastors, part-time pastors, and volunteer pastors who made up a combined 17% of the survey participants. McConnell (as cited in Kelly) stated “the total hours pastors work in addition to these biblical priorities shows that more of the other ministry tasks need to be shared. Jesus Christ designed the work of the church to be done by believers together in unity” (Para. 14). London and Wiseman (2003) acknowledged the challenge of pastors who have great expectations placed on them by laity who are apathetic to the needs of others. They expect the pastor to be there for their crisis, but are distracted by their own “comforts, achievements, and happiness rather than on the needs of others” (p. 25). The inability of pastors to meet expectations is clearly reflected in the burnout phenomenon.

Transformation

Transformation is difficult to clearly measure, as one cannot easily measure degrees of transformation or even the significance a transformation within a person. The questions of transformation have generated much debate, but very little academic study. Three perspectives of transformation emerged within the review of the literature. First, an educational theory introduced by Mezirow in the late 1970's sought to determine the key ingredients in education becoming transformative. Mezirow developed the theory of transformative learning as a result of his work with adult women entering college in order to prepare themselves to enter the workforce (Mezirow, 1991). The second perspective was developed by Barna (2011) as the result of a six year study on the failure of the church to make true disciples. The third perspective, transformational discipleship was developed by Lifeway Research in a series of studies aimed at helping the church better accomplish its mission (Geiger et al., 2012; Stetzer & Rainer, 2010).

Transformative learning takes place when the learner recognizes a new concept as being significant enough to change one's life (Brock, 2010). Transformative learning opens one up to the greater reality at work in the world and in one's own life, which gives purpose and meaning in changing the world (Tolliver & Tisdell, 2006). Mezirow (1991) set out to discover a theory that would help adult learners make sense out of their world through a process that leads to transformation when wrong assumptions are uncovered. Transformative learning theory views the learning process as significantly more than simply knowledge gained or skills learned. Transformative learning evaluates the process by which learning destabilizes the learner and the unbalance creates a posture for transformation. According to Hodge (2011), destabilizing events can trigger periods of

self-examination and cause learners to think through the perspectives that they have previously taken for granted. Areas of identity, social roles and other deeply rooted concepts are often evaluated only through periods of crisis.

Humanity is constantly in a state of searching for meaning. According to Isopahkala-Bouret (2008), much of that identity and meaning come from ones occupation. Therefore, transitioning from one position to another can create a crisis that opens oneself up to the reflection necessary for transformative learning.

Through studies focusing on adult learners, Mezirow (et al., 2000) formalized 10 steps to transformation in his theory of transformative learning:

1. A disorienting dilemma
2. Self-examination with feelings of fear, anger, guilt, or shame.
3. A critical assessment of assumptions.
4. Recognition that one's discontent and the process of transformation are shared.
5. Exploration of options for new roles, relationships, and actions.
6. Planning a course of action.
7. Acquiring knowledge and skills for implementing one's plans.
8. Provisional trying of new roles.
9. Building competence and self-confidence in new roles and relationships.
10. A reintegration into one's life on the basis of conditions dictated by one's new perspective. (p. 23)

Much debate has been generated as to the cognitive focus of Mezirow's 10

steps (Kovan & Dirx, 2003; Tisdell, 2000; Tolliver & Tisdell, 2001, 2006) rather than recognizing that transformation must take into account one's spiritual side as well as one's sense of mission in life. The 10 steps have also been somewhat confusing (Brock, 2010; Kroth & Boverie, 2009). Kang (2013) presented a simplified version involving four steps:

1. "Initiating event creates disequilibrium
2. Prompts critical reflection of core assumptions or premises
3. New premise is gained
4. Different action based on integration of new premise" (p. 340).

Moon (2011) detailed the findings of a qualitative study designed to understand the application of transformative learning to the specific challenges faced by bereaved older adults. According to Moon, a debilitating dilemma is the impetus for the reflection necessary for transformative learning. While much research attention had been given to the grieving process, little attention had been focused on determining the ways in which older adults can and do learn as a direct result of the grieving process.

According to Moon (2011), the findings were divided up into two sets. The first set was focused on the transformation within the participants, and the second looked at the process of transformation. The transformation reported by the participants typically revolved around a change in priorities. The death of a loved one reminded them that life was not forever, thus they evaluated what they wanted to invest in.

Transformative learning has been applied in a large number of areas of study since its inception. Hodge (2011) detailed the findings of a study focusing on the application of Transformative learning theory on a vocational education training

program. Making use of a case study methodology, Hodge worked with an entry level management class of 10 students. Eight of the 10 students agreed to interviews over the course of several weeks to discuss how the materials they were learning were impacting their view of management. Seven of the eight participants stated that the program was causing them to reflect deeply on the practices of management in their own workplaces. Two of the participants left their jobs during the study as a result of what they were learning, and two more stated that they were looking for new positions because of the clear disconnect between what they were learning and what was widely practiced in their current positions.

Isopahkala-Bouret (2008) detailed the findings of a study focusing on the transformative learning that takes place in managerial role transition. Isopahkala-Bouret conducted her research with six participants, three male and three female, who were transferring to team leader or project manager roles within a large technology firm in Finland. According to Isopahkala-Bouret, the new managers had a mixed reaction to the process of transition. All participants engaged in the reflection sought by transformative learning. However, this reflection was not always an internal reflection as much as it was a reflection on the expectations of the organization.

McEwen (2012) recognized the application of transformative learning to the concept of discipleship. According to McEwen, the theme of transformation is found throughout the New Testament. McEwen recognized that although Mezirow (1991) does not support a Christian worldview, his work in transformation certainly has applicability to the church. Tolliver and Tisdell (2001, 2006) asserted that learning has more of a transformative effect if it includes one's spiritual side, not just one's cognitive side.

Barna (2011b) detailed the findings of a six-year research project aimed at discovering the process of transformation in the lives of believers. Barna used both quantitative and qualitative methodology to collect data from over 15,000 participants through phone surveys and follow-up phone conversations. A spiritual journey is a very personal experience and cannot be exactly duplicated.

According to Barna (2011a), transformation is a long-term process that requires a partnership with God, openness to the pain and hardships of growth, and a willingness to live counter culturally. This transformation process is not one that is readily encountered by the American church-going population. Barna reflected that the reluctance may be in part because of ignorance of the purpose of transformation. As a result of the ignorance of the purpose of transformation, Barna reported that Christians tend to entangle themselves in circular spiritual journeys rather than in a progressive route. Barna discovered that the Christian journey is not always linear, but it does have clearly discernible progressive steps.

The most decisive part of the journey according to Barna (2011b) was brokenness. Passing this stop required a believer to be broken of sin, self, and society. This brokenness is reflective of complete surrender to God. Barna (2012) stated that less than 5%, or 750 of the 15,000 surveyed, transitioning through brokenness.

Barna (2011b) indicated the failure of the majority of Christians to progress past the brokenness was a direct result of the marketing movement within the church. Barna reported that the church's zeal for souls has led the diluting of the expectations presented to prospective Christians.

Nazarene theologian F. Moore (personal communication, January 27, 2014) asserted that a Wesleyan view of transformation leads a disciple through a more optimistic view of the discipleship journey. The theological perspective of the person and the theological perspective of the church he/she attends can influence the perspective and the journey.

The final perspective of transformation examined is that of transformational discipleship. Geiger et al. (2012) established that discipleship is not merely about the transfer of information, acquisition of knowledge, or behavior modification, but was indeed about the transformation of the heart. Geiger et al. asserted that the church today has focused on defensive discipleship instead of offensive discipleship. The church is playing not to lose rather than playing to win.

The framework presented by Geiger et al. (2012) involved three key components of discipleship: truth, posture, and leadership. Truth is informed first and foremost by the gospel, but also through the disciples understanding of his identity in Christ and supported through the Christian disciplines of prayer, scripture reading, worship, and community. The second component is posture, which embraces weakness, interdependence, and an outward focus. The third component is healthy Christian leadership. According to Geiger et al., a “Transformational Sweet Spot” (p. 47) develops where these three components merge.

While the concept of transformation is difficult to measure, it is a concept that the church must become more aware of if it is going to accomplish its mission. Too much of the church’s time and attention is focused on the numbers reflective of attendance, buildings, and cash (Barna, 2001; McDonald, 2007; Stetzer & Rainer, 2010).

A better understanding of transformation within the life of a disciple must involve a better understanding of a person's identity in Christ (Geiger, 2008; Geiger et al., 2012). The identity of a disciple has many facets, both spiritual and practical. For the purposes of this study, the DiSC Assessment was utilized as a portion of *The Place Assessment* tool to help disciples understand who they are and how they fit in the greater body of Christ.

The DiSC Assessment

The Place Assessment utilized in this study assesses personality, spiritual gifts, abilities, passions, and life experiences. The personality portion of the assessment utilizes the DiSC assessment. In order to provide a conceptual background on *The Place Assessment*, the following section will briefly review literature related to the DiSC Assessment tool.

Phares (1984) recognized the elusiveness of a single definition of personality. Although according to Phares the field of personality study did not assume a clear shape until the 1930's, by 1937 researchers had found 50 distinct definitions of personality by drawing from the fields of etymology, theology, philosophy, jurisprudence, sociology, and psychology (p. 9). Rosenberg and Silvert (2013) noted that the four style concept of personality tracks back to Hippocrates' four humours, Aristotle's four elements, Jung's four functions, Spranger's four value attitudes, Fromm's four orientations, and Pavlov's four temperaments (para 1). Some would connect the four styles to the four quadrants of the human brain (Eagleton & Muller, 2011; Rosenberg & Silvert, 2013). While this theory requires much more attention the significance of the four concepts bears consideration. While there are many assessments available to ascertain personality

tendencies, the DiSC profile is one of the best and most widely used (Davis, Brown, Owen, & Garner, 2011). According to Rosenberg and Silvert (2013) The DiSC concept began in the 1920's through the leadership of Dr. William Moulton Marston who made the DiSC format available without copyright restrictions, but was not formalized or made available commercially until the 1970's through the work of Dr. John Geier (Sugerman, Scullard, & Wilhelm, 2011).

According to Sugerman et al., (2011) The DiSC is based on two axes, the vertical axis measures outward activity level from fast-paced and outspoken at one end to cautious and reflective on the opposite end. The D and I styles are found on the north end of the axis, and the S and C styles are found on the southern end. The horizontal axis measures inward processing from questioning and skeptical on the western end to accepting and warm on the eastern end.

The primary areas of the DiSC assessment are Dominance, Influence, Steadiness, and Conscientiousness. The DiSC assessment recognizes that individuals typically have a dominant personality type as well as a secondary type that also influences behavior. (Sugerman et al., 2011).

Dominance is concerned with control, power and assertiveness. Dominant personalities are very opinionated individuals who are focused on results and success. They are very blunt and challenge the status quo (Davis, et al., 2011; Sugerman et al., 2011).

Influence is concerned with social interactions and persuasiveness. Influential personalities are high-energy, generally very talkative and charming. They rely heavily

upon their communication abilities to influence situations (Davis, et al., 2011; Sugerman et al., 2011).

Steadiness is concerned with patience, persistence, and thoughtfulness. Steady personalities are typically gentle and accommodating, showing concern for the needs of others. They strive to create harmonious environments (Davis, et al., 2011; Sugerman et al., 2011).

Conscientiousness is concerned with analytical, structural, and organizational details. Conscientious personalities, sometimes called compliant personalities, desire to fully understand policies and procedures and take a systematic approach to their work (Davis, et al., 2011; Sugerman et al., 2011).

Sugerman et al., (2011) described the DiSC as a circumplex, which implies the complexity of the mathematical equations present in its design as well as the ability to measure not only the dominant personality type, but also the leanings from one personality type to another with a possibility of eight dimensions. The eight dimensions starting with strong Dominance and moving clockwise are

- D: Commanding
- Di: Pioneering
- i: Energizing
- iS: Affirming
- S: Inclusive
- SC: Humble
- C: Deliberate
- CD: Resolute (para. 2).

Davis et al., (2011) took the circumplex model but also recognized the opposing personality times as sometimes being present within a person, thus creating 12 DISC flex sub factors:

- D > i: Efficiency
- D > s: Self-motivation
- D > c: Independence,
- I > s: Enthusiasm
- I > c: Self-confidence
- S > c: Persistence
- I > d: Friendliness,
- S > d: Patience
- C > d: Cooperativeness
- S > I Thoughtfulness
- C > I: Accuracy
- C > s: Sensitivity (Davis et al., para. 4)

The diversity represented in these 12 personality types allows individuals to discover both their typical strengths as well as their possible blind spots (Sugerman et al., 2011). The DiSC assessment recognizes that the assessment results may vary based on the situation that one is in. Some people respond differently in work environments, family environments, and social environments. Davis et al., (2011) recommended taking the assessment three times with the different environments in mind.

One of the greatest strengths of the DiSC process is that it recognizes that while each individual has dominant tendencies, it is possible to learn to not only understand

other perspectives but also to learn to emulate them in order to lead or serve in different situations (Davis, et al., 2011; Sugerman et al., 2011).

Summary

The review of the literature reveals many more questions than answers in the area of discipleship. The current condition of the church is reflected in the declining attendance numbers and the rapid rate of young adults leaving the church. However, the literature reveals that this is not a new problem, but has been typical of American Christianity. The highs and lows of church attendance are reflective of the revival mindset that pursues conversions rather than discipleship.

Transformation is not easily measured, but researchers are in the beginning stages of determining ways in which transformation does take place in the hearts and minds of learners. This study seeks to determine if a better understanding of oneself through *The Place Assessment*, structured training, and one-on-one coaching can assist in the transformation process. This study sought to reveal both quantitatively and qualitatively the transformative effects of better understanding ones personality, spiritual gifts, abilities, passions, and life experiences.

In chapter three quantitative and qualitative findings and results will be presented from participants in each of the four churches to determine the effects of implementation of *The Place Assessment* tool with training and coaching. The findings focus on the effects of *The Place Assessment* process in the areas of personal transformation, personal engagement, as well as the transformational effects within the church as a whole.

CHAPTER III
METHODOLOGY

Introduction

The purpose of this mixed methods study was to identify the impacts of a process of a structured training; assessment of personality, spiritual gifts, abilities, passions, and life experiences; and one-on-one coaching in the development of disciples. The quantitative research focused on transformation and engagement as measured by participant self-reporting on the *Spiritual Growth Assessment* utilized for the pre-posttest. The qualitative data sought to further determine the transformational implications, the engagement implications, and the overall impact of the process on the church. To that end, the researcher sought the answers to three research questions:

1. In what ways does a comprehensive assessment which evaluates personality, spiritual gifts, abilities, passions, and life experiences combined with structured coaching increase discipleship engagement?

2. In what ways does a comprehensive assessment which evaluates personality, spiritual gifts, abilities, passions, and life experiences combined with structured coaching encourage transformation in the life of a disciple?

3. In what ways does a comprehensive individual assessment which evaluates personality, spiritual gifts, abilities, passions, and life experiences combined with structured individual coaching impact the church as an organization to better make disciples?

Research Design

This research project was a mixed-method approach with quantitative results gathered through pre- and post-research *Spiritual Growth Assessment* published by Lifeway Resources (see Appendix A). The *Spiritual Growth Assessment* is a 60 question instrument that measures participant's self-perceptions in six categories of spiritual growth. Areas of self-reporting include: Abiding in Christ, living in the Word, praying in faith, fellowship with believers, witness to the world, and ministry to others. Each category of spiritual growth contained ten questions with responses ranging from one to five, with five being the highest score. Discipleship engagement data, as sought for research question one, was collected from the following categories: Fellowship with believers, witness to the world, and ministry to others. Discipleship transformation data, as sought for research question two, was collected from the following categories: Abiding in Christ, living in the Word, and praying in faith.

Qualitative results were collected through a total of nine focus group sessions held by the researcher with participating churches. The first session involved the pastors and trained coaches from each church, and the final focus group was made up of willing participants who had completed the training, assessment, and coaching process. Interviews were recorded, transcribed, and evaluated to discern themes that developed pertaining to the impact of *The Place Assessment* on the church as an organization (Gay et al., 2012).

Population

The population selected for this research project was Church of the Nazarene attendees from selected churches in Eastern Iowa. The researcher drew from the church

that he pastors as well as three additional churches pastored by other individuals. The four churches involved in the study range in attendance from the mid-thirties to over four-hundred. The population of the churches involved represented nearly 1,000 Church of the Nazarene attendees from Eastern Iowa.

Sampling

The population of the 1,000 Church of the Nazarene attendees in Eastern Iowa was developed on a voluntary basis. Pastors were asked to promote the participation in the research project within their congregations. Churches were assigned a number of complimentary assessments in accordance with the size of the congregation. Out of the population of 1,000 Church of the Nazarene attendees, the researcher sought 5-10% participation for a minimum sample size of 50-100. In total, 122 participants completed the training sessions, 87 participants completed the assessment through written or computer form, and 61 participants completed the posttest and focus group discussions. Therefore, the sample was approximately six percent of the population.

Data Collection

The first step in the data collection process was the structured instructional time. When participants arrived they were given informed consent forms and the *Spiritual Growth Assessment* pre-test to determine current engagement levels as well as to discern approximate spiritual maturity. Upon the completion of the informed consent and pre-test, participants were given an instructional time covering aspects that were to be uncovered in the assessment process: personality, spiritual gifts, abilities, passions, and life experiences. The instructional time lasted approximately two-and-a-half hours at each location, with participants eating an evening meal provided by each church during the

instructional time. The researcher taught each session, utilizing an adjusted PowerPoint presentation purchased from The Place Ministries. The researcher also drew heavily from a training DVD purchased from The Place Ministry with founder Jay McSwain teaching through the five assessment areas. Following the instructional time, participants were supplied with complimentary copies of *The Place Assessment* booklet and were emailed a link to take the assessment online.

Within one month of each of the initial training sessions, the researcher met with selected coaches from each church to train them to complete the one hour coaching session with each participant. Coaches were selected by the senior pastor based on the perceived abilities of participants from their congregation to conduct one-on-one coaching sessions. Selected coaches demonstrated an ability to understand basic human behavior concepts, a knowledge of their local church, and a willingness to be trained as a part of a research program. Two of the churches had five coaches, one had three, and the researcher and his wife conducted all of the coaching in the researcher's church. The training session for coaches lasted approximately two hours, where a sample coaching DVD published by The Place Ministries was viewed in addition to a structured discussion and role playing to train coaches.

Following the instructional time and the completion of *The Place Assessment*, participants met for a one-on-one coaching session with a trained coach from their own church. Coaches were trained to begin the session with the participant sharing the story of how they came to faith in Jesus Christ. The coach would then connect the participant's personality blend to their life story. The remainder of the time consisted of semi-structured questions designed to discern the level of synthesis of personality, spiritual

gifts, abilities, passions and life experiences. Coaching sessions lasted approximately one hour. Coaching sessions took place within four months of the initial training — dependent on scheduling abilities of both the participant and the assigned coach.

Approximately three months after the coaches were trained, the researcher met with the coaches and the senior pastor from each church to discuss their experiences. These discussions were recorded with the permission of the participants. In the case of the researcher's own church, a conversation covering the same themes was recorded with the church board and the researcher's wife. The recordings were transcribed by the researcher and analyzed for themes.

Approximately four months after the initial training session, the researcher emailed participants who had completed the training, assessment, and were reported by their church to have completed the coaching session and asked them to complete a the post-test survey through a digitalized version of the *Spiritual Growth Assessment*. Written permission was received from Lifeway Resources to publish the *Spiritual Growth Assessment* on a secure, password protected website. Survey Monkey was the secured survey tool utilized. The pre-posttests were numerically coded to properly match test results. A code was established at the initial instructional time and consisted of the first initial of the city in which the church was located, if the participant was on the church board, they would then use a B for board or if not they would use an L for laity. The third component of the code was the full four digit year the participant was born, and the fourth component was the last four digits of the person's telephone number. Questions were asked in the Survey Monkey assessment to reconstruct the initial code provided. Additionally, the researcher asked for the gender of the participant on the post-test and

participants were also asked to rate the perceived helpfulness of the instructional time, *The Place Assessment*, and the coaching time. A five point Likert scale was used, and participants were asked to rate the perceived helpfulness in their discipleship journey, in their understanding of themselves, as well as in their ability to work well with others.

Approximately five months after the coaching session, participants were asked to participate in focus group discussions conducted at their local church. A total of nine focus groups were held, with five focused on the pastor and coaches from each church, and four held for all participants from each church. Approximately 65 people participated in the focus groups, with 49 contributing to the discussions. Participants who had not yet completed the online posttest were asked to complete a paper version with the exact wording of the online version. Discussions were guided by the researcher with open-ended questions focused on what difference the teaching, assessment, and coaching had on their personal lives. The researcher began the coaching interviews and the focus group discussions with an open-ended question on participants thoughts overall. The researcher then asked the participants and coaches for their thoughts on the usefulness of this process on their discipleship journey, in their understanding of themselves, and in their understanding of others. The following questions were then asked to further develop the impacts of the process on transformation, engagement, and discipleship.

- In what ways did this process prove helpful in your understanding of yourself?
- In what ways does an improved understanding of yourself improve your understanding of discipleship?
- In what ways does this process help you to become more engaged within the body of Christ?

- Did you find that understanding yourself better, and understanding others better helped you engage more with the body of Christ?
- In what ways did this process help your church?
- Do you feel that this process was helpful in your personal relationship with Jesus Christ?
- Do you feel that this process was helpful in your understanding and participation in the biblical community?
- Do you feel that this process gave you a deeper desire to know God better through His Word?
- Do you feel that this process was helpful in finding ways to engage in biblical service?

The discussion of the topic of transformation was developed by questioning the impacts of the training, assessment, and coaching on the person's personal relationship with God and with their biblical engagement. The evaluation of engagement was developed by questioning the impacts on biblical community and service to others.

Analytical Methods

Quantitative data was collected and evaluated through the use of the *Spiritual Growth Assessment* and analyzed through a Paired Samples *t*-test. Data analysis was conducted using IBM's SPSS. A Cohen's *d* was established to determine the specific effectiveness of the intervention in the areas of transformation and engagement.

The *Spiritual Growth Assessment* asked participants to score themselves from one to five, with one being the least likely to agree and five being the most likely to agree, on 60 questions divided into six different areas of discipleship. Transformation was

measured by responses to the first three areas: abide in Christ, live in the Word, and pray in faith. Engagement was measured by responses to the final three areas: fellowship with believers, witness to the world, and ministry to others.

While the *Spiritual Growth Assessment* does not have published reliability and validity data, the researcher conducted reliability analysis using IBM's SPSS software which indicated a high internal consistency with a Cronbach's Alpha of .96. Further analysis showed a Cronbach's Alpha score of .932 for the questions on transformation, and a .947 for the questions on engagement. Test-retest reliability estimates utilizing pre-posttest scores yielded a Pearson's Correlation coefficient of $r = .794$ $p < .001$. Additionally, the fact that change due to intervention was captured speaks to the validity of the test.

Qualitative data was gathered through interviews with trained coaches (the full church board at the researcher's church) and through the focus group discussions. Sixty-one people participated in the focus group discussions, with 49 captured as participating in the discussion. Discussions were recorded, transcribed, and evaluated to discern themes that developed in the areas of engagement, transformation, and the overall impact on the church.

Sessions were recorded utilizing the *Recorder Plus* by TurboKey app on the researcher's iPad. In the larger focus groups, the researcher also utilized a digital camcorder, and merged the two audio files together with Adobe Audition. The two recording devices were set up in different parts of the room for better sound quality.

Recordings were transcribed utilizing *Dragon Naturally Speaking 12.5* software from Nuance. The researcher would listen to a short session of the recording and then

speak into the voice recognition software. After sessions were transcribed, the researcher went back through each session comparing the transcripts to the original recordings. Some parts of the conversations recorded but not pertaining to *The Place Assessment* Process were omitted from the transcripts. Participants in the coaches focus groups sought to determine future applicability of *The Place Assessment* process and implementation within their local churches. These conversations were not applicable to the researchers desire to determine the implications of *The Place Assessment* process on transformation or engagement. Names of all participants were changed to an encoded name to allow the researcher to connect thoughts of participants without revealing identity. The researcher then used *NVIVO 10* qualitative data analysis software to identify themes in the qualitative data.

Limitations

The researcher recognized several limitations with this study. First, the population consisted of laity and board members from four Nazarene churches in Iowa. Participants from other denominations or other geographical areas might respond differently in a similar research process.

Another limitation was the five percent sample size. Although 10% participated in the training, only five percent completed the entire process. An independent samples *t*-test was performed on the pre-test scores of those who completed the process and those who did not. This test clearly indicated that there was no statistical difference in pre-test scores between these two groups. The low completion rate may have been influenced by the emphasis on taking the assessment online, which may have been confusing for some

of the participants with less comfort with technology and online tools. The mean age of participants was 50.9, with a standard deviation of 14.34.

The lack of ethnic diversity is also a significant limitation of this study as most, if not all, participants were Caucasian. This was not intentional on behalf of the researcher, but the lack of ethnic diversity was reflective of the region where the study was conducted and of the racial makeup of the participating churches.

Another limitation is the spiritual maturity reported, as the average number of years as a Christian was reported as 31.5, with a standard deviation of 15.3. This was largely influenced by the request of the researcher for church board members to participate. Seventy percent of participants were church board members.

Summary

The research conducted in this study sought to determine the impacts of an assessment process that included structured training; assessment of personality, spiritual gifts, abilities, passions, and life experiences; and a one-on-one coaching session. Impacts were measured qualitatively through focus group discussions, and quantitatively through a pre-posttest. The researcher will discuss these results in the following chapter.

CHAPTER IV

FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

Introduction

The process for developing disciples has not been clearly researched by the church. The lack of material on the discipleship process available for the literature review established the deficit in this area. Additionally, the up and down patterns of church attendance throughout American history revealed that the church has been unable to establish sustained growth (Carpenter, 2001; Gordon-McCutchan, 1983; Moreland, 1997). Revival techniques that focused on emotional appeal and quick decisions rather than engaging the true work of discipleship has left the church in a precarious position (Moreland; Watson, 2009).

The purpose of this study was to determine if a process of self-awareness which involved teaching, taking *The Place Assessment*, and individual coaching could aid the church in accomplishing and sustaining its mission of making disciples. If *The Place Assessment* process was deemed to be helpful in the work of discipleship, the researcher then desired to understand in what ways it was helpful. The research was therefore conducted through a mixed method approach which measured quantitative pre/posttest scores to determine if *The Place Assessment* process was effectively followed by focus groups to determine qualitatively the impacts of the quantitative data. Three specific research questions were developed to guide the research process:

1. In what ways does a comprehensive assessment which evaluates personality, spiritual gifts, abilities, passions, and life experiences combined with structured coaching increase discipleship engagement?
2. In what ways does a comprehensive assessment which evaluates personality, spiritual gifts, abilities, passions, and life experiences combined with structured coaching encourage transformation in the life of a disciple?
3. In what ways does a comprehensive individual assessment which evaluates personality, spiritual gifts, abilities, passions, and life experiences combined with structured individual coaching impact the church as an organization to better make disciples?

Findings

Quantitative data was collected through the *Spiritual Growth Assessment* instrument used as a pre-posttest. The *Spiritual Growth Assessment* is divided into six spiritual disciplines: abide in Christ, live in the word, pray in faith, fellowship with believers, witness to the world, and minister to others. Qualitative data was collected through recorded focus group discussions conducted by the researcher with participants. A minimum of two focus group discussions were held with each participating church. Recordings were transcribed by the researcher and then analyzed with the help of NVivo 10 qualitative analytical software. Themes were identified and consolidated to provide clarity.

The first research question, which is likely the most readily applicable to *The Place Assessment* process, sought to determine the impacts of the process in the areas of engagement. Quantitative data analysis for the area of engagement utilized the sum of

fellowship with believers, witness to the world, and minister to others pre-test scores as compared to the same posttest scores. The findings for the paired sample *t*-test in the area of engagement, as shown in table 4.1, were significant at $t_{(59)}=5.72, p < .001$ Cohen's *d* .60, which shows a medium effect size.

As can be seen in table 4.1, the mean increased with from 38.32 to 40.87 in the area of *fellowship* from the pre-test to the posttest. In the area of *witness to the world*, the mean increased from 33.37 to 35.78. In the area of *ministry* the mean increased from 36.85 to 40.10. The increase in these three areas led to an increase in the combined engagement total from 108.53 to 116.75. As mentioned above, this reflects a medium effect size. The average age of participants was 50.9 with a normally distributed curve. The average years reported as a Christian was 30.8, also with a normally distributed curve. Therefore, one would not expect too significant of a change in these areas. Too large of an effect size would create suspicion in either the authentic spiritual maturity or in the results of this study.

Table 4.1

Results of *t*-test for pre/posttest results self-reported by participants in the area of engagement

Discipline	<u>Pre-test</u>		<u>Posttest</u>		<i>n</i>	sig (2-tailed)	<i>r</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>df</i>
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>					
Fellowship	38.32	3.921	40.87	3.784	60	.000	.47	4.957	59
Witness	33.37	6.894	35.78	6.137	60	.000	.69	3.590	59
Ministry	36.85	5.851	40.10	5.427	60	.000	.64	5.268	59
Engaged	108.53	14.212	116.75	13.363	60	.000	.68	5.724	59
Combined									

Note- *M* = Mean, *SD* = Standard Deviation, *n* = number of participants, sig (2-tailed) significance of results, *r* = correlation, *t* = *t*-score *df* = Degrees of Freedom.

Several key themes emerged in the qualitative data that provided insights into the impact of *The Place Assessment* process on the area of engagement. The most frequent was the theme of *clarification*. Participants related a sense of clarification a total of 86 times in the course of the focus group discussion. The theme of clarification included several sub-themes: clarification of current ministry assignment, clarification of a bad fit in current ministry assignment, and clarification of why past roles did not fit due to personality conflicts. The full transcriptions of focus group discussions are available in appendix B. representative of the comments from participants:

- And in talking with them, you could just see in their physical reaction that if they're put in a leadership role it just goes against everything within them. And being able to say that's okay.
- This made us very aware of where our qualifications were, and we can stop spinning our wheels on something that we want to do but are not qualified to do.
- I think she gave a lot of clarity. Because I moved also, from the area that I thought I was in into an area that I feel like I am... It's a lot more challenging but I feel a lot more fulfilled from it too.
- And that was probably the big thing that comes out of this, you can still be in the right area of ministry, but not be doing the area in which you are gifted in that ministry and still be drained.
- The people that feel that they're doing the right things, we could still look back at situations where they had been doing ministry because they felt like they needed to, or maybe situations that left a really bad taste in their mouth, and we were able to look at them and see what other kind of people they were working with and look at the personalities and say maybe this is why this didn't go well. It may not have been necessarily the job itself, but the circumstances around it.
- Yes I think it does, there are things that I would beat myself up over... A lot of that that I realize now it's just the way I'm made... God made lots of people in many different ways... And I need to work with what I have.
- I was very involved beforehand, but then moved the focus to a different place where I think I am doing a better job at it because the survey. It pointed me in that direction.

- I think it is going to help me, because I didn't really know where to focus... I felt like I try a little bit of everything, and I wasn't sure where I fit in, but I think this is giving me more direction.

The second theme that emerged in the area of discipleship engagement is that of *community*. The unifying theme of community has many contributing thoughts.

Participants reported that the process helped them understand how to better interact in community. Through understanding their own personality as well as the personalities of others, they were better able to respect others within the community. The concept of *respecting others* was referenced 25 times alone. Community included more than just the respect of others. The theme of community also included an increased openness to community involvement, with several participants saying that they felt the process awakened their desire for community. Participants also reported better community integration and role filling as a result of this process. Specifically, the coaching sessions allowed the coach to get to know the participants better which led to better role placements, but also created more of a sense of integration within the overall life of the church.

Coaches specifically reported enjoying the process and being able to connect with their participants. Many coaches reported not knowing participants well prior to this experience, and they were able to build a connection that carried over into other areas of interaction within the life of the church. This combined area of community was referenced 65 times in the recorded discussions in addition to the 25 times that respecting others was referenced. Representative comments from this area of community included:

- It is a real good way to connect with people, and I don't think we are doing that a ton in church.
- One of the biggest benefits, is the people feel like they have a part of the church. Someone recognizes their abilities, and asked them to use it. It's just, it's a good thing for the people, they feel like they're an important part of the community.
- I struggle sometimes with a lady in our church; I just don't understand her... But she did fill this thing out and I could look at her scores, and she is quite different from me... And I could see that from talking to her, but looking at how she scored versus how I scored I can understand why some of the time it's almost like we're on different planets
- I think it helps me to see that we all have our own area, and how we all come together to form the body of Christ. That makes me not feel so bad about the areas that I am not so strong in, because I know that there is someone else that will fill that gap.
- Yeah, it was kind of amazing to see, even in a relatively small example of this church relative to the whole body of Jesus Christ ... That God has given us the puzzle pieces that we need... and this is one of the ways that we are going to be able to put them together.
- I liked knowing the different categories, finding out what you are... You pretty much see yeah, this is me and it is okay to be me. That it really is a thing, and not just what you feel or whatever... But yes, I liked seeing the other categories... Kinda thinking, looking around and thinking that there are different ones in the church like these other categories and it is just as fine for them to be that, as for

me to be this... I liked it very much, I thought it was very helpful. It puts into words what you are.

- I just feel that knowing the different types of personalities can free us up when discipling, because not everybody is going to come along like a thought processor, and you know we can give these people room to grow in their own skin and we are not feeling like we failed.
- I always enjoy conversations like this so it was fun just to get to know somebody... And just to hear them... I probably cried with at least three of them as they shared things and you know... Felt that with them. And now when I see these individuals at church, I feel a connection with them that maybe wasn't there before. Our paths had never crossed before. And I think that is really positive.
- I think there are plenty of people taking this that want to feel more of a sense of community in the church. And they think that this could be a good launch pad for that.
- It reinforces that we are truly the body, and we each have our function... We work in community because that's the way that God designed the church to work. So when we see what our part of it is, then we take our part, and we feel that God is working with us to help us with that part.

A third theme that emerged under the area of discipleship engagement is that of *passion vs. obligation*. Participants alluded to this concept approximately 22 times in the course of the discussions. Participants reported being able to identify areas of passion; both inside and outside of the church. Participants reported that prior to *The Place Assessment* process, they were serving more out of obligation than out of their passions.

Identifying their passions through this process led several participants to new areas of service, while others have identified the area of service they are passionate about, and are working to transition to that area. Representative comments from participants in this area included:

- But I think it's really neat to see people doing what they are passionate about doing... The passions that God gave them, to be able to realize those.
- I will say that one man was passionate about this whole place assessment, and talked a lot about it, every week in life group he brought his papers in his book and stuck them out there and was very eager to move in to find a place to serve.
- I think that it helps us to serve others better, because if we find the right place then we serve passionately versus serving becoming a chore or an obligation.
- It removed that guilt for me so I was able to serve, like you are saying, more passionately and more fulfilling in that particular area.
- I think that, to go along with that, a lot of times people in general will try to fill gaps in the church just because there's gaps... And it will drain people... And people fall out of ministry completely for years because they were in ministry just to fill a gap rather than filling ministry that they are called to.
- I think there is definitely a disconnect between you and God when doing what you're doing is such a strain, such a fight, you just feel... Well God this is what you want me to do, okay... But you just feel AHHHH. Who are you?
- Where I have been serving hasn't changed, since when I started this... But I think being reminded of personality and experiences... That God has put me in situations in the past and developed me as a person to be who I am now... Being

reminded of all that has help me feel more engaged in the ministry that I am serving in. It has just helped remind me of my passion... So I can use that in my current ministry assignment.

The second research question sought to determine the impacts in the area of transformation. The researcher recognized that there is significant overlap in the concepts of engagement and transformation, but sought to determine the transformative effects of the assessment as it applied to abiding in Christ, live in the word, and praying in faith; as assessed by the *Spiritual Growth Assessment*. Data analysis for the area transformation utilized the sum of abide in Christ, live in the word, and pray in faith pre-test scores as compared to the same posttest scores. The findings for the paired sample *t*-test in the area of transformation, as shown in table 4.2, were significant at $t_{(59)}=5.72, p < .001$. Cohen's *d* .47, which shows a small effect size.

As reflected in table 4.2, the mean for *abide in Christ* increased from 39.47 to 41.72 from the pre-test to the posttest. In the area of *engaging God's Word*, the mean increased from 39.97 to 41.90. For *prayer*, the mean increased from 36.68 to 39.37. The small increases in each area resulted in a combined transformation increase from a mean of 116.12 to 122.98, which reflects a small effect size. Once again, the average age of participants was 50.9 with a normally distributed curve. The average years reported as a Christian was 30.8, also with a normally distributed curve. Therefore, one would not expect too significant of a change in these areas. Too large of an effect size would create suspicion in either the authentic spiritual maturity or in the results of this study

Table 4.2

Results of *t*-test for pre/posttest results self-reported by participants in the area of transformation

Discipline	<u>Pre-test</u>		<u>Posttest</u>		<i>n</i>	sig (2-tailed)	<i>r</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>df</i>
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>					
Abiding in Christ	39.47	5.225	41.72	4.365	60	.000	.67	4.406	59
Engaging God's Word	39.97	5.957	41.90	5.389	60	.000	.94	4.073	59
Prayer	36.68	5.703	39.37	5.275	60	.000	.71	4.920	59
Transformation Combined	116.12	15.499	122.98	13.593	60	.000	.80	5.717	59

Note- *M* = Mean, *SD* = Standard Deviation, *n* = number of participants, sig (2-tailed) significance of results, *r* = correlation, *t* = *t*-score *df* = Degrees of Freedom.

Qualitative data from recorded focus group discussions were analyzed and two key themes emerged in the area of transformation. First, the transformative concept of self-awareness was referenced 37 times in the recorded discussions. Participants reported that they were able to learn more about themselves, understand why they tended to respond certain ways, and understand better why they responded in different situations. Self-awareness was reported in all areas measured by *The Place Assessment*: personality, spiritual gifts, abilities, passions, and life experiences.

While self-awareness is not in itself transformational, one cannot be transformed if self-awareness does not exist. Awareness of self and the need to change is a necessary precursor to the transformation process. Representative comments in the area of self-awareness included:

- My thought is, now that you know, you can control... You can control a lot of your weaknesses now that you're aware of them.
- One lady shared that learning about her personality type and her spiritual gifts helped her to understand why she studies the Bible in the way that she does.
- She started to see the result of her personality within the church, and noticed that she didn't really like the results.
- I think for me really understanding what my personality was, it helped me realize that that was a gift that God gave me to use for people, not just a coincidence that I am that way... That I'm just a nice person or whatever, I can use that for him somehow.
- I think it's been very helpful for me personally and I think it brings a great deal of comfort and satisfaction to know where I know I belong. Rather than trying to be a round peg fitting into a square hole.
- I feel like I have served others, but I'm also the kind of person that I picked myself apart... So I asked myself did I really serve them effectively? So I kind of analyze myself too much.
- I really like the coaching session, because I've taken tests like this before, found out about myself, but didn't really know what to do with them.

The second theme that emerged in the area of discipleship transformation is in the area of testimony awareness. The coaches training video produced by *The Place Ministries* recommended having participants share their testimonies at the beginning of the coaching sessions. *The Place Ministries* founder, Jay McSwain, demonstrated in the coaches training video connecting the person's testimony to their personality type. Those with the *D* personality type typically struggled with the issue of control, or responded impulsively to an invitation to follow Christ. Those with the *I* personality type typically related the relationships that were involved in bringing them to Christ. For those with the *S* personality type, the decision to follow Christ came through a period of seeing God's faithfulness and steadiness before coming to the decision moment. Those with the *S* personality type were also less likely to point to a specific moment, but found themselves gradually pulled into the relationship with Christ. For the *C* personality type, typically participants reported a long period of analyzing factual evidence, weighing the pros and cons of a relationship with Christ.

Participants related that this awareness of the connection of their testimony to their personality type was very enlightening and helpful. Understanding that God chooses to customize salvation experiences based on personalities was transformational both in appreciating one's self, but also in deepening the relationship with a God who knows his followers on a personal level. Representative comments on this theme included:

- If we understand our personalities, and if we understand that this person is a real high C... I'm not pushing for a quick commitment out of them, because I realize they are going to have to think about this for a long time. And if I try to push... I am going to push them away.

- It was like oh, these experiences were given to you for a reason, and this is the direction you should be going because of it.
- The idea that we are saved according to our personalities helps in my estimation, since I realize that, since my coach was talking with me about that... that we can pray for other people and add that into our prayers for how they would become saved.
- For me, that aspect was a joyful surprise... God didn't just deal with me any old way, he dealt with me specifically and that was just a real joy to find out... And it also just makes me know that God knows me... It's not a blanket thing, it is individual and specific and unique to each of us in our personalities.
- How wonderful it is, that God is so patient and doesn't force us. But he knows us and knows what our time limit would be, or how fast we are going to accept him... Not everybody grows the same way even after they are saved. We don't all grow the same way. But it's great that he actually knows us in and out.
- I think it has the power to make us feel more connected to Christ. Because of how much he knows us, were not just in this random connection. It is a specified, intimate, detailed, connection... And that just draws me to him!
- I think that most people have kind of said the same thing, that it kind of reaffirms your faith and who God is, who He is to you personally... It is an individual thing, it is so personal. I think it very much... It helps. It just draws you closer.
- Anytime you improve your confidence in how you are saved, and how you operate, and that God knows you specifically, and that you are doing the right

thing... Then that should free you up to reach all kinds of people because you don't have to be second-guessing yourself.

The quantitative findings in this study showed that there was indeed a measurable effect as a result of *The Place Assessment* process on the process of discipleship. Scores for each of the six measured areas were reported under research questions one and two. Table 4.3 shows the combined quantitative results for the pre/posttest in the areas of engagement, transformation, and a combined total score.

Table 4.3

Results of *t*-test for pre/posttest results self-reported by participants total score

	<u>Pre-test</u>		<u>Posttest</u>		<i>n</i>	sig (2-tailed)	<i>r</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>df</i>
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>					
Engaged	108.53	14.212	116.75	13.363	60	.000	.68	5.724	59
Combined									
Transformation	116.12	15.499	122.98	13.593	60	.000	.80	5.717	59
Combined									
Total Score	224.65	27.653	240.07	24.909	60	.000	.79	6.993	59

Note- *M* = Mean, *SD* = Standard Deviation, *n* = number of participants, sig (2-tailed) significance of results, *r* = correlation, *t* = *t*-score *df* = Degrees of Freedom.

Quantitative data was also gathered by asking participants to rate the perceived helpfulness of *The Place Assessment Process* in three areas: as a disciple of Jesus Christ, in understanding oneself better, and in understanding and working with others better.

Participants answered these questions as a part of the posttest process, with the helpfulness of *The Place Assessment Process* rated on a 5 point Likert scale. Tables 4.4-4.6 show the results of these questions.



Figure 1. Helpfulness for discipleship. $M = 3.43$, $SD = .963$

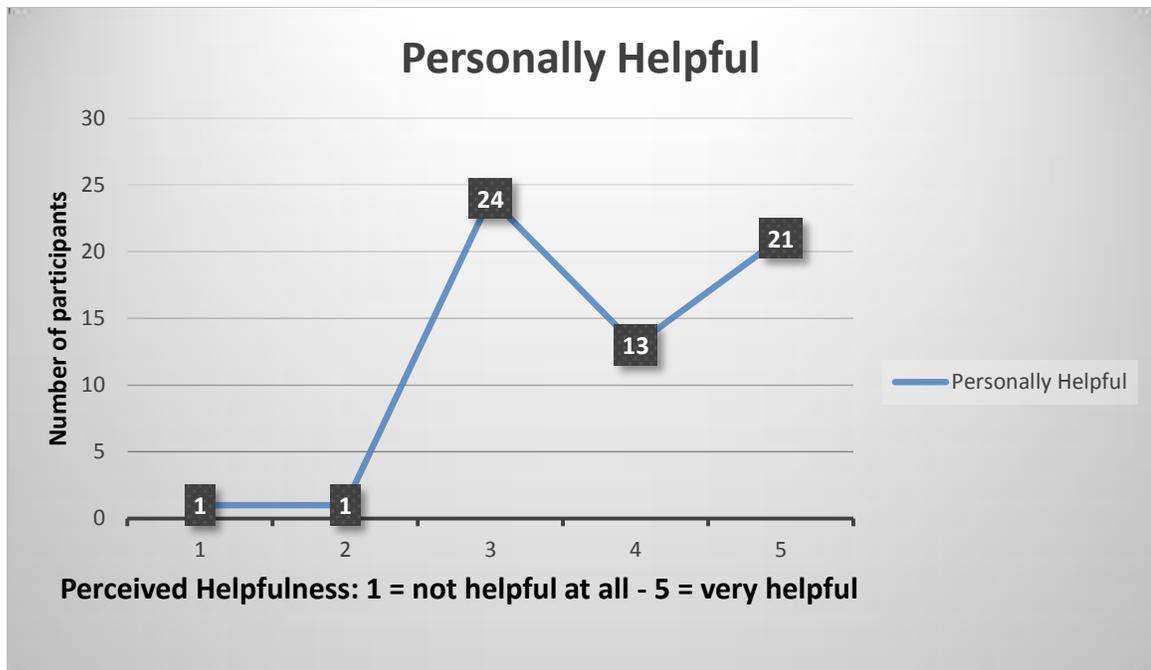


Figure 2. Personally Helpful. $M = 3.87$, $SD = .982$

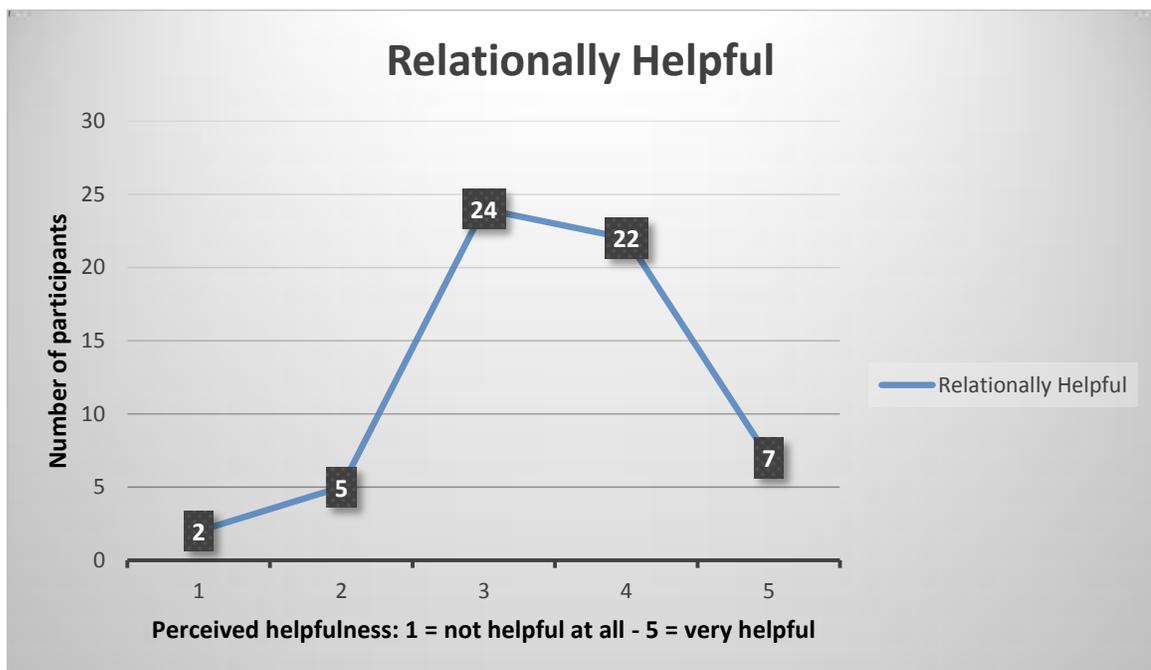


Figure 3. Relationally Helpful. $M = 3.45$, $SD = .928$

The researcher selected a mixed-methods approach because the full scope of the impacts on transformation and engagement could not be fully understood through mere

numerical analysis. The third research question, however, was completely qualitative in nature. With the third research question, the researcher sought to determine the impacts of *The Place Assessment* process on the life of the church on the church's ability to make disciples.

Many of the qualitative results referenced under engagement and transformation have significant implications on the church as a whole. The themes of clarification, community, respect for others, passion vs. obligation, self-awareness, and testimony awareness speak into the impacts of this process on the church. Two additional themes emerged that spoke directly to the church.

The first theme that emerged directly applied to the church was the need to view *The Place Assessment* process as indeed a process. The time limitations of this research project were not sufficient to fully understand the implications of this process on the church long term, as processes take time to implement and fully measure. Therefore, *The Place Assessment* process cannot be viewed as a quick and easy solution to the discipleship dilemma faced by the church. However, it is a helpful process that speaks to the needs of the church in this area. Representative comments on this theme included:

- But that was kind of our expectation, that in coming months and years it would not be so arduous to find volunteers in the children's department and youth department. And maybe that's already happening.
- We have seen some strides, it's a tool we have seen kind of turn the momentum of expectations, and the momentum of what our church can accomplish.
- I have appreciated *The Place* process, the emphasis on making disciples... Going through the process, I think helped clarify the vision for the church... We are not

looking for just warm bodies filling ministry positions; we want people to do what God has created them and prepared them to do so that others will get saved and become Christ followers. So I am impressed with the process, the program.

- There are people who I think are getting it and I expect that to happen. And I expect a year or two from now, the majority of the people in our congregation to know their place and hopefully will be serving in that.
- We are seeing some momentum; I think that it is baby steps
- I think since this launched, we have been far more intentional about it for a longer period of time than we have with our other... You know when we have done ministry fair's in the past... This has stuck, we have continued on with this for much longer than we have with others.

The second theme that emerged was an appreciation of *The Place Assessment* process as a valuable tool on the discipleship journey. *The Place Assessment* is not to be viewed as an end in and of itself, but is a helpful tool to be used on the journey that each disciple makes. The process was viewed as helpful in engaging participants in more of a long-term view of discipleship rather than simply viewing Christianity as a simple prayer that one prays. Participants reported that this view encouraged their attention to a personal relationship, the need for community, the spiritual disciplines, and in their need to serve others. Representative comments on this theme included:

- One guy addressed that. After doing this assessment, he is teaching Sunday school regularly. He said I need to get back into regular habits. I grew up in the church, and I spent a lot of time in the church... But I need to get more disciplined, and this is a good stepping stone to get back into that.

- it has increased my study habits, it has increased my quiet time, it has increase my focus with my kids
- The other lady that I had just went on and on and on about where the ministry that she's plugged into now, her faith has grown so much in one month, more than it had in two years. So I guess just watching the spiritual growth in her
- I feel so much stronger in my faith doing one thing in the ministry than doing 16 things where I thought I was being more helpful.
- We view Place in the future as part of our process to help Christ followers become... You know were targeting people who make clear confessions of faith, have been followed up, and are involved in learning marks of discipleship... The high watermark is that you found your place and you are making disciples.

Conclusions

The first research question was, in what ways does a comprehensive assessment which evaluates personality, spiritual gifts, abilities, passions, and life experiences combined with structured coaching increase discipleship engagement? Quantitative data showed that participants did become more engaged as a result of *The Place Assessment* process. The three measured areas of fellowship, witnessing to others, and ministry to others all showed statistical significance.

Qualitative data reflected that *The Place Assessment* process helped participants become more engaged in several ways. The most consistently mentioned theme was that of clarification. Participants reported clarification in who they were, the roles that fit them best, and the roles that would be struggles for them. The second theme was that of

community. Participants reported a renewed desire for community as well as reflecting that this process was helpful for them in learning to live in community together.

The third theme that emerged in the qualitative data was that of serving out of passion vs. serving out of obligation. *The Place Assessment* process helped participants in identifying and plugging into areas of passion rather than simply plugging them into areas of ministry need.

The second research question was, in what ways does a comprehensive assessment which evaluates personality, spiritual gifts, abilities, passions, and life experiences combined with structured coaching encourage transformation in the life of a disciple? Quantitative data revealed transformation in all three areas measured: abiding in Christ, engaging God's Word, and prayer.

Qualitative data had significant overlap with areas previously identified by the first research question, and identified two additional themes: self-awareness and testimony awareness. The theme of self-awareness revealed that participants felt more aware of who they were through *The Place Assessment* process, which identified personality, spiritual gifts, abilities, passions, and life experiences. This increase in self-awareness not only transformed the ways in which they engaged in discipleship practices, but also transformed their view of themselves. While self-awareness is not necessarily transformational, it is necessary for transformation to take place.

The second qualitative theme developed was that of testimony awareness. Participants reported that their salvation experience was best interpreted through their personalities, and also reflected that this understanding was transformational in that it

helped them feel closer to a God who not only loved them but revealed himself to them based on who they were.

The third research question was, in what ways does a comprehensive individual assessment which evaluates personality, spiritual gifts, abilities, passions, and life experiences combined with structured individual coaching impact the church as an organization to better make disciples? The quantitative data presented in the first two research questions provide some insight into this question, as does the qualitative data. Specifically, the areas of clarification and community speak to the need for the church to foster a sense of community where each person has a place rather than seeking to develop a series of ministries where people are plugged in to fill gaps.

Additionally, *The Place Assessment* process was identified in the qualitative data as a useful tool on the discipleship journey. This conclusion recognized that the assessment process is not to be viewed as an end, but rather a means to a greater end.

Finally, *The Place Assessment* process is indeed a process. Implementation and full results cannot be measured in the six-month time frame reflective of this research project. Rather, the full results will take years to fully assess. A long-term approach to research could measure continued spiritual growth, although a different instrument would be necessary. The *Spiritual Growth Assessment* would have a limited ability to measure long term growth as it is based on a 5-point Likert scale.

The Place Assessment process influenced discipleship engagement and transformation as participants proceeded through this study. Quantitatively measured movement on the pre-posttest scores showed improvement with statistical significance. Areas reflective of all four key areas of discipleship were measured in the *Spiritual*

Growth Assessment utilized for the pre-test, posttest. A personal relationship with Christ was measured through abiding in Christ and prayer portions of the pre-posttest. Involvement in biblical community was measured through the fellowship with believer's portion of the pre-test, posttest. Biblical engagement was measured through the live in the Word portion of the pre-posttest. Finally, service to others was measured in the witness to the world and minister to others portions of the pre-posttest. All areas showed statistically significant growth. The conclusion of the researcher, therefore, is that *The Place Assessment* is a valuable tool to increase discipleship engagement and transformation.

One of the concerns of the researcher was the impact of social acceptability influencing participants to score themselves higher on the *Spiritual Growth Assessment* posttest. Several steps were taken to discourage this from taking place. First, the pre-test and posttest were taken five to seven months apart to allow participants time to hamper participant's ability to remember how they had scored themselves initially. The researcher also instructed participants to answer the questions, but not worry about totaling up the scores. Although some participants did total up their scores, the emphasis was placed on individual questions, not only on their total scores. Participants did not have access to their pre-test scores or tests when answering the posttest.

The researcher serves as lead pastor at one of the participating churches, and was also involved in the coaching process at that church. To determine if this skewed the results in any way in regards to social acceptability, one way ANOVA's were run to determine if any differences existed in the scores between the churches. No significant difference was found in any of the one way ANOVA's $F(3, 56) = .307, p > .05$.

The average age of participants was 50.9 with a normally distributed curve. The average years reported as a Christian was 30.8, also with a normally distributed curve. The researcher found both of these statistics interesting in light of the results. The qualitative concepts of clarification and self-awareness speaks to the lack of movement in the church to ensure that parishioners are understanding how they fit into the ministry of the church. Therefore, although the average age of participants was older, the applicability of *The Place Assessment* process to all adults showed to be significant. Likewise, the average years reported as a Christian shows applicability of *The Place Assessment* process to those who have been in the church for years as well as relatively new Christians.

Implications and Recommendations

In 2006, The Church of the Nazarene unveiled its new mission statement: *to make Christlike Disciples in the Nations*. The language shift to making disciples rather than the previous focus on reporting on salvation or sanctification experiences has caused pastors and churches to reevaluate their current focus to ensure that they are doing their part to accomplish the greater mission of The Church of the Nazarene. However, there remains much confusion as to what *to make Christlike disciples* actually looks like. In the defense of the first chapter of this dissertation, Dr. Frank Moore, the reader for this dissertation and the General Editor for The Church of the Nazarene indicated that although the denomination had adopted the mission of *making Christlike disciples in the nations* in 2006, he did not perceive that the churches fully understood how to practically accomplish the mission (Personal Communication, May, 2013).

The researcher defined discipleship as *a life-long transformational journey that*

engages the whole person, flows out of a personal relationship with Jesus Christ, and is fulfilled through participation in biblical community, intentional biblical engagement, and sacrificial service to others. The ability of The Church of the Nazarene as a denomination to accomplish its mission depends greatly on clarifying what it means to *make Christlike disciples* and also to identify tools and processes that can be helpful to churches in accomplishing this purpose. The quantitative data and qualitative data presented in this research study provided validation to *The Place Assessment* as such a tool for churches.

The researcher has identified several implications for churches as a result of this study. The need for self-awareness and clarification in order for disciples to be able to serve out of their passions rather than simply out of obligation is the first implication. The second implication centers on the need for disciples to understand how others work so that they can effectively work together for task accomplishment, but also thrive in the relationships necessary for biblical community to develop within the church. The third implication is that churches have typically approached the important work of evangelism from a one-size-fits-all perspective. Qualitative data from this study showed that God typically reveals himself to disciples in accordance with their personalities. The church has failed to recognize this concept, and has instead attempted to coerce non-believers into a faith relationship. Recognition of personality diversity will allow the church to partner with God to share the hope of the Gospel in a way that the person is wired to receive and process it.

The first recommendation for further study would center on the use of *The Place Assessment* as a means of community integration. Use of *The Place Assessment* as a part

of a new membership class or newly formed Bible Study group could possibly be used to create a cohort type feel for a group to identify and develop better self-awareness and a greater sense of community. The questions could center on the effectiveness of self-awareness and community interaction in attendance stability and member retention.

A second recommendation would seek to gather more qualitative data from the coaching sessions to understand to a greater degree than was present in the focus group discussions, the consistency of God revealing himself to participants based on their personality type. While this theme certainly emerged in the focus group discussions for this study, the majority of the data that would be necessary to fully understand this was not recorded nor available for analysis as it took place in the coaching sessions.

A third recommendation for further study would center on the usage of *The Place Assessment* process in the development and training of pastoral candidates. Several of the pastors involved in the present study recognized that this process was helpful for their own self-awareness and ministry approach, and indicated that they wished that they had used this type of tool earlier in their ministry career.

A future direction of study could involve alternative measures of transformation and engagement, as these areas are not well defined in the research realm. The ceiling affect would limit the effectiveness of the continued use of the *Spiritual Growth Assessment* as a measurement tool.

A final recommendation for further study would be to look at the ways in which discipleship is processed by different personality types. Specifically, how do the concepts of personality, spiritual gifts, abilities, passions, and life experience identified through *The Place Assessment* influence a disciples understanding and interactions within a

personal relationship with Jesus Christ, involvement in biblical community, biblical engagement, and service to others?

The primary work of the church, as established by Jesus Christ, is to make disciples. The stated mission of The Church of the Nazarene is *to make Christlike disciples in the nations*. However, the church in recent years has been more focused on attendance, buildings, and cash flow (McDonald, 2007; Stetzer & Rainer, 2010). As the church seeks to return to its true mission, it must identify with clarity what discipleship looks like, and what tools can be used to help the church accomplish this mission. The data provided through this research study reveals that *The Place Assessment* process is a useful tool that pastors and churches can use to help accomplish their greater mission.

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APPENDIX A:
SPIRITUAL GROWTH ASSESSMENT

Spiritual Growth Assessment

As you complete the assessment, avoid rushing. Listen for God's voice to encourage and challenge you. Consider this experience as one-on-one time with Him. Be intentional in your growth towards Christlikeness. Use the scale below to respond to each statement.

Never - 1 Seldom - 2 Occasionally - 3 Frequent - 4 Always - 5

SPIRITUAL DISCIPLINES	RESPONSE
ABIDE IN CHRIST	
1. I practice a regular quiet time and look forward to that time with Christ.	
2. When making choices, I seek Christ's guidance first.	
3. My relationship with Christ is motivated more by love than duty or fear.	
4. I experience life change as a result of my worship experiences.	
5. When God makes me aware of His specific will in an area of my life, I follow His leading.	
6. I believe Christ provides the only way for a relationship with God.	
7. My actions demonstrate a desire to build God's kingdom rather than my own.	
8. Peace, contentment, and joy characterize my life rather than worry and anxiety.	
9. I trust Christ to help me through any problem or crisis I face.	
10. I remain confident of God's love and provision during difficult times.	
Abide in Christ Total	
LIVE IN THE WORD	
1. I regularly read and study my Bible.	
2. I believe the Bible is God's Word and provides His instructions for life.	
3. I evaluate cultural ideas and lifestyles by biblical standards.	
4. I can answer questions about life and faith from a biblical perspective.	
5. I replace impure or inappropriate thoughts with God's truth.	
6. I demonstrate honesty in my actions and conversation.	
7. When the Bible exposes an area of my life needing change, I respond to make things right.	
8. Generally, my public and private self are the same	
9. I use the Bible as the guide for the way I think and act.	
10. I study the Bible for the purpose of discovering truth for daily living.	
Live By God's Word Total	
PRAY IN FAITH	
1. My prayers focus on discovering God's will more than expressing my needs.	
2. I trust God to answer when I pray and wait patiently on His timing.	
3. My prayers include thanksgiving, praise, confession, and requests.	
4. I expect to grow in my prayer life and intentionally seek help to improve.	
5. I spend as much time listening to God as talking to Him.	
6. I pray because I am aware of my complete dependence on God for everything in my life.	
7. Regular participation in group prayer characterizes my prayer life.	
8. I maintain an attitude of prayer throughout each day.	
9. I believe my prayers impact my life and the lives of others.	
10. I engage in a daily prayer time.	
Pray in Faith Total	

FELLOWSHIP WITH BELIEVERS	
1. I forgive others when their actions harm me.	
2. I admit my errors in relationships and humbly seek forgiveness from the one I've hurt.	
3. I allow other Christians to hold me accountable for spiritual growth.	
4. I seek to live in harmony with other members of my family.	
5. I place the interest of others above my self-interest.	
6. I am gentle and kind in my interactions with others.	
7. I encourage and listen to feedback from others to help me discover areas for relationship growth.	
8. I show patience in my relationships with family and friends.	
9. I encourage others by pointing out their strengths rather than criticizing their weaknesses.	
10. My time commitments demonstrate that I value relationships over work/career/hobbies.	
Build Godly Relationships Total	
WITNESS TO THE WORLD	
1. I share my faith in Christ with non-believers.	
2. I regularly pray for non-believers I know.	
3. I make my faith known to my neighbors and/or fellow employees.	
4. I intentionally maintain relationships with non-believers in order to share my testimony.	
5. When confronted about my faith, I remain consistent and firm in my testimony.	
6. I help others understand how to effectively share a personal testimony.	
7. I make sure the people I witness to get the follow-up and support needed to grow in Christ.	
8. I encourage my church and friends to support mission efforts.	
9. I am prepared to share my testimony at any time.	
10. My actions demonstrate a belief in and commitment to the Great Commission (Matthew 28:19-20).	
Witness To The World Total	
MINISTER TO OTHERS	
1. I understand my spiritual gifts and use those gifts to serve others.	
2. I serve others expecting nothing in return.	
3. I sacrificially contribute my finances to help others in my church and community.	
4. I go out of my way to show love to people I meet.	
5. Meeting the needs of others provides a sense of purpose in my life.	
6. I share biblical truth with those I serve as God gives opportunity.	
7. I act as if other's needs are as important as my own.	
8. I expect God to use me every day in His kingdom work.	
9. I regularly contribute time to a ministry at my church.	
10. I help others identify ministry gifts and become involved in ministry.	
Minister To Others Total	

APPENDIX B:
FOCUS GROUP TRANSCRIPTIONS

Church C: Discussion with Pastor and Program Coordinator

Researcher: first question is just to give me a brief overview of what you think of the place process so far within your church. Are you seeing within the church any difference as a result of this program?

Participant C1: I think it's helping, like I mentioned to you... I think people are seeing the value of the personal discovery that goes with it. It doesn't necessarily mean they are making a drastic change in what they do in ministry, but I think people are aware of what's going on with the process. And I don't see a lot of people who are indicating that... The people that do it enjoy it, have found it useful, and people who have heard about it see that in them, because people don't tend to run the other direction when you approach them about the potential of doing it... That's one of the things with ministry sometimes, a lot of time you ask people to do something and they I hightail it in the other direction... But I think that they are really interested in finding out more about themselves and the coaching sessions are great because... Like you talked about the lady was involved in 16 different ministries and the one that she needed to be in was different than all those others and she did notice... It's a big launch pad into spiritual growth... And I think that's what you can really get out of the coaching sessions, but the coaching sessions do take time, and they are a commitment... But the people who go through them, and I think the coaches as well... It is a real good way to connect with people, and I don't think we are doing that a ton in church... It's just like... Kind of a product of our culture, it is very individualized and we are not connected in that way... And I think this is really helped with that... When we announce that we were going to do the session again, and Pastor C wanted me to do a ministry moment, and get up and announce it...

And I told him I said think for this when we just make an announcement during the service... At least that was my recommendation, and if we are going to do a big kickoff for this again, I don't think there's anything more powerful than somebody with a testimony that has gone through the process... Or someone who has seen the fruits of the labor from it to do... To tell people what it's all about, how they experienced it... And he agreed with me... a little surprised... Or at least he relented. (Laughter) at the moment...but I think that's important part of it, seeing what people are getting out of it... And I think people are getting beneficial things out of this...

Researcher: the decision to go ahead and do another one this soon... Did you have people who didn't participate that said hey can I? Or was it just you recognizing you had people that didn't participate?

Participant C1: there was a few people that didn't participate that wanted to, but most of them are new... I said 8 to 10 for this Sunday, there are two of them that didn't participate last time that I think might come, but I haven't got the confirmation on it yet... There's one that is going to that did not participate the last time... The other seven are all new... So the majority of them, as far as I can tell their new to the program if not new to the church. There are at least two or three people at signed up that I've never seen in church before which I thought was awesome.

Pastor C: and there might be some Buzz about the Place, but I'd like to think that some of it has to do with the vision casting that I have been doing... The Lord has been clarifying our vision to be a church that rescues hurting people... You know I have reminded our people that everyone is essential to that mission. Everyone has to find their place in God's great rescue mission. So I think some people are answering the call... They are

saying it's time to find my place... And you know I have appreciated the place process, the emphasis on making disciples... Going through that I think help clarify the vision for the church... We are not looking for just warm bodies filling ministry positions, we want people to do what God has created them and prepared them to do so that others will get saved and become Christ followers. So I am impressed with the process, the program, a little disappointed that not everyone followed through... I think they realized that it was a serious commitment and weren't ready for that... And I think we also see our need to shore up our processes for placing people once we have helped and see where they fit. You know the onus is on us to get them there and help them to succeed. And we need to improve and that, training and resourcing people... Encouraging them and all that but again I'm sold on the process and it is a part of our vision going forward. We believe every Christ follower needs to, and we will strongly encourage them to find, their place.

Researcher: have you noticed in your conversations with people any transforming effects? Has understanding themselves made a difference for some of the people that you are coaching? Whether the refining where they are currently serving or just helping them to understand better and to change as a result of what they learned in this process so far?

Participant C1: the people that I've talked to or coached, I think of been a lot more aware of, bare minimum, their personality from this. So I think that's been beneficial because they see based on their personality where they might fit and how they interact with other people. That's probably been my biggest finding I think, in regard to the question.

Researcher: that's going to be my follow-up question... I will go ahead and ask it now see you can speak to this as well... Have you noticed, and in this situation because your entire board went through this, and you noticed a better respect for one another because

of their personalities and abilities rather than the typical church fighting? Have you noticed the people are saying you know what, you're just a C, or just an I, that makes sense now... And more respect...

Pastor C: we don't fight and Oakland (laughter) I do think our board recently came to the realization... And the place process may or may not have informed that... That some people need more time to process... We had been attempting to expedite our board meetings and it wasn't sitting well with everyone. As of last month, we decided that we wouldn't feel badly if our board meetings lasted a little bit longer... And again I don't know if it's because of place, it is a recognition that not everyone makes decisions the same way. And board members were not feeling good about how we were coming to decisions. So were making changes... Backing up, not sure if I have the exact question, I coached the male board members and I was encouraged to see some of them deciding that they were doing what they were shaped to do, and feeling better about their current ministry, not feeling like it was a second rate ministry... My buildings and maintenance guy for example, I'm probably the most excited about one guy in our church who is relatively new, but he is gone through the process and now he just seems very alive... New energy in him... Despite the fact that his wife just died recently, he is serving in ways consistent with how God has made him and he is having a ball doing it... I'm sure there are other stories like that but I am very encouraged by this participant's growth in the last few months.

Participant C1: for church board specifically, when I put that report together... remember I summarize everybody's personalities, spiritual gifts on a document. I gave it to all the board members in and told them to keep them in their board packets so that when we are

interacting with each other we can refer back to that... The example I had for that was previous to doing anything with place, but my workplace does that, and that is extremely helpful! To find out what people's personalities are before you have in-depth conversations with them or arguments with them...

Researcher: not that happens and this church... Laughter

Participant C1: no that doesn't happen at this church... Laughter... I'm talking about my workplace... So I guess I was kind of trained in that... Like at our workplace, it's mandatory that they you in the first year to go through personality assessment, and I think they do the abilities part, since it's a secular place in they're not interested in the spiritual gifts, at least not on the surface... So I tried to emphasize that in my report, unfortunately I was gone for that board meeting... The one that I report directly to... another board member... went through that, but I'm not sure if he emphasize that, but if people read what I sent, they would've seen that... But I can't speak to that... So the tools out there, but at the board level I don't know if it is being used... In particular I did have one board member that did not want his information released to the entire board, and I told him why thought it was a good idea but at the same time I respect his decision in there's was left off of it... So the tools out there but I don't know how well it's being used. But I'm not a social of the person as some other people, I think somebody like Participant C3 would be able to answer that question a lot better than me... Sorry to diverted but what he said is probably better evidence overall. It's hard for me to answer that because I'm not having these conversations with people on as regular of a basis... I am usually chasing some child around...

The tools are out there, I've seen glimpses it is being used... I certainly don't think it's something that were just saying this is what we did now we sweep it off the table. I think it's being used, but I think you could be used more. And I think evidence of that is that there are more than one or two people interested in doing this again.

Researcher: last question want to ask is do you see an increase in engagement within the church? Are people stepping into ministry roles? People who have gone through this process who probably would not have otherwise stepped in the ministry roles?

Pastor C: I can't stay for certain that that's the case, but I am not hearing about as many vacancies... So that's been encouraging, whether it's attributable to our place efforts or not, is not clear... But that was kind of our expectation, that in coming months and years it would not be so arduous to find volunteers in the children's Department and youth department. And maybe that's already happening...

Participant C1: He mentioned the children's Department, we do rotational Sunday school, and I'm a workshop leader. So I'm seeing that on a regular basis, so if I can gauge any part of our church it's that area... So I have seen a handful of people from this process stepping into that, and only one of them did I coach, so it wasn't just I know we need someone in the children's Department... I know other people were helping guide them in that way as well... The coaches were... So I think that's a good example but it has succeeded... You know couple weeks ago you mentioned that no one wants to serve cookies and drinks in the morning... Which is something really easy to do, it is a great practical ministry... A great way to interact with people in the church, and no one wants to do it. So I think we got a handful, but there's still a gap. And I can tell you that gap is

growing, because there's more need... I would say that's likely the case, but that's the pessimistic side of me talking.

Pastor C: we have been negligent in this area for the last few years, so I didn't have any visions of expecting all of our problems to be solved... But I'm optimistic, and I do think that the message is getting across that there is this expectation from God that you will be a part of the team. And I think the recent response to sign-ups, with little pressure, was encouraging... There are people who I think are getting it and I expect that to happen. And I expect a year or two from now, the majority of the people in our congregation to know their place and hopefully will be serving in that.

Participant C1: complements to Pastor C for taking the whole month of January to really focus on our churches vision... What it should be based on what God wants, not what he wants... Any particular group wants, and I think people responded that and this is... I think people want to know more about themselves, and this is a great way to do that. Even if they don't find their place, I think people want to find out more about themselves. And I think it's kind of a byproduct of that, that you have more of a draw to go into some kind of ministry. Because everyone was built for purpose, and most of them realize that before they do this. But after they do this the tendency is that you start thinking about what your purpose is more. I think it's a great tool for that, and hopefully we'll see that with the second round, and again a dozen, and if we see 50% of those people jump into ministry, and where they are effective, from that. I think that's pretty good. I mean 50% on a test is a failing score, but getting half the people to do something that you want to do something, is a pretty good return. And they're doing what... That goes right along with the discipleship stuff... They're doing what they are meant to do and I think that opens

the doors to spiritual growth, discipleship, and many other facets... Future board members... It's a good launch pad.

Pastor C: it's changing the culture, it is starting to change the culture... And again it is going to be in expectation of members, of Christians, those that we baptize, that they will find their place for service.

Participant C1: it goes along with your questions, but I think it's really neat to see people doing what they are passionate about doing... The passions that God gave them, to be able to realize those... And I think this is a great tool to do that. I think we've seen, at least early on, it's usefulness for our church. We have seen some strides, it's a tool we have seen kind of turn the momentum of expectations, and the momentum of what our church can accomplish... I think everybody wants to, whether they know it or not, belong to something that makes a difference... And that's what we are trying to do.

Church C Coaches Focus Group

Researcher: the first question I want us to look at is just general impressions of the process... When you met with people to coach them how do you feel that the process was received by people? Did you feel that it was beneficial in their lives? And by beneficial, I will clarify that, I'm looking at three different questions that I asked on the post-test...

Do you feel that it was helpful as a disciple? Do you feel like it was beneficial in helping you understand yourself? And helping you to relate to others better?

Participant C2: well I had several people that I met with the said that it was especially helpful in helping them understand themselves as a person better. In fact, a lot of times, the results from the survey... They would say so that's why I am like that... Or that's why I do this in this situation... I think that for a lot of them that part was definitely true.

Participant C3: I agree, I have a couple who talked also about the personality, and having a better understanding of how they maybe react and respond. As far as, is it helpful as a disciple, I think that probably, looking at the list of people that I spoke with (several names were read off) I would say that it was probably one of the first times that they had may be, actually share their testimony... A couple of them (names were given) are still kind of seekers... But being able to articulate where they are at on their journey with Christ was beneficial for them... To kind of crystallize in their own minds where their thoughts are, or where their faith is at, And where they were at in their walk with Christ. I don't know if they will share that with you or not in that post survey, but I think it was beneficial for them just to be able to hear that out loud... What they were really thinking and that type of thing.

I thought it was very positive, I always enjoy conversations like this so it was fun just to get to know somebody... And just to hear them... I probably cried with at least three of them as they shared things and you know... Felt that with them. And now when I see these individuals in church, I feel a connection with them that maybe wasn't there before. Our paths had never crossed before. And I think that is really positive.

Researcher: I will follow up with something that you said there, a couple of people said "it helps me understand why I respond this way" did you find that you spent time working through the different personalities... For example I am a strong D, and I had two of those in Moravia last week and this was very enlightening for them... This is why I push everybody away...

Participant C3: yes, and the one I had it with most was KR, very strong D... I teach a personality class at work, and I even showed her on that scale here's how people perceive

you... Your intention may be this, but this is what you feel like to others... She went into great detail about how she offends people and people are afraid to talk to her... And rightly so because she is very in-your-face, and when things don't go her way she gets very upset. So we spent a lot of time just talking about social styles... And the reason that you probably find other people frustrating, and we looked at the graph of where they probably are... And again knowing that their intentions are good can help you tolerate, better understand, at least give them some grace... I don't know, it was probably forgotten quickly...

Pastor C: I don't know, I haven't seen her for a month or two maybe (laughter)

Participant C3: I think she does have some mental illness too, that plays into her situation also...

Pastor C: yeah, I dealt with some of the core members of our church, and I think that most of them appreciated some objective measurements of what they are best at in ministry... I think some are affirmed in what they are doing, others are motivated to kind of hone in on what they are really shaped to do. I think some kind of felt like they were coerced into this process but I think they all appreciated the insights that they gained from the interaction that they gained with me as their coach.

Researcher: I am going to follow up with that, did you as coaches find that people responded to the coaching sessions in a positive way? Where they reluctant? How did people seem to respond to that coaching session?

Participant C2: the ones that I coached all thought it was great, I had one who had not been coached before, but had gone through a similar spiritual gifts inventory and stuff like that. And I think she kind of had in her mind that she already knew what she was

wired for. So no matter what we discussed during the coaching session, she kind of already knew what the end result was going to be going into it. But everyone else that I went through the coaching process with really enjoyed it, they thought it was really insightful, and I think they appreciated being heard.

Participant C1: yeah, everyone that I coached that went that far, I think that's been the highlight of their process... If they make it to that point, they really appreciated the chance to be heard. It is kind of enlightening for them because they have to kind of look at themselves through a window a little bit, which we don't usually do as a person on a daily basis. I think it was good. I think it also... I tried to really present it as we are not here to have a list of jobs and you choose one off of this list based off of what we find on the assessment. So here you go have at it... It's more evaluating what the assessment has to say, and then thinking about areas that you want to serve in exploring those further. And I think that's... That has helped people that I went through it with, they feel pretty comfortable in that... In a reassuring way, not just an I am comfortable that I don't have to do anything... But I am comfortable, and I may actually want to do that. And I think that's good

Researcher: did you sense any reluctance on behalf of those being coached? I am wondering if there is a difference in the response and small churches versus larger churches.

Participant C3: I didn't sense any reluctance at all. There were a few of my people who talk about sexual abuse... We talked about a lot of different things... I did not feel any, you know I think you're gonna go tell somebody...

Participant C2: yeah, I don't know if it was the same for you? But I wasn't able to read the life experiences section of the assessment... But every person that I coached shared that with me, even when it was deeply personal stuff. So no, people didn't really hold anything back. They were very open. When you asked them, you know, why don't you tell me your testimony... For a lot of them, they were like wow! That was the first question I asked them...

Participant C1: that really set the tone

Participant C2: I've never really had someone ask me that before... Or stuff like that... From that aspect I think it was positive as well.

Pastor C: I think... I would like to think that we have encouraged the culture of honesty about who we are... God never wastes a hurt, he can use our brokenness to help others... You know we talk about that a lot... And kicking off the Place experience we spent a month there, maybe that helped... But I think they hear that it our church.

Researcher: and I would say that in reading the life experiences that came in, I could tell that this church was very vulnerable in what they put out there. There wasn't any holding back, it was very clear... Probably more clear than any of the other churches... I haven't compared them, but just off the top of my head with the experiences I remember glancing through, really a lot of personal stuff... I am glad that came out of the coaching, I'm sorry I thought I had given you permission to view those life experiences... But I'm glad they told you the stories

Participant C3: I wonder if it is big city versus little city? You know that town is a very religious small town, all the stores are closed, no one mows grass on Sunday... Whereas we are a very sinful city.

Pastor C: I wonder if it is old Nazarene versus new Nazarene... I think sometimes we are in denial about the things that are not holy in our lives... I don't know if that plays a factor in this, I hope we talk a lot more about grace in our church...

Researcher: The next series of questions... As I have studied discipleship, and Pastor C you may have a little bit different perspective on this than I have, and that's okay...

Maybe we can have that conversation sometime... When I look at discipleship, and when I study the great commission, I see four things that Jesus expected to take place: a personal relationship, biblical community, biblical engagement, and biblical service. So these are the four areas that I'm trying to measure... Does this assessment process help in these four areas?

So we will start with that first one, do you feel that this was helpful for people in their personal relationship with Jesus Christ?

Participant C3: for those that were still seekers I think it was helpful, because it help define what their relationship is at this time. And I think as we talked they defined what they thought their next step was going to need to be... With two of them, we talked about, you know, what that next step was going to look like... It was kinda scary when they think about what that next step means, they know it's coming at some point... So I think yes, for those two, it really helped their personal relationship. With the other ones I think maybe a sense of gratitude when they tell their testimony as to God's grace, his redemption, the power of forgiveness, and how thankful we are... As you look back over your life and you see God's hand at work. So I guess that would help with the relationship, just being mindful of the gratitude that we have for Christ and what he has done for us.

Participant C1: I don't think I have anything to add to that...

Pastor C: I think it became clear from the outset... And I missed your initial training, but watched the video... That this was Kingdom business, it wasn't just discover yourself... It was all in context of great commission, building the kingdom, as it should be... As life should be... I don't think you could miss that crucial component of finding your place... That's why you find your place, that's how you find your place... It starts with a personal relationship with Christ. And I appreciated that about this process... It was clear that this was bigger than just you (the researcher)...

Researcher: I hope so! Participant C1, when you say you don't have anything to add to that, did you agree with what she said?

Participant C1: yes

Researcher: okay I just wanted to clarify that... Participant C2 did you see anything?

Participant C2: I am trying to think... It kind of related, I had one in particular, she had grown up in the church her whole life, but then had gone her own way and has since come back. And I don't want to say that she was saved again, but was kind of like she had this spiritual awakening... And for her going to *The Place Assessment* was very exciting because she said now that I am committed, now that I am all in, I know that this is what I'm supposed to be doing, I know that I'm supposed to be serving people, I am supposed to be helping bring others to Christ! This was a very important part of her relationship with Jesus because she felt like she was being obedient to what she should have been doing all along. I guess maybe that falls more under the serving your church community or whatever... But for her it was very exciting to be going through Place because she knew that for her relationship with Jesus this is what she needed to be doing.

Researcher: I tried to approach this from two different perspectives theologically in the training: first is that we are created in the image of God. Also that we each have a part to play within the body of Christ. I know for me, I have learned to understand my high D, and therefore have been able to appreciate the differences in others. Did the light bulb click on for anybody to see that since God created me like this, it is ok to be who I am?

Pastor C: I think that too many people lament who they are... If I really had my act together I would be more disciplined, or a better leader, or more likable, or engaging... And even among the board members that I talked to, I think some were like okay, this is who I am, this is who God made me to be... I think it still takes some effort to get over the ideal you and accept the real you, but I think this helped. This is the way God made me, and "God don't make no junk..." And again, I was dealing with core members... But I think even with them, some were like, "I wish I were different." hopefully they came through and said, no, I'm good... God made me who I am.

Participant C2: I experience that somewhat, I had very few D's... And I think you said that was a pretty small portion of the population...

Researcher: yeah 10 to 15%...

Participant C2: and I had several the people that I went through with that said "I wish I could be more of a leader"... And in talking with them, you could just see in their physical reaction that if they're put in a leadership role it just goes against everything within them. And being able to say that's okay... You know I use the example that you can't have too many cooks in the kitchen... And if we were all leaders that nothing would actually get done because we would be too busy trying to tell each other what to do... So

I think for a lot of people being able to say that's okay, that you're made that way... That way you don't have to feel guilty for that, I think that was reassuring for a lot of them.

Participant C3: statistically leaders are not drivers... If you look at true leaders and managers, they make up... You see all people in those positions. You just take your driver to the position, you lead through compassion, you lead through... You know what I mean? So I think it's a misconception to say that you have to be a driver to be a leader... That just doesn't hold up statistically.

Participant C2: sure

Participant C3: you know with presidents or any kind of leader... And maybe when I talk to people... The styles the personalities... My thought is, now that you know, you can control... You can control a lot of your weaknesses now that you're aware of them. You can make yourself more versatile, or more accommodating to people... you know what other people's preferences are, you know yours... You know how to control you to make you more influential, or credible, or have a more positive relationship with somebody else.

Researcher: interestingly in this study, there are for pastors represented, and I have all four personality types represent... I don't have any duplicates among the pastors...

Participant C3: I found the spiritual gifts helpful for me, in that I am high in teaching, but just knowing that there is a difference between knowledge and teaching I had never thought of that before...

Participant C1: yeah that was very helpful...

Participant C3: now my husband is very high in knowledge, but he is always wanting to study... And I am like if God made it so hard to be a believer then half the population

wouldn't be able to get in... I'm like people with disabilities can become a Christian you know you don't need to know all that... I always felt that was kind of contrary, it was just nice to see that there was knowledge, and there was teaching... You could be high in one, and not the other

Researcher: and wisdom as well, which is different than either of those two...

Participant C3: I thought maybe I was a shallow Christian, because sometimes I feel kind of shallow what I am talking to him... Wanting to know what these words mean...

Researcher: the next area then is biblical community, and I think this one is the most easily relatable to this assessment process... Did you feel that this was beneficial to people, and yourselves, in relation to biblical community?

Pastor C: I actually think this is one of the weaknesses of our church, most churches, we tend to think individualistically, and I've been reminding our people that we need armpits, and elbows, and all kinds of parts... But I'm not sure that everyone gets that... I still think go at this" you know I need to find my place" so that I will be fulfilled... And I am sure that many think I am needed so that we can get this done... But I see us struggle there. It doesn't seem like the place group found any camaraderie in each other... You know like we're in this together, but maybe we didn't set it up that way... I don't know if you saw more from the initial group that was at the training... you could not pick out of our church those that were... They're not talking about it with each other... I don't think, I didn't sense that... But maybe you've heard more than me. And I'm sorry if that sounded a little negative.

Participant C1: a little melancholy?

Pastor C: it is an area of need in our church

Participant C1: that is a danger of this process, is the self-fulfillment of it... And I tried to emphasize that in the coaching sessions, that's not what this is for... But I think it's still pretty individualized. But I think it has help people to launch into the little communities within the church. No one is buying the bumper sticker of "I'm a place alumni"...

Participant C2: I would say that in reflecting, there were some of mine that got a sense of the bigger picture of you are doing this for others, but I think that there were a fair amount that were "I want to know where I fit" or that's what "I would be good at" or "that is where I feel comfortable"...

Pastor C: "I can quit feeling bad..."

Participant C2: yeah, exactly... They knew that that's what they needed to do, but it was for them... But there were others that I coached that were very... They had hearts for reaching others for Christ in whatever way... I wouldn't say that it was across the board, but I would say that it was probably a 50-50 split for me... There were some that you just got a sense of it was more individualistic driven... Which sounds weird because it's a service thing...

Participant C3: I don't know if it's so much individualistic, you know what your skill set is, obviously you want to be in the spot that has the most influence... And it goes with being in a place that feels comfortable... You know what I mean?

Participant C1: but in the same breath though I think there are plenty of people taking this that want to feel more of a sense of community in the church. And they think that this could be a good launch pad for that.

Participant C3: I don't know if this answers the question at all but out of the 10 names are so, three or four commented that they had been in the church for a while but they really

don't feel close to anybody... I had two comment that they felt like the church was different than when they started coming, and wondered if this would be a church that they would seek out if they were church shopping right now... So I felt that there was a strong message that we need to build more community within our church. And maybe that's when actually begin to see the different styles interact with each other, but right now where a lot of silos... Or I kind of feel like we are a lot of silos... I don't think we would even know what somebody else's social style is because we don't even interface at all...

Participant C1: yes, but that's a part of a bigger cultural problem, how do you exactly attack that? I don't know

Participant C3: I will say that one man was passionate about this whole place assessment, and talked a lot about it, every week in life group it brought his papers in his book and stuck them out there and was very eager to move in to find a place to serve. I've never seen anybody work so hard to find a place to serve then this guy.

Researcher: one of the challenges that we face is in our cultural addiction to television, one survey reported that the average American watches 35 hours of TV a week, which is staggering to me, since I never have time to watch TV... every ten minutes on TV is a set of advertisements, and every advertisement is appealing to the individual. So for a church, and since our churches tend to be forward facing, everybody comes in, sits down and looks forward... we can't in an hour or 35 minutes a week combat the hours of advertising that the average person watches... we try, and that is where the Holy Spirit really has to work.. but it is a challenge to get people to see in our culture that it isn't all about them.

Pastor C: I think this will be an integral part of our vision, we say that everyone needs to find their place in the great rescue mission that God has called us to... I hope people are getting that we are in this together... And for the first time in a while we are trying to rally... We're gonna put some pressure on people to find their place, this is what Christ followers do. They find where God wants them to be. And this is why, because we have this mission that is going to take all of us. So again, I think it will help us to get there... But in and of itself, we can come through this and still be very self-centered. But we are not going to be... That's the D coming out in me (laughter)

Researcher: the next area is biblical engagement... Did anyone express a deeper desire to understand God's word as a result of what they learned in this process?

Participant C1: one guy address that, after doing this assessment, he is teaching Sunday school regularly. He said I need to get back into regular habits, I grew up in the church, and I spent a lot of time in the church... But I need to get more disciplined, and this is a good stepping stone to get back into that.

Participant C3: I don't think I had anybody that said anything like that...

Pastor C: if I say too much more we will get depressed... Looking at Participant C3's list... And I guess I don't know many of the others... You would like to think that people would come to this and say, God is going to use me so I need to be ready, take responsibility... There are people who are on our lists that have been through place that have not been very involved in the church in the last couple of months. And I think that disconnect is possible... I will do my little ministry... And that's pretty cynical... But it won't improve the quality of their discipleship. But maybe that is on me, or on us, to keep

talking about the source of our strength... The need to stay connected to the vine if we're going to bear fruit.

Participant C1: you can't pinpoint it down that much though, and certainly leaders have accountability... We have people who are going to this process that are being assigned to different leaders within the church, and the leaders have the responsibility... But there's self-accountability with that too. If you don't have the self-discipline to do it, you can be whipped and you can still just sit there...

Participant C2: I didn't have anybody come out and say... Like one guy did... But one lady shared that learning about her personality type and her spiritual gifts helped her to understand why she studies the Bible in the way that she does. She is more like

Participant C3's husband ... When she reads something she really has to dive into it and understand and all of that... This assessment help her to grasp that when it comes to God's word, why does she study it in the way that she does... I was going through all my sessions in my head, and that is the only one that specifically brought up reading God's word and how this assessment kind of tied into that.

Participant C3: I may be using the wrong word here, but metacognition, I think... You have to tell people why information is important, and we didn't do that... If we had a form that says we gone to this... Let's do some self-reflection right now, how is this going to help you forward with your walk with Christ which would've taken that learning to another level. But we didn't set it up that way

Participant C1: we can incorporate that very easily...

Participant C3: that would be a very easy fix... You know when I do training, so what, now what, you have to tell people, or explain to them what they need to do with what

they just experienced. And we didn't do that, I don't know if it's a disability in our brains, but we don't do that for ourselves. And a good teacher always does that. You know you're going to learn this because of this... But we didn't set it up like that... But it's easy to do that.

Participant C1: that's a good point, because were doing more coaching sessions right now...

Pastor C: it's a good point, but I think some of the onus has to fall on the ministry team leaders to hold their people accountable, to look out for them... I'm not sure that we do a good job with that. We have people serving in ministry in lieu of worshiping in church. It's like, who's calling attention to that... You know I think that those people in influence need to remind them of that frequently, they have to be filled up if they are going to effectively serve. The one who leads worship to our children and youth, whomever ... do you agree that we need to better job in creating community and accountability on our ministry teams?

Participant C2: yeah I would say that ministry wise, and this is specific to our church, I think a lot of the ministry is not that sense of community and holding ourselves accountable... Our ministry is that we are going to get this done, this is what has to get accomplished in this amount of time. And that tends to be our focus in the whole... where are you at in your walk right now because that's important for us to achieve the ministry... I think that part is skipped over

...specific discussion on follow through by ministry leaders when they were sent possible workers...

Researcher: the last question I want us to look at is do we feel that this has benefited in the area of biblical service? Are they serving better where they were already serving, or are they serving in new areas as a result of this?

Participant C1: well I know that Participant C2 started a job that I think this kind of helped launch as the work and witness coordinator...

Participant C2: I know one lady who worked closely with Participant C3 on the Christmas party for the kids...

Pastor C: I think we have at least 8 to 10 real success stories...

Participant C1: we are seeing some momentum I think that it is baby steps

Participant C2: to me the more difficult thing was when you did your coaching session with people who are already serving, but they acknowledged that they were not serving where they were best fit to be serving... But they were still doing the same job because they feel like they can't stop doing it because it's something that needs to be done. I think that was a more difficult thing when you went through this coaching session with someone and you were like oh so you're not really where you're supposed to be, but I don't exactly know what we are going to do about it.

Researcher: yes because you not only have to find their spot but you also have to find a replacement for the spot they're currently in...

Participant C2: so for me that was a more difficult part... It was almost easier for the people who weren't already serving because then you can get them plugged into something new. But that's just my take.

Pastor C: I think going forward, the more we talk about rescuing people, I think the place training helped clarify that that is why we serve, to make disciples ultimately, but helping

people see that every ministry is a part of the rescue effort. And I think that helped... You know I am doing this, so that someone some time will come to know Jesus. But I don't think everyone has connected the dots yet

Participant C1: I think this is a better tool than we have seen used in the 7+ years that we've been at this church. So that makes it good, but to make a great we've got to figure that out... And were working on that.

Pastor C: and one thing you may not be aware of, that we view Place in the future as part of our process to help Christ followers become... You know were targeting people who make clear confessions of faith, have been followed up, and are involved in learning marks of discipleship... The high watermark is that you found your place and you are making disciples....

Participant C2: I think since this launched we have been far more intentional about it for a longer period of time than we have with our other... You know when we have done ministry fair's in the past... This has stuck, we have continued on with this for much longer than we have with others... It is tweaking it for how it best fits in with our church I think... And hopefully every church looks at it like that.

Specific discussion of application within the local context of this church, not informative to this study)

Pastor C: think it's gonna be a part of the movement as we see God moments happen, I think it they will come from this group, and others saying I want to be a part of that...

Church C Full Focus Group

Researcher: the first question I'm going to ask, and I know for a few of you it will take a few minutes to think through this. In general, what were your thoughts on *The Place Assessment* process? The process included the training that you went through last fall, the assessment that you took online that gave you your personality type, and the coaching session. So with those three components, what were your general impressions of *The Place Assessment* process? Was it beneficial? Something that you are glad that you have done? Or something that you wish you would not have done?

Participant C4: I am glad that I did it, I feel like I learned a lot about myself... A lot of things I didn't know. As far as the coaching part, I don't think I really followed through like I should have because I was active in other areas that were not what I was number one in...

Participant C8: I like this session where you came and spoke to us, I think you gave a clear idea of what to expect when we did actually do the survey and what was going to come ahead...

Participant C6: I really like the coaching session, because I've taken tests like this before, found out about myself, but didn't really know what to do with them. So I met with Participant C2 and she asked me a lot of questions that really was like, oh yeah, this is making me think about what I really, really like to do. And I think somehow my name got out there, because now I am hooked up where I really love! So, I think it's the coaching session that makes a difference in what I've done in the past anyway! It was huge!

Participant C8: I had Participant C2 also, and I don't know if it was Participant C2 that was really good at coaching, that provided that, but I think she gave a lot of clarity.

Because I moved also, from the area that I thought I was in into an area that I feel like I am... It's a lot more challenging but I feel a lot more fulfilled from it too...

Participant C5: I like the Counseling session at the end, I do think that the instrument that you use was a little bit flawed because there were things like healing, intercession, miracles, and deliverance that were not addressed in there, and I think that they should of been...

Researcher: and the reason that this assessment doesn't, is because those are areas that there is a lot of disagreement on within the church as to one denomination feels yes, one denomination feels no. With it being an interdenominational assessment.. Jay McSwain said that he read about 100 different books on spiritual gifts, and came up with about 99 different perspectives... So trying to go with the ones that would be accepted in the middle, by most... And again there would be some that we would say that we believe in that... That's the reason that some of them were not

Participant C5: I think it might've changed a little bit if those were included...

Researcher: the next question is... Do you feel like in general, this was beneficial to you as a disciple? Do you feel that you have grown as a disciple of Jesus Christ through understanding yourself better through this assessment?

Participant C9: I think I will, I have not done the coaching session yet, but I took the test twice, and I was surprised that it did not come up with the same results twice... The first time that I did it, I did not realize there was an email link... I must not have been paying attention... So I did it in the book, and then this morning I actually finished it online... I

was almost a little disappointed in what I got, because I thought I was something else... But I think it helps me to understand myself better and give me into a place that will make me feel the most fulfilled...

Participant C10: I have done several of these before, I have led a lot of them... But this was just perfect timing because right as we took this assessment, but before I did the coaching, an opportunity came open to help the children's church right as we were doing this. So I took the assessment right before that opportunity came open, and it matched. Even though I already have a role in the church, I wasn't afraid to go after it because of the survey. So I think if the timing of the survey had not come around, I probably would not be leading children's church right now. I liked it.

Researcher: the next question I want us to look at is does this help us to be more engaged with the church? Do we feel like, in understanding ourselves better, if we were not involved does it help us to be more involved? Or if we are involved, does it help us look to see if we are in the right spot? Did this help us to be more engaged with the church?

Participant C8: I was very involved beforehand, but then moved the focus to a different place where I think I am doing a better job at it because the survey. It pointed me in that direction.

Participant C9: I think it is going to help me, because I didn't really know where to focus... I felt like I try a little bit of everything, and I wasn't sure where I fit in, but I think this is giving me more direction...

Participant C11: I agree with Participant C9... We had already made previous commitments when I took the survey so I haven't had a chance to switch positions yet but I think it's going to be a lot more beneficial for me when I do.

Participant C5: I would say no.

Participant C13: I think it confirmed to me that I am serving in ministry where I am called to serve and where I think my gifts support the ministry that I am serving in. It helps to see that... It helps to see where your talents, and skills, and abilities are and stuff... To see what the broad range of those are, and stuff like that. I think mine were more distributed so I can be different things at different times versus any one thing standing out, it was more of a flat liner.

Researcher: the last question in this line of questioning before we shift to those four areas... What is the impact on the church? Do you feel that this is beneficial for the church? And how so?

Participant C6: I wish everyone would take this! I know only a few did, my husband did not... But I think it's huge. I am kind of still laughing, because I came home... I have gotten involved in women's ministries, which is just starting up, and it is my passion! It has been for really long time! My husband and I are still laughing because I came home from a 2 ½ hour women's ministry meeting and I said you know that I hate meetings, but I could have stayed there all night! Because they were excited as I was. So you know you're in the right place. So I feel that if everybody could take the survey, and get excited and fired up about what lights them up... It would be a whole different place. We can impact so many people, but how do you get people to take the survey? I think it can make a huge difference.

Participant C8: I think in the same area with children, you want people who are passionate about it and enjoy it, and things like that... So I say have you taken *The Place Assessment*? Should you even be... I know that you want to volunteer because your kids

are here... But is this the right place for you? I think this is a great resource to allow leaders of the department to know whether or not you should actually... Whether they are in the right place.

Participant C1: I think it is reassuring, as an example... Not as a part of this study, getting ready to do another workshop and when I was going to get something that I needed for the workshop to walk by and see someone who had been coached working in a position that they had discovered in a coaching session might be a good place for them to be serving at... To see them actively involved in that is pretty reassuring to see that it can be a great tool to help our church help people find their place.

Participant C10: if I hadn't taken the survey, if my wife hadn't taken her survey... If we hadn't had the courage to go and take children's church... I don't know what would've happened children's church. I don't know if someone else would have stepped up... So maybe not expanding the church ministry, but keeping it from a bad thing happening. Because all we had was rotation Sunday school and we had gone down to one children's service... If we hadn't taken this, the potential impact...

Researcher: So moving now into the four areas that we talked about a little bit ago... Personal relationship with Jesus Christ, biblical community, biblical engagement, and biblical service.

How do you feel that this is helped you in your personal relationship with Jesus Christ?

Participant C10: I have to study a lot more for this new area that God has called me in, I can't just wing it anymore... When you are in front of 20, 30, 40 kids you got have all the right verbiage, you have got to make sure you don't talk to high, you have to make sure you don't talk to low... it has increased my study habits, it has increased my quiet time, it

is increase my focus with my kids. It has even increase my time with my own kids, I am more focused... All right, I need specific feedback from you guys, I need some help because I don't know what to do this next Sunday.

Participant C8: he is an I too, so having that you must study, you must... Is really good

Participant C1: I think taking the assessment was a reaffirmation of my faith. I didn't feel like for me personally, and other people have, so it's not a general statement... For me personally I didn't discover anything new per se about myself, but it reaffirmed what I thought I knew about myself so that I can be more confident in my faith, I think. But also from a coaching perspective, since I've done several coaching sessions now... Just to see God and the Holy Spirit work in that time is another reaffirmation of my faith. Because there is just something that goes on during that coaching session... It is hard to explain, you just have to be there to experience it from one side or the other... I gesture at

Participant C6 because I feel like she is already shared that to an extent... But I am by no means a professional at this, being able to connect the coaching sessions to people I see the Holy Spirit and God worked through that and it is pretty amazing... Faith reaffirming to me... Quite a bit

Researcher: did any of you find any encouragement or insight and seeing how your testimony lined up with your personality type?

Participant C8: it was a comfort for me... It was like oh, these experiences were given to you for a reason, and this is the direction you should be going because of it...

Participant C5: I don't think it really changed it because I knew where I was before... I just stayed even...

Researcher: next area is biblical community... And I think this is one of the areas where the assessment has a lot of potential simply because we understand that we are who we are for a reason, and we understand that others are who they are for a reason... And neither one is wrong, they're just not the same as us. Do you feel that this assessment has been helpful in the way that you view others within the body of Jesus Christ? And the way that you view yourself within the body of Jesus Christ?

Participant C9: I think it helps me to see that we all have our own area, and how we all come together to form the body of Christ. That makes me not feel so bad about the areas that I am not so strong in, because I know that there is someone else that will fill that gap.

Participant C1: yeah, it was kind of amazing to see, even in a relatively small example of this church relative to the whole body of Jesus Christ ... That God has given us the puzzle pieces that we need... and this is one of the ways that we are going to be able to put them together.

Researcher: Pastor C Do you want to tell me how you feel that this plays into the vision that God has given you for this church... Where everyone has a role to play in the rescue mission.

Pastor C: I don't know if it was concurrent with Place, you know it is kind of how God works... Just bringing things together to help us become what he has ordained... What he is calling us to become. This deep conviction that we are saved to contribute, to serve. But what does that mean to a lot of people that have a hard time seeing their place? And for me it is to be able to say a, you are all essential... You have been rescued to rescue. This gives context for that, and specific direction, and again I see this as a critical component of our vision. And an expectation, Participant C6, that everyone who claims

to be rescued by grace will go through this process... This is the new normal... I don't know if we will get everyone in the church on board, but going forward, this is God's will for all of us to be contributors, to be rescuers. And we just happen to have a great way for you to figure out how God uniquely shaped you... It was an answer to prayer before we started praying it. It is going to help us accomplish our mission. And as we have been hearing, and as we all believe, when you find your place in the spot where you are called and the most effective it is a win-win. Happy fruitful Christians, it is a good thing.

Participant C10: having taught SHAPE, and having gone through Place, the differences in it... I see a big difference in it, and I see it is the puzzle piece within the vision because of the difference between the two... The shape put so much emphasis on the spiritual gift, whereas the place put so much more emphasis on the personality... At least that is how I saw it... That is how I separate the two in my mind. With our vision, once you get to the point where you are ready to start helping others.. its not just what God has given you but it is how he has given it to you... And that personality that come striking through in everything that you do, and by emphasizing that, it made everything okay. No matter what the spiritual gifts, or whatever God has given you, it makes it okay... And I think that is what is going to help make the transition easier from being one of the people who has needs to being one who helps rescue others and helps them with their needs. I like that interplay, and I think that is going to help with our vision... Putting more emphasis on the personality stuff.

Researcher: the next question is biblical engagement. And Participant C10, you alluded to this a little bit earlier, when you said the study more now because of the role that you are

in... And I have heard that elsewhere to. For people who have been plugged into a new role, it has caused them to study more because they are in a role that helps them to realize that. Do you feel that this has helped you study God's word better? I will also tack on this: have you thought about the fact that Scripture was written by authors with personalities? Does it help us to understand Scripture better in understanding the personalities of the authors? Does this Place assessment help us to study more consistently because we understand where we fit?

Participant C10: yes and no. It may not have helped with the studying knowing that, but it help me to relate to someone that I could latch onto. Seeing that personality in Peter I could latch onto Peter, and say yeah, I am like him. I am going to be really high one moment and really low the next moment. That is just the way that I am going to be. I'm going to do something really cool for Christ, and that I'm going to do something really stupid... That's just the way that it's going to be. So the relationship when you read, knowing that those go to authors is really nice.

Participant C8: I think I related without knowing that I was relating... I studied more often because of knowing where I stand and confirming the next step, where should I go from here. I didn't think about the relationship side of it, but I did anyways.

Participant C5: I think I knew my personality before, so I kinda gravitate towards Matthew, Peter, and Paul.

Researcher: the last area is service to others. Do we feel that this assessment helps us to serve others more genuinely, and better?

Participant C4: I feel like I have served others, but I'm also the kind of person that I picked myself apart... So I asked myself did I really serve them effectively? So I kind of

analyze myself too much... So I don't know if it is helping me or hurting me... I am guessing that it is helping me... Because I'm learning more about myself.

Participant C13: I think that it helps us to serve others better, because if we find the right place then we serve passionately versus that serving becoming a chore or an obligation... Something that is draining. I know that when I am serving in youth ministry, there are different ways that you can serve with teens. If I am discipling teens one-on-one, that is energizing... That is something that energizes in ministering to the kids. There are other ways that you can serve in ministry as well that can just be draining. And that was probably the big thing that comes out of this, you can still be in the right area of ministry, but not be doing the area in which you are gifted in that ministry and still be drained. So the key thing coming out of this is, make sure you find your place in the ministry that your called to be serving in. That is probably a key thing that I got out of this... That is how you serve others, making sure that you find the right place in ministry, and serving in the right capacity within that ministry.

Participant C8: it removed the guilt of not serving... Because I felt like I needed to be serving here because there is a gap here, and here, and here, and here,... It removed that guilt for me so I was able to serve, like you are saying, or passionately and more fulfilling in that particular area.

Participant C13: I think that, to go along with that, a lot of times people in general will try to fill gaps in the church just because there's gaps... And it will drain people... And people fall out of ministry completely for years because they were in ministry just to fill a gap rather than filling ministry that they are called to. Leadership in the church, we need to watch for that, if we have a ministry, and we don't have people called to do that

ministry... Maybe that ministry doesn't need to be there right now. And that is what we as leadership need to look out for. Make sure that we have people that God has called to serve and to lead that ministry if not, maybe that ministry is not supposed to be there right... Until God raises people to lead that ministry. Let's not just fill gaps if people are not meant to be there

Participant C5: I am beginning to feel kinda like Paul was to the Jewish church, but I am not necessarily supposed to help in this church but I'm supposed to help people outside of the church... I am gravitating towards that... rather than doing something for the church here.

Participant C7: where I have been serving hasn't changed, since when I started this... But I think being reminded of personality and experiences... That God has put me in situations in the past and developed me as a person to be who I am now... Being reminded of all that has help me feel more engaged in the ministry that I am serving in. It has just helped remind me of my passion... So I can use that in my current ministry assignment.

Participant C10: sometimes when you are used to serving, and fixing holes you don't know exactly what to... You go through the motions, and even if you were passionate at some point, you feel like you are going through the motions now and taking this kind of survey and being reminded about where different people's passions are and where your passion is... You get reminded of these are the things that energize me... And if you're in charge of the particular area as it's going, you can schedule those moments a little more... As we took *The Place Assessment*, and as we were going into the new position, I felt it would be a great time to put more of those moments in there that are going to

energize me... I like organized chaos, and all of my helpers don't... So what I got to do was program a little more organized chaos... Let them know that hey, we're going to have some more organized chaos at these particular intervals, and they are all C's, so they were good with that... Laughter... So knowing that they were all C's, and knowing that I am an I, and that I need organized chaos... That really helped out, and I think it helped all of us create a better atmosphere for the kids. I think that is like all four areas in one... that is how it ended up going for me.

Participant C9: I think for me really understanding what my personality was it help me realize that that was a gift that God gave me to use for people, not just a coincidence that I am that way... That I'm just a nice person or whatever, I can use that for him somehow...

Pastor C: I'm debating on whether to make this comment... One of the challenges I do believe, like Participant C1 said, when everyone is in step with the spirit than all the needs are met... But you never have everyone... And so there is still this challenge to get things done that maybe no one really wants to do... And again hopefully as we equip more people for service, we will have less of that. But we are in a transition time, and we need to be careful not to be too... I see the potential that this could become egocentric, well I'm only supposed to do the things that I love doing... And I am not sure that that is quite the mark. Again if everyone is doing what God has uniquely shaped and placed them to do, we are Golden... But someone still has to stack chairs on Sunday. Whose spiritual gift is that? Maybe some of us are better at that than others. And were talking... We talked frequently about entry-level ministry, get the new people to do some of the mundane stuff... But there's frankly some leadership stuff that some of our board

members say I don't really like doing that, and we had a board member say well, this is your call right now... I am afraid that half the board is going to resign this year...

Laughter... I do think that the Lord is going to help us, but I still think there is a place for people saying that all right, because I love Jesus, and someone needs to do this, count me in for a season... God bless Participant C12, who is always willing to do the dirty work... We need 10 of him frankly...

Researcher: what is your personality type Participant C12?

Participant C12: I don't know...

(time was taken to review personality types, as it had been several months since the assessment was taken)

Participant C12: I guess what I got saved, the transformation that God did in me... My personality is my personality... It is what it is, so be it, I don't pay much attention to it okay... I just come and I feel that God pulled me to do this, and then to do this, you know we needed ice melt on the sidewalk one day because the guy who normally does it was in Arizona for a few weeks. And I get here early, I'm here early everything... I go out and put a little ice melt on the sidewalks... Somebody needs to do it, so somebody doesn't slip and break a leg...so be it... Because there is nobody else to go and do it... Is there a realm to not just do something because nobody else can do it? Sometimes yes and sometimes no... If you're going to lead, you have to lead with a servant attitude... Christ came to serve us, and he called me up out of the pit of hell to serve the body of Christ ... That's what I feel in my life regardless of what it cost me... And until we all realize that Christ came to serve us with his life, what am I willing to spend to give back? That's

what I feel in my heart... That's where I come from... It doesn't matter what it is, chairs have to be stacked... Chairs have to be unstacked...

Pastor C: I want to reiterate, or pick up on something that is key... Participant C12 is so in love with Jesus Christ, but he is also an S, and one of the challenges is to see that not everyone thinks like we think and not to overly spiritualize it, we C's are the worst, because there is a logical way to do everything, why wouldn't you see this way... But some people don't... Laughter... And Jesus may love them too... Laughter...

Researcher: Thank you very much for your participation in this...

Church D Board Discussion:

Researcher: tonight we're going to address one area in addition to what we addressed on Sunday night in the focus group discussion... What impact has *The Place Assessment* process had in the church?

Participant D1: if all of the leaders know what our strengths are, if we all use our strengths it will definitely be a benefit to the church. It will unify the church, unless we all have the same gifts... Laughter... I think he can have a unifying effect. It would've been more helpful I think if we would've had more of the whole church involved... It helps the leadership, but if we would've had 50 people instead of 15... That would've been more effective.

Participant D6: I think too, as far as individuals within the church, if they are looking for a place... Where they might fit in in a church, I think going through this assessment might help them if they had questions about where they fit in... In terms of where their strengths are, what they like to do...

Participant D1: down the line, you can give it to someone who searching for what they can do in the church... That would be helpful...

Researcher: what I would like to see us do, is have us get as many of our church people through this as possible.... *(a summary was given of the research results up to that point)*

I would like to see us have this as a part of our identity as a church. In order to train disciples, we need people to understand who they are, and understand how we work together.

(Discussion was held as to the design of the research, participants wished they would have had the pre-test to compare as they filled out the post-test)

Participant D4: will this help people that don't get involved with things because they think they aren't capable of doing anything? Will this help them to understand themselves and what they can do? Where Satan is there telling them that they can't do this they're not qualified or whatever...

Participant D6: I think it would, especially listening to people that said that they felt more confident about things.

Participant D2: I think there's a misunderstanding in churches, that when I go to church I have to fill in what they are requesting. And therefore, a lot of people I think do feel like they just don't have anything to offer in the church setting...but when they can sit down and list their passions, The things that really touch their heartstrings... I experienced a lot of tears as we were talking through people's lists of things that they really felt passionate about... And then they saw... wow, I really could do something... There is a job for me in this area passion! It may not be something that we are doing in our church right now, but that is something that we can explore even in their personal lives.

Participant D7: they could be more focused then, instead of being so general in their thinking or whatever, or maybe not even thinking about it all because they don't know. I would think that would be beneficial.

(Questions were asked specifically about implementation within this specific church)

Participant D5: this made us very aware of where our qualifications were, and we can stop spinning our wheels on something that we want to do but are not qualified to do... Or maybe we didn't think we could do.

Participant D8: That stems back to the confidence, well I really could be good at this... A lot of people back off because... I don't think I could do that... And they go back and sit in their pew and they don't get involved.

Researcher: Let me ask the question this way... Do you think it helps us as a church board as we interact with each other when we know the personalities of others?

Participant D8: yes, oh yes.

Participant D7: yes

Researcher: how so?

Participant D6: it helps with our interactions between each other

Participant D1: well I think if there's something certain that you wanted answers for, you would look and see maybe somebody here... Maybe if you see someone that was needing encouragement, I could talk to Participant D2 about it... Or some administrative thing... Just saying how that would be helpful.

Researcher: I will say that I feel that this helped me as a leader and as a pastor to recognize... Especially as you look down the primary personality blends... Five of you are C's... When I look at these numbers, I have been leading this board as a D, but because I have mostly C's or I's, I have been leading this board in such a way that you guys probably feel like you haven't had much of a voice. I present it, we do it, but you don't have time to think about in process it to ask the questions to give me the feedback. We talked about that a little bit last month but I am hoping... I feel like I have learned that I need to change the way that I lead the board because I am leading the board my way but ignoring most.

Participant D8: that's why you sent the agenda out yesterday so that we could look at it before today...

Researcher: and noticed that I am the only strong D on this board, the others that have the D are more balanced... Which means that they have learned to listen... That has not been my greatest strength.

Participant D8: but that's what brought up the conversation last month, that we would like to know ahead of time what is going on instead of being slapped in the face we walk in the room... And I think being aware of the water cooler in the water heater... I didn't have any idea that any of that was going on... And that's something where you want to walk into... You feel like you walked into a situation where we are not aware of something in your like oh I have already got it figured out... And that's probably where you felt like we didn't get a say, because you already had it figured out and taken care of...

Participant D4: once again I think it is... It goes back to helping each one of us realize that we are not what we are not... And we don't have to be made to think that we have to be what we are not... You see somebody else and you say I can't do that but I should be able to do that... this kind of shows you what you can do, not what you can't do... I mean there are things that a lot of people think that they can't do but if you really have an interest, you can on certain things, but looking at the broad scope I think it pinpoints so Satan is not beating you on the head.

Participant D5: you are more positive about yourself when you know, and with everyone knowing where they stand and where their qualified it has a big influence.

Participant D4: I can feel guilty about not being with the kids on Wednesday night or Monday night... But that is just not me... It just wouldn't work.

Participant D8: will the next step be to use this with the children's workers? To see if they're in the right spot? What are the groups in the church would you like to target to see if they want to be a part of a placement group? Or do you want to just blanket the whole congregation? Do you have someone in mind? Or some kind of workers that are in church? Or do you want to target people who aren't involved and see where they could possibly fit in if they wanted to be involved? Some people sit back, like you said, and say oh I don't think I could do that... And they just sit in the pew and they go home. The risk with that, is that the people who just sit in the pew show up, maybe write a check, and say amen... Out of here, gone, don't see them until next Sunday. They can slip away easily. They've got to be attached, they have to have a reason to be here. And the more people that you get involved in the right position it makes a stickiness. And they feel like they need to be here. Then again, you want to make sure you get them in the right kind of position. There are people in any church that say... That just needs to be done so I'll do it... I may not be good at it... It's definitely not what I want to do, but I'll do the job... Just to fill the hole...

Participant D2: I think there is definitely a disconnect between you and God when doing what you're doing is such a strain, such a fight, you just feel... Well God this is what you want me to do, okay... But you just feel AHHHH. Who are you? Someone brought up a really interesting concept, I don't know how to do this... Maybe you can think of how to do this... She suggested maybe when we have new people come in, we don't want to put them to this test is as a "you have to do this in order to come back," that she was thinking

if there was a conversation, or line of questions... Draw out some of these things so that we have some hints. Maybe not the complete picture, but some hints. Then they have felt heard, they have felt understood, and her theory was would that make people feel more attached immediately when they come in? Then gradually move them onto a place of service because they feel understood and needed.

Researcher: I think this would be a very good part of a membership class, to have people as a part of a church membership class go through this process... To where, if you are going to join our church, you're going to join our church to work in this church... But yet trying to create a culture as a church that we expect that being a part of this church means that we have personal relationship, we are engaged as a biblical community, we are engaging God's word, but we are also a community of service. That's a part of who we are as a church, these four concepts we are serving... So the very first conversations will be about how we serve. Here's what we do, this is our culture surrounding these four areas. Training disciples for us is our mission, we accomplish that through these four areas. And this is a language that we learn to speak as a church. We really do care about serving, but we serve out of who God created us to be... rather than serving, trying different things, and hoping that they stick.

I think it has to be early on as we bring new people in... And as you said Participant D8, the revolving door in all churches is huge...

Participant D1: I don't think it's something that they need to be pressured into... If they have the gift of mercy... I think it's something that should be made aware of, and then allow the Holy Spirit to direct them to where they're going to go... I don't think there

should be pressure applied, will you scored high on this so let's get into evangelism now...

Researcher: but it think the coaching that we did, and in Participant D2 and I did all the coaching here, is just an opportunity to connect with a person, and suggest opportunities, or to affirm what they are already doing. You guys are already involved, so the idea was to affirm what you are already doing and to see if there were anything else that you wanted to do that you haven't been doing. But it is about gently suggesting, and recognizing that we don't have all the answers either, but we want you to be aware of who you are and then you can find a place of service. And we will help you if you get questions, or if you are interested in this... But no were not going to push anyone.

Participant D2: and this lady suggestion was just a gentle conversation, some line of questions that can kind of draw some of the possibilities out, just so the person feels heard, and understood, and respected, and cared for... Was kind of her thought... That would be the intent, to make them feel wanted, understood.

Researcher: part of the reason that we had you share your testimony as part of this coaching is because we see God custom fit your salvation experience to your testimony. Just as he did that, we need to be very aware of the reality that God is using us in other people's lives, based on their personality, based on their design. The way that they interpret us, the way that God can use us in their lives, is based on who they are... And also based on who we are.

Participant D1: that would be helpful for a pastor in dealing with new people I would think... It would help to point and guide them towards their salvation.

Researcher: I think it helps all of us though doesn't it? If we understand our personalities, and if we understand that this person is a real high C... I'm not pushing for a quick commitment out of them, because I realize they are going to have to think about this for a long time. And if I try to push... I am going to push them away... Participant D3, you probably experience this in your group as well... You realize, that you're working with some ladies that are going to think about this for a while...

Participant D3: when I talked to you, and you asked me for my testimony... I went home thinking while, that was really boring... Because it was like you even said... Is that all? (Laughter) and you know, Thursday in my group, someone ask a question: (to another lady in the group) how did you get out of the Catholic Church? Or why did you? And this person had the most fantastically interesting testimony that I have ever heard... It was like wow, I had better polish mine up... But I didn't go through everything that she did... 11 years of searching, reading books...

Researcher: and part of with yours, is that you have a strong D, you have a strong S, and you have the I, and I was listening to hear all of those and it was short because you grew up in the church... I was trying to connect the dots, and you have a lot of dots because you are very balanced... Laughter...

Participant D3: so then I'm going to try stop trying to figure out a new one...

Researcher: we embrace who we are, and that is okay... You're a very balanced person and I was just trying to connect all three of your dots...

Researcher: any other thoughts about how this assessment process impacts the church?

Participant D4: it helps you understand us better right?

Researcher: absolutely!... well if there are no other thoughts, then I will go ahead and stop the recording.

Church D Full Focus Group

Researcher: what we're looking to understand... First question... Do you feel that this assessment gave you a better understanding of yourself?

Participant D13: I will speak up first believe it or not... Because I was just speaking to my coach yesterday so it is fresh in my mind... it affirmed what I thought I knew about myself... I don't know if you want more details... It basically showed that I wasn't really a leader, I was more of the helper alongside of the leader... I won't just go and lead a group or something like that... And that I am pretty much a helper... And a peacemaker, which I think I've said before... And that pretty much affirms what I thought of myself anyway... It affirmed what I thought I was capable of...

Researcher: Do you feel like it was helpful and having that affirmed?

Participant D13: yes, it makes me more confident in where I am at...

Participant D4: It makes you look at yourself... In more depth I think, and it helps you to know where you need to be...

Participant D9: I feel like it has made me know what I can do so that I feel more confident in going out and doing what it told me I can do. I find that very helpful...

Researcher: in what ways did this help you understand others?

Participant D7: I liked knowing the different categories, finding out what you are... You pretty much see yeah, this is me and it is okay to be me. That it really is a thing, and not just what you feel or whatever... But yes, I liked seeing the other categories... Kinda thinking,, looking around and thinking that there are different ones in the church like these other categories and it is just as fine for them to be that, as for me to be this... I liked it very much, I thought it was very helpful. It puts into words what you are.

Participant D1: I don't know that everyone knows where they are, but I see the differences you (the researcher) and me... They are different categories, you have a stronger more forceful personality that I do, and when we coached, you related it... Where I fit in personality, related with how I had my salvation. It wasn't a spur of the moment thing, it was a gradual, learning, thinking about it before I made my decision. So that fit my salvation...

Participant D2: I think in terms of viewing others, for someone who has been very intimidated by relationships, this is given me a whole new platform to not have fear in working with people... who maybe I don't understand where they're coming from, but maybe that's a good thing I can relate better to them and I can trust them more and I can understand more where they're coming from because I see these... Wow that's who God created you to be, that's wonderful, that's amazing, I love that... That I could speak to them on those terms instead of trying to figure out how to I talk to this person or how do I relate over here... No, I can really relate with this person and love it.

Researcher: the next item, I'm going to follow up with what Participant D1 was saying... It is amazing to me as I have gone through this with people from other churches, I have coached people from here, to see how our salvation story lines up with our personality. For me, it was very much that. For Participant D2, it was very much that... But we see that God revealed himself to us through the personality that he gave us. Did you find that concept helpful? Was that an eye-opening thing? Have you ever thought about that? Did you find that helpful?

Participant D8: it was an eye-opening experience when you said that's because you think through things before you act. And I thought about that the last two weeks since we met,

and I thought you know, I catch myself now doing more things that I realize I am thinking through before I even act on them... And that is just my personality. You know I told you the story about College church, and how things worked their way through, and I thought the process... I didn't jump through something like your personality would because your dominant person. I was surprised the assessment that I was in the two groups that I was the strongest in, but when I think about my personality and how I operate and do things, I don't necessarily want to be the leader, but I want to be a supporter like you said, you would be a helper. But I also want things done correct, precise, I am very anal-retentive... Call it a control freak... But I also have to be behind-the-scenes making sure that everything is perfect. But that is my personality, and I was just really surprised when we talked that afternoon. And I have thought about that a lot, the last two weeks...

Participant D4: this is a special day for me, because this is the day that we got saved 34 years ago... That was a thought process, it didn't happen overnight... As a matter of fact there were about three miserable years involved for me. But it did happen, and it has been great.

Participant D12: the idea that we are saved according to our personalities helps in my estimation, since I realize that, since my coach was talking with me about that... that we can pray for other people and add that into our prayers for how they would become saved. In other words, you... you usually pray for someone, you say Lord I asked that this person will come to know you... Whatever... We can add the dimension to our prayers that we know the Lord is working within their personality to bring that about... You know, Holy Spirit would you help this person as you know them so well to bring

things into their life according to their personality... How you know them so well. It's comforting to know that he created us, so we know he knows us so well... Inside and out... This is just a new way to think about that... That he brings us along according to how we think, and feel, and process things.

Participant D7: for me, that aspect was a joyful surprise... God didn't just deal with me any old way, he dealt with me specifically and that was just a real joy to find out... And it also just makes me know that God knows me... It's not a blanket thing, it is individual and specific and unique to each of us in our personalities.

Researcher: so here comes the meat of why I did this... Does this help us to be a better disciple? I will ask that as a general question, and then I will ask a couple more specific questions.

Participant D14: sure it does, if you go through the list that you handed us... There's a lot of four's, there's a lot of two's, is probably two or three fives... We are all over the place on that thing... If you can't learn from it... I had better learn from it...

Participant D6: I think that anything that helps you to understand other people and your relationships with them has to be a great tool for being a disciple.

Participant D10: anytime you improve your confidence in how you are saved, and how you operate, and that God knows you specifically, and that you are doing the right thing... Then that should free you up to reach all kinds of people because you don't have to be second-guessing yourself. am my okay, do I look all right, how will this sound? If we can just be ourselves, then we can represent Christ in our day-to-day walk, without having to first say... Now I am a Christian, I don't want to be offensive... All that preliminary... We can just be who we are. And draw people toward Christ.

Participant D12: another thing about our personalities and our individualities... When I was a young Christian, and with other Christian women, or even in the church. I would think that I needed to be like someone else, someone else who was more excited and out there... And so I would try to be that way... And it never felt right, you can't be someone else's faith. So this helps us to understand that if we have the personality that we do, we worship in a certain way, we don't have to be like everyone in the group so to speak... So that helps

Participant D4: I think it helps us to realize that we don't have to be perfect to be a disciple... I mean we got room to grow, and as we are discipling, we should learn, we should grow.

Participant D2: I think to tag on to that, I think that when we do understand our weaknesses instead of just randomly saying that I need to change, I need to be better, I need to do whatever... We can we can specifically talk to God about the specific weaknesses that we see, and then we can really grow. But also for me, this is been a powerful thing in building my trust in God, I really have trusted God... But this is taken me over the edge... Because if God knows each one of us that specifically and that intimately, when he says yes or no, or take this step, or don't take that step... Wow, he knows what's best for me. He designed it all, and he knows what's best. So I think in this process of discipleship working through our weaknesses, but also being able to say God your ways are always better than my ways. You always know the right ways. That builds our ability to grow in discipleship and to disciple others. To be effective.

Participant D7: I just feel that knowing the different types of personalities can free us up when discipling, because not everybody is going to come along like a thought processor,

and you know we can give these people room to grow in their own skin and we are not feeling like we failed and that were not doing it right, and that were failing God and ourselves and them... When we don't see immediate results. And we can pray more specifically for them... And relax. Not be pushy...

Participant D13: and not feel bad if you've been asking you just not that kind of person to do that...

Participant D3: well I think someone has already said one of the things that struck me, was that it does free you up to be able to do what you see that you are good at, and it relieves you from feeling stressed or feeling bad that you are not doing something else that you always thought that you should have done, and you been kicking yourself... And for me I had a surprise, that one of my top spiritual gifts was evangelism, and that's something I've always kicked myself that I didn't do well enough. I guess it's okay if I keep trying and don't worry about some of the other things...

Researcher: and as we talked to, your style of evangelism...you're very active in evangelism, but you just don't see it because it's not the traditional "Say the sinner's prayer with me." It is taking into account the whole person and realizing... When we look at the way the church is traditionally approached evangelism in the last 20 to 30 years, pushing for a decision right now... How many personality types does that fit?

Participant D6: Two

Participant D2: The D

Researcher: The D... The D will make a decision in the moment, but that's it... And these only make up 10 to 15% of the population. So truthfully, the way that the church has approached evangelism... As I now understand that this assessment, we have approached

evangelism in a way that offends, or ostracizes is, 85 to 90% of the population. Instead of taking into account the reality of our diversity... An altar call for example... And Participant D4 I'm going to pick on you, because I think everyone has heard your story... You made the decision to receive Christ, the decision to go forward... But you made that decision to go forward several days in advance. It didn't matter what the preacher had preached that morning, you knew that that was the morning that you had agreed that you and your wife were going to go forward and get saved. Participant D8, you shared a very similar story... You knew that it was going to be that week, you thought about it well in advance... It wasn't in the moment that the pastor just got to you... It was that you had made that decision ahead of time... Because you are C's... you think through things... You don't act on the spur of the moment. Understanding that that's how 85 to 90% of the population works, in that more thoughtful, not in-your-face, type evangelism. That should cause us to step back and say okay, God created me... And God desires us to share him with others... But now I can look and see that I don't have to push for this is right now, I can understand that some people are going to take some time... And some people are going to need to think about this for a long time. Some people are going to need to have relationships surrounding that, the people that walk through it with us are just as important as the decision in the telling of the story.

Participant D14: my mom used to tell me that sometimes it is just planting the seed...

Participant D4: how wonderful it is, that God is so patient and doesn't force us. But he knows us and knows what our time limit would be, or how fast we are going to accept him... Not everybody grows the same way even after they are saved. We don't all grow the same way. But it's great that he actually knows us in and out.

Participant D8: I had used the term friendship evangelism, and I had mentioned the Thursday afternoon ladies group... Participant D10 does the same thing with the sewing group... It's friendship evangelism. It is not beating you over the head with the Bible...

Participant D2: on the discipleship piece too, you keep preaching that one of the components is community, and working together a community... And when we get to know each other, we know better who to call on and we know better how to work together. To not just relate together, but also to work together. When we put together a ministry team, like the children's ministry, we can say that this is the kind of personality types that we need in this role, and in this role, and in this role,... And we are more effective, because we are not trying to cram everybody the places that they are going to burn out. So that community piece is big in discipleship, and in making disciples. We need each other, but we need to work together as God fit us together. When we understand that it just brings tears to my eyes. It is beautiful, it really is.

Researcher: I am going to king of segue from that... There are four areas where God calls us to live out our discipleship. The first is in a personal relationship with him. The second is in biblical community. The third is in biblical engagement, the way that we study God's word. And the fourth is in service to others. I'm trying to measure in this dissertation, what the impacts of this assessment process are on those four areas. So I'm saying this to give you C's some time to think...

I am going to start with a personal relationship... And even if you already spoken to this, if you wanted to come to segue into this again... Do you feel that this assessment process: the training, the assessment, and the coaching... Does that help you in your personal relationship with Jesus Christ?

Participant D2: I think it has the power to make us feel more connected to Christ.

Because of how much he knows us, were not just in this random connection. It is a specified, intimate, detailed, connection... And that just draws me to him!

Participant D6: I think that most people have kind of said the same thing, that it kind of reaffirms your faith and who God is, who He is to you personally... It is an individual thing, it is so personal. I think it very much... It helps. It just draws you closer.

Participant D3: I think it is made me think about some things that I don't normally think about... And evaluate. That have to do with my relationship with Christ.

Participant D4: well, one thing that I think we learn is that God does not judge us on our failures... Now Satan is there all the time when we mess up, or think we messed up, or think we didn't do enough... Whatever... He is right there trying to condemn us. God will never do that, one way or another he encourages us through his word or through somebody else...

Participant D1: I guess that the assessment helps show us that we have value... With our gifts, we are valuable to him and through using our gifts, we can not only come closer to him but help do his work when we see what our gifts and are strengths are.

This is not related, but when I help with Wednesday night's, I was a D when I was teaching... And now that I am helping on Wednesday nights, it bothered me when kids were acting up... It would keep me awake at night, and my wife told me that I am not in charge anymore... Relax, be a C and an S... That is who you are now, you are not in charge, let the other people who are in charge worry about... Not that you don't discipline... There is a main disciplinarian, give it to her, don't take it home and worry about it... Losing sleep over it... Which I was doing. So the last Wednesday I was here, I

just let it go... And probably had one of my best Wednesday nights here. You had told me before that you can change, based on the job you're in. Now that I am retired, I don't have to be the stronger person that I did when I was teaching. Now when I come on Wednesday night, I can lay low... And not try to handle everybody else's discipline from other groups. There's some kids that I was trying to do that with.

Researcher: second question is biblical community... Participant D2 already alluded to this a little bit... Do you think that this assessment process help us to understand our role, and the greater role of biblical community?

Participant D12: it reinforces that we are truly the body, and we each have our function... We work in community because that's the way that God designed the church to work. So when we see what our part of it is, then we take our part, and we feel that God is working with us to help us with that part. But we also respect that other people have their parts, so we are a community together. and in away... and this is something that is come to me in different places along my time of being here at church... And maybe this is some place right need to understand better... But if God brings you to a church, and you believe that God has brought you to a specific church... Why do you leave it? Unless you are called... I'm not trying to say that a person is never called to do something... But I have seen people leave the church who at one time had been valuable parts of the church, and then I wonder if we are a community and God puts together a church, when is it right or wrong to then decide that you leave that church? And my husband and I have left a church to be in this church, so I'm not speaking to that... I am speaking to people who truly believe that they have been called to be a part of that body?

Researcher: I will ask an open-ended question off of that... Does this assessment process help us to see where we fit so that we are not as prone to be looking for somewhere where we can fit?

I will answer your question into ways... First, Sometimes we view church as entertainment and not as a body... And there is always going to be somewhere else that is more entertaining. Second, I think that the church struggles with getting everyone plugged in to the point that they feel like they are an important part of the body. Most important parts of the body do not feel like they are wanting to just walk away if they are where they are supposed to be. Sometimes people can walk away from the church because they are burning out because they are in the wrong spot. Sometimes people can just walk away from the church because they feel like no one notices, and I don't get to do what God created me to do... Have you experienced that? Do you feel like this assessment process is something that can help with that?

Participant D7: I think every human being gets tired, even when they are plug in the right place... And we kind of have to take that into consideration too. We have to allow ourselves to back off a little bit, take a break, or whatever... I am not sure about the rest the question, so I will pass on that.

Participant D1: it showed me where I am supposed to be, and who I am supposed to be.

Researcher: let's bring this back around to the question of the role of this assessment in the development of community...

Participant D10: it would have to help... If everybody is doing what they are actually called to do, then you won't have people elbowing each other out of place because people are doing what they are supposed to do and they are comfortable and that will also leave

the natural places for new people to come and fill their spots. I just think that if we all really could see what God wanted us to do, and we were all doing it, then the body would fill in those empty places and it would have to work better. If we didn't feel like people were jockeying for position.

Participant D2: I think you can head off a lot of conflict too. If someone responds in a certain way, if I don't understand I could take that personally. But if I understand who they are, then I can say that's great, and I don't have to take that personally.

Researcher: the next area we're going to look at is biblical engagement. A part of this assessment for me, is as I have understood personality better, I have also started looking at Scripture is being written by authors with personality. I can see Paul's personality and his driven letters, in his... "how in the world could you miss the point of what I taught you and I was there?" Letter to the Galatians. I can see Matthews's personality in that analytical, detail mindedness, where he knew exactly where he was going from the very beginning and it took him a long time to get started because he was thinking about it... But Matthew knew where he was going. I think about John's I personality that comes out in his letter... In his emphasis on the relationship, the abiding in Christ that he talks about, where he spent so much time in that last evening with Jesus. I think about what we see in Luke in that investigative C where he spent all the time investigating, not as an eyewitness, but as someone who was investigating using one of the abilities. Do we feel that this assessment helps us to understand God's word better? And do we feel that through understanding ourselves better, we have been more actively engaged in studying God's word?

Participant D2: when we specifically know our weaknesses and we are reading Scripture... For me, I have been excited when I was reading and things would pop off the page that haven't before because "oh, that's me." I didn't realize that, but I see that, and find guidance and how to work through that. I know more what I'm looking for, and it personalizes it.

Researcher: the last area that we are going to look at, is the area of service to others. Really the focus of the assessment, is to help us to understand better how we can serve others. Do you feel like this assessment process has helped you to know better how to serve others?

Participant D7: back to evangelizing, we don't have to push people, we don't have to make people fit into slots that they are not capable of fitting into, or they just plain don't fit. It looks like something that can be used for... for everyone that can be more freeing for everybody. I also like the aspect that I didn't feel targeted, everybody's taking it and I really do recommend that.

Participant D4: when it comes to ministering to people we need to realize that we can't play God. And I think when I first became a Christian, I saw people do things that I didn't do before I was a Christian and it was kinda hard to understand that. But I just had understand that the people grow in different ways. But yet there are some times when maybe God doesn't completely take away the things that we might think is not good for them to do. They can use this to minister to people that are more like them. If you took someone that's perfect down the line, as a Christian, could they relate with somebody who is way off on the other side... Or somebody who is not there yet... And relate to them better, even though they may be doing some things they shouldn't be doing still.

Participant D1: I think we see in the assessment that it is not about us... It is about others. It helps me to see my strengths like encouraging others, giving to others, serving others... it is all about serving. It is not about us.

Participant D13: I think that it help me understand what my goal was, and why I am drawn to people that I want to help.

Participant D12: just in the same ways that we are different in the way that we work with others... When you say serve others, do you mean within the church or outside the church?

Researcher: Both: Mostly within but both...

Participant D12: because I was thinking that just as we have the gifts that we use within the body, that we know how God has gifted us to help those who are outside of our little group of people that we are within our church... The ways that we help people...

Participant D1: it is also an encouragement not just to give to the church, but to other organizations, or people... More of a plural thing not just a singular... So that's an encouragement. It's not just our little church, there's all kinds of ways you can serve people or help people

Participant D9: when you get to give people clothing, you get to talk to them about God as you are giving them clothing... And about Jesus... Some will talk about it in some won't...

Participant D1: you talk about clothing, I had the opportunity a few weeks back to take some of the little kids through the store... And how meaningful it was to watch some of the little kids instead of taking toys, they were taking jeans and sweatshirts, a little girl

was taking shoes, another little girl had socks... Not that it's something I am doing, but it is part of what the church is doing.

Researcher: so to wrap the session up, I do I thank each one of you for participating.

Church M Coaches Focus Group

Researcher: The question that I'm seeking to answer with this part of the research. Is what is the effect of this type of assessment, with the coaching, on the church? How do you guys... have you seen the benefits within the church, within the coaching sessions, light bulbs come on for people, if you could each take a few minutes, and summarize what you've seen so far.

Participant M1: one of the biggest benefits, is the people feel like they have a part of the church. Someone recognizes their abilities, and asked them to use it. It's just, it's a good thing for the people, they feel like they're an important part of the community. I mean that's what I got out of everybody I talk to, it's like thank you for realizing I'm a part of the church, thank you for realizing that I can be a part of ministry. It was a real enjoyable experience meeting with the people.

Pastor M: that's good.

Researcher: how many the people that you met with did you know well?

Participant M1: um, I've been in Sunday school and classes with about half of them, so yeah about half of them. And with the other half it was good just getting to know them. I found out things I'd never knew about people. And some of them there testimony is exciting to hear what happened. It was a good experience, for them and a good experience for me.

Pastor M: well I have not done the coaching side, these other guys are the coaches and it might've been just a strange anomaly, but the same time we started this, as I was doing the promotion for it getting volunteers, and then the week that you met with them that first time, several of the people, whether or not they've even finished their assessment

volunteered for jobs. Became Sunday school teachers, did various things that, I just found it unique as I sat there up on that handrail looking down seeing who those people were and in the next few weeks some of those people had taken jobs in the church. And I think just the thought that they could, moved them, not only to take the assessment but then to just go ahead and step in and start taking roles. You're talking six or seven people within a couple of weeks of taking the assessment were all teaching Sunday school. And in one case with Participant M1.

Participant M1: I'm the helper,

Pastor M: you can believe that if you want to, that's not what he tells me. (Laughter)

You are helping him, so that's good, that's one of them. The motivation to even take the assessment, was a desire to get more involved. So I've already seen it. Whether we complete it, get coached, they need to so that they get it solidified. But we've already seen the results, in no less than 6 to 8 people, stepping into positions since the assessment. I think that is a good thing

Participant M2: I don't think we did it on purpose, the way that we divided the women, I ended up with older ladies, Participant M3 got most of the younger ones. And I noticed even if they feel like they're doing the jobs that they should be in ministry, they appreciated someone taking the time to ask them and talk to them about their gifts what their desires were what their passions were in some of them it just confirmed that they are doing what they should be doing or feel like they should be doing. Several of them came out and said, yeah I am teaching but it's not my thing, I don't see myself doing a long-term, but this is where my other passions are. So it created an avenue to say that's okay, and we can make changes as we go, we don't have to feel locked in to doing a job.

Pastor M: did one of them start with the letter “T”? cause there is a lady that’s in this system, that she stepped in, I wasn’t even counting her, she stepped into a position and said are you going to get somebody to take this job? And I said I’m working on it. And she would just stop by and ask, and I would say I don’t have anything yet, and one day she walked in and said “ was reading the book of Ephesians, and I think for little while I’m there to teach the book of Ephesians.” So I’ll take that job. So I said I been waiting on you to tell me that. *Laughter...* You haven’t been looking? I said I knew the teacher was gonna to be, you just had to get there. And she still teaching that class so. You know when you feel it? How can you, I did not want to say, I think you should, because then she might have done it because I wanted her to. I wanted her to want to, and that’s the way it worked out. So kind interesting, people do have spiritual gifts, for whatever reason, they don’t find them right away. But when they do, when she got comfortable...boom. And the class grew after she started doing that, more people are in there now than were. So it made her have a taste of success, with using her gifts. So that’s why asked the letter, because...

Participant M2: actually it was someone else..., and she said people assume that because of her career that she’s a teacher, she said I’m not a teacher. But she said I’m glad we did it, because her husband is thoroughly loving it, and would probably keep doing it with or without her.

Researcher: sometimes it just takes her going with to get him started

Participant M2: yes

Pastor M: because she is a schoolteacher, career wise

Researcher: and sometimes people do that all day and they don't want to do that in the church.

Participant M2: and she's not a classroom teacher, she has another avenue in the school that she works. So she's not teaching, teaching,

Participant M3: well for me I noticed that people just wanted someone to talk with them, I noticed I went in there and I was like were going to try to keep this at an hour, and I didn't speak that much in both were like almost 2 hours and I was like well I've got to go. And I think they both, the two that I got a chance to do so far, really, like there was crying, they just really wanted someone to listen to them. And I know she shared that story with me, the same story that Pastor M told, and she said that, I mean she gave me a list everything that she had done which was like 16 things that she does in the church, and she said that the one that she is currently doing is the only one she really enjoys. And the other ones aren't little jobs, their Sunday school teacher, cowboy church, you know, vacation Bible school, nursery worker, she said I do it because I feel like I should, you know... nobody else is stepping up and doing it but she said that's not really were her passion is, and she didn't realize until doing this, that it was okay to. So now she's going to go through the process of praying about it and seeing if God would direct her to step out of some of those places because she feels she may be plugged in wrong. Like before prior to this so.

And I guess the other lady I had just isn't really sure where her place is in the church so. The other lady I haven't got to coach yet, we did get to talk the other day at the school and she said she struggling to because she doesn't really know where, she knows what the departments are in the church, but she doesn't really feel like... And she doesn't

know if it's insecurity stopping her or what it is... I guess what I noticed most though is that people just want to be heard. They just want you to know their story. Other came to Christ, and their testimony,

Researcher: I think that's one of the benefits among the reasons that I like this program, I looked at a number of different assessments, and since I've been doing this, I've had I had a lady at church last night bring me a stack of assessments that she's taken and wanted to show me these assessments, and I'm looking through those. But there's so many assessments out there, the peace of this that I feel is so crucial, is the coaching session. That's where we get to sit down and talk to people one on one. Because Pastor M, you and I teach and we preach these concepts, I don't think I said anything in this training that was new. People of heard all these things before somewhere maybe just not together. They may or may not have heard of in the church setting but they've heard these things. But to have someone sit down and hear their story, and I haven't started the coaching sessions in Davenport yet, but I know with the children's programming... In order to work with the children you have to interview for insurance purposes. And just those interviews which we assumed would be... I don't do this... but people just sat and talked and talked and talked. They want to be heard. And one of the problems with the church, is we have a whole lot of people who come, but who does all the talking (laughter, to Pastor M) yeah, you and I. And people feel that they know us well because we tell our stories but they don't get to tell theirs. One of the other questions I'm looking at and this is kind of preliminary: do we feel that this is transformational in the life of the person? Do we feel that this is something that makes the difference for them so that they

are different now than they were before because of some understanding they gained to this process? And I'll let you speak to that for a moment that I'll ask another question.

Participant M3: well, in one case I would say not so much probably. The other lady that I had just went on and on and on about where the ministry that she's plugged into now, her faith has grown so much in one month, more than it had in two years. So I guess just watching the spiritual growth in her, because she's the one that I know probably more so than the other one. Just getting to watch her grow spiritually over just being plugged in somewhere different you wouldn't think would make that much of a difference but she said I feel so much more stronger in my faith doing one thing in the ministry been doing 16 things where I thought I was being more helpful in these areas.

Participant M2: I think it was transformational in a couple of different ways. Because the people that feel that they're doing the right things, we could still look back at situations where they had been doing ministry because they felt like they needed to, or maybe situations that left a really bad taste in their mouth, and we were able to look at them and see what other kind of people they were working with and look at the personalities and say maybe this is why this didn't go well. It may not have been necessarily the job itself, but the circumstances around it. so they still had a passion for the area or felt a passion for the area, so maybe it open them up to maybe trying something again that they may have written off. For another gal I would say it's probably more transformational in that it gave her the freedom to try something new. But I think the biggest thing was just it brought out things that we maybe need to do differently within the church as far as making sure that people know what roles are out there, or what ministry opportunities

there are for them, because that came up several times... I don't know what needs to be done or where I could be used. So a little bit more open communication with people.

Participant M3: And I think... that just reminded me of another conversation I had with another lady where she said that sometimes she's noticed even another churches that you know, not just this one but, if you need something done and you call upon the people who've always done it. They are reliable and you know they're consistent, and you know they will get it done. And she said I've noticed in churches all around, and that's where people don't get plugged in, because we don't know the openings are because we don't announce them. Because when they need someone they go to the four people that they always work with. So people just aren't aware...

Participant M2: I had one lady say I would love to help in the kitchen or do food, but I can't get past the kitchen police. (Laughter).

Participant M1: Police, there's your key word right there.

Participant M2: even like funeral dinners or meals for sick people or... She said I would love to do that kind of thing, but I don't know who to go to, to be able to do those.

Participant M3: I just think as a church we aren't good at welcoming new people for several reasons. Because you don't know if they'll be reliable, you don't know if they'll show up, and I think that's a lot of it. But I think we get so comfortable being around the same people, and I'm not sure that's biblical. You know I don't think we involve new people, just because it's uncomfortable will and questionable

Researcher: and you do get in your comfort zones, and pastor when you're in the middle of something, the question becomes okay I don't have time to chase this down, and part of it is that we don't get to know people very well. When they come in, maybe we take

them out to dinner and tell them a little bit about the church, but it's not like you have the time that we have in this coaching session, to really get to know a person. A lot of passions unless you specifically ask a person, you are never going to find out.

Pastor M: right

Researcher: and this gives a venue for that. Otherwise it's really easy just to say, you know I'll call my family. All call so-and-so. Because I know they'll do it. I know they'll do it for me if not for any other reason. Because sometimes that's where were at as pastors. Were just in that world of this job is open and I don't have time for it.

Pastor M: well, part of this I know may not have to do with *The Place Assessment* in particular, but it does have to do with the mindset that this is leading to and helping with. Obviously Participant M2 is sitting in this room because her husband works here, well no that's not the reason she sitting in this room, she's in this room because I asked her. But, her husband is new here on staff, and one of the things we want to try to do, is make it possible to have rotations in jobs. That has been a closed society, not the kitchen either, that's a different police force. But it has been a relatively closed society, and I know that there are people... Last Sunday night we had a meeting to begin planning, not to begin planning, but the begin placing people in the Easter drama. And 78 adults signed up for jobs, and there were no children in there. Well there were children in there but they didn't sign up. You know 78 adults, and some of them were sound technicians, lights, cameras, all the upstairs stuff where we've been eaten alive there lately. Just because Associate pastor called some, and Associate pastor and I both worked on some standing in the foyer, and they were there. So you just have to have the mindset that we are not going to be a closed society.

Participant M3: don't you think it means so much that you ask somebody? That's what I noticed in my coaching, if I would give someone a complement you could just see that it meant so much to them that you would even think to complement them, or ask them.

Pastor M: one guy started on a bad foot, and I obviously talked to my associate pastor and Participant M2 about this, but he was making some assumptions about him not being included, and I knew he wasn't right but I couldn't tell him that, but he said "I'm not just being paranoid", and I said okay so ...Associate pastor and Participant M2 both happen to be in my office, and I was asking, and I knew, Associate pastor said I don't know his name, I know he is in our Sunday school room, and I said I didn't think you knew him, do you know anything about him? Nope. So I call the other guy, that he had had some interaction with, and I asked him and he said oh no he did a great job, I don't know why he doesn't come back upstairs I said for whatever reason he thinks he's not needed or wanted. So I called the guy back and told him, you know I'm not getting that from the other people, and he said yeah it is just my paranoia kicking in. He had told me he wasn't paranoid, but he was in the meeting last Sunday night, because Associate pastor called him on the phone and said you know I think it was a misunderstanding, we are going to fix that and get you plugged in. And he come running into my office and said, man that guy was tickled to death that I called him. So there's something about that personal one-on-one...it makes a lot of difference. And I hope, that whether it be this system or just learning that we can do this periodically with newcomers to set them down and do some type of an assessment, placement, and coaching. Because, it would obviously get people in quicker... Rather than what happened to so-and-so, you know they're in and then

they're gone. Because they didn't get used, we say everybody's welcome, but they don't think they're everybody for whatever reason

Researcher: let me ask you this question, and I think I have asked you before, but I don't remember... Of your average attendance, what percentage would you say are actively involved in a ministry?

Pastor M: it's higher than probably some places, because we have a lot of ministries, but I'm saying actively probably somewhere in the 60% range, maybe not even quite there because a lot of them are duplicates, but somewhere in that range. But we have on any given Sunday, 25% of the crowd that that's their only Sunday of the month. A good solid 25% of the people are so sporadic...that gets the chicken before the egg deal... How can I put that person into a job when they don't even come regularly? I can't do it because then I've got to find a replacement when they just don't show up.

Researcher: and some people, come regularly when they're depended on and they don't if they're not. I've got people who never miss a Wednesday night, but there is sporadic as can be on Sunday morning. But they do things on Wednesday night. But again that depends on the person.

Pastor M: right

Researcher: Participant M1 lets come to you on the transformation piece...

Participant M1: a couple of the guys that I worked with were very mature Christians, and they have worked through lots of jobs over the years, and almost every job in the church, and found the one that they enjoyed the most. But they also said that if something has to be done, I don't care if it's in my gift area or not, I'll throw those chairs, or unload those boxes. One guy, is nearing retirement, and he just can't wait to get more involved in the

church. He said this is going to give me a lot more freedom than I had before, and I'm glad you asked what I'm interested in doing because I do want to do more.. and I am going to be more available starting in May. It was exciting for him, that the church could help fill some of that open time that he was going to have. He thinks he can make a difference in people's lives, and I said you can! Another guy was thinking about is a relatively new Christian and he was excited about what he was allowed to do. For instance, and I love this example, he said I wanted to get involved in the cowboy church. But I don't have a horse and I don't ride a horse, so I went out there and asking what I could do, and they said you can open and close the gate as somebody goes in to do their thing and as they come back out you open the gate. He said "I had more fun doing that because I get to talk to everybody waiting to go in." You know, who would've thought that that's ministry, but to him it's the greatest thing in the world. But anyhow, it just proves to me that when you get people excited about the job, no matter how big, or how small... we only need one Jesus for the Easter musical but we need off a lot of grunts like me. If you feel like you're an important part of it, it's exciting. And it causes spiritual growth!

Pastor M: yes it does

Participant M1: so it is transformational to be included, I'm big on that. When I've worked and what I've done in my life, is that I will include anybody. I may not make them the leader, but I'll include them. You know if they come to Sunday school, and they don't even say a word, I'll tell them I'm glad that they're there, glad you're part of the class, I'm glad you make it a part of your routine. Because God's Word is going in... so yeah I think it is transformational when people realize that I'm a part of it and I need to

be there because these people care about my life. So it just gives them a whole new attitude, even if they're not leading some ministry, there's still an important part. That's the great thing about the Easter musical, there's 100 jobs...

Pastor M: one will be right for you

Participant M1: I know one lady... her job is to make the cinnamon rolls, that's why I signed up again. My criteria is pretty low...

Pastor M: bribe me with food.

Researcher: the next question within the area of transformation, one of the areas that I hope for in this is part of the transformation comes in recognizing the reasons that people act the way that they do so that they're not so irritated by them because they understand it's more personality driven that it is people trying to offend me, did you hear any of that in your coaching conversations?

Participant M3: yeah I did, the lady actually said "I don't think people get me" she said people don't really come up and talk to me, and I know it's because my personality and that's something I've got to work on. Just being bullheaded, stubborn, and very vocal isn't really appealing to a lot of people. She says she doesn't mean to come across this way, that's how her whole family is. So that's something she really has to work on, she says she doesn't mean it to offend people or to not have people near her...

Researcher: as a high D, I can relate to that

Participant M3: but she started to see the result of her personality within the church, and noticed that she didn't really like the results.

Pastor M: that's really huge when you think about that, instead of having it pointed out she recognizes it. Man, that's good

Participant M2: well I had one gal, she really surprised me, I think her strong personalities were D and S they were close, but both very high. And I see her as a D, I see her in the school that way and I see are that way in the roles she has here in the church. But the more we talked, she said I feel like I'm only a D because I have to be in my job, really in my heart I'm an S or a C, I don't remember which one she had. The more we talked about it, it made sense. Certain roles you have to be that way. And you can see that the more that we talked about her passions and where her heart was, that made more sense. But it also made sense, why she doesn't relate well to certain people. And I don't know that she put a whole lot of thought into that before. The other thing that's just been funny for me, because I've done a couple of people who are on the drama committee and as we sat and talked we get to laughing because we think that your personality coming out and it's driving the two of us nuts, but were gonna go with it. But we can put a name to it, and say okay were gonna work through this, but it's been fun to see people realize that we are just different personalities, there's not anything going on that can't be resolved or worked through. It is just that we think differently and we have different priorities. So it has been fun to watch, and it is been fun to watch people recognize it as they are working with other people.

Participant M1: I don't think I really saw too much of that. The people were pretty real with me about who they were, I think they confirmed when they took the survey the kind of people that they thought they were, I don't think they were really different from what they thought before.

Participant M2: well I had another lady say I love singing in the choir, it's one of her passions, that's one of her gifts, but she said I can hardly stand to sit there during choir

practice sometimes because you got all these people that are talking and goofing around, and I was taught that... So we talked about personalities and why maybe she needs to just think about it from a little bit different perspective, and relax a little bit.

Researcher: the last question I want us to look at here is the engagement question have you had luck and plugging people into ministry, are you mostly reaffirming people? How is that gone so far? And again were not finished yet...

Participant M1: the ones that I did, most of them felt like they were doing what they really enjoyed. They weren't wanting to get out of it. They were like I love what I'm doing, I'm thankful I can do it, I'm glad I have a place to do it. I had one guy, his life is changing as I've said before, and he wants to get involved in the church and I need to talk to pastor Pastor M about that little more. He told me exactly where he needed to work, and I see a lot of possibilities there think he can be engaged in this.

Pastor M: he needs to join the choir, I just found out he can sing

Participant M2: I've had a couple of people, and because it's music related, associate pastor and I can work together on that. Had a couple of people, and one of their biggest frustrations, is not being allowed to do things. Through singspiration, and through some specials, we've gotten some people up doing things and it's just thrilled them to have the opportunity to do something. I think there's probably a lot more people out there, it's just that we didn't have the time to sit and talk to each and every one of them and we didn't know what they want to be doing.

Pastor M: we have normally three guitars, and three guitar players. Last Sunday night were nine guitars on stands on the platform, and I'm assuming that every one of them got played by somebody during the night. There's a ton of talent... And I realize... I don't

know how you do that for sure... There are people that that's what they want to do...

Didn't really thrive on having a Sunday just to sit down and watch... They want to be involved, but if that closes the door to other people somehow you either add, or you say no, we need you to move off that stool so somebody else can sit down

Participant M3: when you say add someone, and thinking 100 people up on that stage :-)

Pastor M: all playing the guitar :-) but that's the thing, since Associate pastor came we talked about, talked great length about, it's that rotation this is that we are going to be inclusive. We are going to be inclusive! And we are rotating praise team members not so much the choir, because it's not big enough yet, but it's getting there, it's going to get bigger, I just think every time someone new is on the platform other people go huh...

And that inclusive keeps coming up

Participant M3: I think so much is just insecurity, people think they can't be like... But when you see people... Their average... Just like you to get up there... Makes you feel like if they can include them that I could probably be included...

Researcher: Well I'm going to wrap up the recording now.

Church M Full Focus Group

Researcher: so I'm going to throw question out there, and as I throw this out there, state your name, and then give an answer.

First question is this: in what ways did this process, including the training, the assessment, and the coaching, prove helpful in your understanding of yourself. Did you feel that this was helpful to understand yourself better.

Participant M4: I will say yes, and part of it was just a peace in understanding that there is a reason for why I feel misunderstood a lot of the times, my ideas feel very off-the-wall in my mind, there's a reason for that, and they are put there for a reason so there is almost a little bit of a peace in knowing that's okay, and that is within my box even though it may be outside of others boxes. So it did teach me some things about myself. I am also, give me the four again?

Researcher: D, I, S, C.

Participant M4: I am very high D and very high S so it made me see that there are times when I use one more than the other, and I feel it's hard to balance those in my life. So it really gave me some ideas of how to provide that balance. So yes,

Researcher: so with the strong D, you have these great ideas, with the S, you tend to follow those ideas through, whereas for me, I am a strong D but I have very little S so I don't see things through as well.

Participant M4: wait a second, what is the S? What is the I?

Researcher: The S is steadiness, the I is Influential, the I is the people person...

Participant M4: Wait, I am high D and high I, what is S?

Researcher: S is the steady

Participant M4: no I'm not steady (Laughter in the room). So I am high D, and high I, which is very hard to balance, I could use some S.

Researcher: I married my S (laughter)

Participant M4: me too, totally.

Researcher: did anyone else find this helpful personally?

Participant M5: I'm Participant M5, I did find it helpful, but I can't explain it.

Researcher: all right

Participant M6: I'm Participant M6, and I agree with Participant M5 (laughter)

Researcher: Ok

Participant M7: it made me wish that we had done it with all of our teens, to help them early on to find their niche. Mine was similar for most of them, part of it was personal choice of what I like to do, part of it I'm forced to do because of my job. So I think it would be helpful for kids to know early kind of where their spot is so that they can learn how to make use of the other side to. That organization side that I have none of.

Researcher: I'm actually using this right now, kind of testing it out with three couples I'm working with for premarital counseling. Making them take this assessment in that premarital role to help them understand how they're going to interact with each other. And again when you get younger, it does I think, help kids to understand okay this is why I do this,

Participant M8: I've taken a lot of these before, like with the company I work for, I've probably taken six over the years, or something. But this one was a little different, each one is a little different, although they have some of the same traits, but there was enough difference in this one that I learned little bit more about my personality, maybe how I

lined up a little better with some different things that I didn't see before, so it just kind of broadened how I approach different areas of my life now. Knowing that I'm a low S, and that I have to put a little bit more attention to that in order to be successful with some of the stuff that I need organization with or whatever. So, I found it to be helpful by raising my awareness of... Well a lot of times at work, I may not have filled them out honestly, but this one I did try to fill out honestly, and I think that help me to be more aware of actually where I am at... as opposed to where I want to be. I might have tended to fill them out that way sometimes at work.

Researcher: and one of the things that I will say to that, a part of what I have wrestled with in myself in this assessment process... We all have this ideal of who we want to be, what we think would be the ideal personality, but that's not necessarily who we are. We look at someone who may have more, I look at someone who may have more people skills or have more ability to think through details, and I think man I wish I could do that. So I tend to want that, instead of embracing who I am. And embracing the fact that I have that Driven-ness that drives, and use that, but also bring people alongside of me. But there is the tendency to want a different kind of personality.

Participant M8: I think that's a good way to put it, it help me embrace who I was more. Like the more honest I was in filling it out, the more I realize I really am that person. But, God designed me that way for a reason, so instead I just of trying to want other things... I know I have to focus on other things to be better overall. But I was able to channel what I am good at better I think.

Researcher: any other thoughts on helping you as a person, with a better understanding of yourself? ...(silence, no answer) okay, let's flip this now, to how does a better

understanding of yourself help you to process and better understand discipleship? So how does this help you spiritually to be more like Christ?

Participant M9: if I understood your question, you can't do everything, and you can't be everything to everybody. This assessment helps you streamlined, just like Participant M8 said, streamline those areas that you can potentially have ministry in. It's not just a carte blanche thing, you need to study those carefully, but in this particular place there is an opportunity for whatever it is you do, and of course ministry worldwide is true also

Researcher: okay

Participant M9: I realize that was nebulous, I didn't say anything about myself...

Participant M12: is that a personality trait? (Laughter).

Researcher: by wife and I joke a lot about this assessment now, because she is a C and I am a D, so we joke. I also have one couple in working with right now, that are both I, D's that are getting married, and they already have kids together, otherwise I would probably say this is not the best idea, but what they've done is that they joke about it now and they say okay it's your turn to be the parrot, and your turn to be the lion, or I will be the parrot, and you can roar. (laughter)

Researcher: so in what ways does an improved understanding of yourself, and what ways does this process of understanding your personality, spiritual gifts, abilities, passions in life and life experiences help you in the discipleship process?

Participant M4: what I was thinking is, it is really changed my prayers in a way, because my constant prayer is use me, use me, and now I think I have a better understanding of how I am intended to be used. So it's not this open ended, woo hoo, find me a cruise ship

to be a missionary on, it's more focused and I feel like I'm better prepared for when that moment comes. So it's changed not only what I prayed for, but also the way that I pray

Participant M8: I feel like the list of things that you do in the church that are matched up with your personality traits gave me confidence, you know I may have thought I could be a Sunday school teacher before, but then seeing that that matched up perfectly with my personality trait. Gave me confidence that you can do this, and you can be successful at it. So I think just having that list of things specifically, things in the church, whatever... Just seeing that matched up with your personality traits, can really focus you on how you can serve the church and give you the confidence that maybe you felt called to do but didn't have the confidence to do it before. It may just be enough to make you step out in faith and take this on.

Participant M10: Participant M8 and I just came back from a mission's trip, I guess I never really thought about it in this program but, we ran into some personalities down there, that had a certain way of doing things because I wanted to tell them our way that didn't work really good, we ended up doing a lot of things their way, which a lot of times was the hard way.

I don't really remember what I was, I have memory issues so if I remember right out of my things was on one of my strong things was in giving I guess the Lord has blessed me. It cost a lot of money to go to Costa Rica, but I didn't think much about it because, you know I figure the Lord will continue to bless... and seeing people down there we are blessed beyond measure

Researcher: let me approach this question a little bit better, because I know that for you C's you guys have to think about things...(laughter) and I want everyone to participate.

When I talk about discipleship, there are four key areas that I believe fall under discipleship. The first area of discipleship is a personal relationship with Jesus Christ. You cannot be a disciple of Jesus Christ without having a personal relationship with him. The second area of discipleship is biblical community where we belong to the greater body, and we are a part of this greater body. The third area is biblical engagement. The study of God's word, understanding his word, and applying his word. And the fourth area of discipleship is biblical service where, we serve others out of a joyfulness not just out of a duty because God has created me to serve others. So to give you C's some time to think about this I am going to ask in each of those four areas how has this process helped you. That is what I mean by discipleship: a personal relationship, biblical community, biblical engagement, and biblical service. With that definition, does anybody else want to address the question of how this process has helped me as a disciple?

Participant M11: my answer is similar to Participant M8's, I have been a little girls first and second grade teacher for, I don't even know, 10 years or something like that, and I always thought that's kind of where I belonged because that's just where I could understand and that's where I can teach. And it's been good. It was about the time that we took the assessment last fall and some things started coming back, we had to think about ranking what were our passions, and I remember marking like marriages, women... I don't remember exactly what the wording was but... And that was when I had the chance to... I thought I was subbing for a gal who's no longer able to teach, and come to find out I've been teaching ever since a women's group. And I was really intimidated to take that because I thought "who am I to teach something." But with the meeting that I ended up having with my leader (Coach), just some things that happened, I realized it

was really passionate about women and marriage, and learning the Bible, then why am I not good enough then to take the group. And I mean we work on things is a group, but that gave me the... I guess the reassurance that if this is something that you feel strong about and why not take this, why not take the opportunity. And I still don't know if I have the confidence, similar to what Participant M8 said, you know the confidence to... If this is something you care about to do it. And I think it's been good for me, I don't know about for the rest of the people in the group, but they keep coming back, so if nothing else it is been good for me. I guess I'm in it now, and I enjoy it, and I don't know if all of those events wouldn't have taken place if I'd still would've been doing that.

Researcher: what is your personality type?

Participant M11: I don't know, something that would go along with timid.

Researcher: are you a C? are you someone who thinks through things analytically?

Participant M11: probably some of that

...Time was taken to look up the personality types of many participants who had forgotten their type and their scores since taking the assessment last fall.

Researcher: How do you feel that this has helped you in your personal relationship with Jesus Christ? The personal relationship portion of discipleship...

Participant M3: I guess for me it helped because before I did this, I was talking to my husband about transformation about how the Bible talks a lot about we should be transformed and just not knowing where. And after doing this and seeing where my personality was, I'm a high C, it explains things, relationships, with different personalities in order to... Like where I should be transformed in order to reach people better. Does that make sense?

Participant M7: with mine, it wasn't so much the numbers and such that helped, but in the discussion we talked about... I felt I ended up spending far more time doing service that was good, it's not bad to do service things, but not enough time with the Lord. I mean I had good intentions but not a relationship, so it pointed out a weakness

Researcher: and what was your top score again?

Participant M7: 8 S, 7 D

Researcher: the S personality tends to be one that will burn out, like a golden retriever, they will just do, do, do, until someone says hey, or until you burnout and you say I can't

Participant M7: that's what I went into it hoping it would do, actually, was to find a different area to be of service. You know I'm getting old, and I can't always do some of the stuff that I wanted to do before, and I was looking for something else to do.

Researcher: anybody else? Did this help you to grow spiritually?

Participant M14: I think for me, I try to overthink everything and it all gets jumbled up in my head, and here lately, and I'm going to assume now it makes sense being a C, here lately it's been like just shut up listen to the Lord, just fine-tuning it. It's okay to be confused because I do overthink everything: so fine-tuning it.

Researcher: one thing I'll say here, one thing I found for myself, is that some of Satan's most passionate attacks against me are in my area of D. For my wife, some of Satan's most potent attacks are in the area of the C, trying to get her to overthink everything and keep her from doing, or for me trying to attack everything I'm doing and tell me I'm doing it all wrong... Our greatest strengths in the Lord, will be the biggest target for the enemy.

I saw several other people shaking their head that this was helping them grow spiritually, did anyone want to say anything about that?

Participant M6: just an awareness, I've never taken one of these tests before.....so it was all very new... and I did take it truthfully by the way... (Laughter)

Participant M8: that was BC (laughter)

Participant M6: I guess I was... Not that I was pleased with myself, don't take it that way... But I was encouraged maybe by my numbers being even... I thought that was hopefully in the right direction... And as far as a discipleship, just gonna keep on keeping on... And the numbers kinda reflected that.

Participant M8: I change my answer after you gave a little... So, right before I took this, I recently became a Sunday school teacher... And like I said it built my confidence in that a little bit but at the same time it did make me realize in order to do that I was gonna have to be better at my prayer life, getting in the Word, because it takes time and effort to plan a Sunday school lesson and I kind of took that for granted what I signed up for that. So that whole process, it gave me confidence that I could do it, but the realization that it was gonna take more effort on my part to accomplish where I wanted to be within that. But it develops your prayer life, You are in the Word more, so my personal experience with that is that I feel that help me to grow spiritually and a lot of different areas. Because when you're in the word, you're taking in the word, and your serving. So I felt like it encourage me greatly and shined some light on some things I probably wasn't doing so well before.

Researcher: second question is in the area biblical community... Does this understanding of yourself and also the realization that others have scores, or the others have

personalities, does that help in working together as a biblical community, and seeing yourself within that, but also with seeing others in biblical community?

Participant M8: I wished when you walked up to somebody that their numbers were over there head... (Laughter) if you're a D, there's a big D over your head...

Researcher: no, because then they would just walk away from us... Laughter

Participant M7: I think a lot of us kind of new those things without knowing our letters and numbers, like I worked with Participant M11 for several years, I know she complements me. I can come up with the idea and she's got the follow through to do it she is far better at that than me. So I think we recognize that... with Participant M8, he's family so I know he's got strengths, and it's good to be able to see him use the strengths that I knew he had.

Participant M13: I think it helps you understand why maybe some partnerships or things within the church haven't always work to the full potential of what you'd wished they would have... because now you see oh maybe it was because our personalities conflicted more than it just being "oh it didn't work" or that it was a bad idea... it was just that the team conflicted too much.

Participant M9: it makes me aware that there are other people that can do things, and when you get into a group, you start listing, which is a good policy... which this thing has helped me do... Then you understand that inside this group there's probably a little bit of everything... Every trait that all put together can function very effectively. You just have to stop, and think about what you've learned from this, where you are in relation to what those people can tell you and just simply listen... Well hear and listen both I guess...

Participant M4: it is definitely the D in me, but I hope that what it's done thus far, and I hope it continues in all my relationships, especially the churches... Not trying to make people into something they're not... Because I really like to be pretty manipulative... And I'm gonna get you to do it... You might not know it yet, but I will... And I can hopefully lessen some of that... And just let them be the personality they were designed to be... So I'm hoping that eases some of that in my life.

Participant M3: and I was just going to say, I guess mine's a little bit different because I got ...I was on the other end... for me the life experiences really stood out... Just getting to know people on a deeper level in understanding why their personalities are the way they are. You know it wasn't just that they were born that way it was also life experiences that may have helped form that or change that... So now I think it's mainly because I'm a C, so I analyze... Just pick out everything that people say... The way they treat others and things... I think now it's giving me a greater understanding that like life experiences are... You know when I have a personality conflict, or I see other people have it, it gives me a better understanding because I can tell that that person has a story... Just because I got to sit down with several ladies and see what life experience formed the personality... And I can understand that a lot of who they are is life experiences... Good and bad. And the same thing for me... kinda like Participant M4 was saying, you can't just expect people to be who you want them to be...

Researcher: recognizing that God created everyone... And God does have a plan... It's just hard for us D's to understand... God does have a plan to get things accomplished, we just have to let him work his plan, and not manipulate others to get it done sooner...

Laughter

the next area is in biblical engagement, and Participant M8 you have already talked about this a little bit... Has this helped you to study the Word differently?

Participant M8: knowing that I have little to no organization in my life, overall... It made me realize that in order to sustain and be diligent in my studying of the Bible that I had to set time aside and I had to do something different than what I was. Because if I don't do that it falls through the cracks, and so more of what I am not than what I am showed me that if I'm gonna really study the word that I had to set aside the time. It's not that I wasn't studying the word, but it for sure wasn't on a regular, dedicated, set aside this much time, this is what I'm doing and this is only what I'm doing... Knowing that I needed that in order to study differently changed the way I did things with the Bible

Researcher: I will give you an example from my life. Paul, the apostle Paul, was a very high D. Peter, was a high I, Moses was a C, Barnabas was the S. When I'm preaching... Actually right now I am preaching on transformation... And I'm spending most of my time in Paul's writings, because I get Paul better now in understanding his personality and in understanding myself. But I also have this awareness in studying. Okay, but not everybody in my congregation is a Paul. And that is a good thing. Does anybody else see anything... To that degree... Seeing your personality represented in Scripture?

Participant M7: I compared myself to Martha, you know some of the jobs that I do I may not like doing them but they need to be done so I'm going to do them... If I was more of a D, I would get someone else to do it or find someone who actually liked doing it... I know, like I said before, in my job I have to do one side of things that me individually is another side of things. and I like this one better than I like this one... And I don't know how you separate out some of those sometimes...

Researcher: biblical service, do you feel like this helped you serve better?

Participant M4: I can share, but this is gonna make me cry so just be prepared... This is the I in me... You didn't know it, but I had been diagnosed with cancer the week before the training... I was having surgery the next morning. And so when I sat down I went ooh, I know it's mercy... It was kind of the surrender moment. Mercy is not typically high for D's, because it's very personal and it's not... It is listening it's not telling... And so, it was huge (crying) I just thought I should share... I don't know that I have really found where God wants me to be in that yet... And I was really thankful for the coaching because it just... From an older lady... my coach is not in here is she? Laughter... A more experienced lady said "that's okay"... And it's okay to not know what I'm doing... Next?

Participant M1: Can you repeat the question again, want to make sure I answer correctly...

Researcher: did this help you in service to others?

Participant M1: normally I say yes when something has to be done, whether it fits my areas of strengths... But I think it help me a little to know that there are some things I should say no to... Because God has people to fill every need, every void, so maybe I should say no... That sounds terrible in the church, I hate to say that... But there are things that I'm not good at! And I should not be the leader of this, or that, and it is hard for me to get ready or be prepared if I just don't have that ability in me. And so when pastor calls me on the phone... He thinks the answer is probably going to be yes... When it should be no... So it help me to realize that God can help me to say, you know, I don't have a strength in that area, and I know you called me because... But maybe today the

answer is no. I come from a background where... when something needs to be done I just do it! But there somebody better, who can do a better, and I know that, and I need to remember that. But I don't want to say no, but sometimes you do, as a church, just get up and get it done... But there's times when with my personality I wouldn't do justice to the people that I would be trying to help. So it helps me to realize that that's okay.

Participant M7: I would tag on to what Participant M1 said, about needing to say no...

And I guess in relationships, I'm a counselor, my job is a counselor... I think part of the problem with couples, and people in general, is that some of us need to learn how to say no... Because that hurts our relationships with others when we say yes all the time. For example, my husband thinks sometimes that I am here too much... And can't someone else do that? Well yes, they could, but sometimes it's more fuss find someone to do something, that it is to just go do it.

Participant M4: I will tag along with that too... I knew my spiritual gift was going to be mercy when I sat down, like I said it was that surrender moment... I am a teacher by profession, I love teaching, I'm a pretty effective teacher, but it's not my spiritual gift... And I knew that, so I feel bad when people asked me to teach Bible school and I say no, and people say that you are a teacher... No... I teach Sunday school, and that's okay... But my husband and I are doing it together, and were doing this because he needed that... But I totally am there, it is okay to say no! Because that is not where God wants me.

Participant M11: and hopefully this goes onto the question initially... I got sidetracked in the emotional part... Part of what we talked about was why... Why do I do some of the stuff that I do? You know, I started out teaching little girl Sunday school, because they couldn't get anybody else to do it... And I wanted to, I had never done that before... But

now, why am I still doing it? Why do I teach Bible school? You know, all these things that we talk about, you know I don't know what my list is compared everybody else's... And I don't care... But it was a decent list of things that I do, and I had never really even put it into a list... And I was like oh my gosh... So the coach kept asking why? Is that something you want to do, is that something you set out to do? And I didn't even have an answer... A lot of it was well, they needed help... Well they needed... So I have thought a lot about... And my mother just told me yesterday that I need to learn how to say no... And people tell me that often. But you know, if I'm going to say no to things than what is it? And how do I even do that? And what will people think of me if I say no? And I don't mind being known as someone who" let's ask Participant M11, I know she will help." Because I want to be helpful, but at the same time I guess I have a hard time drawing a line on what is enough and what is too much... What is important... Because to me if there is a need than it is important for me to help if I can. And I am like Participant M1, there's a lot of things I have gotten into that I didn't really know that much about but it got done, so I don't know... Seeing the strengths, and seeing the thing is that I said I was passionate about... I guess made me think what things could somebody else definitely do better? What should I let go of? what should I concentrate on? Because it's hard to manage lots and lots of stuff and be good and effective at it. You know if you got your hand in all these different pots... I haven't come up with an answer yet, but it's made me think... I'll get back to you on it... But it made me think a lot... Maybe I'm not doing any of them justice by doing too many things... But you know what, until somebody else steps up, who would I be to say well you know too bad, I just have to quit this and it's

your problem... I don't mean to sound that bad... But that's kind of how I feel when I start to express that I should give something up...

Researcher: and that is the textbook S... It really is, you feel that obligation until somebody else steps up...

Participant M11: and you know I probably would not have ever said that I wanted to teach until... You know because it was being handled... Until there was a need... They came around, and brought a clipboard around asking would you teach... Here are the holes we have, please help... So maybe there is somebody else, maybe not sitting in here, but they haven't really thought about it, but until that clipboard is passed and then they think well gosh, I should do that. I have not passed that on yet to make someone have to step up... Because I would feel guilty. You mentioned burnout, and I don't know that I'm burned out... And at the same time I don't know if my feelings would be hurt to give up... And you know the other two times that I have mentioned "I think I'm done" dramatic things have happened, two people that were my helpers... So I hate to even put it out there again, because bad things that happened the other two times that I've said I think I'm gonna be done... I don't know, you know it's...

Researcher: but here's how it usually ends up, the curriculum ends up on pastor's desk with you in tears saying I am done... And walking out the door... and we don't want to get there... So this has definitely had you thinking about how to say no... You still have an answer but it has you thinking?

Participant M11: it is definitely had me thinking a lot, especially after the conversation with my coach. Because she kept saying why? How did you get that? Why did you do that? And I was just like I don't know... Because somebody needed somebody and I felt

bad and said yes. And I enjoy all of the things that I've done, and I feel like they were worthwhile things... So if they're worthwhile how can you get fed or burnout or get tired of things that need to be done. How can I say no to first and second grade little girls that want to learn about God? It makes you feel like a bad person... Yeah a lot of thinking, Lotta wrestling, yeah.

Participant M3: well her list was this long...

Researcher: yeah I think you mentioned her in our coaches meeting... Like 16 different things...

Participant M11: and you have things outside of church too... They are still important, you know you lead 4-H, coach basketball... So is it right to give up church things to do outside of church things? It's hard... You know it's for my children, it's for the rest of your children, and grandchildren... You know I probably had most of them... So just makes me feel bad to think that I would give up.

(Time was taken to encourage participant M11 to discuss with other leaders, how to process a transition out of so many things into the things that do matter for her)

Researcher: All right, we are going to move on to another question, my first research question out of three is how does this impact discipleship... And I think you guys have given me some good input into that... The second that I want us to talk about, is does this help us to engage better with the body of Christ? There is some overlap between this and the biblical community... Tell me though, does this process, understanding yourself through the training, the assessment, and the coaching... How does this help you to engage better with the body of Christ?

Participant M13: I guess, being a position of leadership as the Sunday school superintendent, and being an S... when I approach someone, I kind of understand... I know the people who will say yes to me... Who are my other S's. But I know when I approach them, because I know it's hard for me to say no also, I know that when I approach them that I can say it is okay for you to tell me no, I understand... You don't have to feel like you have to say yes... So I kind of understand that aspect of understand the different personalities and strengths that go along with that...

Participant M8: that's awesome because I go to the people that I know will say yes just because I know that they will say yes. (Laughter) because if you're gonna feel guilty about saying no, then you should probably say yes (laughter).

Participant M1: well I think the answer is yes, it certainly helps us to learn more about each other, even what we are doing here tonight is very, very helpful to the body of Christ. You learn a little bit more about a person, you respect them even more than you have before, you can realize that they are different than you are, but you embrace those differences. You are glad when people are different than you are and it just makes our relationships with each other even better. I found it to be a good experience. I found out things about people that I never knew, I'm sure they learned something about me that they didn't want to remember (laughter) but it was a good experience. It deepens the relationships we have with other people. I found a very valuable

Researcher: anybody else on engagement?

Participant M7: I wish there was there some way to get those... Even if the people are here that are and everything... I wish it were some way to get the other people take the same thing to get them somewhere... I don't know how you do that though... I mean you

can raise the awareness of groups before... Of do we really need to continue this ministry? If we do, how do we do this because were burning out people? How do we get more people to do this? I don't know how you get people to step up...

Researcher: going to move on to my last question because I think it blends in... The last question is what is the impact of this on the church? Does this help us as a church, as a body, to better make disciples? To better accomplish our mission? To better be a lighthouse of hope? How does this type of training, assessment, and coaching, help our church? Do you feel it has helped? What are some potential ways you could see this applied to help us going forward?

Participant M8: I like to run things efficiently, as efficiently as possible, no matter what I'm doing. So effectively managing people, and truly finding out what people are good at, and what they like to do better serves the church because people can pick up on their passion for what they're doing. Be more effective in what they're doing. Whatever it is... It could be building sets for the Easter drama... Anything... But when we find out what people are good at and channel what they're good at they don't hate what they're doing, they like what they're doing, they're good at what they're doing... So we more efficiently run things as a church. And I feel by doing that, people see the passion... And passion draws people, from my experience, and when they see the passion and the people care about what they're doing... then we can impact communities... You know, not just the church... But when we are on top of our game... effectively doing things, then were reaching out to the community... And I don't know but I feel like it's a big snowball the just keeps getting bigger when you build momentum like that.

Researcher: and you can be a lot less manipulative when they're in their area passion...

Laughter

Participant M8: I can tell you that my prayers are a lot shorter and the guilt is a lot less...

Laughter

Participant M4: I think Participant M8 is right on with this, he hit the nail right on the head... Because if you are lighting people's fires in what they really feel passionate about... Wow... They're not just pew dwellers... You know, imagine the potential! It just really feel there's something there... It's not an obligation, it's a passion!

Participant M6: and it frees up those people who have a list of 16 things to be able to shorten that list... Because the joy is there to do the work...

Participant M9: it is always a benefit to do something because you want to rather than because you have to... And if people understand where their strengths... And even there in between's are... Then they might say to themselves maybe I could do this... And then of Participant M8 comes along and insists that you are good at it... Away you go...

Participant M8: you could be surprised at what I make people think they're good at...

Participant M7: the verse that I go to is the one that talks about being lukewarm Christians, I don't want to be lukewarm... And I would like to get more people on board... But I'm not as eloquent as Participant M8 is with people. But I think we have a lot of lukewarm... But I don't know how you turn on the fire... I know what does it for me, but I don't know what does it for others.

Participant M13: I think we need to be aware of all of the S's that are out there, and I know that they say that 20% of the people basically do all the work... And what are we going to do when we burn out all of those S's... So that we need to try and make sure

they were doing all that we can to prevent that and come alongside of people and give them support and try to bring in new people.

Participant M8: I think that's what's impacted is already, the people that went through this see the differences in people a lot more than they did before. Even on the most basic level. So I joke around about being a D and manipulating people, but that's never my goal... But sometimes it does happen... that is my personality trait... right... so... But just trying to be more aware of that and just banking on people being honest with you too though. When you honestly ask somebody, some people may not give you an honest answer about whether they want to do it or not. I don't know... Just being honest with ourselves about what we do want to do, or what were capable of doing. Then trying to get people to be honest with us about where they're at, what they're capable of doing, and what they want to do... I think that's already impacted me just by trying to be more aware of people with different personalities and how that fits into God's big plan of what he has for this church and us as individual leaders.

(A question was asked as to the findings thus far, are the other churches reporting more people going through the process that are already involved in ministry rather than people who are uninvolved. The researcher speculated some, but commented that the data was not yet in to clearly determine).

Researcher: Well I do deeply appreciate you going through this process! Thank you, and I hope this has been an enlightening process for you. I also pray that it will help you to be and make better disciples!

Church P Coaches Focus Group

Researcher: the first question is what do we perceive is happening in the greater church as a result of the training, the assessments, and the coaching that's taken place so far?

Pastor P: well at this point I have not seen a lot of change yet, simply because I believe that some people have not been evaluated. So we're still kind of working on that process, but I think for those of us who have taken it, I think there's a greater awareness of ourselves, and what we can possibly do in the church which I think is healthy.

Researcher: anybody else with any observations on the church?

Let's move along to the second question... That's okay because that question in my research is aimed more towards the pastor rather than everybody. The second question is are we seeing in ourselves, and each other, and the people were working with, spiritual transformation as a result of understanding ourselves better?

Pastor P: well I personally, I think this is very helpful... Especially for myself, because it helps me to understand my own strengths, and where my passions are, and what I can do in the church, and what I should do in the church. Rather than doing a lot of things that maybe I should defer to someone else... I think it's been very helpful for me personally and I think it brings a great deal of comfort and satisfaction to know where I know I belong. Rather than trying to be a round peg fitting into a square hole.

Participant P3: well thinking about our group, I have enjoyed getting to know them. I am also learning a lot about them just by spending time with them... I'm just really surprised at how open they are in doing these things in getting involved, and being coaches, and doing these things for the people. I like seeing this... I'm enjoying it.

Participant P2: with my own profile results, I was really surprised at how it came back. I had taken this kind of DiSC assessment before, and I was fairly high on the D. But I don't think it was my top one... But I don't remember what it was 25 years ago... But when it came back with the D and the S exactly matching. They seem to be polar opposites and I'm a nine on both... I looked at that and I thought what do I make of that? I'm still trying to figure it out... But it explains, I think, part of the way I act in the church. You know a D wants to take charge of things, and there's a part of me that sits there and thinks whatever it is... Like the soup supper... I could run that thing... I could, I know I could. But there's a part of me that's, sort of sensitive, and I don't like people picking on me and you know, when you run things people pick on you. So a lot of times I don't... I've got all these ideas but I keep them to myself... That may not be the best way to handle that, but that is sort of my default mechanism. So I'm working on that I'm trying to figure out just how exactly do I keep my S nice and quiet and allow my D to do something or the other way around.

Researcher: and do you feel that in understanding how God created you... does that give you any insight... Does it help you spiritually?

Participant P2: yes I think it does, there are things that I would beat myself up over... A lot of that that I realize now it's just the way I'm made... God made lots of people in many different ways... And I need to work with what I have...

Participant P1: from a personal perspective, I was also surprised with the results.

Particularly in the gifts category. Anytime I had taken assessment before it came out with the gift of service, and that pretty much came out at the bottom of the pile. I think giving was the first... So I'm still trying to process what that means... That I've been going

under certain assumption about what my motivations ought to be... Maybe I'm just not that in touch with how I feel about things. But I did recognize that there's a good reason why the assessment came out with giving on the top. Although I'm not a person of great means, it still is a desire... So kind of interesting how that worked out.

Researcher: let me ask this... When you saw that service was on the bottom did you feel a sense of relief? That you don't have to do things that are uncomfortable for you?

Participant P1: you know, I think that maybe I've been trying to walk with Christ long enough, that he tends to fill in gaps that we don't necessarily do. And one of the things it is really growing in my spiritual life right now is a greater awareness of how little of me needs to be involved in things and how much more of him... If I find that I am feeling like I don't like this, then I probably have something I need to work on. But you know, I've been helping in the nursery lately and when Participant P2 first broached that idea with me I closed one eye and said I don't know how to do that... But as we been doing it... The kids in the nursery are almost always Participant P7's kids... So from working in there... What I know about those kids is that I love them, and I may not be that wise about what we ought to be doing during that period of time. But I do see that those kids matter. So I try not to say you know I'm not really up to that because I guess what I'm learning is that where I am weak, then he is strong. So I suppose that's my primary area of growth in my life at this time.

Participant P7: well I think what I have learned the most through all this is that there is a reason why some things are more difficult for us than others... Details are not one of my high points in my gift things, and that's why the bulletins are not always folded properly, and there might be words misspelled on the slides... And I still want to do it... But I've

been beating myself over the head with” why did you let that mistake get through” so I feel like I could breathe a little better afterwards.

Researcher: next question I want to ask is do you feel that this process is helping you to transform the way that you respect and view others?

Pastor P: it has help me immensely, it helps me to view people differently because now instead of taking everything that they say at face value, I find myself thinking... Let’s see, their personality type is this and because of that I understand why they respond or react to things the way that they do. So it gives me... Number one it keeps me from being offended by some people, and it also helps me to have a greater respect for where they’re coming from. It helps me to also understand better that I need certain types of people in leadership positions that have some of these different qualities because all of us together make a whole that makes us more complete in the decision processes of the church. It also helps me to understand again that God doesn’t create any cookie-cutter molds for people, and thank God for that!

Participant P3: yeah I do think I do think a little bit more when someone says something that really kind of irritates me... I think okay... I’m trying to take a second look at it and think about what kind of person it is and that everybody is different.

Participant P2: I struggle sometimes with a lady in our church, I just don’t understand her... But she did fill this thing out and I could look at her scores and she is quite different from me... And I could see that from talking to her, but looking at how she scored versus how I scored I can understand why some of the time it’s almost like we’re on different planets... I think a lot of that is that she is just made very differently than me. And I need to take that into account

Participant P1: I'm not sure that I know how to answer that question... I tend to be analytical in looking at facts or things... I am still having a hard time bringing myself to try and analyze people when I'm talking to them... I still tend to take them at face value. Maybe it is because I just haven't really sufficiently internalized this whole assessment.

Researcher: I don't think there's anything wrong with taking people at face value, what I'm hoping happens is that we tend to as human beings rub each other wrong very frequently. We say the wrong thing, or we have a wrong attitude when we say it... It's very common... What I am hoping comes out of this... And I'm not trying to lead the discussion here... Is that because of what we are learning about the differences of people, not that we try to over analyze them, but that we respect that they are not always coming from the same place that we are coming from because God created them differently. And that's okay. I may not agree, and I might not understand fully, but I can respect better because I see that they are going to approach this differently. In a decision process for example, you are going to approach it from an analytical perspective, because you are a C. But your pastor, is not going to be thinking to details... Actually the details for Pastor P are very low and that is not where his mind is. But understanding that... Okay, pastor is not a high C so I can come along side of him and help him with those details instead of criticizing the fact that pastor, why didn't you think about this, this, this, this, and this. Does that make sense?

Participant P1: yes that does. I will try to help. You know most of the time when I am in a face-to-face interaction with somebody, whatever opinion they're expressing, if it tends to bear on me in any way, I tend to give them the benefit of the doubt. I assume that

they've got the highest motives and that they've got all their ducks in a row. I might find out later that that didn't pan out, but that will be my first assumption.

Researcher: part of that too, is that you think through what you're saying before you say it, my wife is the same way, she is not going to respond in the moment, she going to think about it before she responds. Because of that, you are more likely to assume that other people have done the same. That has been for my wife and I, because I don't think... As I say it, that's the first time I've heard it too... Laughter

Participant P1: I do recognize that a lot of people decide what they think by saying, kind of seeing how it sounds. So if I recognize that that is your nature, and you say something that sounds like its critical or whatever I just figure you're trying that on to find out if it fits and I probably won't take offense.

Researcher: and that seems to be your nature, you are not the judgmental, easily offended, critical of everyone type personality like some of us at this table might be...

Laughter

Participant P7: I like knowing people's personalities, because for me it takes the guesswork out of it. If I know someone's personality and their traits in their characteristics... If I'm talking to somebody especially if I have to talk about something hard, if I know what they are, then I know are they going to be... How do I approach them? The way that I approach them, and everybody knows that I don't like conflict... You know I'm soft, but there's some people you can't be like that with I'm finding out... Not that I want to be mean, but if you go to someone with one of those personality types, there does can look at you like... Walk right over... And I'm learning this as I get older... So it's nice to know, because I don't want... I didn't ever want to do that to

someone with a softer personality type that that might hurt... I would never want to do that... So it's nice to know how to approach them, what are they thinking, so it helps me know what I'm even going to say to that person... Does that make sense?

Researcher: the last question might not apply as much here because you haven't got done yet... But have you noticed any more engagement within the church? And maybe it's just for yourselves that you're getting more involved in things whereas you are hesitant to do so before...

Pastor P: well at this point I don't think we've noticed any major difference, because this is still very new to all of us, and were kind of finding our way and trying to understand ourselves first of all so that we know where we need to say... Maybe this is an area where I need to plug into... Because again there are so many needs in a small church that we plug-in people just if they're willing to say yes... Just because a job needs to be done. Which is not the right way to do it but sometimes, extreme situations require extreme ways of dealing with it. So unfortunately that happens in far too many churches, and we're trying to alleviate that because I firmly believe that if we can get our people to plug into something where they feel that this is where I belong, they will find so much fulfillment in doing that. And it will make it easier for them to say, you know I don't think I belong over in this area because I know that there are other people who are better gifted for that particular thing... And that's the ideal, that's what we're looking for do this. And I believe this will help us immensely. So we haven't seen any real major changes yet.

Church P Full Focus Group

Researcher: first question I want us to start with... Do you feel like *The Place Assessment* process was helpful in general? And if so just a short answer as to why...

Participant P1: I've taken some type of assessment before, but the ones I looked at before were only on spiritual gifts. The idea of connecting the areas of your life with your experiences and your spiritual gifts and the things that you care about was useful to help try to formulate what you think God wants you to do with your time

Participant P3: I think it was good, it was useful to look at what you found out and you can affirm that that is good because that's what I like to do, but it shows you can try other things.

Participant P4: I felt like it kinda helped me awaken inside of me who I am. It's also God's way of letting me know what I need to do. I felt it was very helpful.

Participant P2: when I took this, I had taken a spiritual gifts thing years ago, and I don't think when I took it that I knew myself very well... I was probably around 30 or so when I did it. And I don't remember exactly what the spiritual gifts were but it didn't resonate with me so much even then and less so as time went on. When I took this, I discovered that I had gifts that I had no idea that I had and some of them were things... Tendencies that I had that I did not think were very useful in a lot of ways. But in taking this, I learned that some of those tendencies are actually a part of my spiritual gifts... I've been pushing them away, thinking that I don't want to be like that. But if that is a gift that I have, I should not be trying to hang up on it. But figuring out how to plug it into what God is asking me to do, that was very helpful to me.

Pastor P: I personally feel like it is the best assessment that I have ever taken. I wish we would have had a 35 years ago when I first went into ministry. It has helped me immensely, understanding my own personality type so that I know that I not only have gifts but how I use them and how it affects others, by knowing my own personality type. Sometimes I have found that I have had gifts, but because of my personality type I didn't always use it to my best capability. So that was helpful to me but also it has given me a greater understanding of people around me. How to relate to them so that when I see them acting the way that they do or saying things that they say... or saying no to different jobs within the church. I now can look and say I understand why. They really don't fit, and I shouldn't try to push them into those positions... Just because we say we have a need. So that has been very helpful for me, very helpful.

Researcher: in keeping with the four areas of discipleship that we talked about tonight, I'm going to ask the question in relation to each of the four areas... The first area is your personal relationship with Jesus Christ, do you feel that this assessment gave you any insight into your personal relationship with Jesus Christ? Was a beneficial to your personal relationship with Jesus Christ? Does understanding yourself better and perhaps understanding the way that you process discipleship better... Meaning if you're a very driven personality type... I think in all of your coaching sessions you were each asked to give your testimony, and then connect your testimony to your personality type... To understand how God revealed himself to you through your personality. So did that help your personal relationship with Jesus Christ?

Pastor P: well, it opened my eyes to something I didn't realize in regard to why I respond to God in the ways that I do... And I look back now, and I can see exactly the pattern

over and over again, of how God dealt with me and how I responded... And also times when I didn't respond. And so I felt that that was... It was just an eye-opener for me... Makes me understand my relationship with God that much more. So I really value that, it was very good.

Participant P5: I think that for me, in talking with the pastor (coach) but I wonder as I'm getting older, what I did when I was younger in the church... I don't feel like I can do anymore... Something about patience... (laughter)... Anyway, as I went through this, I saw that there are still things that an old lady can do for God... and it's there it just had to be woken up to realize that I can still do something for him... That I have a desire for something in me that I don't act on very often because I didn't think it was a gift.

Researcher: the next question, the next area... And I think this is probably where this assessment process has the most applicability... Is understanding how this helps us within a biblical community. A part of what this assessment has done is given us our personality type but also made us aware that there are other personality types... In other words I'm not the only right one... Even though as a strong D I tend to think so... So in helping us to understand that, did you feel that the assessment was helpful in understanding and processing a biblical community?

Participant P5: you will have to ask that question in a little bit simpler terms for this lady...

Researcher: does this assessment help us to get along better with each other?

Participant P5: it certainly showed me where I was weak at, which I knew part of but it reaffirmed... What I need to be better at...

Participant P2: I think that in a community where you work with a lot of different people, they're going to be people that you don't really understand... They don't think like you do, that's clear. You don't really know what exactly drives them, I think this Place thing helped us see... By looking... When you got the book, and you could see all four of them, and you could see different areas of how people behave, you can spot the people that you know in aspects of that. And it makes a big difference to see where you are and where they are... No wonder it's hard to track them sometimes. So yeah I think it helps us to be more patient and understanding, and not so judgmental of people who are different than us.

Participant P1: in the past when I looked at anything like this assessment, the focus was on figuring out what your spiritual gift was so the view was myopic... What about me... I found that this assessment with its view toward discipleship and learning how to get along in the community really had a lot more expansive vision and learning how the personality characteristics, life experiences of others shapes them... Maybe part of that was being older, but I think the assessment did a better job than anything I had seen before.

Participant P6: I agree with that, and Participant P2 too... It is taught me to slow down and be more aware of where other people are coming from... Who they are, what makes them tick... Rather than just I don't like that person because... when I had no idea

Pastor P: just one more bit here, I noticed... It help me to understand there are people who have many gifts but because of their personality type they are very reluctant to use those gifts. So that helps me to understand that I need to encourage more those kind of

individuals, and help them to see that God wants to use them and they just need to make themselves available. And that was... I thought, also very helpful...

Researcher: the next area is biblical engagement... One of the examples of this is when we understand that yes we have personalities, but so did the authors of Scripture... Does this assessment help us to study God's Word better? Does it encourage us to understand where we fit... and ignite us to study God's word? Or does it have any bearing on our study of God's word?

... No responses

the next question is does this help us to serve others better?

Pastor P: I think for me it just made me more comfortable in my own skin, and what God has called me to do... You know I don't have to be everything to everybody... I don't have to do everything in the church... God has not called me to do everything... But he is gifted me to do certain things and that I must do!

Researcher: I see a lot of nodding heads... But the audio recording does not take that up... Laughter... So if you would like to agree with that... If you could say it so I could record it...

Participant P1: I ended up with a lot more gifts itemized on this than anything I had seen before... Seeing what was at the top, and what was at the bottom... I guess it caused me to take a new look at what type of things tend to motivate what I'm doing...

Researcher: Well I do want to thank you all for coming, I do want to thank you all for participating in this!