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THE ANTHROPOLOGICAL PASTOR: NAVIGATING THE
CULTURE OF AN ESTABLISHED CHURCH BY
IMPLEMENTING ANTHROPOLOGICAL
TOOLS AND RESOURCES

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I dedicate this dissertation to Stephanie Marie Turpin. You are a stalwart and encouraging gift of a wife, and without you I would have not been able to travel this long, difficult, yet rewarding road. Thank you for your constant encouragement and for tirelessly bearing the burdens of our educational journey. Palm trees and sand are around the next bend.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

CQ	Cultural Intelligence
EQ	Emotional Intelligence
IMB	International Mission Board
MBTI	Myers-Briggs Type Indicator
NAMB	North American Mission Board
RAP	Rapid Assessment Process
SBC	Southern Baptist Convention

PREFACE

This Ph.D. dissertation is due, in large measure, to the encouragement of those who had gone through the process before me. They often touted the benefits of the refining process of advanced studies while willfully ignoring my blissful miscomprehension of the full price that was to be paid. I am thankful, at this point, for both their encouragement as well as their neglect.

Besides my wife, one person pre-empted all others in encouraging me to pursue this degree, Richard P. Oldham. Through his visionary leadership he called me “Dr. Turpin” while I was still a “preacher boy.” He continued to do so when I began to pursue a B.S. in Biblical Studies and an M.Div in Missions, Evangelism and Church Growth. Step by step I was encouraged to go as far as I could. Though my pastor is now with the Lord, I want to honor his visionary leadership and his continuing impact on my life. A man cannot travel down a road he has never seen—Bro. Richard Oldham was used by the Lord Jesus Christ to help shine a guiding light on my future path.

I must also say a word about one particular professor who inspired me to pursue the topic of this dissertation, a topic that still burns in my heart. M. David Sills, through his courses on cultural anthropology, stimulated a hunger in my heart to know more about the people to whom I minister. He initiated my study of the writings of Paul Hiebert, David Hesselgrave, and Sherwood Lingenfelter, among many others. He also encouraged me to pursue formally the connections between cultural anthropology and local church leadership. In large measure, the Lord used David Sills to help me begin thinking like a congregational cultural anthropologist.

Not all those who influenced this direction in my life did so from behind a

pulpit or lectern. I want to thank my father, Bob Turpin, and my mother, Rhonda MacKenzie, for instilling in me the value of pursuing excellence in my personal education. I also want to thank my brother, Robert Turpin, for showing me that perseverance pays off, and for giving me needed words of affirmation when I was ready to give up. Additionally, I want to recognize Stephanie again for being a wonderful and encouraging wife, always believing I could finish. To Christopher, Anna, John, Sophia and Lydia: Thank you for understanding the value of your father's education, and I pray you also will strive to be all that you can be through the strength that Christ supplies. To Donaldson Baptist Church and South Franklin Baptist Church: Thank you for displaying a willingness to encourage your preacher to sharpen himself for Gospel usefulness; You seemed never to begrudge the time my education demanded. I also want to thank the Caldwell/Lyon Baptist Association, and especially those who faithfully invested in the Gates Bowman Scholarship fund. May your sacrificial giving produce multiplied fruit. I would also like to thank George Martin publicly for patiently leading me across the finish line, and Adam Greenway for encouraging me to begin the Ph.D. journey. Thank you so much Marsha Omanson for all your help in formatting and editing. Finally, thank you to many others who invested in my education in large and small ways throughout my life, the list is long!

Chris Turpin

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Under the leadership of Kevin Ezell, Southern Baptists have streamlined the funding and operations of the North American Mission Board in order to ensure that church planting continues to be the Convention's primary method for making disciples in North America.¹ This church planting emphasis rightly prioritizes building the body of Christ through multiplying new congregations.²

While acknowledging church planting as essential to the long-term viability of the Southern Baptist Convention and to the growth of Christ's Kingdom, it is also important to remember the need to continue encouraging the well being of the 46,000 established Southern Baptist churches who fund the efforts to start these new church plants.³ Without the cooperation of these established local Southern Baptist churches

¹The 2013 budget summary for NAMB prioritizes \$51,467,000 of the \$114,500,000 budget for "church planting" with this note: "Beginning in 2012, the church planting missionaries' salary/benefits are shown in Church Planting. Historically, all missionary salary/benefits have been shown in Missionary Appointment Support and Equipping. NAMB's desire is for our budget to reflect our refocused priority of Send North America and Church Planting." North American Mission Board, 2013 Budget Summary for NAMB, accessed September 4, 2013, <http://www.namb.net/Search.aspx?searchtext=budget%20summary&searchfor=all&orderby=id&orderdirection=ascending>.

²At this point it is important to note that this dissertation does not argue for church health and revitalization in opposition to or in lieu of church planting. I fully affirm David Hesselgrave's thesis, "The primary mission of the church and, therefore, of the churches is to proclaim the gospel of Christ and gather believers into local churches where they can be built up in the faith and made effective in service; thus new congregations are to be planted throughout the world" (David J. Hesselgrave, *Planting Churches Cross-Culturally: North America and Beyond*, 2nd ed. [Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2000], 17). Hesselgrave's book is an excellent treatise on cross-culturally sensitive church planting. For an excellent and comprehensive argument for the biblical foundations of church planting and a seemingly exhaustive treatment of the "how" of church planting, see Craig Ott and Gene Wilson, *Global Church Planting: Biblical Principles and Best Practices for Multiplication* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2011).

³Thom Rainer notes in his 2013 update that there are 46,000 churches in the Southern Baptist Convention. A small portion of these churches are recent church plants themselves, but their participation in continued Cooperative Program support will ensure the funding of future church planting efforts. Thom Rainer, "2013 Update: Largest Churches in the Southern Baptist Convention," ThomRainer.com, accessed

there would be no personnel or finances to ensure that the church planting strategy becomes a reality. In a word, Southern Baptists must not neglect the health and viability of their established congregations.⁴

Although established churches help safeguard the future of the Southern Baptist Convention, it is often a very difficult task to serve as the pastor of one. In fact, one can often hear visionary church planters quip mantras such as “It is easier to have a baby than to raise the dead.”⁵ In many cases these potential planters are called and equipped to start new works, but others seem to be reacting against the significant difficulties inherent in shepherding established congregations. Despite the real difficulties associated with leading an established church, one must consider the fact that many of these established Southern Baptist congregations have proven their resiliency and exhibit potential for longevity and effectiveness in Kingdom work. Thankfully, there continue to be many men of God who have recognized God’s call to serve an established church.⁶ It

September 04, 2013, <http://thomrainer.com/2013/08/03/2013-update-largest-churches-in-the-southern-baptist-convention/>.

⁴Although I write from the perspective of a Southern Baptist, the principles laid out in this dissertation should be transferrable across denominational lines. Many of the established mainline denominational churches are in decline and poor overall health. The application of this research could help church leaders in contexts where the Bible is believed and the gospel is treasured and preached.

⁵This quote is widely used and has been attributed to C. Peter Wagner’s classroom lectures. Others attribute it to Aubrey Malphurs or Rick Warren. Ed Stetzer has used a variation of the quote in his blog.

⁶A call from God is an essential component of a healthy and effective ministry in a local church. This research assumes that the man serving as pastor has received an “internal” and “external call” and is equipped by God to serve as a local church pastor. See R. Albert Mohler, “Has God Called You? Discerning the Call to Preach,” [AlbertMohler.com](http://www.albertmohler.com), accessed September 06, 2013, <http://www.albertmohler.com/2013/07/19/has-god-called-you-discerning-the-call-to-preach-2/>. Those who are in the ministry apart from a call of God are certain to harm Christ’s church. Many books treat the matter of call in much more depth than can be considered within this dissertation. Consider Charles Spurgeon’s chapter on “The Call to the Ministry,” in *Lectures to My Students* (Fern, Scotland: Christian Focus Publications, 1998). For biblical qualifications, see Benjamin L. Merkle, *40 Questions about Elders and Deacons* (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2008). Also, for a good treatment of the way God reveals His will in the heart of His servants, see M. David Sills, *Reaching and Teaching: A Call to Great Commission Obedience* (Chicago: Moody Publishers, 2010).

is imperative that these men be equipped with the tools necessary for effective established church leadership.

There are many pitfalls associated with serving as the pastor of an established congregation. Often, neophyte pastors enter established churches with idealistic visions of complete transformation within their congregation, and soon. Such pastors tend to enter into local church ministry hoping to lead their flocks toward heartfelt worship, selfless ministry, effective evangelism, deep discipleship, vibrant fellowship, and powerful prayer, along with any other values the pastor may hold.⁷ Many of these hopeful pastors have a preconceived vision of the finished product in mind (i.e., their idea of the perfect church).⁸ They may hold very strong convictions regarding how they believe churches ought to look and behave. More often than not, however, their idealistic visions do not match the reality of the people God has sent them to shepherd, or the new cultural context in which they find themselves ministering. Overlooking the not so obvious cultural differences between the pastor and his new congregation, he then sets out to make the congregation match his ideals. The implementation of his agenda tends to bypass the necessary investigation and anthropological research that would aid the pastor in determining just who it is that he is attempting to minister to and through. This information could help him to lead the people to become who God made them to be in

⁷These values are based on Rick Warren's five purposes. See Rick Warren, *The Purpose Driven Church: Growth without Compromising Your Message & Mission* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1995). Other pastors may value the "9 marks" more highly, found in Mark Dever's book, *9 Marks of a Healthy Church*, 2nd ed. (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2004). The point is that every pastor enters a congregation with his own distinct set of values. These values will probably never perfectly match the values of the congregation he serves, but the closer the alignment of values, the better the pastor/congregation match. An in-depth study of values and their effects on church culture and health was conducted in the heart of the dissertation.

⁸Scores of books and articles have been written on the necessity of pastoral vision. My argument is not against vision, but against a vision that does not take into consideration the uniqueness of each congregation. Certain biblical absolutes should guide every pastor's vision for each church. However, many pastors bring culturally prompted visions that neglect consideration of the culture of the church they are called to pastor. A healthy pastoral vision must include consideration of the culture of the church one is called to serve.

Christ. The aforementioned reality is the main problem that this dissertation addresses.

This research was particularly interesting to me because of my own personal experiences and my specific theological training in missions, church leadership, and ecclesiology. From 2001 to 2015 I served as the pastor of two established Southern Baptist churches in Kentucky. The first congregation had a strong element of fundamentalism and a history of combating the surrounding culture. The second congregation is 191 years old and is in the very rural setting of Farmersville, Kentucky. Neither of these congregations exactly matched my congregational culture in all their practices, but I am confident still that was the will of God for me to serve them.⁹ We experienced relatively healthy, harmonious, and effective relationships for over fourteen years.

Admittedly, it would be quite difficult for any pastor to find an established church that matches him in every way. For instance, one could delight in ancient hymns with powerful organs as well as contemplative choruses accompanied with guitar and a tribal drum. The same man could find himself enthralled with heady homilies as well as animated and passionate Bible preaching. Others could prefer to serve in a church where the tradition is always to wear one's "Sunday best," while personal preference may be a comfortable pair of blue jeans. These seeming cultural inconsistencies draw attention to the fact that Christians are complex individuals who represent a variety of cultural preferences, even within a singular individual. Therefore, the pastor must never assume that his own culture will exactly match the culture of the people he serves as a pastor. Assuming most differences are indeed examples of personal preference rather than a

⁹In both of the congregations I have served, I have gladly ascribed to their stated statement of faith, *The Baptist Faith and Message 2000*. It is my firm conviction that doctrinal integrity precedes healthy pastoral/congregational relationships. Within the parameters of *The Baptist Faith and Message* is room for differences in emphasis. I have always taught in accordance with and not contrary to the stated doctrines of the churches.

question of what is right or wrong, who should change: the congregation, the pastor, neither, or both?

In many churches today, one's "Sunday best" would seem pretentious and out of place. Conversely, other churches would be offended if one were to preach in jeans and a t-shirt. Still other church members would be confused if one attempted to lead them to repeat the Lord's Prayer in unison, read an ancient prayer, or asked everyone to lift their hands in worship. These differences of opinion and practice can potentially cause division between pastors and their churches. Cultural dividers include preferences in time, language, formality, decision-making, architecture, kinship, dress, worship practices, Bible versions, personal interactions, and a myriad of other factors that a local church pastor must consider.

Certainly the church perpetually needs to be brought back to the Word for guidance in all matters ecclesiastical. Additionally, the pastor should perform his due diligence to ensure that he knows his people, knows their congregational culture, and then brings the Bible to bear on that culture. The pastor should exhibit faithful reliance on the absolute truths of Scripture, while allowing Christianity to be rooted in the culture of the people. What this type of leadership should exclude is presumptuous shepherding that attempts to lead the congregation one hopes to have rather than the one God has entrusted to him.

Each local church has its own distinct congregational culture. As anthropologists already know, cultures of the world may have many similarities with others in regard to what they value, how they think and act, and their various artifacts. Despite their many similarities, no two cultures are exactly alike, neither are any two churches exactly alike, nor should they be. Therefore, pastors would benefit from the use of the tools of anthropological discovery in studying the cultures of the congregations they serve. The information gained through such research would provide the pastor with a more concrete idea of who his people are, "the way we do things around here," and who

the congregation could be through the transforming power of Christ. He could escape many potential difficulties and better navigate the culture of his established church.¹⁰

Purpose

This dissertation argues that the pastor(s)/elders, and/or potential pastor(s)/elders, of established local churches, should know and implement many of the tools and resources of cultural anthropology within their ministry context in order to enhance understanding and communication between the pastor and his congregation, resulting in healthier pastor-congregation relations, healthier churches, and greater Kingdom effectiveness.

To explain this thesis, the following sections provide a brief description of each aspect of the thesis statement: (1) pastors/elders (2) established local churches (3) tools and resources of anthropology (4) ministry context (5) understanding and communication (6) healthy pastor-congregation relations.

First, this study assumed that the office, variously named *pastor*, *elder(s)*, and *overseer/bishop*, is the same office, whichever of these names is used (Acts 20:17, 28; Titus 1:5, 7). Contemporary Southern Baptists tend to use the word *pastor* for this office.¹¹ Additionally, this dissertation assumed that this office is limited to men (1 Tim 3:2). Furthermore, the principles set forth in this research should be applicable to

¹⁰Paul Hiebert provides an excellent definition for culture, “We define culture as ‘the more or less integrated systems of ideas, feelings, and values and their associated patterns of behavior and products shared by a group of people who organize and regulate what they think, feel, and do.’” Paul G. Hiebert, *Anthropological Insights for Missionaries* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1985), 30.

¹¹According to Stanley Grenz, “Until the nineteenth century, church structure among Baptists in America was quite simple. Whenever possible, local congregations sought out a gifted person to fulfill various pastoral duties, including preaching and evangelism, although such a one was generally referred to as elder rather than pastor.” Grenz later writes, “Baptists today rightfully understand the pastor as one sent by the Lord into a specific congregation for service to that body for an indefinite period of time.” Stanley J. Grenz, *The Baptist Congregation: A Guide to Baptist Belief and Practice* (Valley Forge, PA: Judson Press, 1985; repr., Vancouver, BC: Regent College Publishing, 1998), 64. Baptist congregations usually appoint a pastor or elder(s) to lead them and deacons to serve them (Acts 20:28, 1 Tim 3:12, 13). But, under the headship of Christ, the final authority in Baptist churches rests within the congregation (Acts 14:27; 15:22, 30; 1 Cor 5; Acts 11:22).

churches that utilize a single pastor, plurality of elders, or a multi-staff model. Although this research was conducted with the assumption that pastor/elder-led congregational government is the New Testament norm, the tools presented should benefit those who serve in churches with other forms of church government.¹²

Although the congregation's participation, especially in Baptist churches, is a huge determinant of the success of a local church, this research focuses on the work of the pastor as an anthropologist in his relation to his congregation. The pastor must be willing to study, understand, and adapt his methods and practices to the local church context in which he serves.¹³ Alerting pastor(s)/elders to their need for awareness of, training in, and the implementation of anthropological tools and resources is the primary burden of this research. Also, it is important to note, those evaluating the possibility of pastoring a church should also be implementing the suggestions in the conclusions of this research. Therefore, the results of this research are to be implemented by pastor(s)/elders and/or potential pastor(s)/elders. Further, cultural evaluation teams composed of laypersons can also carry out the applications of the conclusions of this dissertation.

Second, the research conducted in this dissertation is intended to be useful for pastors who already serve established churches, or those who expect to enter an *established local church* pastorate. Although there are various degrees of being "established" as a church, this research understands an established church to be one that has been in existence long enough to have developed beliefs, values, and behaviors generally accepted by the members of the congregation.¹⁴ These beliefs, values, and behaviors will

¹²For more on polity, Daniel Akin et al., *Perspectives on Church Government: Five Views of Church Polity*, ed. Chad Owen Brand and R. Stanton Norman (Nashville: B&H Publishers, 2004).

¹³Paul Hiebert is especially helpful in thinking about how to approach the culture of a congregation. Hiebert argues for "critical contextualization, whereby old beliefs and customs are neither rejected nor accepted without examination. They are first studied with regard to the meanings and places they have within their cultural setting and then evaluated in the light of biblical norms." Hiebert, *Anthropological Insights for Missionaries*, 186.

¹⁴Aubrey Malphurs uses the metaphor of an apple as a helpful illustration of the three major

be evident when the pastor begins to observe the established pattern of leadership, worship, polity, methodologies, artifacts, and general ways of thinking and behaving.¹⁵

It is important to note, at this point, that the new pastor enters an established church as an outsider.¹⁶ The church is usually composed of those who have been *enculturated*. Sherwood Lingenfelter and Marvin Mayers describe *enculturation* as the “lifelong process of learning . . . by which an individual acquires the cultural heritage of a larger community.”¹⁷ Although the pastor may come from a church culture very similar to the one he presently shepherds, there will be differences.¹⁸ Since the pastor was enculturated in another church, he will need to go through the process of *acculturation* in his current ministry. Stephen Grunlan and Marvin Mayers define *acculturation* as “the learning of the appropriate behavior of one’s host culture.”¹⁹ They go on to set a realistic expectation that can be applied to the pastor of an established church by recognizing, “we may never become fully recognized as a member of the new culture for a variety of reasons.” Therefore one who attempts to pastor an established church should approach

components of culture: beliefs (the core of an apple), values (the flesh of an apple), and behavior (the peel of an apple). Aubrey Malphurs, *Look before You Lead: How to Discern & Shape Your Church Culture* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2013), 26.

¹⁵Paul Hiebert divides the three measurable areas of culture similar to Malphurs, but Hiebert refers to the areas as, *cognitive, affective, and evaluative*. Hiebert, *Anthropological Insights for Missionaries*, 30-35.

¹⁶In today’s congregational economy, most churches tend to interview and call pastors who have not been discipled within their own congregation. In some instances, however, a pastoral candidate may be considered an insider (“one of us”) because he has grown up within the congregation.

¹⁷Sherwood G. Lingenfelter and Marvin K. Mayers, *Ministering Cross-Culturally: An Incarnational Model for Personal Relationships*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2003), 19.

¹⁸Aubrey Malphurs’ book *Look before You Lead* will be one of the primary sources of this research. Malphurs will serve as the primary representative of the church leadership side of research. Malphurs argues, “When pastors are hired to lead existing churches, they go into and have to adjust to an already established church culture.” Malphurs, *Look before You Lead*, 15.

¹⁹Stephen A. Grunlan and Marvin K. Mayers, *Cultural Anthropology: A Christian Perspective*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1988), 80.

the task with an awareness of his culturally conditioned beliefs, values and behaviors.²⁰ Then, he can move forward in using the tools and resources of anthropology to understand the culture of the church he serves and become acculturated. Effort in these areas will be rewarded with the pastor having a better understanding and a healthier relationship with his established congregation, even if he may never fully be “one of them.”

The third idea communicated by the thesis is the idea regarding the many *tools and resources of anthropology*. These tools and resources will be useful in aiding a pastor/elder in discovering and understanding the culture of the established church he is expected to lead.²¹ According to Stephen Grunlan and Marvin Mayers, “Participant observation is the primary research tool of anthropologists.”²² In addition to participant observation the local church pastor can employ interviews, conduct surveys and administer questionnaires, and examine existing literature, along with other lesser-known tools and resources. These tools generally fall under the umbrella of *ethnographic research* for the anthropologist.

The field of anthropology offers an assortment of terms and tools that have been considered within the body of this research. Anthropological tools and resources will aid the pastor/elder in gathering information germane to established church leadership. This information will help the pastor/elder to understand what his church

²⁰In *Look before You Lead*, Malphurs provides several questionnaires that could help pastors determine their own beliefs, values, and behaviors. Determining which beliefs, values, and behaviors are culturally conditioned proves much more difficult.

²¹Grunlan and Mayers as well as others often use the term *cultural anthropology*. This term should be understood as synonymous with my use of the term *anthropology*. The use of the word *anthropology* in this research should not be confused with the systematic theology heading of anthropology. Anthropology in the field of systematic theology deals primarily with the biblical understanding of who man is and his relation to God. The type of anthropology encouraged in this research is the type employed by those in the social science field of anthropology. A good book for in-depth biblical anthropology from the systematic side (the doctrine of man) is Anthony A. Hoekema, *Created in God's Image* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1994).

²²Grunlan and Mayers, *Cultural Anthropology*, 240.

believes, what it values, how it behaves, and why. Conducting ethnographic research (or ethnography) from within the church and the surrounding culture is one method of implementing anthropological tools and resources. David Fetterman describes ethnography as “the art and science of describing a group or culture.”²³ Since the pastor/elder can only work with the information he has—the tools and resources of anthropology will aid in gathering important information on a particular ministry context.

The *ministry context* mentioned in the thesis is that of an *established local church*. The local congregation will be somewhat representative of the surrounding culture, but the primary focus is the actual members of the congregation and the details of their lives together as an organized community of faith. Authors like Aubrey Malphurs and Angie Ward have classified these church contexts as a subset of *organizational cultures*, in accordance with the business world’s nomenclature.²⁴ The research presented in this dissertation recognizes the validity of such a classification, but expands on the terminology by incorporating research from the field of anthropology and missiology. In reality, according to Eugene Nida and David Hesselgrave, local church pastors/elders must understand and work through three cultures or contexts: “The Bible Culture, The Missionary’s Culture and The Respondent Culture.”²⁵ This study focuses on the context of the “missionary” (in this dissertation the pastor/elder) as he relates to the “respondent culture” (in this dissertation the established church he pastors or will potentially pastor).

Additionally, regarding *ministry context*, one must consider the location where

²³David M. Fetterman, *Ethnography Step by Step*, 3rd ed., Applied Social Research Methods Series, ed. Leonard Bickman and Debra Rog (Newbury Park, CA: Sage Publications, 2009), 11.

²⁴Malphurs, *Look before You Lead*, 7. Angela Joan Ward, “Church Organizational Culture: Construct Definition and Instrument Development” (PhD diss., The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2011), accessed August 18, 2014, http://digital.library.sbts.edu/bitstream/handle/10392/3730/Ward_sbts_0207D_10043.pdf?sequence=1.

²⁵David J. Hesselgrave, “The Role of Culture in Communication,” in *Perspectives on the World Christian Movement*, ed. Ralph D. Winter and Steven C. Hawthorne (Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library, 2002), 392-96. Eugene A. Nida, *Message and Mission: The Communication of the Christian Faith*, 3rd ed. (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1960).

the congregation meets and the cultural context of the surrounding community, state, and nation. These elements include things such as: high-context versus low-context cultures, hot versus cold-climate cultures, relationship versus task oriented cultures, individual versus group oriented cultures, etc.²⁶ The established church pastor will gain understanding necessary to promote effective communication by using the tools of anthropology within his ministry context. The local church pastor needs to relate to his cultural context in much the same way missionaries have learned to study and work through foreign cultures.

Understanding and communication is the fourth idea presented in the thesis statement. As the pastor begins to implement the various tools and resources of the anthropologist he will begin to understand more clearly the culture of his established church. However, the goal of this research is not to inform alone, the pastor must use his newly gained knowledge to communicate with and lead the local congregation. Communication will occur through formal preaching and teaching. It will also occur through informal communication, as the pastor lives and labors among his people.

The pastor must speak the language of the people and communicate the message of the Bible in culturally appropriate ways. Even in a culture similar to the one in which he grew up, the pastor must learn the various nuances of the particular church he is serving. He must ensure that he is: hearing what the people are communicating, knowing and understanding who the people are, and, knowing and understanding what they believe. Additionally, he must learn to communicate in a way that is well received

²⁶Geert Hofstede, Richard Lewis, Sarah Lanier, and Sherwood Lingenfelter and Marvin Mayers present several helpful paradigms for classifying the ways cultures tend to think and act. See Geert Hofstede, *Culture's Consequences: International Differences in Work-Related Values* (Beverly Hills, CA: Sage Publications, 1980); Richard Lewis, *The Cultural Imperative: Global Trends in the 21st Century* (Boston: Intercultural Press, 2007); Sarah A. Lanier, *Foreign to Familiar: A Guide to Understanding Hot- and Cold-Climate Cultures* (Hagerstown, MD: McDougal Publishing, 2000); Sherwood G. Lingenfelter, *Leading Cross-Culturally: Covenant Relationships for Effective Christian Leadership* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2008); Lingenfelter and Mayers, *Ministering Cross-Culturally*; and Sherwood Lingenfelter, *Transforming Culture: A Challenge for Christian Mission*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1998).

by the people. This type of communication is covered further under the heading of critical contextualization.²⁷

Ultimately, the goal of this dissertation is to benefit pastors and congregations in developing healthy relationships that will endure the difficulties associated with local church ministry. Unhealthy relationships between pastor(s)/elders and their respective congregations abound, and sometimes they end in forced resignations. Richard J. Krejcir has accumulated statistics on why pastors are forced to resign. He interviewed 825 such pastors at conferences in California. Of those who had been forced to resign, Krejcir groups the five most popular reasons for the forced resignations.²⁸ All the reasons given surround the inability of the pastor and his congregation to successfully navigate conflict, or failure to successfully communicate. These reasons buttress the importance of healthy relationships between the pastor and his congregation, and the perennial need for people-skills. Therefore, pastor(s)/elders of established local churches should know and implement many of the tools and resources of anthropology within their ministry context in order to enhance understanding and communication between the pastor and his congregation, resulting in healthier pastor-congregation relations.

Finally, this dissertation assumes the pastor is leading the established church to function in accordance with and not contrary to the plain teachings of Scripture.

²⁷Hesselgrave, "The Role of Culture in Communication," 392-96.

²⁸According to Krejcir, "1. Four hundred twelve (412 or 52%) stated that the number one reason was organizational and control issues. A conflict arose that forced them out based on who was going to lead and manage the church-pastor, elder, key lay person, faction, 2. One hundred ninety (190 or 24%) stated that the number one reason was their church was already in such a significant degree of conflict, the pastor's approach could not resolve it (over 80% of pastors stated this as number 2 if not already stated as number one, and for the rest, it was number 3!). 3. One hundred nineteen (119 or 14%) stated the number one reason to be that the church was resistance to their leadership, vision, teaching, or to change, or that their leadership was too strong or too fast. 4. Sixty-four (64 or 8%) stated the number one reason to be that the church was not connecting with them on a personal level or they could not connect with them, or the church over-admired the previous pastor and would not accept them. 5. Forty (40 or 5%) stated that the number one reason was not having the appropriate relational or connecting skills as a pastor." Richard J. Krejcir, "Statistics on Pastors: What Is Going on with the Pastors in America?" (Francis A. Schaeffer Institute of Church Leadership, 2007), accessed May 2, 2016 <http://www.intothyword.org/apps/articles/default.asp?articleid=36562>.

Therefore, in accordance with the purpose statement for this dissertation, when the pastor/congregation relations are improved, the overall health of the church will be improved. Additionally, as the overall health of the church improves so will its corresponding Kingdom effectiveness.

Definitions

Due to the assortment of understandings in the academy, this section will provide definitions for a few of the foundational terms that make up the core of this research. The terms defined in the following pages are *culture*, *congregational cultural anthropology*, *ethnography*, and *contextualization*.

There is no universally accepted definition for culture. In one of the most recent textbooks on Cultural Anthropology from a Christian worldview perspective, *Introducing Cultural Anthropology*, Brian Howell and Jenell Paris give their synoptic definition of culture: “Culture is the total way of life of a group of people that is learned, adaptive, shared, and integrated.”²⁹ Paul Hiebert, in his article, “Cultural Differences and

²⁹Brian Howell and Jenell Paris, *Introducing Cultural Anthropology: A Christian Perspective*. (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2011), 36. For an earlier definition from a Christian introduction to cultural anthropology, see Grunlan and Mayers, *Cultural Anthropology*, 39. There are myriads of definitions for and explanations of culture. The following contains some that are particularly relevant to this study. Richard Niebuhr, in his definitive book, *Christ and Culture*, defines culture as “the artificial, secondary environment which man superimposes on the natural. It comprises language, habits, ideas, beliefs, customs, social organization, inherited artifacts, technical processes, and values.” H. Richard Niebuhr, *Christ and Culture* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1951), 32. A. L. Kroeber and C. Kluckhohn define culture in the following way: “Culture consists of patterns, explicit and implicit, of and for behavior acquired and transmitted by symbols, constituting the distinctive achievement of human groups, including their embodiment in artifacts; the essential core of culture consists of traditional (i.e., historically derived and selected) ideas and especially their attached values; culture systems may, on the one hand, be considered as products of action, on the other hand as conditioning elements of further action.” A. L. Kroeber and C. Kluckhohn, *Culture: A Critical Review of Concepts and Definitions* (New York: Random House, 1952), 357. Sherwood Lingenfelter and Marvin Mayers define culture as “the anthropologist’s label for the sum of the distinctive characteristics of a people’s way of life.” Lingenfelter and Mayers, *Ministering Cross-Culturally*, 16. Brian Galloway has written, “Culture consists of three interrelated aspects: namely, 1) social organization, 2) economy-technology, and 3) ideology. Social organization consists of how people relate to one another, whether those relationships are based on kinship, hierarchal systems, commonalities, or individual preferences. . . . Economy-technology includes the system of production and distribution and consumption. Ideology involves more than beliefs. Ideology includes the basic assumptions underlying any system of ideas. It consists of what people hold true, including values, norms, and precepts in life.” Bryan K. Galloway, *Traveling Down Their Road* (Bangkok: Self-published, 2006), 74. Charles Kraft defines culture this way: “The term culture is the label anthropologists give to the

the Communication of the Gospel,” writes, “Cultures are made up of systems of beliefs and practices that are built upon implicit assumptions that people make about themselves, about the world around them, and about ultimate realities.”³⁰ Howell and Paris focus on culture being learned, and Hiebert demonstrates that culture informs one’s worldview. In another place Paul Hiebert and Eloise Meneses show the reader how culture can be transmitted: “The more or less integrated systems of beliefs, feelings, values and worldview shared by a group of people and communicated by means of their systems of symbols.”³¹ Finally, a comprehensive definition that addresses other elements of cultural development comes from The Willowbank Report from the Lausanne Conference:

Culture is an integrated system of beliefs (about God or reality or ultimate meaning), of values (about what is true, good, beautiful and normative), of customs (how to behave, relate to others, talk, pray, dress, work, play, trade, farm, eat, etc.), and of institutions which express these beliefs, values and customs (government, law courts, temples or churches, family, schools, hospitals, factories, shops, unions, clubs, etc.), which binds a society together and gives it a sense of identity, dignity, security, and continuity.³²

These definitions, along with others mentioned in the footnotes, are a small

structured customs and underlying worldview assumptions which people govern their lives. Culture (including worldview) is a peoples’ way of life, their design for living, their way of coping with their biological, physical and social environment. It consists of learned, patterned assumptions (worldview), concepts and behavior, plus the resulting artifacts (material culture).” Charles H. Kraft, “Culture, Worldview and Contextualization,” in *Perspectives on the World Christian Movement: A Reader*, 3rd ed., ed. Ralph D. Winter and Steven C. Hawthorne (Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library, 1999), 385. Timothy Tennent gives four foundational assumptions for a Christian understanding of culture: “First, *Christians affirm that God is the source and sustainer of both physical and social culture. . . . Second, Christians affirm the objective reality of sin, rooted in the doctrine of the Fall, which has both personal and collective implications for human society. . . . Third, Christians affirm that God has revealed Himself within the context of human culture. . . . Fourth, Christians affirm that a future, eschatological culture, known as the New Creation, already has broken into the present.*” Timothy C. Tennent, *Invitation to World Missions: A Trinitarian Missiology for the Twenty-first Century*, Invitation to Theological Studies Series (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2010), 171-74 (Italics in the original).

³⁰Paul Hiebert, “Cultural Differences and the Communication of the Gospel,” in *Perspectives On the World Christian Movement*, 3rd ed., ed. Ralph D. Winter and Steven C. Hawthorne (Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library, 1999), 381.

³¹Paul G. Hiebert and Eloise Hiebert Meneses, *Incarnational Ministry: Planting Churches in Band, Tribal, Peasant, and Urban Societies* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1995), 37.

³²“LOP 2: The Willowbank Report: Consultation on Gospel and Culture,” *The Lausanne Movement* (1978), accessed November 1, 2011, <http://www.lausanne.org/en/documents/lops/73-lop-2.html>.

sample of the definitions that exist, and they give one the sense that coming to a recognized consensus on the definition of culture is a futile effort. It is almost as if defining culture is synonymous with having a theory for everything touching human interactions.

When defining culture, Charles Kraft points out that there is more to culture than is readily apparent. He writes, “A culture may be likened to a river, with a surface level and a deep level. The surface is visible. Most of the river, however, lies beneath the surface and is largely invisible.”³³ In addition to being deep, Scott Moreau notes that cultures often overlap and intersect: “We may consider culture to be the diverse and dynamic pattern for living which is shared by a people and transmitted from one generation to another as part of the fabric of life.”³⁴ The number of cultures or sub-cultures represented in any given room could be at least quadruple the number of people. For instance, the author of this dissertation identifies as a “hillbilly” from Cincinnati who pastored churches in Kentucky, while working on a Doctor of Philosophy and coaching little league football, and is now a missionary in New York City. Even after knowing these various micro and macro-culture factors, it is difficult to summarize just what my culture is.

Despite the difficulties associated with defining culture, the term is still a valuable handle for studying established churches. Since this study culminates with a synthesis between the writings of Paul Hiebert (looking mainly at his book *Anthropological Insights for Missionaries* as a paradigm for implementing anthropological tools and resources in established churches) and Aubrey Malphurs’ book

³³Charles H. Kraft, *Culture Communication and Christianity* (Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library, 2001), 44.

³⁴A. Scott Moreau, “The Human Universals of Culture: Implications for Contextualization,” *International Journal of Frontier Missions* 12, no. 3 (July-September 1995): 121.

Look before You Lead, I close this section by interacting with their definitions, and conclude with a an adapted synthesis of the two.

Aubrey Malphurs approaches churches from the church leadership and organizational culture paradigm; therefore, he defines the organizational culture of local churches, which he calls *congregational culture*. Malphurs writes, “I define the church’s *congregational culture as the unique expression of the interaction of the church’s shared beliefs and its values, which explain its behavior in general and display its unique identity in particular. . . . In short, a church’s congregational culture is its unique expression of its shared values and beliefs.*”³⁵ Malphurs definition brings value to this study by recognizing and studying churches as organizational cultures, and by using the term *congregational culture*.

In *Anthropological Insights for Missionaries*, Paul Hiebert defines culture as “the more or less integrated systems of ideas, feelings, and values and their associated patterns of behavior and products shared by a group of people who organize and regulate what they think, feel, and do.”³⁶ Later, an update to this definition is presented in a compilation of Hiebert’s writings published after his death, *The Gospel in Human Contexts*. In this work Hiebert defines culture as “the more or less integrated system of beliefs, feelings, and values created and shared by a group of people that enable them to live together socially and that are communicated by means of their systems of symbols and rituals, patterns of behavior, and the material products they make.”³⁷ In his later definition Hiebert replaces “ideas” with “beliefs” and he also completely reworks the second part of his definition. Both definitions follow Hiebert’s pattern of dividing culture into the triad of cognitive, affective, and evaluative dimensions.

³⁵Malphurs, *Look before You Lead*, 20.

³⁶Hiebert, *Anthropological Insights for Missionaries*, 30.

³⁷Paul Hiebert, *The Gospel in Human Contexts: Anthropological Explorations for Contemporary Missions* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2009), 150.

For the purposes of this research I adapt Hiebert's later definition of culture to fit Malphurs' idea of congregational culture: Congregational culture is the more or less integrated system of beliefs, feelings, and values created and shared by a particular congregation that enable the people to function as a church and that are communicated by means of their systems of symbols and rituals, patterns of behavior, and their material products.³⁸

Now that I have defined congregational culture I move on to congregational cultural anthropology. Paul Hiebert puts it simply, "Anthropology is the study of people."³⁹ Robert Lavenda and Emily Schultz write, "Anthropology can be formally defined as the study of human nature, human society, and the human past. This means that some anthropologists study human origins, others try to understand diverse contemporary ways of life, and some excavate the past or try to understand why we speak the ways we do."⁴⁰ "According to Brian Howell and Jenell Paris, "Anthropology has traditionally been divided into four subfields: archaeology, linguistics, physical or biological anthropology, and cultural or social anthropology."⁴¹ The study of established churches in North America would fall under the heading of cultural anthropology. In regard to cultural anthropology Lavenda and Schultz write, "Cultural anthropologists investigate how variation in the beliefs and behaviors of members of different human

³⁸Hiebert, *Anthropological Insights for Missionaries*, 30.

³⁹Paul Hiebert, *Cultural Anthropology*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1983), 1. I agree with Hiebert's clarifications regarding epistemological foundations for anthropology. Hiebert writes, "We will assume the Christian perspective that humans are created in God's image, that they have both transcendent and earthly dimensions, and that science must find its place within a larger theological context. We will reject the views of secular materialism and reductionism, which see scientific models as the only acceptable forms of knowledge and reduce humans to mere creatures of this earth determined fully by their environment. In a theological context, however, anthropology does provide valuable insights into the nature of human beings, particularly within their sociocultural settings" (2).

⁴⁰Bold in original. Robert H. Lavenda and Emily A. Schultz, *Core Concepts in Cultural Anthropology* (Mountain View, CA: Mayfield Publishing Company, 2000), 2. This book is a good example of the general acceptance of evolutionary theory as an existential presupposition in mainstream anthropology.

⁴¹Howell and Paris, *Introducing Cultural Anthropology*, 5.

groups is shared by culture, sets of learned behaviors and ideas that human beings acquire as members of society.”⁴²

In his book *Customs and Cultures: Anthropology for Christian Missions*, Eugene Nida remarks, “All good missionaries have in a sense always been good anthropologists, for they have been sensitive to the needs of the people and in a remarkable way have entered into the lives of the people, fully identifying themselves with the people.”⁴³ Both Nida and Hiebert note, outside of Christian missions, the science of anthropology has typically been built upon Darwinian structures and is resistant to missionary interference in cultures. Hiebert rejects the paradigm of modern anthropology (built upon faulty assumptions about human beings and their relation to their Creator) and urges Christians to implement anthropology in Christian missions from a Christian worldview perspective. Hiebert argues, “Christians need an understanding of human life that anthropology offers through the study of diverse sociocultural contexts.”⁴⁴ It is the argument of this dissertation that anthropology is not only valuable to missionaries, but should also be valued and used by established church pastors.

In the previous section churches were classified as possessing many of the

⁴²Lavenda and Schultz, *Core Concepts in Cultural Anthropology*, 4. Lavenda and Schultz go on to explain, “Cultural anthropologists specialize in specific domains of human cultural activity. Some study the ways people organize themselves to carry out collective tasks, whether economic, political, or spiritual. Others focus on the forms and meanings of expressive behavior in human societies—language, art, music, ritual, religion, and the like. Still others examine material culture—the things people make and use, such as clothing, housing, tools, and the techniques they employ to get food and produce material goods” (4).

⁴³Eugene Nida, *Customs and Cultures: Anthropology for Christian Missions*, (Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library), 22. In his notes on this text on 280, Nida writes, “The anthropologist is obliged to study missions as simply one aspect of culture change. As an impartial, professedly neutral descriptive science, anthropology aims at an analysis of the cultural facts and is not primarily concerned with the vindication or condemnation of historical developments.” Although Nida admits that anthropology is not primarily concerned with morality, certainly Christian cultural anthropologists will bring the Bible to bear on immorality within cultures.

⁴⁴Hiebert, *Cultural Anthropology*, xvi. Hiebert goes on to speak to secular anthropologists: “Anthropologists, I believe, need the understanding that Christianity provides concerning the transcendent nature of humans and the cosmic history within which they live. These Christian views provide ultimate meaning and worth to the richness and diversity of human existence” (xvi).

markers of cultures.⁴⁵ Therefore, for the purposes of this research, Malphurs' term *congregational culture* is combined with the discipline of *cultural anthropology* as I propose a hybrid discipline, *congregational cultural anthropology*. The following definition of the term borrows from Paul Hiebert's definition of culture. *Congregational cultural anthropology is the study of the more or less integrated system of beliefs, feelings, and values created and shared by a particular congregation that enable the people to function as a church and that are communicated by means of their systems of symbols and rituals, patterns of behavior, and their material products.*⁴⁶

One method for recording the findings of congregational cultural anthropology is ethnography. According to Howell and Paris, "Ethnography . . . refers to both the activity and the product of cultural anthropology. Cultural anthropologists engage in ethnography by studying multiple aspects of life in a particular place or among a group of people to create a picture of how those people understand and live in the world."⁴⁷ Robert Lavenda and Emily Schultz write, "Cultural anthropologists write about what they have learned in scholarly articles or in books. And sometimes they document the lives of their research subjects in film. The word monograph is sometimes used to describe the books that anthropologists write; an ethnographic monograph, or ethnography, is the scholarly work about a specific way of life."⁴⁸ James Spradley summarizes, "Ethnography is the work of describing a culture. The essential core of this activity aims to understand another way of life from the native point of view."⁴⁹ David Fetterman argues,

⁴⁵The next section deals with the term *congregational culture*, put forward by Aubrey Malphurs.

⁴⁶Hiebert, *Anthropological Insights for Missionaries*, 30.

⁴⁷Howell and Paris, *Introducing Cultural Anthropology*, 10.

⁴⁸Lavenda and Schultz, *Core Concepts in Cultural Anthropology*, 5.

⁴⁹James P. Spradley, *The Ethnographic Interview* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1979), 3.

“Ethnographic research begins with the selection of a problem or topic of interest. The research problem that the ethnographer chooses guides the entire research endeavor.”⁵⁰ John Creswell writes, “As a process, ethnography involves prolonged observation of the group, typically through participant observation in which the researcher is immersed in the day-to-day lives of the people or through one-on-one interviews with members of a group. The researchers studies [sic] the meanings of behavior, language, and interactions of the culture-sharing group.”⁵¹

Some of the tools and resources available for ethnographic research in congregational cultural anthropology are observation, participant observation, questionnaires and surveys, interviews, key actors or informants, histories, recording devices, computers, and anything else that will aid the pastor in studying and understanding the congregation.

The final term that needs clarification in this introduction is contextualization. Contextualization began in the mind of God. God spoke to Adam in a way that Adam could understand, and has been speaking similarly to His people ever since. The incarnation is a masterpiece of contextualization. C. René Padilla writes, “The gospel is the good news that God has put himself within humanity’s reach. To accomplish this, he has broken into human history through the breach made by Jesus Christ in the time-space reality. Though God had made himself known in many ways in the past, in these last days he has visited us in the person of his own Son—the Word made flesh—at a particular time and in a definite place. It may be said that God has contextualized himself in Jesus Christ.”⁵²

⁵⁰Fetterman, *Ethnography Step by Step*, 13.

⁵¹John W. Creswell, *Qualitative Inquiry and Research Design: Choosing among Five Traditions* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 1998), 58.

⁵²C. Rene Padilla, *Mission Between the Times* (Carlisle, England: Langham Monographs, 2010), 103.

In reference to Genesis 1:27 David Hesselgrave and Edward Rommen write:

In a real sense, contextualization, culture, and theology all have a simultaneous beginning. Along with the shafts of light that broke through the foliage of Eden on the first morning of human life, the silence was broken by the voice of God. Communication commenced between God and man. . . . Since that morning men and women have wrestled, not just with the problems of knowing God and subduing earth, but also with communicating what they have learned about divine will and their own environment. Ever since Eden and especially since Babel, men and women have fallen prey to miscommunication and misunderstanding.⁵³

God has contextualized His message, and now it is our responsibility to make sure that others hear, understand, and apply God’s truths within their own particular contexts. Pastors are called to understand the contexts of their ministries and to communicate and lead in a way understood by their congregations. Pastors must contextualize, even those who come from one English speaking church in the United States to serve in another English speaking church in the United States.

A conservative philosophy of effective contextualization for pastors is aided by the two-pronged approach of Stephen Grunlan and Marvin Mayers: “We advocate cultural relativism coupled with biblical absolutism. Thus the culture defines the situation, but the principles for behavior are found in God’s Word. Indeed the Bible is the absolute authority for all cultures, but it must be applied to specific and relative cultural forms.”⁵⁴ Keeping biblical absolutes as the foundation for application, and working to discover and work within a particular context, one can follow Paul Hiebert’s and Eloise Meneses’ process for “critical contextualization.”⁵⁵

For Hiebert and Meneses, critical contextualization is accomplished by

⁵³David Hesselgrave and Edward Rommen, *Contextualization: Meanings, Methods, and Models* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1989), 27.

⁵⁴Grunlan and Mayers, *Cultural Anthropology*, xiv. Certainly the term cultural *relativism* is a red-flag for me and for others who hold to a belief in the inerrancy, infallibility, and authority of the Scriptures. Notice, however, that Grunlan and Mayers are advocating for biblical absolutes and ministry that is culturally relevant, without changing the truths of Scripture.

⁵⁵Hiebert and Meneses, *Incarnational Ministry*, 168. Hiebert and Meneses write, “An uncritical rejection of old cultural ways and an uncritical acceptance of them both lead to a syncretistic church, but what other alternative is there? A third approach is a critical contextualization of the gospel in which the old ways are evaluated in light of the gospel” (168).

following a four-step process: (1) Exegesis of the culture (2) Exegesis of the Scripture (3) Critical response and (4) New contextualized practices.⁵⁶ First, under *exegesis of the culture* Hiebert and Meneses write, “The first step is to study the local culture phenomenologically.”⁵⁷ They encourage the gathering of as much data on the culture as possible, without criticizing the traditional ways at this point. Next, Hiebert and Meneses describe *exegesis of the Scripture* as a process of biblical study through which the pastor leads the church. The goal of exegesis of the Scripture is to look at cultural practices in light of biblical teachings. The third step in Hiebert’s and Meneses’ critical contextualization is *critical response*. During this phase Hiebert and Meneses urge missionaries or pastors to lead their people to respond to the teachings of the Bible and to live out the impact that these teachings have on their cultural practices. The people should reject ideas and practices that are contrary to clear scriptural teaching. Finally, under *new contextualized practices*, Hiebert and Meneses argue, “After critically evaluating their old ways, people, led by their pastors, need to create new rites and practices that are both Christian and native. They are no longer pagans, nor should they live like western Christians.”⁵⁸ The people will replace some of their old customs with new practices of baptism, the Lord’s Supper, and other Christian disciplines and ways of thinking and acting.

Knowing the foundational parameters for contextualization and a viable process, let us now move on to some other precautions and practices. Hiebert and Meneses warn, “If we overcontextualize the gospel, we make it captive to the local culture. It loses its divine character and becomes human ideas about God, not God living,

⁵⁶Hiebert and Meneses, *Incarnational Ministry*, 168-71.

⁵⁷Hiebert and Meneses, *Incarnational Ministry*, 168.

⁵⁸*Ibid.*, 171.

acting, and revealing himself in their midst. The result is Christopaganism.”⁵⁹ Also, Hiebert and Meneses reason, “If we do not contextualize the gospel, but proclaim it in our language and live it in our cultural forms, the people cannot understand it, or reject it as a foreign culture.”⁶⁰

Though over-contextualization is a real danger, most pastors in the United States tend to largely neglect contextualization. Hiebert and Meneses point to some good foundational principles for contextualization, “First, as missionaries it means we must identify ourselves with the people we serve. We must live among them, learn their language, adopt cultural ways, and work alongside them. Becoming one with people enables us to build trust and earn the right to be heard.”⁶¹ Pastors must make conscious efforts to become a part of the culture they serve in, to learn the “way we do things around here.”

Pastors would do well to apply David Hesselgrave’s and Edward Rommen’s advice to missionaries, “The missionary’s ultimate goal in communication has always been to present the supracultural message of the gospel in culturally relevant terms.”⁶²

⁵⁹Hiebert and Meneses, *Incarnational Ministry*, 370. Hiebert and Meneses are not in favor of altering the gospel message: “Unfortunately, western missionaries today are often more willing to contextualize the message of the gospel than patterns of church organization” (238).

⁶⁰Hiebert and Meneses, *Incarnational Ministry*, 370.

⁶¹*Ibid.*, 371.

⁶²Hesselgrave and Rommen, *Contextualization*, 1. D. A. Carson says, “Two or three decades ago, missiologists and other Christian leaders were endlessly debating the precise nature and limits of ‘contextualization,’ which was understood to go beyond the well-known indigenous principle by demanding not only that churches in any area be self-governing, self-supporting, and self-propagating, but also that their theology be shaped, in measure, by the local cultural context. Nowadays, however, debates over contextualization sound faintly old-fashioned. In the era of global, instantaneous, digital communication, pressures are rising to think through what ‘globalization’ might mean, for good and ill, in the theological arena.” D. A. Carson, “Conclusion: Ongoing Imperative for World Mission,” in *The Great Commission: Evangelicals and the History of World Missions*, ed. Martin I. Klauber and Scott M. Manetsch (Nashville: B&H Academic, 2008), 182. According to Paul G. Hiebert, “Cultural differences affect the messengers, but they also affect the message. Each society looks at the world in its own way, and that way is encoded in its language and culture. No language is unbiased, no culture theologically neutral. Consequently, cross-cultural translation and communication are no easy tasks. If we do not understand this, we are in danger of being ineffective messengers at best, and at worst of communicating a gospel that is misunderstood and distorted.” Hiebert, *Anthropological Insights for Missionaries*, 141.

They go on to say, “There are two potential hazards which must be assiduously avoided in this endeavor: (1) the perception of the communicator’s own cultural heritage as an integral element of the gospel, and (2) a syncretistic inclusion of elements from the receptor culture which would alter or eliminate aspects of the message upon which the integrity of the gospel depends.”⁶³ Avoiding the cultural baggage of the messenger and syncretism on the part of the host are very important in proper contextualization.⁶⁴

David Sills, in his book *Reaching and Teaching*, deals with modern heresy under the guise of contextualization. Sills warns, “Some people mistakenly believe that contextualization means changing aspects of Christianity to make it look like the culture, but contextualization is simply the process of making the gospel understood.”⁶⁵ According to Sills, “The Bible speaks to all cultures and is over them—the Bible informs all cultures and is informed by none. No culture may change the gospel or any content of biblical instruction because someone thinks it would be culturally preferable to do so. Yet, even so, effective gospel communicators must take into account the target culture as they preach the gospel.”⁶⁶ Sills summarizes, “The goal of contextualization is to be culturally relevant and faithful to God’s Word.”⁶⁷ His understanding of contextualization, along with the protections and processes mentioned previously serve as the parameters for

⁶³Hesselgrave and Rommen, *Contextualization*, 1.

⁶⁴According to Hesselgrave and Rommen, “Anthropologists and sociologists largely concern themselves with ‘cultural level’ contextualization. They operate in the more visible surface layers of culture that have to do with institutions, artifacts, and observable behavior. Their approach is phenomenological and their product is ethnotheology. Theologians, on the other hand, primarily operate in the deeper layers of culture that have to do with worldview, cosmology, and moral and ethical values.” Ibid., 53. Hesselgrave and Rommen point out, “Each of the four Gospels . . . reflects the cultural orientation of its author and is clearly addressed to a particular audience. Matthew’s Jewish orientation is reflected in his emphasis on messianic prophecy, kingship, the divine titles of Jesus, and the Aramaisms which characterize his Jewish-Greek language. Luke, on the other hand, reflects a distinctly Hellenistic mind-set” (8).

⁶⁵M. David Sills, *Reaching and Teaching: A Call to Great Commission Obedience* (Chicago: Moody Publishers, 2010), 195.

⁶⁶Ibid., 198.

⁶⁷Ibid., 199.

contextualization in congregational cultural anthropology. Also, the primary operation of the pastor in a culture similar to his own is not contextualization of the message, but contextualization of methods and practices. This research assumes a biblical understanding of the message of the Gospel and focuses more on the messenger's methods, ways of thinking, and general leadership practices among an established congregation. The same basic principles of contextualization apply.

Background

My interest in writing on the topic of anthropology, as it relates to the ministry of established church pastors, had a lot to do with my own personal struggles in the pastoral ministry and my theological training in missions. I served as the pastor of two established churches from 2001 through 2015. My first pastorate was in a small conservative Southern Baptist church in Franklin, Kentucky. That congregation preferred the King James Version of the Scriptures, women wearing dresses, excited and strong preaching, and worship that did not include drums or pre-recorded music. My most recent pastorate was a larger (around 120 Sunday morning attendance and 274 on the roll) conservative Southern Baptist church in Farmersville, Kentucky, ninety-six miles to the west of my first pastorate. The congregation there allowed me to preach from the English Standard Version of the Scriptures, did not promote a “dress code” for women, preferred thorough expositional messages and did not mind singing with upbeat soundtracks. These two congregations hold to the same basic doctrines, but have their own distinct cultures.⁶⁸ Maintaining a healthy pastor to church relationship, and leading towards sustainable change that is embraced by the congregation, requires a different approach at South Franklin Baptist Church than the approach and process required for Donaldson Baptist Church.

⁶⁸Both South Franklin Baptist Church and Donaldson Baptist Church hold to *The Baptist Faith and Message 2000* as their statement of faith. Both churches also use the same covenant and have the same policies regarding membership. South Franklin was founded in 1924 and Donaldson was founded in 1823.

While serving as pastor of South Franklin, I knew I needed to understand better the people God had entrusted to me. I felt unprepared from day one. My shortcomings, however, were buttressed through my missions studies at Southern Seminary. Since I was in Southern Seminary's Billy Graham School "Pastoral Flex-Track,"⁶⁹ I was required to take several missions courses, even though I was an established church pastor and had no intention to go to the mission field. One course that seemed to come at a point when I craved more knowledge about how to understand the people I ministered to was *Cultural Anthropology* with David Sills. It was through that course of study that I began to understand my task as a pastor to be the synthesis of theology and anthropology.

My studies in missiological anthropology (or missiology) were surprisingly relevant to my ministry in an established church in Kentucky. I also began to notice the writings of missiologists, such as those of Donald McGavran, had been key influences on the development of the Church Growth Movement in the United States. I additionally concluded that most contemporary church health and leadership resources failed to interact with the thoughts and tools of anthropologists; tools and resources that missionaries have grown to see as essential to faithful gospel ministry.

The contemporary lack of interaction with anthropological research, methods, and tools appears to be a glaring weakness in much of the current research being conducted by those trying to affect the health and growth of established churches. Even one of the most promising books, which understands each local church as a distinct culture, fails in this regard. Aubrey Malphurs' book, *Look before You Lead*, follows the general trend in church leadership resources. Malphurs looks to established business and organizational culture literature, along with church-growth resources as sources, and does not cite even one Christian anthropologist or missiologist as a source. This is a book that

⁶⁹The pastoral flex-track was a degree track set up to help pastors complete a Master of Divinity over the span of four years by attending class on Fridays and Saturdays.

has the anthropological category of *culture* in the subtitle.⁷⁰ Although churches certainly are organizational cultures and Malphurs is wise to consult the literature, I believe he and many others like him are failing to gather the cultural tools and resources that have been refined through the implementation of countless God honoring missionaries, anthropologists, and agencies. It is my contention that those who serve as pastors of established churches in North America could benefit greatly from studying missiology, and especially anthropology. Many enterprising pastors are already using anthropological tools, but most are using them to study the culture around them and not the culture of their own church.

These pastors are typically interested in knowing the demographics of their surrounding community. They know that they need to understand the culture of the people they are trying to reach with the gospel of Jesus Christ. What they often fail to understand is that they must work through the culture of their local congregation in order to effectively disciple the surrounding culture. Pastors are called to “equip the saints for the work of ministry” (Eph 4:12). If pastors fail to understand their own congregational culture then they will have great difficulties in motivating their people and moving them toward ministry in the surrounding culture. On the other hand, if pastors harness the potential of their established church and work through their church culture to lead more members to do “the work of the ministry,” their effectiveness will multiply.

Often, new pastors assume that they know how and where to lead their congregation from day one. They have gone through an interview process and they feel that they have asked the appropriate questions to find the church that God has called them to serve. Despite their assurance, after the interview and hiring process, most pastors find

⁷⁰Malphurs does acknowledge the influence of Edgar Schein on his thinking, but this appears to be his only source that could be identified as an anthropologist. Malphurs, *Look before You Lead*, 20. Schein’s specialty is in organizational culture and his applications are geared toward businesses. Schein’s book, *Organizational Culture and Leadership*, 4th ed. (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2010), is an excellent resource for mining anthropological insights for local church leadership.

that their respective churches had put their best foot forward during the interview process. After a little time on the church field the pastor will generally find himself in the midst of some sort of conflict because he has failed to do his due diligence in finding out the “way we do things around here.” I can list several instances in my own ministry when I had no idea that I was headed for conflict.⁷¹ The basic assumption that often led me down a trail of trouble was, “these people think like me” or “these people need to be more like me, or more like my ideal church.” Experience has proven that these assumptions are usually misguided, if not downright wrong.

It is not my argument in this dissertation that congregations should be left in their current states, or that they should never become more like their pastor. In my section on critical contextualization I argue for a ministry that seeks to conform to biblical principles, but also a ministry that is sensitive to the culture of the church and the surrounding community.⁷²

A host of missiologists and anthropologists has written on studying cultures from a Christian worldview perspective with the intention of making disciples of Jesus. Of these many authors, those who have influenced my thinking the most have been Paul Hiebert and David Hesselgrave. These men have written an assortment of books dealing with how a missionary is to use anthropological tools within the context of cross-cultural missions.

Since I have been serving primarily as an established church pastor in North America, I tend to read their books with an eye toward application in established local church ministry. That sort of investigation and reflection caused me to hone in on one

⁷¹Not all conflict is bad, but most church conflict is unnecessary. Much of the conflict in local churches is due to preferences and culture rather than the weightier matters of sound doctrine and biblical principles. This research is intended to aid the pastor in avoiding unnecessary conflict and to leave him better equipped to deal with necessary conflict.

⁷²Hesselgrave, “The Role Of Culture In Communication,” 392-96.

particular book. Paul Hiebert's *Anthropological Insights for Missionaries*, has great potential for cross-discipline applications in pastoral ministry,

Additionally, seeing extant missiological research is much too expansive to be delineated in a single dissertation, I have sifted through the most readily transferable principles in Hiebert's writings and brought them to bear on the culture of established churches. Instead of training missionaries for foreign cultures, I apply many of Hiebert's principles to local church pastor(s)/elders and their respective congregations.

In my writing I interact with a wide variety of resources from the disciplines of Christian cultural anthropology, business organizational leadership, and church leadership. In so doing, I use Hiebert's principles as a coordinating grid by which I decide what to include and what to lay aside for some other person to explore.

Finally, I believe this work is greatly needed because of what I see happening to many of my friends and acquaintances in the ministry. There are many reasons why pastors experience short tenures and why pastors and churches find themselves in destructive conflict (I have already mentioned the research conducted by the Francis J. Shaeffer Institute). Often, the root of the conflict is a clash of cultures, the culture of the pastor clashing with the culture of the congregation he is attempting to lead. Since the pastor has grown up in a particular congregational culture, he subconsciously believes his way is the right way. The congregation feels the same about their congregational culture. This thinking may include cultural expressions as simple as the design and use of the church bulletin, and who goes first at the church fellowship meal. Failure by pastors to understand the differences between their enculturated church beliefs, values, and practices, and those of the established church they pastor, lead to miscommunication and unhealthy relationships. This miscommunication and lack of health often ends in pastoral termination or resignation and harm to the church, the pastor and his family, and the reputation of Christ.

Some pastors wrongly attempt to lead the churches they envision rather than

the present congregational reality. This idealistic leadership plays a part in cycling some churches through a new pastor every two or three years. The church remains confused, and more importantly the Kingdom of Christ suffers the stigmas of church fights and ineffective management and ministry. Some of these difficulties could be avoided if pastors were to do their due diligence in implementing anthropological tools and resources. This dissertation, along with the tools and resources it presents, is one small step toward circumventing confusion and conflict between pastors and their established churches.

Limitations and Delimitations

Although it would have been tremendously valuable to interview Paul Hiebert for this dissertation, it is written within the limits of Hiebert's extant resources, up to his passing in 2007, including works of his that were edited and published after his death.

Further, this research is conducted within the parameters of three necessary delimitations. First, this dissertation only interacts with business model research that has an emphasis on organizational culture within businesses and is a key reference in one of the church leadership resources. These resources will certainly contain principles from the larger body of business literature.

Second, this dissertation only interacts with church growth and church leadership materials that recognize that churches possess many of the markers of cultures. Some works do not use the word *culture*, but still give credence to the idea of the uniqueness of each church.

Third, this dissertation focuses on buttressing the excellent book by Aubrey Malphurs, *Look Before You Lead: How to Discern & Shape Your Church Culture* with principles found primarily in the writings of Paul Hiebert, especially, *Anthropological Insights for Missionaries*.

Methodology

My study of anthropology, as it relates to the work of an established church pastor, is focused on three primary areas of literature: cultural anthropology literature from a Christian worldview perspective, evangelical church leadership resources, and organizational culture leadership materials directly related to the two other streams of literature. The synthesized findings from the areas of anthropology, organizational leadership, and church leadership are intended to shed light on anthropological tools and resources that are available for those who serve as pastors in established churches. Those who read this dissertation should be able to utilize the distilled principles and tools within their own church contexts.

Paul Hiebert's book *Anthropological Insights for Missionaries*, and Aubrey Malphurs' book, *Look before You Lead*, will provide two basic frameworks for discovering the many connections between cultural anthropology and church leadership. After a broad overview of most of the relevant literature, I put forward a way forward for a new cross-discipline approach to navigating the culture of established churches, congregational cultural anthropology.

Many of the books that I use are in my personal library, and I have purchased new resources on a regular basis. I also have full access to James P. Boyce Centennial Library on the campus of The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary and the E. M. White Library on the adjacent Presbyterian seminary campus. Through these library sources, inter-library loan, dissertation databases, other online resources, and through purchasing books, I have access to most every resource that is particularly relevant to my research.

Chapter Descriptions

This chapter serves as an introduction. It presents the research question that serves as the investigative guide for the dissertation: This dissertation argues that the pastor(s)/elders of established local churches should know and implement many of the

tools and resources of anthropology within their ministry context in order to enhance understanding and communication between the pastor and his congregation, resulting in healthier pastor-congregation relations. Additionally, in the preceding pages I articulated the problem that the research is intended to address. I also explained my reason for arriving at my thesis, and why the research is needed in contemporary church life. Further, I have laid the groundwork for an amalgamation of the research from the fields of anthropology/missiology and relevant organizational culture and church leadership resources for the benefit of local church pastors. Finally, this chapter also served to delineate relevant definitions and the limitations and delimitations of the research, and closes with a description of the upcoming chapters.

In chapter 2, I conducted a selective survey of much of the relevant literature surrounding the study of anthropology/missiology, church leadership, and relevant organizational culture literature. This literature review traces the development of anthropological thought and how missionaries have learned to implement anthropological tools and resources on the mission field. The review then demonstrates how anthropology is already being discussed in church leadership materials, but without interaction with anthropological resources. Due to the scope of this research, I narrowed my interaction with church leadership material to materials that include sections that seem to recognize that each established church exhibits culture. The section reviewing relevant organizational culture is limited to resources that have been quoted in church leadership works, or those that seem most relevant to local church pastors. The review then provides a basic summary treatment of the writings of Paul Hiebert and the writings of Aubrey Malphurs.

Chapter 3 presents my findings from anthropological research that are most relevant to the work of a local church pastor. In this chapter, Paul Hiebert's book *Anthropological Insights for Missionaries* is used as a tool to develop the outline and a paradigm for looking at the work of a local church pastor through the lens of cultural

anthropology. Hiebert's works, along with those of several prominent anthropologists/missiologists, are mined for anthropological tools regularly used by missionaries. These tools are transferable to the work of an established church pastor. This chapter demonstrates that established churches exhibit many of the markers associated with cultures. It also argues that efforts to understand congregational culture are greatly benefitted by the implementation of anthropological tools and resources.

In chapter 4, I examined the results from my research in church leadership literature, specifically, writings that recognize that churches exhibit culture. Aubrey Malphurs' book *Look before You Lead* served as a guideline for the outline of the chapter. The primary objective of this chapter is to demonstrate that church leadership authors often use anthropological principles and language, but interact very little with the writings, research, tools and resources of anthropologists or missiologists.

Finally, chapter 5 presents my findings and conclusions. This final chapter presents a practical guideline for the implementation of anthropological tools and resources within the context of an established church.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

Churches exhibit many of the markers associated with cultures—as studied in the field of anthropology. And though pastors have implemented many transferable principles from the disciplines of business management and organizational culture leadership, they have utilized very little from the field of cultural anthropology, at least as it relates to navigating individual congregations. This literature review is an attempt to demonstrate the potential of anthropology’s contribution toward local church leadership, and, to show some of the cultural principles and opportunities already found in church leadership, organizational, and business literature. The presentation of this review follows the general pattern of Justus Randolph’s “A Guide to Writing the Dissertation Literature Review.”¹

Focus

This chapter serves as a selective survey of the literature from the fields of cultural anthropology, missiology, church leadership, church-growth, organizational development, and business culture. The primary focus of the review is to find opportunities for the application of anthropological tools and resources from within these

¹This literature review is guided by principles set forth in Justus J. Randolph, “A Guide to Writing the Dissertation Literature Review,” *Practical Assessment, Research and Evaluation* 14 (2009): 1-13, accessed June 17, 2014, <http://pareonline.net/pdf/v14n13.pdf>. Also, I consulted Anthony Casey’s dissertation as a template resource for an appropriate literature review at the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary. Anthony Francis Casey. “How Shall They Hear? The Interface of Urbanization and Orality in North American Ethnic Church Planting” (PhD diss., The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2013).

literature streams. Many of the categories introduced in this chapter are further developed in subsequent chapters.

Under review is the implementation of anthropological thought within missiology and how missionaries have learned to implement anthropological tools and resources on the mission field. Also, the review presents church leadership materials that regard churches as exhibitors of culture, materials that have direct application in discovering and navigating the cultures of churches. The organizational and business literature contained within this review is a select group of resources found through interactions within church leadership literature.

Goal

The goal of this review is to demarcate many of the anthropological, church leadership, and organizational leadership terminology and concepts, and to reveal areas that will receive further development in the remaining chapters. This review is the culmination of research among evangelical and mainline resources, as well as purely secular literature, and therefore is interdisciplinary in its scope.

Perspective

My personal bias has affected my interpretation and screening of the available literature. I am a conservative Christian who believes the Bible is the authoritative word of God and without error. Therefore, I read secular anthropology in light of my conviction that man is not a product of spontaneous unaided generation or evolution. Most modern anthropological authors assume man is a product of evolution, and therefore these authors fail to fully understand man's nature, his relation to creation, and his spiritual core. Although my presuppositions filter my application of mainstream anthropological principles, they do not keep me from learning from cultural anthropologists. My results are presented from a Christian worldview perspective.

Another bias that affects the literature deemed important or relevant in this

study is my emphasis on applying anthropology to the task of local church leadership. Other researchers are encouraged to explore applications that I overlook in my discovery and presentation. My intention was to present the most readily accessible and applicable tools and resources for pastors, and to join a conversation that should continue to grow long after this dissertation has accumulated its dust. Therefore, seasoned anthropologists will notice that I have not presented a thorough treatment of the history and development of anthropological thought and practice, nor have I attempted to present all of the cutting-edge anthropology of the day. Instead, I attempt to bring together the anthropological applications of Paul Hiebert in *Anthropological Insights for Missionaries* with the church leadership work of Aubrey Malphurs in *Look before You Lead*. The conclusions focus on churches as exhibiting culture; and, how to understand, communicate with, and lead them.

Research Methods

My research progressed along several investigative fronts. First, I attempted to find and mine through all that Paul Hiebert and Aubrey Malphurs had written. Through my exploration of the content of those works I noted and explored relevant references and bibliographic entries. Second, I explored the sources mentioned in their notes, until I reached a point of relative saturation. Third, I attempted to find and explore all I could find from a Christian cultural anthropology perspective. I additionally researched several secular anthropology works, looking for insights regarding culture, and methods of cultural investigation and navigation. Fourth, I searched databases for dissertations, articles, and other resources that dealt with the topics of church and culture or anthropology or missiology, among other tangential topics. Fifth, I explored Southern Seminary's shelves and adjacent materials regarding church leadership, cultural anthropology, and organizational culture. I also did a similar search throughout bookstores, my own personal library, Amazon, Google Books, WorldCat, and other

search engines and sites. These sources offered other relevant sources in their bibliographies. All of these searches, spanning well over a year, led me to a point of relative saturation. I consulted all know major works and especially relevant books, articles, and dissertations; however, it seems that my discoveries are ultimately penultimate, and new literature and information is published every day.

Coverage

This review is purposive in its coverage. The purposes follow the three main types of literature. First, among anthropological literature sources the purpose was to hone in on resources that delineate and explain anthropological tools and principles, especially from a Christian worldview perspective. Second, an attempt has been made to find all church leadership material that regards churches as having culture or material that presents applicable principles and methods that are consistent with churches exhibiting the markers of cultures. Third, knowing that the proliferation of business and organizational literature is much too expansive to cover in this dissertation, the purpose is to review literature that has been cited in Christian anthropological sources, or works referenced in relevant church leadership material.

The final section of this review is devoted to an exploration of basic principles presented in the works of Paul Hiebert and Aubrey Malphurs. Paul Hiebert seems to be one of the most comprehensive evangelical authors in the field of cultural anthropology. His book *Anthropological Insights for Missionaries* was the main impetus for this cross-discipline research. Aubrey Malphurs has also written an important book. *Look Before You Lead* looks at churches as cultures from an evangelical viewpoint.² There are many other authors who have valuable things to say, and I reference and interact with a host of them, but the research conclusions and applications are more concrete when presented as

²Several authors from mainline traditions look at churches as cultures, and I interacted with much of that material later in the dissertation.

an interaction between the ideas of two authors who have likely never had a conversation on the topic, but should.

Organization

The organization of this literature review sets the pattern for the rest of the dissertation. The first section presents a very brief survey of anthropology and its use in missiology, along with a presentation of important tools and resources that could be transferable to pastoral leadership in an established local church. This introductory section launches into a major section on anthropology and points to potential areas of interest for further study in the fields of church leadership, business, and organizational culture.

The second major section brings to light most of what has been written regarding churches as possessing markers of cultures from a church leadership perspective. Although these resources often provide good information, it is noted that most fail to interact, in any significant way, with anthropological sources. Also, I present an introduction to proposed improvements in church leadership research and resources. Although there are many anthropological weaknesses in these books, I understand that church leadership authors cannot interact with every discipline. I do argue, however, that church leadership authors could greatly benefit from augmenting their works with anthropological theories, research, methods, and tools and resources.

Anthropological Tools and Resources

Since this dissertation is primarily about the application of anthropological tools and resources to the work of a local church pastor, it is appropriate to spend introductory time looking at the development of the discipline. The following sections present various anthropological tools and resources and their value for cultural discovery.

Foundations for Anthropological Tools and Resources

Many conservative Christians question the value of a discipline that is built on faulty epistemological foundations, and rightly so. Bronislaw Malinowski is considered by many to be one of the most important anthropologists, and there is no question that Malinowski, though a prominent and skillful anthropologist, built his work on evolutionary philosophical assumptions. Malinowski wrote, “Modern anthropology started with the evolutionary point of view. In this it was largely inspired by the great successes of the Darwinian interpretations of biological development, . . . its main assumptions are not only valid, but also they are indispensable to the field-worker as well as to the student of theory.”³ Malinowski led the way for scores of anthropologists and is quoted or referenced in almost every source that deals with the history of the development of anthropological thought. Malinowski, along with subsequent generations of influential anthropologists, has constructed his theories and pieced together his anthropological interpretations on the godless underpinnings of Darwin’s evolutionary constructs. This fact alone could explain why evangelical theologians have been slow to apply anthropological principles to the discipline of missions in the past and why they seem to be even slower to implement insights from anthropologists in church leadership materials today.

Even seminal anthropologist Clifford Geertz can only be partially helpful to Christian anthropologists and to the discipline of cultural anthropology. His evolutionary presuppositions skew his conclusions. For instance, Geertz once wrote,

The view of man as a symbolizing, conceptualizing, meaning-seeking animal, which has become increasingly popular both in the social sciences and in philosophy over the past several years, opens up a whole new approach not only to the analysis of religion as such, but to the understanding of the relations between religion and

³Bronislaw Malinowski, *A Scientific Theory of Culture and Other Essays*, ed. Huntington Cairns (Chapel Hill, NC: University Of North Carolina Press, 1944), 16.

values. The drive to make sense out of experience, to give it form and order, is evidently as real and as pressing as the more familiar biological needs.⁴

In this short statement Geertz classifies faith in Christ as a response to the need for meaning generated through biological impetus, as well as all other religious impulses and observances. This type of thinking neglects the reality of the human soul and hampers any true understanding of man. Man is only understandable because “God created man in his own image . . .” (Gen 1:26, 27). Further, Geertz’s anthropological deductions mar his understanding of the sinfulness of the human heart and man’s proclivity toward sin (Jer 17:9; Rom 1:18-32; 5:12-21, etc.). He assumes man is perfectible and driven toward the good, but the Bible presents man as fallen in nature and careening toward sin (Rom 3:10-18).⁵

Another prodigious anthropologist bound by Darwin’s chain of evolution is Geert Hofstede. His work has had a positive and profound influence on Paul Hiebert and other missiologists, but he too falls short of a biblical worldview. In his paradigm-shifting book, *Culture’s Consequences*, Hofstede uses the tired analogy of the blind men in an Indian fable, groping over the metaphorical elephant. Hofstede admittedly struggles with understanding the difficulties associated with complex human societies. He bemoans the futile subjectivity of individual knowledge, but hopes that a community of knowledge will produce more substantive results.

We will never be more than blind men in front of the social elephant; but by joining forces with other blind men and women and approaching the animal from as many different angles as possible, we may find out more about it than we could ever do alone. In other words, there is no such thing as objectivity in the study of social

⁴Clifford Geertz, *The Interpretation of Cultures: Selected Essays* (New York: Basic Books, 1973), 140.

⁵Bruce Riley Ashford writes, “Neither Malinowski nor Geertz allowed biblical theology to provide the starting point, trajectory, and parameters for their theories, and therefore both are unable to give a comprehensively accurate account of man’s works or his world, his origin or destiny.” Bruce Riley Ashford, “The Gospel And Culture,” in *Theology and Practice of Mission: God, The Church, and the Nations*, ed. Bruce Riley Ashford (Nashville: B&H Publishing, 2011), 111.

reality: We will always be subjective, but we may at least try to be ‘intersubjective,’ pooling and integrating a variety of subjective points of view of different observers.⁶

Although Hofstede has a lot to offer for those desiring to understand established churches, his philosophical underpinnings hinder his understanding of men created in the image of God, and they darken his perception of absolute and knowable truth. Hofstede fails to comprehend man’s basic nature as understandable in an objective way because of the revelation provided by God in Scripture. Despite this glaring neglect, Hofstede is ultimately correct in concluding that our perception of reality is subjective and largely based on our own philosophical and cultural assumptions and prejudices.

To my knowledge, Malinowski, Geertz, and Hofstede do not claim to be Christian teachers, and their knowledge certainly lacks proper philosophical foundations, but one must not forget that God has displayed general revelation before the unenlightened (Rom 1:19-21). Just as those who write in the field of church leadership do not attempt to learn only from Christian businessmen, neither should Christian anthropologists limit their anthropological interactions. Christian scholars have long understood the contamination of unrestrained greed and self-promotion in the business world, while continuing to look for wise ways to apply the shrewdest of men’s methods (Luke 16:8). In like manner, anthropology as a discipline can also be helpful for understanding men and their congregations, if properly filtered through a biblical worldview foundation. Christian men like Paul Hiebert, Eugene Nida, Charles Kraft, David Hesselgrave, and many others have proven the value of implementing anthropological tools and resources in cross-cultural missions, while refusing to submit themselves to its faulty substructures.

Eugene Nida once famously wrote,

[A]ll good missionaries have in a sense always been good anthropologists, for they have been sensitive to the needs of the people and in a remarkable way have entered into the lives of the people, fully identifying themselves with the people. There is no

⁶Geert Hofstede, *Culture's Consequences: International Differences in Work-Related Values* (Beverly Hills, CA: Sage, 1980), 15.

fundamental conflict between the science of anthropology and Christian missions—though there may be between some anthropologists and some missionaries. The accumulated experience of the science of anthropology can make important contributions to Christian missions.⁷

Nida wrote those words sixty years ago—and he was right. Since that time, Christians with biblical worldviews have further developed a Christian perspective on anthropology, especially in the sub-field of *cultural anthropology*.

Brian M. Howell and Jenell Williams Paris present a helpful summary of this development in *Introducing Cultural Anthropology: A Christian Perspective*. Their textbook is one of the most recent introductions to cultural anthropology from a Christian worldview perspective.⁸ In their work, Howell and Paris note, “Anthropology has traditionally been divided into four subfields: archaeology, linguistics, physical or biological anthropology, and cultural or social anthropology.”⁹ Seeing that social anthropology is primarily European nomenclature, cultural anthropology stands as the most appropriate sub-field title of anthropology implemented by American missiologists and those who study established churches. Therefore, the rest of this section of the review will investigate the utility of cultural anthropology for the purposes of Christian ministry, starting with cross-cultural missiological applications and moving toward local-church application.

⁷Eugene A. Nida, *Customs and Cultures: Anthropology for Christian Missions* (Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library, 1954), 22.

⁸Brian M. Howell and Jenell Williams Paris, *Introducing Cultural Anthropology: A Christian Perspective* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2011). Due to the nature of this research, this section serves only as an introduction to resources that provide a basic history of the development of Christian cultural anthropology. Other notable summaries can be found in Paul G. Hiebert, *Cultural Anthropology*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1983); Nida, *Customs and Cultures*; Charles H. Kraft, *Anthropology for Christian Witness* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1996); Stephen A. Grunlan and Marvin K. Mayers, *Cultural Anthropology: A Christian Perspective*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1988); and Michael Rynkiewicz, *Soul, Self, and Society: A Postmodern Anthropology for Mission in a Postcolonial World* (Eugene, OR: Cascade Books, 2011).

⁹Howell and Paris, *Introducing Cultural Anthropology*, 5.

Tools and Resources in Ministry

Anthropology has long been a helpful science for missiologists; the time has come for evangelical church pastors to begin to implement anthropological research in studying their established congregations. Paul Hiebert pleads,

How should we, as missionaries, pastors, and church workers, prepare for our ministries? It is increasingly clear that we must master the skill of human exegesis as well as biblical exegesis to meaningfully communicate the gospel in human contexts. We need to study the social, cultural, psychological, and ecological systems in which humans live in order to communicate the gospel in ways the people we serve understand and believe.¹⁰

Some evangelicals may question Hiebert's admonition, thinking the value of these disciplines may be a waste of time. Instead, these well-meaning Bible believers may retort, "just preach the Word." This dissertation, however, demonstrates anthropological tools and resources can aid in simplifying effective communication of the Word. In fact, pastors will find distilled anthropological principles very helpful in leading people to live out the commands of the Scriptures.

Anthropology has already grown to be almost universally valued for its usefulness in missionary enterprises. Most Christian denominations look to anthropology for guidance while attempting cross-cultural ministries.¹¹ For instance, the formidable Catholic anthropologist, Louis J. Luzbetak, wrote, "Cultural Anthropology is indeed a 'missionary science' par excellence. There is no other art or science that can help the missionary divest himself of his cultural prejudices more surely than this science."¹²

¹⁰Paul G. Hiebert, *The Gospel in Human Contexts: Anthropological Explorations for Contemporary Missions* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2009), 12.

¹¹Charles Kraft gives "...ten reasons why it is important for all who seek to witness wisely in a cross-cultural context to study anthropology." (1) Anthropology attempts to deal with what people actually do and think. (2) Anthropology historically has dealt primarily with nonwestern peoples. (3) Anthropology has developed the culture concept. (4) Anthropology takes a holistic view of people. (5) Anthropology is a perspective, not simply a subject. (6) Anthropology focuses on communication. (7) Anthropology distinguishes between forms and meanings. (8) Anthropology has developed the concept of worldview. (9) Anthropology has developed the research method most helpful to Christian workers. (10) Anthropology deals with cultural change. Kraft, *Anthropology for Christian Witness*, 4-13. All ten reasons are listed as bold and capitalized headings in the original.

¹²Louis J. Luzbetak, *The Church and Cultures: An Applied Anthropology for the Religious*

Although Luzebetak seems to accept some of the evolutionary presuppositions of traditional anthropology, his statement is proof of the perceived value of cultural anthropology for missiological efforts on behalf of the Catholic Church.

A more recent proponent of the value of anthropology for missiology is Michael Rynkiewich. He notes the progression of applied anthropology within the field of missions. Says Rynkiewich,

The formal application of the perspective of anthropology to the practice of mission began in the late 1950s with the publication of *Customs and Cultures* by Eugene Nida (1914-2011). Through the 1960s and 1970s, great strides were taken by people like Alan R. Tippett (1911-1988), Jacob Loewen (1922-2006), Kenneth L. Pike (1912-2000), Charles Taber (1929-2007), Charles Kraft (1932-), and others to work through anthropological concepts such as culture, culture shock, ethnocentrism, communication, language, social structure, values, worldview, and other anthropological concerns. In those decades, missiology developed as an academic discipline, journals like *Practical Anthropology* (later renamed *Missiology*) were founded, and the use of anthropological concepts greatly enriched our understanding of mission and evangelism. The expansion of the work in the 1980s and the 1990s by anthropologists like Louis Luzbetak (1919-2005) and Paul Hiebert (1932-2007) pushed the paradigm even further.¹³

Rynkiewich values anthropological progress, but he also believes postmodernism and the postcolonial culture of the majority of the world has made the mono-cultural methods of Hiebert and others obsolete. He urges modern missiologists to understand that the days are past when one could engage someone who exhibited a singular culture. Rynkiewich writes, “Anthropology still involves doing fieldwork, writing ethnographies, and presenting at least glimpses of this world, but missiologists trained in a 1960s “jungle anthropology” are ill-equipped to understand this new world, and have trouble engaging in dialogue with postmodern anthropologists.”¹⁴ Rynkiewich intends for his work “to appreciate the best of the old paradigm for mission studies and then show how we need to incorporate newer paradigms in order to understand and

Worker (Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library, 1970), 4.

¹³Rynkiewich, *Soul, Self, and Society*, xi.

¹⁴*Ibid.*, xiii.

engage the world as it is.”¹⁵ He critiques modern missiology further by writing, “Anthropology changed in the 1980s and 1990s, but missiology did not get the news. Anthropology gained some new insights, but missiology seemed satisfied with what it had already learned.”¹⁶

Rynkiewicz raises some valid concerns for anthropology within missiology. Many modern missiologists have not been trained in traditional anthropology departments, or with cutting edge philosophies and methodologies. They do tend to come from seminaries and seem to depend on the work of men like Nida and Hiebert. Rynkiewicz rightly notes a weakness—there is a real need for contemporary integration of modern anthropological understandings within the field of missiology. One must also consider, however, that Western culture, where many of these modern philosophies originate, is moving further away from a biblical worldview. Christian anthropologists are needed as much as they ever were, or more, but all philosophies, methodologies, paradigms and tools must be filtered through a biblical worldview for maximum usefulness and presupposition integrity.¹⁷ Let the best and brightest Christian anthropologists study at forward-thinking and cutting-edge institutions, but may they only bring the most distilled and valuable principles and tools over to the field of missiology—preferably free of evolutionary philosophical assumptions, biological determinism, and ethical relativism.

¹⁵Rynkiewicz, *Soul, Self, and Society*, xiii.

¹⁶*Ibid.*, 8. Although Rynkiewicz’s critiques are appropriate, this dissertation is written with an eye towards just such anthropologists. Future work could be generated by those who would search out modern anthropological methodologies and tools that are not included in the works of Hiebert, Hesselgrave, Kraft, Nida, and Mayers, etc.

¹⁷Bruce Riley Ashford writes, “Christian theology alone reveals man’s nature as an image-bearer of the Triune God, and therefore Christian theology alone can render intelligible man’s works and his world. Christian theology, therefore, will give the starting point, trajectory, and parameters for our discussion of culture.” Bruce Riley Ashford, “The Gospel And Culture,” in *Theology and Practice of Mission: God, The Church, and the Nations*, ed. Bruce Riley Ashford (Nashville: B&H Publishing, 2011), 111.

In addition to scholars pursuing modern anthropological studies with an eye toward missiology, there is a need for the integration of modern anthropological tools and resources within the field of church leadership. The cultural landscape of the world is moving at the speed of the Internet and modern transportation. Local church pastors have to learn to think more like missionaries in every way. They could benefit from anthropological tools and resources to engage their local cultural context, but they could also benefit from looking at their particular congregations with the aid of anthropological tools and resources.

Tools and Resources for the Study of Culture

Although the introductory chapter presented many definitions of culture, the purpose of this section is to focus exclusively on several of the most helpful anthropological definitions and explanations of culture for this dissertation. From a Christian perspective, Brian Howell and Jenell Paris define culture as “the total way of life of a group of people that is learned, adaptive, shared, and integrated.”¹⁸ Although they feel most metaphors for culture fall short, they do present a helpful one. They write,

Our preferred metaphor is culture as a conversation. In real life, a conversation has many of the qualities anthropologists affirm as aspects of culture. For example, like culture, a conversation is shared. At the same time, a conversation is dynamic. In any conversation different individuals, from moment to moment, respond to power, intention, use, and context. This reflects the dynamism anthropologists understand as part of the culture concept.¹⁹

Howell and Paris’ conversation metaphor helps one to understand the necessity of community for cultural dynamics and is worthy of further exploration, but will not be explored within this dissertation.

Another interesting definition, from a Christian anthropological understanding, is one presented by Charles Kraft. He explains,

¹⁸Howell and Paris, *Introducing Cultural Anthropology*, 36.

¹⁹*Ibid.*, 40.

The term *culture* is the label anthropologists give to the structured customs and underlying worldview assumptions which people govern their lives [sic]. Culture (including worldview) is a peoples' way of life, their design for living, their way of coping with their biological, physical and social environment. It consists of learned, patterned assumptions (worldview), concepts and behavior, plus the resulting artifacts (material culture).²⁰

Kraft's definition is unique because of his repetitive incorporation of the concept of *worldview*. He provokes his readers to wonder how worldview can be a stand-alone term, apart from culture.

Culture is important in the local church, because cultural differences are a major contributing factor to misunderstanding and subsequent conflict. As Eugene Nida explains, "In general we do not see the rhyme and reason behind other cultural beliefs and practices because we have acquired our own beliefs and values as the result of the molding process of our own culture, of which we have been largely unaware."²¹ This cultural ignorance can be overcome, in part, through an awareness generated through anthropological investigation. Nida goes on to write, "An anthropological understanding of culture helps us to see and comprehend more clearly not only the reasons for others' behavior but also the bases of our own."²² When there is cross-cultural understanding there is a reduced likelihood of conflict.

Leaders cannot avoid, nor should they avoid all conflict. Some conflict is necessary for growth and change. The type of conflict that should be avoided by missionaries and pastors is the unnecessary conflict created through miscommunication. This conflict results from a general misunderstanding of one's own cultural ways and the cultural beliefs and practices of others.

²⁰Charles H. Kraft, "Culture, Worldview And Contextualization," in *Perspectives on the World Christian Movement*, 3rd ed., ed. Ralph D. Winter and Steven C. Hawthorne (Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library, 1999), 385.

²¹Nida, *Customs and Cultures*, 24.

²²*Ibid.*, 24.

When thinking about the definition of culture and how it affects pastor-congregation relations, the best place to begin is for the pastor to know and understand his own congregational culture. The paradigm shifting secular anthropologist Edward T. Hall, in *The Silent Language*, alerts his readers to perhaps the greatest difficulty associated with cultural investigation. Hall explains “Culture hides much more than it reveals, and strangely enough what it hides, it hides most effectively from its own participants. Years of study have convinced me that the real job is not to understand foreign culture but to understand our own.”²³

Pastors must understand, as James Spradley points out, that culture is “*the acquired knowledge people use to interpret experience and generate behavior.*”²⁴ Everyone is born culturally neutral and learns or *acquires* their culture.²⁵ And though most of us are unaware of the specifics of our cultural ways of doing things, the best way to begin to see and understand them is through cross-cultural interactions. Thankfully, anthropology provides categories for comparison and interaction that will help pastors better understand their own culture and the cultures of those to whom they are ministering.

Geert Hofstede led the way by developing groundbreaking anthropological research. He introduced specific marks for measuring the differences in cultural perceptions and practices. In his original work *Culture’s Consequences*, Hofstede compared the cultures of 40 countries. He accumulated data on the respondent’s answers

²³Edward T. Hall, *The Silent Language* (New York: Doubleday, 1959), 29.

²⁴Italics in original. James P. Spradley, *Participant Observation* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1980), 6.

²⁵Edward T. Hall writes, “Most of culture is acquired and therefore cannot be taught.” Hall, *The Silent Language*, 37. Hall adds, “[I]n spite of many differences in detail, anthropologists do agree on three characteristics of culture: it is not innate, but learned; the various facets of culture are interrelated—you touch a culture in one place and everything else is affected; it is shared and in effect defines the boundaries of different groups.” Edward T. Hall, *Beyond Culture* (Garden City, NY: Anchor Books, 1976), 16.

to questions that were crafted to measure one's values regarding "Power Distance, Uncertainty Avoidance, Individualism, and Masculinity."²⁶ Though these categories are not exhaustive, they have provided anthropologists with standardized groupings for continued research. Hofstede's work has provided areas of interaction for many dissertations already, and yet there is plenty of room for research regarding the application of his principles to a local church context.

James Spradley provides succinct guiding questions for understanding one's own culture and the culture one hopes to study. Spradley explains, "When ethnographers study other cultures, they must deal with three fundamental aspects of human experience: what people do, what people know, and the things people make and use."²⁷ Spradley classifies the results of these research questions: "When each of these are learned and shared by members of some group, we speak of them as *cultural behavior*, *cultural knowledge*, and *cultural artifacts*."²⁸ These categories are easily investigated by local church pastors in their established church, and, as David Scotchmer says, "Because culture is public, it is interpretable."²⁹ The discovery and interpretation of these cultural categories is accomplished best through the exercise of cultural anthropology.

²⁶Hofstede, *Culture's Consequences*, 313. Sarah Lanier has written a very helpful book for a rudimentary understanding of some of the practical ways cultures differ in their operation and communication. Lanier's book delineates many of the differences between "cold-climate," or productivity focused cultures and "hot-climate," or relationship focused cultures. Lanier describes the differences between direct and indirect communication, individualism and group identity, inclusion and privacy, varying concepts of hospitality, high and low-context cultures, and varying understandings of time. Although Lanier's book is not an academic book, it is worth mentioning because of the potential effect it could have on the thinking of established church pastors when entering a church in a different culture. Sarah A. Lanier, *Foreign to Familiar: A Guide to Understanding Hot- and Cold-Climate Cultures* (Hagerstown, MD: McDougal Publishing, 2000).

²⁷Spradley, *Participant Observation*, 5.

²⁸*Ibid.*, 5.

²⁹David Scotchmer, "Symbols Become Us: Toward a Missional Encounter with Our Culture through Symbolic Analysis," in *The Church between Gospel and Culture: The Emerging Mission in North America*, ed. George R. Hunsberger and Craig Van Gelder (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996), 170.

Resources in Cultural Anthropology

Brian Howell and Jenell Paris define *cultural anthropology* as “the description, interpretation, and analysis of similarities and differences in human cultures.”³⁰ This definition allows for cultural anthropology to be used by pastors to study congregations different from the church in which they were originally disciplined. Also, Howell and Paris’ definition leaves room for implementing anthropological tools and resources while serving within the congregation in which the pastor grew up. Though they have been enculturated within their “home” congregation, it is possible for their denomination, books, and theological education to shape their cultural tendencies.³¹

Within the field of cultural anthropology there are already an assortment of specializations. According to Howell and Paris, “Cultural anthropologists often differentiate themselves by referring to areas of interest and expertise such as economic

³⁰Howell and Paris, *Introducing Cultural Anthropology*, 4.

³¹Harold Recinos argues, “Many pastors work in a context similar to their own background, but if they have attended college and seminary, they may find that higher education creates a social class distinction between them and their parishioners. Using anthropological techniques and perspectives to investigate the context provides a way back into a community from which the pastor has been separated by the new social identity he or she has taken on. Anyone considering youth ministry probably understands that, in the United States, where each generation is encouraged to differentiate itself from the previous one, there are significant differences between the cultural contexts of youth and those even just ten years older. Moreover, many ministries involve connecting with *subcultures*, groups within a larger culture that define themselves (or are defined by others) in opposition or in distinction to the majority.” Harold J. Recinos, *Jesus Weeps: Global Encounters on Our Doorstep* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1992), 253. Philip Richter writes, “The role played by denominational cultures has seldom been widely considered within the field of congregational studies. When cultural analysis has been applied, there has been a tendency to focus on the particular and sometimes idiosyncratic local culture of individual congregations.” He also notes, “One reason why denominational cultures have been relatively ignored within congregational studies relates to the perception that denominational loyalties are of lessening importance to churchgoers.” Richter believes a study of the influence of denominational cultures on the culture of local churches and their pastors would be difficult. He writes, “Another reason why denominational cultures have received little attention within congregational studies may be the inherent difficulty of pinning down cultures that are themselves in process of change.” Philip Richter, “Denominational Cultures: The Cinderella of Congregational Studies,” in *Congregational Studies in the UK: Christianity in a Post-Christian Context*, ed. Mathew Guest, Karin Tusting, and Linda Woodhead (Aldershot, England: Ashgate, 2004), 169. Finally, it should be noted that heroes, books, and conferences tend to influence local church pastors to emulate “successful pastors,” not realizing that each church has its own ways of doing things, and that a one size fits all approach is often confusing and destructive.

anthropology, urban anthropology, or anthropology of religion, to name just a few.”³²

Understanding the breadth and variety of fields within the field of cultural anthropology, there is no reason to believe that one could not specialize in using cultural anthropology to study established church congregations. Howell and Paris seem to allow space for the discipline of *congregational cultural anthropology*, although it may not yet be a recognized subset of cultural anthropology.³³ The anthropological pastor could carry out the discipline of congregational cultural anthropology, but he will first need to be equipped to carry out qualitative research.

Resources for Qualitative Research

Anthropologists utilize both quantitative and qualitative research, but tend to rely most heavily on qualitative methods and reports. According to Powell and Paris, “*Qualitative research methods* are interpretive approaches that use participant observation, interviews, document analysis, and other methods to understand the nature and meaning of phenomena.”³⁴ The primary subject of the anthropologist is culture; therefore, congregational cultural anthropologists could utilize qualitative methods to study congregational culture by implementing anthropological tools and resources.

The following sections present some of the tools and resources that are currently being used by anthropologists in qualitative research—tools and resources that

³²Howell and Paris, *Introducing Cultural Anthropology*, 4.

³³Harold Recinos, a professor and United Methodist minister who has a doctorate in cultural anthropology, urges pastors to practice “*pastoral anthropology*: the use of ethnographic techniques to learn about the community where their church is located, the demographics of church members, and the social and spiritual needs of both communities.” Recinos, *Jesus Weeps*, 253. Italics in original.

³⁴Howell and Paris, *Introducing Cultural Anthropology*, 14. Anselm Strauss and Juliet Corbin write, “By the term ‘qualitative research,’ we mean any type of research that produces findings not arrived at by statistical procedures or other means of quantification. It can refer to research about persons’ lives, lived experiences, behaviors, emotions, and feelings as well as about organizational functioning, social movements, cultural phenomena, and interactions between nations.” Anselm Strauss and Juliet Corbin, *Basics of Qualitative Research: Techniques and Procedures for Developing Grounded Theory*, 2nd ed. (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 1998), 10, 11.

could be implemented by local church pastors. These categories are expanded in chapter three; here they only serve as an introduction to the discipline of qualitative research.

Resources for Ethnographic Research

James Spradley points out, “Ethnography is the work of describing a culture. The central aim of ethnography is to understand another way of life from a native point of view.”³⁵ Since ethnography is accomplished on the field it is often referred to as *fieldwork*. David Fetterman explains, “Fieldwork is exploratory in nature. The ethnographer begins with a survey period to learn the basics: the native language, the kinship ties, census information, historical data, and the basic structure and function of the culture under study for the months to come.”³⁶ Fetterman also writes, “The most important element of fieldwork is being there—to observe, to ask seemingly stupid yet insightful questions, and to write down what is seen and heard. . . . The ethnographer must then cross-check, compare, and triangulate this information before it becomes a foundation on which to build a knowledge base.”³⁷ Ethnography generates valuable information that would be compiled in an ethnographic report. Although pastors may not have the time or see the need to compile a formal ethnographic report, there is no doubt that following the ethnographic research process would aid in understanding their context and their congregation.

Paul Hiebert catalogs some of the tools used in ethnographic research: (1) Observation (2) Participant-Observation (3) Conversations and Interviews (4) Key Informants (5) Ethnosemantics (6) Case Studies (7) Grounded Theory (8) Participatory

³⁵Spradley, *Participant Observation*, 3.

³⁶David M. Fetterman, *Ethnography: Step by Step*, Applied Social Research Methods Series, ed. Leonard Bickman and Debra Rog, vol. 17 (Newbury Park, CA: Sage, 1989), 18.

³⁷*Ibid.*, 19.

Research and Action.³⁸ One could add to Hiebert’s list surveys and questionnaires. For the purpose of a local church pastor, the discipline of participant observation would serve as the fountainhead for the other disciplines.

The Tool of Participant Observation

Charles Kraft values anthropology for missions because of his perception of the supreme value of participant observation. Kraft argues, “. . . anthropology can be of great help to us . . . in discovering insight into human behavior on the field, for anthropology uses the field method that is of greatest usefulness to cross-cultural workers: *participant observation*.”³⁹ He continues, “Anthropology has said that in order to study people, we have to observe people by living with them and participating with them in their everyday life. We must live with them, learn their language, and do as much as we can to learn to look at the world from their point of view.”⁴⁰ The type of participant observation Kraft describes is additionally valuable for the study of local churches, and is something pastors could and should do. Later, in my section on church leadership resources, I show how James Hopewell demonstrates that some mainline pastors have already realized the connection, and implemented the tool of participant observation within established churches.

REAP As an Anthropological Tool

A valuable idea found in Howell and Paris’ work is a method of conducting rapid qualitative research. The authors write, “A recent development in research

³⁸Hiebert, *The Gospel in Human Contexts*, 164-72. Hiebert writes, “Ethnosemantics is the analysis of conceptual categories people use in thinking about reality. For example, each culture has words for colors, for geographic features, and for rituals such as marriage and death” (169).

³⁹Kraft, *Anthropology for Christian Witness*, 12.

⁴⁰Ibid. Kraft explains, “We need to discover what their assumptions are concerning reality and ask ourselves questions such as, ‘If I assumed reality to be what they assume it to be, how would the world look to me? And if it looked that way to me, how would I behave?’”

methodology that makes the benefits of the anthropological approach more accessible to more people is *rapid ethnographic assessment procedures* (REAP), or the time-compressed use of focus groups, ethnographic interviews, mapping, and other methods within a framework of participant observation.”⁴¹ Rapid assessment would be more palatable to busy pastors than months or years of study required by traditional ethnographic research and reporting. Also, there are many pastors and denominational leaders who want some sort of tool that will help one to discover if a pastor should accept a particular pastorate before he reaches the field.

Most ethnographic research can only be accomplished once one is actually living among the people. For pastors, that means they would need to know, to a large degree, whether they would be able to function in the existing culture of an established church. Questionnaires and surveys, as well as efforts in participant observation, could be used to give a potential pastor a snapshot of the culture of the congregation before he decides to move his family to the field. There appears to be nearly nothing written on rapid methods of anthropological research that could be conducted before a pastor agrees to serve the congregation as her pastor. Therefore, a proposal for a rapid assessment is an important component of the conclusion of this dissertation. For now I will move on to an introduction to the complexities of cross-cultural communication and leadership.

Cross-Cultural Ministry

Although this dissertation is intended for an English speaking audience and is based primarily on established churches in the United States, tools and resources for cross-cultural applications are still helpful. The one small exception may be a pastor who now serves in the church in which he grew up, but even in such an unusual case others have probably influenced the pastor’s congregational culture. For instance, did he attend seminary? Or, has studying church leadership and church growth resources influenced

⁴¹Howell and Paris, *Introducing Cultural Anthropology*, 12.

him? Or, have other leaders and leadership paradigms influenced his congregational culture? Of course, every pastor is going to additionally encounter those within his community context that come from cultures different from his own, but the focus of this research is on the cultural differences between the pastor and the established local church that he serves. Therefore, though the degree of cultural heterogeneity varies greatly from context to context, local church pastors need to understand cross-cultural communication while serving in established churches.

Ethnocentrism

The first major step for established pastors to be effective in cross-cultural ministry is to lay aside their ethnocentrism. According to Howell and Paris, “*Ethnocentrism* is the use of one’s own culture to measure another’s, putting one’s own culture (*ethno*) at the center (*centrism*) of interpretation and typically devaluing the other culture. Ethnocentrism is inevitable because humans are socialized to see their way of life as normal, natural, and often superior.”⁴² There is no doubt that pastors are often guilty of *ethnocentrism*. Many may even embrace what Howell and Paris call *cultural superiority*.

According to Howell and Paris, “*cultural superiority* is the belief that one culture is more enlightened, advanced, civilized, or intelligent than another. It is often expressed with patronizing comments such as, ‘Those people just don’t know any better,’ or, ‘If we can teach these people how we live, then they can become as advanced as we are.’”⁴³ These types of statements are often found on the lips of, and springing from the hearts of established church pastors. Instead, pastors need to develop a cultural relativism that holds to biblical absolutes. This concept is further presented in chapter three. For the purposes of an introduction, Howell and Paris’ explanation will suffice. They write, “Cultural relativism—the anthropological tenet that people’s ideas and behaviors make

⁴²Howell and Paris, *Introducing Cultural Anthropology*, 33.

⁴³*Ibid.*, 33.

sense when viewed from their culture’s perspective—benefits virtually every occupation, calling, or context.”⁴⁴

Contextualization

Cultural sensitivity can lead to effective cultural contextualization. Paul Hiebert resists the cultural relativism of the greater cultural anthropology community by recommending critical contextualization. Hiebert argues for a contextualization “whereby old beliefs and customs are neither rejected nor accepted without examination. They are first studied with regard to the meanings and places they have within their cultural setting and then evaluated in the light of biblical norms.”⁴⁵ According to Bruce Riley Ashford,

The New Testament provides abundant examples of theology conceptualized and communicated contextually. The four gospel writers shaped their material for engaging particular communities of readers. Paul shaped his sermons and speeches according to each particular context. An examination of his sermons in Acts 13 (to Jewish Diaspora), Acts 14 (to a crowd of rural animists), Acts 17 (to the cultural elite of the Areopagus), and his testimonies in Acts 22 (to a mob of Jewish patriots) and Acts 26 (to the elite of Syria-Palestine) reveal Paul’s deft ability to communicate the gospel faithfully, meaningfully, and dialogically in a variety of settings.⁴⁶

This type of biblical contextualization aids in effectively communicating the gospel with a minimal amount of cultural confusion and miscommunication.⁴⁷ And, it is this type of

⁴⁴Upon studying the congregation, whether rapid pre-assessment, or through an extended process of thorough assessment, pastors should consider Howell and Paris’ words regarding *cultural relativism*. “Cultural relativism is the view that cultural practices and beliefs are best understood in relation to their entire context. A symbol, belief, or behavior may make little sense or even be offensive when understood from an outsider’s cultural perspective. When viewed holistically, in light of its own economic, historical, political, and religious contexts, what at first seemed nonsensical will appear sensible. Thus, culture is relative to context.” Ibid., 31.

⁴⁵Hiebert, *Anthropological Insights for Missionaries*, 186.

⁴⁶Ashford, “The Gospel and Culture,” 119. Also, a valuable treatment of contextualization can be found in Dean Flemming, *Contextualization in the New Testament: Patterns for Theology and Mission* (Downers Grove, IL: Intervarsity Press, 2005).

⁴⁷Bruce Riley Ashford writes, “In seeking to proclaim the gospel in a way that is meaningful, we listen to the questions that a culture asks, acknowledge the categories within which it thinks, and learn the language that it speaks. But at the same time, we recognize that without the gospel the host culture does not know all of the right questions to ask, does not have the [*sic*] all of the right categories within which to think, and does not possess a fully adequate vocabulary.” Ashford, “The Gospel and Culture,” 122.

contextualization that needs to be carried out within the context of established local churches.⁴⁸ Cross-cultural miscommunication within the pastorate often leads to offensive interactions. Offending, and being offended, is often the first step toward many, if not most, pastoral resignations or terminations. Even when these offenses do not lead to a severance they hold back effective kingdom ministry. Proper contextualization is dealt with more extensively in chapter three, and a summary of its usefulness for established church pastors is presented in the concluding chapter.

Incarnationalism

A term akin to contextualization is *incarnationalism*. Paul Hiebert, among others, points to the incarnation of Christ as a pattern for an effective missions strategy. Hiebert writes, “Christian Ministry begins with relationships, and ends in the transformation of people and communities. This was the way of the incarnation, and it is the model for Christian development programs.”⁴⁹ Hiebert infers that Christ became one of us to make us like Himself—He met us where we are to take us where He is.

Sherwood Lingenfelter and Marvin Mayers also look to Jesus as the perfect example of incarnationalism. They write,

God’s Son studied the language, the culture, and the lifestyles of his people for thirty years before he began his ministry. He knew all about their family lives and problems. He stood at their side as learner and as coworker. He learned to read and study the Scriptures in his local synagogue and earned respect to the point that the people called him Rabbi. He worshiped with them in their synagogues and observed the annual Passover and other feasts in the temple in Jerusalem.⁵⁰

⁴⁸An interesting book that encourages pastors to realize their context before they attempt to pastor rural churches is Arthur Wentworth Hewitt’s *Highland Shepherds: A Book of the Rural Pastorate* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1939). Although Hewitt does not propose methods of anthropological investigation, he lays out detailed methods for effectively serving rural congregations.

⁴⁹Paul Hiebert, “Anthropological Insights for Whole Ministries,” in *Christian Relief and Development: Developing Workers for Effective Ministry*, ed. Edgar J. Elliston (Dallas: Word Publishing, 1989), 75.

⁵⁰Sherwood G. Lingenfelter and Marvin K. Mayers, *Ministering Cross-Culturally: An Incarnational Model for Personal Relationships*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2003), 16, 17.

Lingenfelter and Mayers go on to write, “The point is that Jesus was a 200-percent person. . . . He was and is 100 percent God. Yet Paul tells us that Jesus took ‘the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness.’ He was 100 percent human.”⁵¹

Although the term stirs debate among evangelicals, the modern notion of incarnationalism is less about the doctrine of the hypostatic union and more about an attempt to fit-in and minister from a posture of true understanding and identification.⁵²

Though Lingenfelter and Mayers present Christ as the pattern, they recognize that missionaries can never become 200-percent persons. That sort of identification was only possible for the Son of God, Who was born into Jewish culture. Instead, they urge missionaries to strive toward becoming a 150-percent person (75 percent of original culture retained and 75 percent of new culture acquired).⁵³ This type of incarnational identification breaks down the walls of ethnocentrism and creates open doors for ministry—ministry that is better received by the host culture.

Cultural Markers

Studying a church’s culture is a potentially endless task. There are some cultural markers that are more helpful than others in helping pastors discover and understand what their people believe and why they act. The following sections survey some of the more important ones. Other cultural markers are explored in chapters three and four.

Values

Aubrey Malphurs writes, “*Core values are the constant, passionate shared*

⁵¹Lingenfelter and Mayers, *Ministering Cross-Culturally*, 17. Their Scriptural reference is a summary of the teaching of Phil 2:6-7.

⁵²The debate on incarnationalism/representationalism is covered in David Hesselgrave, *Paradigms in Conflict: 10 Key Questions in Christian Missions Today* (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2005), 141-66.

⁵³Lingenfelter and Mayers, *Ministering Cross-Culturally*, 24.

core beliefs that drive and guide the culture.”⁵⁴ Knowing and understanding the values of the people one serves should be a top priority for any leader, especially pastors. Geert Hofstede writes, “Values are among the first things children learn—not consciously, but implicitly. Development psychologists believe that by the age of 10, most children have their basic value system firmly in place, and after that age, changes are difficult to make.”⁵⁵ This value system tends to be incrementally changed as one goes through life.

Values are the underlying factors that help determine action. Values alignment is important in establishing healthy pastor-congregation relationships. If a pastor’s values are greatly dissimilar those of his congregation he should expect great difficulties, or better yet, he should decline to take the church in the first place. This fact and other implications regarding values are covered in the remaining chapters.

Symbols

Christianity has the cross, Judaism has the menorah and Islam has the crescent—understanding these symbols aids in understanding the religions they represent.⁵⁶ “A *symbol* is an object, sound, action, or idea too which people assign arbitrary meaning; that is, there is no necessary relationship between the symbol and its meaning,” says Brian Howell and Jennell Paris.⁵⁷ The list of Christian symbols is as

⁵⁴Aubrey Malphurs, *Look before You Lead: How to Discern and Shape Your Church Culture* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2013), 40. Italics in original.

⁵⁵Geert Hofstede, *Cultures and Organizations: Software of the Mind* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1991), 8.

⁵⁶David Scotchmer explains the importance of rightly understanding symbols, “Culture coheres and consists not so much in the rules and order that people create but through the symbols they use to unite, express, and summarize the rules and understandings between people, both within and across communities. Thus one is ‘acculturated,’ not when one has learned the rules of relations, or even the words of a culture, but when one manages the symbols or tools for making meaning, interpreting ‘facts,’ and communicating effectively in context. This is no less true for a new seminarian taking on the symbols of the professional clergy than it is for the missionary seeking to make a home and gain a hearing among strangers. What makes symbols *cultural* with enormous social impact is the fact that there is always a *context* for their use and their misuse, their death and their resurrection.” Scotchmer, “Symbols Become Us,” 164.

⁵⁷Howell and Paris, *Introducing Cultural Anthropology*, 186.

extensive as the various cultures through which Christianity is lived out. Howell and Paris mention some of the most popular Christian symbols:

Christians have a broad repertoire of symbols such as the cross, fish, and dove. But symbols are much more pervasive than these obvious examples. For example, in many Protestant churches, the congregation sits in rows facing the front, where the pulpit or podium sits in the center of a (usually) raised dais or stage. In a Roman Catholic Church, the speaker's podium is off to the side, while the altar sits in the center. The physical arrangement of the church is a symbol that communicates the Protestant emphasis on the preaching of the Word. In liturgical traditions such as Roman Catholicism, Anglicanism, and Lutheranism (the latter two are Protestant), the central altar symbolizes the centrality of the Eucharist in the worship service.⁵⁸

Elsewhere Howell and Paris write, "Dress, music, architecture, preferred versions of the Bible, and myriad other symbols make up the symbolic system of Christianity."⁵⁹ Symbols are ubiquitous in established churches and a failure on behalf of the pastor to understand and rightly use them can detract from his credibility and influence. Symbols are tools that can be used by the pastor to lead the congregation.⁶⁰ These symbols are used in predictable and repeatable patterns, referred to in anthropological research as rituals, or rites.

Rituals and Rites

Catholic churches seem to be the most ritual saturated Christian tradition, but they are not alone, evangelicals have their rituals as well. According to Brian Howell and

⁵⁸Howell and Paris, *Introducing Cultural Anthropology*, 186.

⁵⁹Ibid., 187. Howell and Paris make an interesting observation regarding what one wears to church. "Many U. S. Americans who wear business attire to work every day may feel these are 'secular' clothes (this idea is strongly associated with European Americans, but people from other groups may agree). Wearing these clothes to church may make church seem like a continuation of the workweek, rather than a special time. Thus, some white-collar workers find themselves drawn to the casual services of contemporary megachurches, or informal congregations in which the pastor goes by her or his first name and everyone wears casual clothing. In this way, their church clothes symbolize the way church is a break from the workweek" (187).

⁶⁰Howell and Paris argue, "It may seem false or manipulative to acknowledge that we use symbols or movement to create a mood or make something 'seem uniquely realistic.' But when Christians select a musical style, choose appropriate dress, decide between the use of written or extemporaneous prayers, inspire (or deter) clapping hands or raising arms, we are making culture; that is, we are choosing and shaping symbols to help participants feel close to God or understand God better." Howell and Paris, *Introducing Cultural Anthropology*, 190.

Jenell Paris, “A *ritual* (also called a *rite*) is any patterned, repeated, predictable action.”⁶¹ They classify rituals under the three headings of, “rites of intensification, rites of affliction, and rites of passage.”⁶² Rituals in an evangelical church can include: the pastoral prayer, making the announcements, receiving the tithes and offerings, standing for congregational singing and the reading of the Scriptures, the public invitation and the closing prayer, just to name a few. Local church pastors must understand the rituals of their respective church and understand the ingrained attachment to these rituals. Wrongly handling rituals in a local church context could lead to destructive mistrust and conflict. Misunderstanding and misapplying rituals can confuse the pastor’s role and malign his status.

Role and Status

Status is another important anthropological term to consider in local church ministry. Howell and Paris write, “Status refers to any position a person may occupy in a social structure. Like the common English phrases ‘high status’ or ‘low status’ suggest, anthropologists emphasize hierarchy and stratification when they study status.”⁶³ They go on to explain,

There are two types of status: achieved and ascribed. An *achieved status* is one that a person chooses or becomes associated with due to behaviors or skills. Occupations like student or farmer are achieved statuses because people aren’t simply born into them; they have to make choices and learn skills in order for their status to be socially recognized. An *ascribed status* is given to an individual through no choice or action of her or his own; it is a status granted by circumstances of birth.

⁶¹Howell and Paris, *Introducing Cultural Anthropology*, 188.

⁶²Ibid., 189. They explain, “*Rites of intensification* are rituals in which elements of society, belief, values, or behaviors are made more dramatic, intense, or real than in normal life. A high school pep rally is an example of a nonreligious rite of intensification” (189). They also say, “Christian worship may be understood as a rite of intensification as well” (190).

⁶³Howell and Paris, *Introducing Cultural Anthropology*, 68. Howell and Paris include role and status in the domain of *social structure*. According to Howell and Paris, “*Social structure* (also called *social organization* or *social order*) refers to the ways people coordinate their lives in relation to one another at the level of society” (66).

Examples of ascribed status are son, Southerner, or female.⁶⁴

In describing a role, Howell and Paris explain, “A *role* prescribes expected or required behaviors for those who occupy a particular status. Some statuses, particularly those defined by institutions, have clear roles.”⁶⁵ The roles of a pastor, including chaplain, scholar, teacher, prophet, etc., are addressed in greater depth in the section of church leadership resources.

Kinship and Marriage

Although local churches bear many semblances to families, the natural family often trumps the spiritual one. Brian Howell and Jenell Paris write, “*Descent* is a social rule that assigns identity to a person based on her or his ancestry.”⁶⁶ Unsuspecting pastors often enter congregations without a clue as to who is related to whom, and their lack of this relational knowledge could lead to critical errors in interpersonal communication and relationships. For instance, a pastor may be able to preach on church discipline with relative acceptance, but when he attempts to exercise said discipline on an influential member’s family member he may experience severe repercussions. Understanding the anthropological categories of kinship and marriage are essential to effective local church leadership, without such knowledge power struggles are inevitable.

Anthropology as a Way to Learn and Transform a Culture

This section provides a short introduction to the discipline of learning culture from an insider’s perspective. A pastor is well on his way to establishing a healthy pastor-

⁶⁴Howell and Paris, *Introducing Cultural Anthropology*, 68.

⁶⁵Ibid., 69. They also say, “People experience role conflict, or role strain, the stress that occurs when the behavioral expectations from various roles come into play simultaneously” (70). Another category strongly tied to role and status is *class*. Just a definition of class will suffice for this research, but it is a cultural anthropological category that could yield rich fruit for local church experience and ministry. Howell and Paris relegate class to an economic category: “*Class* (also called *social class*) is a cultural category describing how people are grouped according to their positions within the economy” (80).

⁶⁶Ibid., 155.

congregation relationship when he understands and identifies with how his people truly think, feel, and act. Some, like catholic missiologist, Louis Luzbetak refer to the process of learning a culture from the inside as *enculturation*.⁶⁷

Enculturation and Acculturation as Culture Learning

The process of enculturation occurs naturally for a person who grows up within a culture; however, pastors have to be intentional about speedy acculturation. It would be impossible for a pastor to become acculturated without spending significant time on the church field among the people. The goal of acculturation is discovering the insider or emic perspective of a culture.

In order to gain an insider perspective, Paul Hiebert warns that we must set aside our cultural ignorance and ethnocentrism. Hiebert writes, “As Christians, we are often unaware that our beliefs are frequently shaped more by our culture than by the gospel. We take our Christianity to be biblically based and normative for everyone. We do not stop to ask what parts of it come from our sociocultural and historical contexts, and what parts come from Scripture.”⁶⁸ This sociocultural impact on church practice could cause pastors to judge differing churches as inferior in practice. Hiebert adds that an “attitude of cultural superiority is a serious hindrance to cross-cultural communications. We may identify with the people by adopting their dress, eating their food, and living in their houses. . . . But the people can sense if there are any feelings of superiority and will respond by remaining distant and aloof.”⁶⁹

⁶⁷Luzbetak, *The Church and Cultures*, 73. Luzbetak is a Catholic anthropologist, and therefore his nomenclature is not universally accepted. He clarifies, “Enculturation is sometimes referred to as ‘socialization.’ However, the two terms are not perfectly synonymous. ‘Enculturation’ embraces the learning of all aspects of culture, including technology, art, and religion, while ‘socialization’ focuses on those patterns by means of which the individual becomes a member of his social group, adapts himself to his fellows, achieves status, and acquires a role in society.” (73, 74).

⁶⁸Hiebert, *The Gospel in Human Contexts*, 18.

⁶⁹Hiebert, “Anthropological Insights for Whole Ministries,” 80.

Sherwood Lingenfelter and Marvin Mayers warn that cultural differences can be divisive when seen as a difference between the “right” and “wrong” ways. They charge, “Conflict arises not only from personal and cultural differences but also from the fact that people often attribute moral force to their priorities for personal behavior and judge those who differ from them as flawed, rebellious, or immoral.”⁷⁰ Hiebert, Lingenfelter, and Mayers, alert their readers to the persistent need to seek to understand people from their own perspective, withholding judgment until there is true understanding. Exceptions to withholding judgment should only be exercised in very clear violations of Scripture. Enculturation in a church that seems to be doing things backwards or wrong will take its toll on the pastor—chances are he and his family will experience some of the effects of culture shock.

Culture Shock as a Side Effect of Learning a Culture

Paul Hiebert testifies, “We are all excited, and a little fearful, when we enter a new culture. Our first response is fascination and wonder. We spend the day exploring new sights and sounds. Everything seems so strange, so exotic. At this stage, however, we are still tourists, and the day comes when we realize we cannot be tourists forever.”⁷¹ This stage of tourism is often referred to as “the honeymoon” in a local church pastorate and will be discussed in chapter four and in footnote 190 in this chapter.

Charles Kraft believes culture shock or “culture stress” has as its root cause worldview assumption differences. Kraft writes, “If we are in another society, not only are they behaving on the basis of different assumptions than ours, they may not even understand why we are having a problem. We may be off balance because our assumptions aren’t working, and we get no help because it never occurs to the people of

⁷⁰Lingenfelter and Mayers, *Ministering Cross-Culturally*, 14.

⁷¹Hiebert, “Anthropological Insights for Whole Ministries,” 77.

the other society that we are having a problem.”⁷² This sort of ignorance on behalf of the church in relation to its pastor is the norm. They usually fail to realize that most pastors have left everything they knew to come and serve in a new culture. Certainly the culture of the church and the community may be similar to their home, but there are usually enough cultural differences to produce stress.

Regarding culture shock symptoms, Hiebert writes, “Our initial response is hostility and anger. We find fault with the culture and compare it unfavorably with our own.”⁷³ Hiebert explains, “We do not realize that we are perfectly normal people experiencing the trauma of learning a whole new way of thinking and living.”⁷⁴ On the other hand, “If we develop positive attitudes toward our host people, and learn to live as they do, as much as psychologically possible, we have laid the foundations for an effective ministry among them. They will listen to what we say because they learn to trust us as people like themselves,” says Hiebert.⁷⁵ Hiebert’s approach is also essential for healthy pastor-congregation relationships. Pastors will experience relatively small levels of culture shock in most instances, but they will benefit from understanding what it is and how to combat its negative effects. Culture shock will vary to the degree that there is worldview incongruence between the pastor and his congregation, and the congregation’s cultural context.

Changing the Foundations of a Culture in Worldview Transformation

One cannot assume that all those who profess faith in Christ operate out of the same worldview framework. Differences in worldview paradigms within a congregation

⁷²Kraft, *Anthropology for Christian Witness*, 57.

⁷³Hiebert, “Anthropological Insights for Whole Ministries,” 77.

⁷⁴Hiebert, “Anthropological Insights for Whole Ministries,” 77.

⁷⁵*Ibid.*, 78.

will inevitably lead to conflict. According to Charles Kraft, “Worldview, the deep level of culture, is the culturally structured set of assumptions (including values and commitments/allegiances) underlying how a people perceive and respond to reality. Worldview is not separate from culture. It is included in culture as the deepest level presuppositions upon which people base their lives.”⁷⁶ Since worldview is part of the core of one’s culture, it is essential that pastors understand worldview and how to navigate the culture of those who may have differing philosophical assumptions.⁷⁷ Worldviews fall along a scale, and there are some worldviews that are completely incompatible with Christian faith. Although pastors should attempt to work through existing worldviews for change, they must protect against attempts to appease those devoid of the Spirit. According to Paul Hiebert, changing worldviews falls under the realm of spiritual warfare.⁷⁸

Change at the Speed of Insiders

Charles Kraft believes all cultures change, just at different rates. Kraft writes, “Anthropologists know that no people has left its culture unchanged for even one year, much less for a thousand years. . . . There is no such thing as a culture that has not been changed over a given length of time. All peoples are changing their cultures at all times.

⁷⁶Kraft, “Culture, Worldview and Contextualization,” 385. Paul Hiebert summarizes, “Our worldviews are what we think with, not what we think about.” Paul G. Hiebert, “The Gospel In Our Culture: Methods of Social and Cultural Analysis,” in *The Church between Gospel and Culture: The Emerging Mission in North America*, ed. George R. Hunsberger and Craig Van Gelder (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 1996), 142.

⁷⁷Kraft suggests, “Culture consists of two levels: the surface behavior level and the deep worldview level. At the core of culture and, therefore, at the very heart of all human life, lies the structuring of the basic assumptions, values, and allegiances in terms of which people interpret and behave. These assumptions, values, and allegiances we call worldview.” Kraft, *Anthropology for Christian Witness*, 11.

⁷⁸Paul Hiebert understands worldviews in light of Eph 6:12, as part of “principalities and powers.” Hiebert writes, “For the most part, worldviews are implicit in the culture and therefore are hard to detect. Their power over us exists, in part, in that we are not aware of them or the ways they shape our lives. Because they are foundational, however, they are at the heart of the Western ‘principalities and powers.’” Hiebert, “The Gospel In Our Culture,” 142.

The only things to be investigated, then, are the hows and whys of change.”⁷⁹ Kraft’s perception of the inevitability of cultural change gives hope to prospective pastors.⁸⁰ Churches can change their ways of thinking and doing, but it will take a considerable investment of time, and intentional guidance to lead toward healthier congregations.

Kraft argues for attempting to change cultures in ways that are the least disruptive to the host people. He argues for this in a mission context, but the principles are transferable to pastoral leadership. Kraft exhorts,

As Christian witnesses, we are eager to see certain changes take place among the peoples with whom we work. It is important, however, that such changes take place in ways that will be less disruptive rather than more disruptive to the people. The wrong kinds of change or too rapid change can often be seriously disruptive even if brought by well-meaning people. A study of anthropology should enable us to understand the processes of culture change so that we can work for the kinds of change that Christianity asks for in ways that are less disruptive rather than in ways that are more disruptive. By learning what anthropology has to offer in this area, we can learn to work constructively and often in terms of the change processes already going on, rather than destructively and counter to those processes. In this way, Christianity can be built on the foundation already provided by the society rather than in opposition to what the people are already familiar with.⁸¹

Church cultures will change on their own, or they can change with direction, but change needs to be consistent with Scripture and minimally disruptive.

Chapter three contains much more about anthropology and its tools and resources. Since this literature review serves as an introduction to relevant terms and authors, the focus will now transition from anthropological to church leadership literature and resources.

⁷⁹Kraft, *Anthropology for Christian Witness*, 12, 13.

⁸⁰Kraft may be referencing culture on the macro level, but culture is perpetually changing on the macro and micro level based on the change of those who influence it. Writing from an organizational culture perspective, regarding microcultures and macrocultures, Edgar Schein writes, “Microcultures evolve in small groups that share common tasks and histories. Shared assumptions will arise especially in groups whose task requires mutual cooperation because of a high degree of interdependency. . . . Organizational cultures exist in a context. They operate in one or more macrocultures, such as ethnic groups and other larger cultural units.” Edgar Schein, *Organizational Culture and Leadership*, 4th ed. (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2010), 67.

⁸¹Kraft, *Anthropology for Christian Witness*, 13.

Church Leadership Tools and Resources

C. Peter Wagner begins his book *Church Planting for a Greater Harvest* with the categorical statement, “*The single most effective evangelistic methodology under heaven is planting new churches.*”⁸² Underlying Wagner’s statement is the assumption that there are established churches sending out these church planters and providing the financial capital for the church-planting efforts. Therefore, the foundation of the “most effective evangelistic methodology under heaven,” upon the eternal foundation of Christ, is established churches. Without established churches the mission of Christ on earth will grind to a halt.

Many established churches have already benefitted from anthropological principles in their outreach. An important work, *Understanding Church Growth*, written by Donald McGavran and edited and revised by C. Peter Wagner, records, “Much of the energy of the church growth researchers in the 1960s and 1970s was spent on discerning factors of church growth informed by the behavioral sciences, especially cultural anthropology.”⁸³ The effect of implementing anthropological tools and resources in church outreach led to some innovative and effective methods for cross-cultural communication and understanding the questions or “felt needs” of the people. There is yet much room available for research and writing regarding the implementation of anthropological tools and resources within the context of an established church.

Currently, much energy is being directed toward church *revitalization*. Gary McIntosh, in his 2012 book on revitalizing plateaued or declining churches to health and growth is commended as being a step-by-step guide. Ed Stetzer writes in his blurb on the book, “McIntosh skillfully draws on his three decades of church consultations to forge a step-by-step strategy for restoring vitality to struggling churches. This book give [sic]

⁸²C. Peter Wagner, *Church Planting for a Greater Harvest* (Ventura, CA: Regal, 1990), 11. Italics in original.

⁸³Donald A. McGavran, *Understanding Church Growth*, 3rd ed., ed. C. Peter Wagner (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 1990), 6.

you hope and will show you the way to revitalize your church.”⁸⁴ For the purposes of this dissertation, it is important to note that McIntosh’s considerable expertise in the field and decades of research causes him to only find value in interacting with one notable missiologist/anthropologist source, C. Peter Wagner, *Leading Your Church to Growth*. McIntosh’s book gives several pointers on how to build a coalition for change, but starts by urging the pastor to see the potential, and seems to skip over the primary anthropological principle of knowing and understanding the people.

Thankfully, there are books in print that value and implement anthropological principles in local church contexts, but they tend to be from moderate or mainline leaders. Biblically conservative evangelicals, however, much like they did with social ministry, are late in filtering out valuable insights and applications. These evangelicals must once again realize that all truth belongs to God and should be leveraged for Kingdom purposes.

One valuable source from a mainline perspective is, *Studying Congregations: A New Handbook*. The authors introduce the book by writing, “This book is an invitation to engage in a systematic look at congregational life.”⁸⁵ Throughout the introduction the authors mention several resources that have been developed for congregational studies over the past several decades. Since the publication of their first edition, they released *Handbook for Congregational Studies* in 1987, an updated version. In the newer version they mention the Lilly Endowment (which has funded several research projects on congregations), The Alban Institute, the Yokefellow Institute, National Evangelistic Association (Herb Miller) and the Center for Parish Development.⁸⁶ They also list

⁸⁴Gary L. McIntosh, *There's Hope for Your Church: First Steps to Restoring Health and Growth* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2012), 1.

⁸⁵Nancy T. Ammerman et al., *Studying Congregations: A New Handbook*, ed. Nancy T. Ammerman et al. (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1998), 9.

⁸⁶*Ibid.*, 12.

universities, other schools, fellowships, and associations that have developed programs to emphasize the study of congregations. All of these agencies and institutions lean to the theological left and therefore have little interaction with conservative evangelical scholars. Also, their research seems to fail to generate much interest among evangelicals, another reason why this dissertation is needed.

Studying Congregations as a Church Leadership Resource

Studying Congregations is a significant work that is on the right track. It looks at congregations through what the authors term, the lens of *the ecological frame, the culture frame, the resource frame and the process frame*.⁸⁷ Looking at a congregation through the *ecological frame* displays the context of the congregation, understanding congregations to be living organisms. Therefore, the congregations are understood by looking at their surrounding community, their religious and denominational affiliations and participation, and even the larger cultural context of the national politic and worldview.

Next, the *cultural frame* investigates each congregation as an individual culture. The authors write,

Culture includes all the things a group does together—its rituals, its ways of training newcomers, its work, and its play. It also includes artifacts. Everything from buildings to bulletins, from sacred objects to the most mundane tools, helps identify a particular congregation’s habits and places of being Finally, culture includes the accounts it gives of itself—its stories and heroes, its symbols and myths, its jargon, and its jokes. To look at a congregation engaging in its unique rituals, showing off the things with which it has surrounded itself, and telling the tales of the group is to see a cultural frame for understanding its life together.⁸⁸

The next category is the *resource frame*. This frame is meant to encourage the study of the congregation’s available resources or capital. The authors summarize, “The ‘capital’ to which you will give attention from this vantage point may be the

⁸⁷Ammerman et al., *Studying Congregations*, 14-16.

⁸⁸Ibid., 15.

congregation's members, its money, its buildings, its reputational and spiritual energies, its connections in the community, and even its history.”⁸⁹

Finally, under the category of the *process frame*, the authors write, “Process perspectives ask how leadership is exercised and shared, how decisions are made, how communication occurs, and how conflicts are managed and problems are solved.”⁹⁰ The categories presented in *Studying Congregations* appear to be original and helpful, especially relevant to this dissertation is the understanding of a *cultural frame*.

Studying Congregations is one of the best resources in existence that looks at churches as exhibiting culture and attempts to equip pastors to understand them, but it is not the only book.⁹¹ To varying degrees there are church leadership resources that understand church culture and offer valuable insights. The following pages are devoted to pointing out: some of the most pertinent church leadership resources, what they add to this research, and areas where they need additional input.

Culture as a Primary Field of Church Leadership

In *Creature of the Word*, Matt Chandler, Josh Patterson, and Eric Geiger write,

⁸⁹Ammerman et al., *Studying Congregations*, 15.

⁹⁰Ibid., 16, 17.

⁹¹Much research has been conducted in the UK. One book containing some of the results is *Explorations in Practical, Pastoral and Empirical Theology*. In the book the authors write, “In contrast to the US situation, only a handful of congregations have been studied or audited either from the inside or outside. Few British seminaries train their students in congregational studies, and few clergy initiate such studies. When a scholar approaches a congregation in the UK, he or she is therefore usually in virgin territory, with no clear expectation or responsibilities on either side.” Also, in *Congregational Studies in the UK*, the authors explore congregations from extrinsic and intrinsic categories and a number of subcategories. Later, they write, “Whilst American congregational studies have continued to be deeply engaged with these extrinsic concerns, the second phase of British studies displays a rather different orientation. Those who study congregations now come from a wide range of academic backgrounds, and their aim is generally to understand the socio-cultural characteristics of the group that is being studied for the sake of understanding. Of course the results of such study may be useful to those making decisions about the future of these groups, but such practical application is not the primary aim of the research.” Matthew Guest, Karin Tusting, and Linda Woodhead, eds., *Explorations in Practical, Pastoral and Empirical Theology, Congregational Studies in the UK: Christianity in a Post-Christian Context* (Hampshire, England: Ashgate, 2004), 1-18.

“But while every church has a culture, not every church possesses a *healthy* culture.”⁹²

The goal of studying congregational cultures should be to lead them to greater health.

This health should be measured by faithfulness to the revealed will of God in the

Scriptures. As Gene Mims writes,

[W]e generally take our understanding of what a perfect church should be from our understanding of the New Testament church. The problem with this, however, is that there is no such thing as *the* New Testament church. There were many churches in the first century, and none of them was perfect. There was the young church in Jerusalem that had problems feeding some widows. There was Corinth where things got out of control. There was Thessalonica where some folks stopped working. How about the seven churches in Revelation, or those in Galatia? None was perfect, but they were all New Testament churches.”⁹³

This understanding of the diversity of churches should lead one to study each

congregation in its own context, looking for biblical faithfulness and fulfillment of the church’s unique identity.

James Hopewell defines a congregation as, “a group that possesses a special name and recognized members who assemble regularly to celebrate a more universally practiced worship but who communicate with each other sufficiently to develop intrinsic patterns of conduct, outlook, and story.”⁹⁴ Each congregation is worthy of individual exploration. “Your church has a story. Why was it founded? Who were the people who came to church and what did it mean to them? What was the community like? What are the memorable occasions in the church’s history? What were its proudest moments and its low points? Has the church struggled through a crisis?” are some of the questions

⁹²Matt Chandler, Josh Patterson, and Eric Geiger, *Creature of the Word: The Jesus-Centered Church* (Nashville: B&H Publishing Group, 2012), 96. Chandler, Patterson, and Geiger write, “And this group has a certain personality, a character, a collective soul, a set of deeply held values, whether openly declared or merely understood, that guides its ongoing actions. In other words, your church has a distinct and unique culture.”

⁹³Gene Mims and John Perry, *The 7 Churches Not in the Book of Revelation* (Nashville: B&H Publishers, 2001), 13.

⁹⁴I would define a congregation with more specificity than Hopewell, but his definition points out several of the cultural markers of local churches. James F. Hopewell, *Congregation: Stories and Structures*, ed. Barbara G. Wheeler (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1987), 13. Italics in original.

asked by Anthony Pappas and Scott Planting.⁹⁵ Many pastors enter congregations without even asking these basic questions and therefore make uninformed leadership blunders.⁹⁶

James P. Wind writes, “I would suggest that very little attention is paid to equipping people to ‘read’ the local cultures they are going to serve. Instead, seminarians are taught a variety of techniques and insights that they are to apply to their local congregations, as if one size fits all.”⁹⁷ Thomas Edward Frank explains,

Every congregation is a unique culture comprising the artifacts, practices, values, outlooks, symbols, stories, language, ritual, and collective character that make it particularly itself. This culture is an outgrowth of the life together of a particular mix of individuals, families, and ethnic and community forms that have connected in a certain place over time. By carefully observing congregational culture, leaders and participants can deepen understanding and appreciation for the congregation as it has endured. They can also realize what Denham Grierson called the “openings for ministry” made possible by building upon the congregation’s values and strengths.⁹⁸

There are many anthropological tools and resources that can be used in discovering a church culture. Lydia Rappaport’s dissertation was an effort “to discover what congregation members’ descriptions of their worship experience, and adjoining Sunday morning rituals, reveal about the congregation’s culture.”⁹⁹ Rappaport only

⁹⁵Anthony Pappas and Scott Planting, *Mission: The Small Church Reaches Out* (Valley Forge, PA: Judson Press, 1993), 98. Another area that pastors need to understand, early on in their ministry, is who the decision makers are. Hans Finzel warns, “Many people in an organization may want to ‘change the way we do things around here,’ but only the ones in control of the organization have the power to do so. If you are not at the top, you must convince those who are, of your program for change. The environment of every human institution, be it a church, business or family, is set by the leadership, and only those at the top can bring about significant change.” Hans Finzel, “Creating The Right Leadership Culture,” in *Leaders on Leadership*, ed. George Barna (Ventura, CA: Regal, 1997), 264.

⁹⁶Mims and Perry also help young pastors with “*The Seven Sins of a Young and Ambitious Pastor*: 1.) Not accepting people for who they are 2.) Believing that preaching will change them 3.) Assuming everyone wants to change 4.) Believing the few represent the many 5.) Expecting worship to accelerate the change 6.) Believing an expert will convince them 7.) Imitating another pastor.” Mims and Perry, *The 7 Churches Not in the Book of Revelation*, 14-18.

⁹⁷James P. Wind, “Congregations: Discovering Congregational Cultures,” *The Christian Century*, February 1993, 105-10.

⁹⁸Thomas Edward Frank, *The Soul of the Congregation An Invitation to Congregational Reflection* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2000), 161.

⁹⁹Lydia M. Rappaport, “Rapid Assessment of Congregational Culture: Discovering a Congregation's Unique Reality through Descriptions of Worship and Ritual Experience” (PhD diss.,

looked at Sunday morning worship, but she showed how some of the tools and resources of anthropology could help uncover congregational culture. Many of these tools and resources will be further explored in chapter 3.¹⁰⁰

Church leadership authors like Will Mancini recognize the value of understanding church cultures. Mancini writes, “Culture is the combined effect of the interacting values, thoughts, attitudes, and actions that define the life of your church.”¹⁰¹ Mancini believes failing to recognize the change in culture when transitioning to a new church is a “competency trap.”¹⁰² Mancini writes, “He or she naturally brings along the ministry patterns and programs that previously defined success. But what the leader can’t bring along is the other church’s culture. Because it is easier to duplicate familiar programs than to incarnate new ones, the leader overlooks the DNA discovery process.”¹⁰³ Mancini’s words bring a warning to pastors who enter a new church culture unaware of their own church culture, or the one they are about to enter.¹⁰⁴

Princeton Theological Seminary, 2007), 103.

¹⁰⁰Lyle Schaller, in his book *Activating the Passive Church: Diagnosis & Treatment*, writes, “There are many different approaches available for examining the life and ministry of a worshipping congregation, and no one approach will provide an adequate frame of reference for understanding all facets of church life. Each perspective adds something to help one see the total picture.” Lyle E. Schaller, *Activating the Passive Church: Diagnosis & Treatment* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1981), 18.

¹⁰¹Will Mancini, *Church Unique: How Missional Leaders Cast Vision, Capture Culture, and Create Movement* (San Francisco: Jossey-bass, 2008), 7.

¹⁰²Ibid., 11.

¹⁰³Ibid. Mancini’s use of the term *DNA*, when referring to church culture, is worthy of further exploration. This term follows the nomenclature of biology rather than anthropology and could be explored in another research project.

¹⁰⁴Lyle Schaller, in the concluding chapter of *The Interventionist*, presents a thorough set of investigative questions for pastors to use when attempting to enter into an established congregation. Though the book is primarily geared toward church consultants, there are many helpful questions and topics that could inform the labor of an established church pastor. Schaller’s book should cause pastors to be aware of things to be looking for before they visit a church. Lyle E. Schaller, *The Interventionist: A Conceptual Framework* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1997). Gene Mims and John Perry have provided pastors a helpful book on studying the type of church one may be called to pastor in *The 7 Churches Not in the book of Revelation*. Mims divides the types of established churches into (1) The University Church (2) The Arena Church (3) The Corporate Church (4) The Machine Church (5) The Family Chapel (6) The Legacy Church and (7) The Community Center Church. Mims describes the University Church as “where

Mancini attempts, like many other church leadership authors, to help his readers work through a church's culture for the purpose of casting vision. His main emphasis is on moving the congregation towards a motivating vision (Part One: Recasting Vision; Part Two: Clarifying Vision; Part Three: Articulating Vision; Part Four: Advancing Vision). He, like most other church leadership authors, spends very little time telling his readers how to study and understand the current culture of the church. Additionally, Mancini's title includes "culture," but in the book he doesn't interact with any works from the field of anthropology. It seems Mancini is trying to work in and through culture, a specialty field of anthropology, without looking to the specialists for help and insight.

Ethnographic Research in Church Leadership

Some in the church leadership field have actually implemented anthropological methods in studying local congregations. Melvin Williams, in his chapter of *Building Effective Ministry: Theory and Practice in the Local Church*, explains,

The ethnographic analysis of a congregation is an application of anthropology as a method of understanding the culture of the congregation. Stated briefly, the anthropological approach assumes that every congregation has its own distinctive pattern of meaning that can be discovered by the two basic methods of ethnography: participant observation and the ethnographic interview. The ethnographer endeavors to understand the behaviors, customs, interactions, social networks, feelings, and artifacts of the congregation and to determine what these signify to its members.¹⁰⁵

Melvin Williams also gives one of the best examples of an extended

the emphasis is on teaching, learning, and doctrine." The Arena Church is "worship-centered, where performance and entertainment are key." The Corporate Church is "large, complex, intricate, and a model of efficiency." The Machine Church is "program-oriented, focused on building, missions, and task management." The Family Chapel Church is "based on family ties, where personal relationships come first." The Legacy Church is rich in tradition, often focused on a great event or personality of the past." And, finally, The Community Center Church is "committed to community service and local issues." Mims and Perry, *The 7 Churches Not in the book of Revelation*, 25.

¹⁰⁵ Melvin D. Williams, "The Conflict of Corporate Church and Spiritual Community: An Ethnographic Analysis," in *Building Effective Ministry: Theory and Practice in the Local Church*, ed. Carl S. Dudley (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1983), 55.

ethnographic study of an established congregation in his book *Community in a Black Pentecostal Church: An Anthropological Study*. Williams helps his readers to understand a particular church, its context, its people, and their ways of interacting. His Chapters include descriptions of the church's (2) history (3) organization (4) behavioral dynamics of the membership (5) church activities (6) symbolic expressions (7) physical setting (8) community.¹⁰⁶ Williams' information is rich in detail and helps the reader know the church without personal interaction. The details he presents are the fruit of extended study and could prove to be invaluable information to anyone entering the church as an outsider. Because of the particular structure and polity of "Zion church" it is doubtful that one would even enter in as the pastor from the outside. Despite this fact, Williams book demonstrates how helpful anthropological tools and resources could be in acquiring intimate knowledge of a particular congregation, even before being physically introduced. The reason books like Melvin Williams' *Community in a Black Pentecostal Church* fall short of fulfilling the purpose of this dissertation is twofold: First, Williams has written a finished ethnographic report, on one particular congregation, and not laid down a general guide on how pastors can implement anthropological tools and resources within their own context. Second, whereas most Evangelical church leadership authors focus too little on anthropological understanding and too much on changing the cultures. Mainline authors like Williams focus almost exclusively on understanding congregational cultures, and never propose transforming worldviews, or full obedience to Scripture.

Another author who sees the value of anthropological investigation in local churches is Andreas Dietrich. He writes in his dissertation, "The elementary concern of the pastor is not so much how to engage in ministry tasks but learn to whom he or she ministers. Ministry takes place not in a cultural vacuum but in the context of shared assumptions, values, theological convictions, collective attitudes, behavioral patterns, and

¹⁰⁶Melvin D. Williams, *Community in a Black Pentecostal Church: An Anthropological Study* (Pittsburg: University of Pittsburg Press, 1974).

communication styles.”¹⁰⁷ In another place Dietrich writes, “Failure to consider congregations as unique cultures comprises one of the more serious oversights pastoral leaders commit, often with painful consequences. The cost of neglect in learning a congregation’s culture can effect misunderstandings, conflict, alienation, failure to realize vision, and impediment of ministry potential.”¹⁰⁸ Dietrich’s work is valuable, but it falls short of the purpose of this dissertation. His goal was to develop a church culture survey in accordance with Geert Hofstede’s four cultural value dimensions.¹⁰⁹

Although some would like to lump churches into large groupings, such as Southern Baptist, Episcopalian, United Methodist, etc., church by church observation and investigation is also essential for local church pastors. As Thomas Edward Frank writes, “Although congregations bear many similarities, no congregation has exactly the same history, mix of personalities, or community location as any other. To understand it requires delving into its uniqueness and particularity.”¹¹⁰ Frank also notes, Every congregation is a unique culture comprising the artifacts, practices, values, outlooks, symbols, stories, language, ritual, and collective character that make it particularly itself.”¹¹¹ One of the best ways to evaluate this sort of ethnographic data on a particular congregation is through *participant observation*.

¹⁰⁷Andreas G. Dietrich, “Discerning Congregational Culture for Pastoral Ministry: The Church Culture Survey” (DMin. diss., Asbury Theological Seminary, 2007), 6.

¹⁰⁸Dietrich, “Discerning Congregational Culture,” 4. In the abstract of Andreas Dietrich’s dissertation he writes, “No one congregation functions like another because every local church embodies a unique culture, made up of distinct values and norms, language, and rituals. Discerning a congregation’s culture constitutes a vital discovery for pastors who want to minister in a manner congruent with the congregation’s distinct culture. Pastors typically receive some training in leadership but have not always received instruction to think culturally about their congregations, nor have they had access to tools aiding them in contextualizing their leadership for a particular congregation. Relying on abstract leadership principles, without consulting the unique cultural distinctives of a congregation can result in an avoidable pastor-congregation disconnect.” Ibid., abstract.

¹⁰⁹Ibid., 73.

¹¹⁰Frank, *The Soul of the Congregation*, 8.

¹¹¹Ibid., 161. Frank, a United Methodist pastor, writes this book in part due to his frustration with church-growth books focused on changing congregations. He describes the typical church-growth

Participant Observation as a Church Leadership Tool

Participant observation is a valuable tool for neophyte pastors and can also help those who have been serving in a particular congregation for an extended period of time. According to James Hopewell,

Though members can never achieve the detachment of an ethnographer who comes from the outside, they can become their own best informants, because they already participate in the structures that the outsider has to learn. The trick is that members must learn to function and observe as if they were outsiders so that they see afresh the myriad matters about the congregation that they now take for granted. Pastors and members can begin to see extraordinary aspects of common church happenings if they consider themselves visitors from another culture or time. They learn to ask what common things mean, why ordinary operations work.¹¹²

According to Hopewell, “The fullest and most satisfying way to study the culture of a congregation is to live within its fellowship and learn directly how it interprets its experience and generates its behavior. That approach is called participant observation. As the term suggests, the analyst is involved in the activity of the group to be studied but also maintains a certain detachment.”¹¹³ Another author, Thomas Edward Frank writes, “Seeing and understanding congregational culture requires conscious participant observation. . . . Participant observation is an art. It requires being fully part of whatever is going on, in such a way that one’s presence does not disrupt or seriously alter the activity.”¹¹⁴

Participant observation is an extremely important anthropological tool, it is especially useful for pastors who have the unusual luxury of spending significant time

book this way: “In short, church management and growth literature—universally calling for new visions and ‘paradigms’ of church—mostly tries to smooth the way for a better fit between congregation and the master narrative of American culture: progress. Change is always good; mobility is always improvement; the future is always an advance over the past” (21). This type of language demonstrates the fact that Frank’s general purpose is to understand congregations far and above transforming them. Frank’s work is helpful, but he falls short of my stated purpose of implementing anthropological tools and resources for the purpose of increasing Kingdom effectiveness.

¹¹²Hopewell, *Congregation*, 89.

¹¹³Ibid., 88.

¹¹⁴Frank, *The Soul of the Congregation*, 82.

among a potential congregation. For most pastors, participant observation will necessarily begin when they assume the pastoral responsibilities. Even then, the pastor will not gain an accurate picture until the people learn to be authentic in the presence of their new pastor. In spite of this tendency on the part of the congregation to put up a front, the pastor can still learn a lot during the “honeymoon phase” of his pastorate.¹¹⁵

Rapid Assessment as a Church Leadership Tool

In her Doctor of Ministry Thesis for Princeton Theological Seminary, Lydia M. Rappaport deals with the possibility of rapidly assessing a congregation’s culture. The Title of her thesis is, *Rapid Assessment of Congregational Culture: Discovering a Congregation’s Unique Reality Through Descriptions of Worship and Ritual Experience*. In her abstract, Rappaport writes, “An arriving pastor’s ability rapidly and accurately to

¹¹⁵Lyle Schaller’s book *Activating the Passive Church* has some helpful insights regarding a pastoral “honeymoon.” Schaller writes “The first year of a new pastorate can be described in many different ways. One of the most widely used analogies is to refer to it as the honeymoon. This is the period during which the newly arrived minister and the congregation become better acquainted. Each discovers the unique personality of the other. Each identifies both strengths and flaws in the other that were not visible during the courtship. Each is forming opinions about the other, and these opinions will influence many different decisions during the years to come.” Schaller, *Activating the Passive Church*, 131. Schaller also writes, “After studying scores of congregations that have recently completed their first year or two with a new minister, and after listening to thousands of lay persons from these same churches describe their reactions to that honeymoon year, the evidence strongly suggests that in the majority of cases the newly arrived minister should accept a more active leadership role.” Ibid.,133. Schaller makes four exceptions to the new pastor leading strongly in a new pastorate: (1) In a severely divided congregation (2) When the pastor follows a long pastorate (3) When a substantial number of members have walked out due to an internal congregational dispute (4) When the office of pastor has been severely undermined by the actions of the predecessor. Ibid., 133-35. According to Aubrey Malphurs, “A pastoral change can motivate the revitalization of a congregation. God often uses this window-opening event to implement a new vision for the church. The advantage is that the church grants the new pastor a certain amount of leverage. The resignation or removal of the former pastor disrupts the congregational status quo. Next, people realize the new pastor is not aware of “how we do things around here.” They also want to make a good first impression; they want the pastor to like them. Third, the board is relieved to have someone fill the pastoral office. They were not aware of how much the former pastor accomplished until he left. The result is an initial willingness to flex.” Aubrey Malphurs, *Pouring New Wine into Old Wineskins: How to Change a Church without Destroying It* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1993), 116. Aubrey Malphurs writes, “Churches which are in decline and aware of it often respond favorably to significant change during the honeymoon with the new pastor. There is a sense that if we do not act now, there may be no tomorrow” (117). Regarding a plateaued congregation Malphurs writes, “More often the new pastor in a plateaued church has to earn the right to lead the ministry through the change process. It may take some time to build necessary credibility with a plateaued congregation” (118).

assess a congregation's culture increases his or her capability to lead effectively. Learning the particular congregation's culture provides vital information with which pastors can gain members' acceptance of their leadership."¹¹⁶

Rappaport provides a helpful scriptural metaphor based on John 10:5, "Those who lead God's people have been likened to shepherds, and congregations to flocks, since biblical times. Just as sheep display resistance to following a shepherd who is a stranger to them, congregation members often exhibit reluctance to follow an unfamiliar pastor."¹¹⁷ Rappaport continues her metaphorical understanding of the congregation by noting that the "gatekeeper" must open the door to the shepherd and that the shepherd knows the sheep individually.¹¹⁸ Heeding Rappaport's metaphorical lesson, pastors should consider the fact that it takes time for a shepherd to truly learn the sheep and it likewise takes time for the sheep to learn to trust and follow their new shepherd.

Rappaport's research rightly emphasizes anthropological tools and resources as valuable in congregational assessment. She implemented participant observation in the beginning stages of her study of Newton Square Presbyterian Church.¹¹⁹ Her research seems to demonstrate that the more mainline protestant researchers have been thinking about implementing anthropological resources in congregational studies for years.¹²⁰ It seems that evangelicals, on the other hand, have tended to avoid social science studies of congregations, much like their long avoidance of social ministries in urban and international missions settings. Rappaport's greatest contribution is her connecting rapid

¹¹⁶Rappaport, "Rapid Assessment of Congregational Culture," 1.

¹¹⁷Ibid.

¹¹⁸Ibid., 3.

¹¹⁹Ibid., 33.

¹²⁰Rappaport quotes a 1993 article by James Wind that dates the beginnings of anthropological study of congregations back to the 1970s. Ibid., 5. James P. Wind. "Leading Congregations, Discovering Congregational Cultures." *The Christian Century* (February 1993): 105.

research methods with local church leadership. Rapid methods further research and a thoughtful guide for evangelical pastors, my concluding chapter proposes a way to meet that need.¹²¹

Systems Approach as a Church Leadership Resource

Another area of research within the church leadership field that shows promise for anthropological study in established congregations is systems thinking. Jim Herrington, Mike Bonem and James H. Furr write, “Congregations are spiritual and human social systems that are complex, connected, and changing.”¹²² They argue, “A systems view of a congregation acknowledges the ongoing interaction of its spiritual and material dimensions.”¹²³ Herrington, Bonem and Furr warn that congregations are not only systems, but also one of the most complex systems known to man. They contend,

Christian congregations are the most complicated human organizations that exist. Their mix of the human and the divine, a heritage measured in centuries, and variations in size, context, beliefs, values, and practices make them extraordinarily intricate. We are tempted to treat them like social machines by indiscriminately interchanging people, programs, and purposes, but their status as living systems requires a far more nuanced understanding and approach.¹²⁴

A systems approach carries over biological research and thinking into the world of the church. Paul Hiebert uses the nomenclature of systems thinking in much of his work and the topic is addressed further in chapter three.

¹²¹Rappaport’s research is focused on only one congregation and only on the congregation’s (insider) perspective on their worship. Also, she only implements the anthropological tools of interviews and participant observation in her discovery process. Therefore, though her research is helpful, and does conclude that anthropological tools can help to understand a congregational culture, her purpose is different from the purpose of this dissertation. Where Rappaport’s research is especially helpful is in the fact that she introduces rapid appraisal methods to the field of church leadership. Rappaport, “Rapid Assessment of Congregational Culture,” 1.

¹²²Jim Herrington, Mike Bonem, and James H. Furr, *Leading Congregational Change: A Practical Guide for the Transformational Journey* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2000), 144.

¹²³Ibid., 145.

¹²⁴Ibid.

Contextualization as a Church Leadership Tool

Contextualization is an important anthropological tool implemented by those within the field of church leadership. According to Anthony Pappas and Scott Planting, “The culture of a small church is ‘the way we do things around here.’”¹²⁵ Some pastors recoil at hearing about how a congregation has, “never done it that way before.” But, the pastor gains helpful information when he learns how things have “always been done.” Not that the pastor cannot lead in a direction different than the norm, but he first needs to understand the ways the congregation is used to doing things.¹²⁶ When he learns the ways of the culture then he can work through that particular context, or contextualize.

A book that does an excellent job of presenting a theory of contextualization is Timothy Keller’s *Center Church*. Keller writes,

The first step in active contextualization is to understand and, as much as possible, identify with your listeners, the people you are seeking to reach. This begins with a diligent (and never-ending) effort to become as fluent in their social, linguistic, and cultural reality as possible. It involves learning to express people’s hopes, objections, fears, and beliefs so well that they feel as though they could not express them better themselves.¹²⁷

Though Keller is presenting contextualization for the purpose of reaching the surrounding culture, the principles are applicable to a pastor attempting to lead through an established church culture.¹²⁸

¹²⁵Pappas and Planting, *Mission*, 49.

¹²⁶James Hopewell writes, “Rather than assume that the primary task of ministry is to alter the congregation, church leaders should make a prior commitment to understand the given nature of the object they propose to improve. Many strategies for operating upon local churches are uninformed about the cultural constitution of the parish; many schemes are themselves exponents of the culture they fancy they overcome.” Hopewell proposes, “An analysis of both local congregational idiom and the way the gospel message confronts and yet is conveyed by that language would be a better starting point for efforts to assist the local church.” Hopewell, *Congregation*, 11.

¹²⁷Timothy Keller, *Center Church: Doing Balanced, Gospel-Centered Ministry in Your City* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2012), 120.

¹²⁸Of contextualization Timothy Keller writes, “Ultimately, the most important source for learning will be the hours and hours spent in close relationships with people, listening to them carefully.” *Ibid.*, 121. Keller looks to missiologists like David Hesselgrave for insights relevant to serving as the pastor of Redeemer Presbyterian in Manhattan.

For the purposes of contextualizing in an established church, Ron Klassen and John Koessler explain,

I had to learn about the futures market, about hedging, and about cattle varieties and breeds. I learned the difference between pickups and trucks. I learned about fertilizers, different types of seed, and crop diseases. I learned that cheat isn't just something you can do on an exam, but also something that shows up in wheat fields. I learned that dinner in the country is the noon meal, and lunch is a between-meal snack.¹²⁹

Klassen and Koessler go on to describe their personal experience in contextualization, “when the pastor speaks their language, farmers will be interested in listening and learning when that same pastor preaches the Word of God. But even more than learning the language, people like for their pastors to enter their turf, to take an interest in their lives. Paul was right. If you want to win farmers, you must learn to live like a farmer.”¹³⁰

It seems that pastors often attempt to evade the cultural ways of their people and thereby miss out on effective contextualization. Instead, Ron Klassen and John Koessler invite, “The more pastors become the students of their people, the more they can impact their lives for good. If we want to reach people for Christ, we must immerse ourselves in their world instead of trying to force them into ours.”¹³¹ Contextualization, with proper Scriptural boundaries, is a wise methodology for the local church pastor, but not everyone agrees.

Gene Wood makes a counterintuitive statement regarding the pastor's responsibility to identify with and become a part of the culture of an established church he hopes to “turnaround.” Wood writes,

Every community has a definitive culture as does each church. The pastor must learn both. It does not mean he will necessarily choose to join the culture but he must understand it. In fact, most effective turnaround pastors make a conscious choice not to ‘go native.’ The moment we become like the people in a decaying

¹²⁹Ron Klassen and John Koessler, *No Little Places: The Untapped Potential of the Small-Town Church* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1996), 68.

¹³⁰Klassen and Koessler, *No Little Places*, 68.

¹³¹*Ibid.*

church we lose our ability to help them rise to a new level.¹³²

There certainly is some value in Wood’s warning—pastors should not become like their congregation in sinful indifference to making an impact for the Kingdom. Pastors, however, must understand the value of contextualization if they hope to lead through change with maximum effectiveness, both in their established churches and in reaching the surrounding community through the established church.

Church Leadership Resources and Cultural Change

From a church leadership perspective, Lovett H. Weems Jr. provides some very valuable insights on change. Weems recognizes church culture as an essential component in any lasting change. He writes, “Thus, a church’s culture—who we are and how we do things around here—is both essential and a source of great resistance. But it cannot be ignored. Culture and values lead to resistance and, at the same time, provide the basis for any lasting change. Only the culture can hold the group together during the change process and sustain the change into the future.”¹³³

Changing a church culture is a difficult process, made unnecessarily more difficult by the pastor’s failure in acknowledging the realities of the existing culture. As Thomas Edward Frank writes, “To learn a congregation’s culture is to honor the people whose lives it expresses. When the people know they are honored and appreciated, they are much better prepared for a critical and constructive engagement with their own culture. They are more able to see it in new ways and imagine fresh perspectives on church.”¹³⁴ Frank is not arguing that respecting and understanding the culture of an established church is some sort of cure-all, but it is the best first-step in attempting to lead

¹³²Gene Wood, *Leading Turnaround Churches* (St. Charles, IL: Churchsmart Resources, 2001), 138.

¹³³Lovett H. Weems, *Take the Next Step: Leading Lasting Change in the Church* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2003), 57.

¹³⁴Frank, *The Soul of the Congregation*, 80.

a congregation through change. Even with intentional efforts, nevertheless, the best and most culturally sensitive leaders will still experience cultural conflict.

Church Leadership Resources and Cultural Conflict

In their 2003 book, *Eating the Elephant*, Thom Rainer and Chuck Lawless pose the question, “Is there a way to implement change without destroying the church in the process?”¹³⁵ They later argue, “The process of leading a traditional church to growth is analogous to ‘eating an elephant.’ It is a long-term deliberate process that must be implemented ‘one bite at a time.’”¹³⁶ Additionally, Rainer and Lawless warn, “Remember, church members who hold tenaciously to the old paradigms are not ‘wrong’ while you are ‘right.’ They are children of God loved no less by the Father than those who prefer a different style.”¹³⁷ And, Lawless and Rainer are not alone in urging pastors toward patient understanding in pastoral/church relations.

The Peace Making Pastor is an attempt to apply Peacemaker Ministries’ conflict management principles to pastoral leadership encounters. In the book, Alfred Poirier writes, “Seminary did not prepare me for conflict in the ministry. We are taught well how to exegete Scripture, but we are given little guidance in learning to exegete people. We feel ill-equipped to handle conflicts of this magnitude. At times in the midst of these conflicts, we wonder whether God has really called us to ministry. We ask, *What am I to do?*”¹³⁸ Of course, one answer to Poirier’s question is for the pastor to avoid all

¹³⁵Thom S. Rainer and Chuck Lawless, *Eating the Elephant: Leading the Established Church to Growth* (New York: Pinnacle, 2003), vii.

¹³⁶Rainer and Chuck Lawless, *Eating the Elephant*, 5. Rainer and Lawless reveal, “The manner in which we lead our churches, communicate God’s vision, and encourage enthusiasm will be directly related to our attitude toward the church and the people” (29).

¹³⁷*Ibid.*, 5.

¹³⁸Alfred Poirier, *The Peacemaking Pastor: A Biblical Guide to Resolving Church Conflict* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2006), 18.

unnecessary conflict. Much conflict is a result of cross-cultural misunderstandings that could be avoided by implementing anthropological tools and resources.

Other resources come dangerously close to telling pastors that they need to go in and cause chaos in order to be effective. One example can be found in the book *Transitioning the Church: Leading the Established Church to Reach the Unchurched*. Zach Williams warns,

This book will show you the steps we have incorporated to transition from the church to the unchurched. Here's a warning. For some of you and the churches you lead, these steps will be controversial. You will cause discomfort among the church in the congregation. Some will begin to eye you and the other staff and leaders with distrust because this is "their church." It is hard both emotionally and spiritually. As the pastor or church leader, you will question every decision you make as the backlash grows.¹³⁹

Williams seems to value reaching the unchurched more than he values the established congregation.

Yet another perspective on change and conflict comes from Robert Lewis and Wayne Cordeiro in *Culture Shift: Transforming Your Church from the Inside Out*. They write, "As two pastors long in the trenches of everyday church life, we are absolutely convinced of the primacy of giving attention to church culture. It influences everything you do. It colors the way you choose and introduce programs. It shapes how you select and train leaders."¹⁴⁰ Lewis and Cordeiro accurately diagnose a missing component of many pastor's ministries: "Church culture is foundational to the life and witness of every church. Unfortunately, too many church leaders fail to recognize or understand the implications of this reality. Others grasp the concept but want practical guidance about the culture of the church they serve: how to identify it, how to change it, and how to keep

¹³⁹Zach Williams, *Transitioning the Church: Leading the Established Church to Reach the Unchurched* (Nashville: Rainer Publishing, 2014), 10.

¹⁴⁰Robert Lewis and Wayne Cordeiro, *Culture Shift: Transforming Your Church from the Inside Out* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2005), xxi. Lewis and Cordeiro write, "Culture first. This is what we want every church leader to know, understand, appreciate, applaud, and then cultivate. That's because real transformation only flows one way: from the inside out!" (xxiii).

it aligned with their church’s mission.”¹⁴¹ Lewis and Cordeiro’s approach could lead to less conflict in local church ministry and healthier pastor-congregation relationships. To fail to approach church cultures with this sort of respect undermines trust, and trust is essential to effective leadership.¹⁴²

Church Leadership and Cultural and Emotional Intelligence

Bob Burns, Tasha Chapman, and Donald Guthrie conducted a seven-year study of ministers who appear to be “thriving” in the ministry. Their conclusions were that there are five areas that are of particular importance to thriving in the ministry (1) spiritual formation (2) self-care (3) emotional and cultural intelligence (4) marriage and family (5) leadership and management.¹⁴³ Much more has been written regarding spiritual formation, self-care, marriage and family, and leadership and management than regarding emotional or cultural intelligence. Undoubtedly, emotional intelligence is important for pastoral leadership, but this research focuses on cultural intelligence or CQ.

Burns, Chapman, and Guthrie understand CQ to be an essential tool for thriving in the ministry. They write, “If a pastor is never exposed to different cultural expressions while growing up, or while in university or seminary, learning to live and

¹⁴¹Lewis and Cordeiro, *Culture Shift*, 2.

¹⁴²Regarding building trust in the local church, Anthony Pappas and Scott Planting write, “In small churches it takes several years for the pastor to build a level of trust within the congregation before beginning to make changes. The early years of a pastorate must be spent in building relationships and getting to know the community. In small churches the pastor is first a ‘lover,’ and second a manager. Understanding the church and community means time spent in kitchens and at lunch counters. To be an effective small-church pastor means paying dues. Only as the congregation gets to know the minister will they listen and be responsive to new directions.” Pappas and Planting, *Mission*, 104.

¹⁴³Bob Burns, Tasha D. Chapman, and Donald C. Guthrie, *Resilient Ministry: What Pastors Told Us about Surviving and Thriving* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Books, 2013), 16. Burns, Chapman, and Guthrie term *emotional intelligence* as *EQ*, and *cultural intelligence* as *CQ*. Regarding EQ, they write, “Emotional intelligence can be described as the ability to proactively manage your own emotions (EQ-self) and to appropriately respond to the emotions of others (EQ-others). EQ-self is not easy. It is hard for any of us (pastors included) to identify our feelings. However, without the ability to *understand* our emotions—as well as our strengths, limitations, values and motives—we will be poor at *managing* them and less able to understand the emotions of others. Our EQ-self directly affects our EQ-others” (103).

minister in a different context could be a major adjustment.”¹⁴⁴ They rightly note that the pastor’s “home church” shapes him in enduring ways.¹⁴⁵ They also note culture differs among the generations represented within the same congregation. The overall macro-culture of the church is a conglomeration of micro-cultures, consisting of various interest groups and kinship structures.¹⁴⁶ Burns, Chapman, and Guthrie do interact with some of Paul Hiebert’s writings, and their understanding of CQ is a valuable tool for local church pastors.

Church Leadership and Values Alignment

Values alignment between the pastor and his congregation is another essential area for harmonious pastoral/congregation relationships. As Lyle Shaller notes, “The most important single element of any corporate, congregational, or denominational culture . . . is the value system.”¹⁴⁷ Hans Finzel also warns, “At times, leaders are matched to the wrong situation, and the best thing they can do for themselves and their followers is to leave. In such cases, the leader’s values are too far different from those of the new corporate culture he has attempted to enter.”¹⁴⁸

In his Ph.D. dissertation, Ron B. Holman used a case study method to investigate the impact of core values on church revitalization. His guiding question,

¹⁴⁴Burns, Chapman, and Guthrie, *Resilient Ministry*, 136.

¹⁴⁵Ibid.

¹⁴⁶In regard to CQ, Bob Burns, Tasha Chapman and Donald Guthrie write, “It is important for pastors to recognize that their generational framework significantly affects their perspective. One of the best ways to become aware of these tendencies is to initiate sincere dialogue with persons of other generations, both above and below your own. Of course, this requires that we slow down long enough to ask questions and listen to these persons. If you don’t have any cross-generational relationships, you should make time for them. You (and your church) will be enriched through them.” Burns, Chapman, and Guthrie, *Resilient Ministry*, 138.

¹⁴⁷Lyle E. Schaller, *Getting Things Done: Concepts and Skills for Leaders* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1986), 152.

¹⁴⁸Finzel, “Creating The Right Leadership Culture,” 264.

“How do core values impact revitalization for a Southern Baptist congregation?”¹⁴⁹

Holman’s research has value, but it is important to note that he neglected interaction with anthropological resources. Instead, Holman writes, “The literature selected for review is categorized into resources on church revitalization, resources on core values, and resources related to the development of core values in church revitalization.”¹⁵⁰ Although his areas of research are helpful, anthropological tools and resources are perfectly suited for discovering a congregation’s values. Holman’s work could be of greater benefit to local church pastors if it included insights into values discovery from anthropological tools and resources. In spite of this obvious weakness, Holman’s research is on the right track.

Church Leadership and Vision

Another area of pastoral leadership that could benefit from anthropological input is the area of “vision.” Will Mancini writes, “The missional visionary is also a cultural architect. We started the book with the assertion that each church has a unique culture. While walking through the Vision Pathway, we emphasized the importance of close observation and listening in order to better understand the surrounding culture, and of unlocking the past in order to unleash the future.”¹⁵¹ Though Mancini doesn’t mention anthropological resources, he does emphasize discovery for the purpose of formulating a vision. This vision should be based on the values discovered. “Based on your group’s values, develop a distinct expression of where you are going as a group. Learn how to state that direction in a mission and vision statement,” says Hans Finzel.¹⁵² Vision for the

¹⁴⁹Ron B. Holman, “The Impact of Core Values on Church Revitalization: A Case Study of Emmanuel Baptist Church of Crestview, Florida” (PhD diss., New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary, 2007), xiii.

¹⁵⁰Ibid., 12.

¹⁵¹Mancini, *Church Unique*, 229.

¹⁵²Finzel, “Creating the Right Leadership Culture,” 268.

future of a particular congregation should be commensurate with their cultural identity and who they are as a congregation in Christ; anthropological tools and resources are invaluable in discovering these cultural markers.

Church Leadership Tools and Resources for Revitalization

Revitalization is a buzzword in church health and church leadership literature. Most congregations in the Southern Baptist Convention are plateaued or declining, hence the need for revitalization.¹⁵³ Arnold Cook, in his book *Historical Drift*, says of churches, “Unlike secular structures, the Church is first an organism and secondly an organization. God designs organisms for renewal. Organizations can only be restructured.”¹⁵⁴ Though the term is helpful, revitalization hearkens to the reinstatement of the same life that was previously present in the “organism.” What churches need is a fresh move of the Spirit to which they respond in obedience, along with contextually appropriate methods. Anthropological tools and resources are helpful for the pastor who shepherds a congregation through the revitalization process. These tools and resources are also helpful for the congregation who hopes to understand and reach its community with the unchanging Gospel. In order for pastors to effectively revitalize congregations, the primary task is to gain an accurate understanding of the current cultural reality.

This chapter serves as a literature review and therefore is simply a cursory introduction to some of the most relevant concepts. Chapter four presents a more in-depth consideration of church leadership resources. The next section of this review introduces some of the applicable organizational culture and business culture concepts.

¹⁵³Paul F. South, “NOBTS Study: Eighty-Nine Percent of SBC Churches not Experiencing Healthy Growth,” New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary, May 6, 2009, accessed February 21, 2015, <http://www.nobts.edu/publications/News/LeavellCentersidebar3-09.html>

¹⁵⁴Arnold L. Cook, *Historical Drift: Must My Church Die? How to Detect, Diagnose, and Reverse the Trends* (Camp Hill, PA: Christian Publications, 2000), 5.

Organizational and Business Culture Tools and Resources

Edgar Schein, in the 3rd Edition of *Organizational Psychology* defines an organization: “An organization is the planned coordination of the activities of a number of people for the achievement of some common, explicit purpose or goal, through division of labor and function, and through a hierarchy of authority and responsibility.”¹⁵⁵ An established church unquestionably falls inside Schein’s defined parameters.

As one of the leading representatives of the field of *organizational culture*, Edgard Schein delineates the three levels of culture as, “Artifacts, Espoused Beliefs and Values, and Basic Underlying Assumptions.”¹⁵⁶ Schein explains,

Though the essence of a group’s culture is its pattern of shared, basic taken-for-granted assumptions, the culture will manifest itself at the level of observable artifacts and shared espoused values, norms, and rules of behavior. In analyzing cultures, it is important to recognize that artifacts are easy to observe but difficult to decipher and that espoused beliefs and values may only reflect rationalizations or aspirations. To understand a group’s culture, you must attempt to get at its shared basic assumptions and understand the learning process by which such basic assumptions evolve.¹⁵⁷

Schein’s work is indicative of the fact that organizational culture research and writing operates within a basic anthropological framework. Church leadership materials have begun to explore some of the implications of organizational cultural paradigms, but it seems they are just following the trend of business leaders. Since organizational culture

¹⁵⁵Edgar H. Schein, *Organizational Psychology*, 3rd ed., ed. Richard S. Lazarus (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice-hall, 1994), 15.

¹⁵⁶Schein, *Organizational Culture and Leadership*, 24. Kim Cameron and Robert Quinn write, “Although more than 150 definitions of *culture* have been identified (Kluckhohn, Kroeber, and Meyer, 1952), the two main disciplinary foundations of organization culture are sociological (organizations *have* cultures) and anthropological (organizations *are* cultures). A review of the literature on culture in organization studies reveals that a majority of writers agree that the concept of culture refers to the taken-for-granted values, underlying assumptions, expectations, and definitions that characterize organizations and their members. That is, the functional, sociological perspective has come to predominate. Most discussions of organization culture (Cameron and Ettington, 1988; O’Reilly and Chatman, 1996; Schein, 2010) agree that culture is a socially constructed attribute of organizations that serves as the social glue binding an organization together.” Kim S. Cameron and Robert E. Quinn, *Diagnosing and Changing Organizational Culture: Based on the Competing Values Framework*, 3rd ed. (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2011), 18.

¹⁵⁷Schein, *Organizational Culture and Leadership*, 32.

is borrowing heavily from anthropology, and since Christian missionaries have been implementing anthropological principles in church leadership for decades, it would be prudent for church leadership authors to consult anthropological sources as well. Church leadership authors benefit from years of tested insight by taking their cues from missiologists regarding how to appropriately implement anthropological tools while holding to a biblical worldview. These church leaders should read Schein, and benefit from his work, but they should also read Paul Hiebert, David Hesselgrave, Eugene Nida, Charles Kraft, etc.

John Newstrom and Keith Davis present another text on organizational culture that holds potentially beneficial cross-discipline resources. Newstrom and David define organizational culture as, “the set of assumptions, beliefs, values, and norms that are shared by an organization’s members.”¹⁵⁸ In another place they write, “Any attempt to measure organizational culture can be only an imperfect assessment. Such measurements capture only a snapshot of the culture at a single point in time. In reality, many organizational cultures are in the process of changing and need to be monitored regularly and by a variety of methods to gain a truer picture.”¹⁵⁹ They emphasize, “Over time, an organization’s culture becomes perpetuated by its tendency to attract and retain people who fit its values and beliefs.”¹⁶⁰

Newstrom and Davis emphasis on the transformation of cultures over time holds true for established churches. These authors also bring to light the tendency of churches to attract those who already have a similar church culture. The trajectory of a

¹⁵⁸John W. Newstrom and Keith Davis, *Organizational Behavior: Human Behavior at Work*, 11th ed. ed. John Weimeister (New York: McGraw-hill, 2002), 91.

¹⁵⁹Ibid., 94.

¹⁶⁰Newstrom and Davis, *Organizational Behavior*, 92. John Newstrom and Keith Davis write, “Can culture be changed? A study of corporate cultures at nine large companies—Federal Express, Johnson & Johnson, 3M, AT&T, Corning, Du Pont, Ford, IBM, and Motorola—suggests that it can change. However, it requires a long-term effort, often spanning five to ten years to complete.” Newstrom and Davis, *Organizational Behavior*, 96.

church culture can be changed, but it will take time and strategic initiative, geared toward bringing people on board who have values and vision similar to the desired future of the church. For maximum effectiveness, these new influencers will need to work through the existing culture.¹⁶¹

Vision and Values as Organizational Culture Tools

Organizational culture material also relies heavily on the concepts of *vision* and *values*. Jesse Stoner, Ken Blanchard and Drea Zigarmi write, “A compelling vision creates a strong culture in which the energy of everyone in the organization is aligned.”¹⁶² The authors also note, “When organizations seek greatness, they often find aspects of their organizational culture that need change. A strong, focused organizational culture starts with a compelling vision.”¹⁶³ This sort of writing hints at the need for working through established congregational cultures to create a unified vision of what the church could and should be. This unified vision will make plain the areas of the established culture that are impediments to Kingdom effectiveness and reaching the realization of the

¹⁶¹Terrance Deal and Kent Peterson, in *Shaping School Culture: The Heart of Leadership*, implement the ideas presented in this dissertation in the context of a local school. They created an accompanying fieldbook for compiling the information gathered during qualitative study. Terrence E. Deal and Kent D. Peterson, *Shaping School Culture: The Heart of Leadership* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1999). A modification of the *Shaping School Culture Fieldbook* would be a good tool for pastors and key informants working with new pastors. Kent D. Peterson and Terrence E. Deal, *The Shaping School Culture Fieldbook* (San Francisco: Jossey-bass, 2002). Deal and Peterson see school leaders as responsible for multiple roles. They write, “School leaders take on eight major symbolic roles: (1) *Historian*: seeks to understand the social and normative past of the school. (2) *Anthropological sleuth*: analyzes and probes for the current set of norms, values, and beliefs that define the current culture. (3) *Visionary*: works with other leaders and the community to define a deeply value-focused picture of the future for the school; has a constantly evolving vision. (4) *Symbol*: affirms values through dress, behavior, attention, routines. (5) *Potter*: shapes and is shaped by the school’s heroes, rituals, traditions, ceremonies, symbols; brings in staff who share core values. (6) *Poet*: uses language to reinforce values and sustains the school’s best image of itself. (7) *Actor*: improvises in the school’s inevitable dramas, comedies, and tragedies. (8) *Healer*: oversees transitions and change in the life of the school; heals the wounds of conflict and loss.” Deal and Peterson, *Shaping School Culture*, 87-99.

¹⁶²Jesse Stoner, Ken Blanchard, and Drea Zigarmi, “The Power of Vision,” in *Leading at a Higher Level: Blanchard on Leadership and Creating High Performing Organizations* (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Prentice Hall, 2007), 23.

¹⁶³Stoner, Blanchard, and Zigarmi, “The Power of Vision,” 23.

shared vision. A disciplined approach of church leadership that works through the established church culture demonstrates respect to the church, and causes the membership to trust the leaders because they feel that their opinions are valued.¹⁶⁴

Values terminology is also ubiquitous in organizational and business leadership literature. Hans Finzel wisely recommends, “If you are a new leader, your number one job is to study the values and group traditions that make people behave as they do.”¹⁶⁵ Church leadership, organizational and business culture, and anthropological researchers all agree that knowing the values of the persons one hopes to lead is essential to effective leadership. Anthropology provides the tools that all of the other disciplines need for values discovery. Established church pastors would be wise to implement these anthropological tools in order to lead out effectively on the preferred vision.

Cultural IQ as a Business Culture Tool

Business authors, Fons Trompenaars and Charles Hampden-Turner, write in their introduction to business culture, “It is our belief that you can never understand other cultures. Those who are married know that it is impossible ever completely to understand even people of your own culture.”¹⁶⁶ Trompenaars and Turner seem pessimistic, but some cultural understanding is better than none at all.

One author who has written extensively for business leaders on understanding culture and how it relates to managing people is David Livermore. Livermore describes *Cultural Intelligence*, or *CQ*, in his book *Leading with Cultural Intelligence*. He presents

¹⁶⁴Business leaders know that trust is a huge asset in interpersonal relationships, especially when one hopes to lead another. Stephen M. R. Covey writes, “In a high-trust relationship, you can say the wrong thing, and people will still get your meaning. In a low-trust relationship, you can be very measured, even precise, and they’ll still misinterpret you.” Stephen M. R. Covey and Rebecca R. Merrill, *The Speed of Trust: The One Thing That Changes Everything* (New York: Free Press, 2006), 6.

¹⁶⁵Finzel, “Creating the Right Leadership Culture,” 270.

¹⁶⁶Fons Trompenaars and Charles Hampden-turner, *Riding The Waves of Culture: Understanding Cultural Diversity in Business*, 2nd ed. (London: Nicholas Brealey Publishing, 1997), 1.

a four-step cycle for leading with cultural intelligence.¹⁶⁷ He also wisely points out one of the gaps in his research: “Understanding the sociological differences in cultural beliefs, values, and behaviors is essential, but it is incomplete apart from also exploring the psychological dynamics involved as one person interacts with another.”¹⁶⁸ Livermore reminds his readers that anthropological tools and resources are an important component of the leadership puzzle, but they are only complementary to other disciplines, including psychology. Although it is not the prerogative of this dissertation, there is certainly room to write on the usefulness of psychological methods in navigating church cultures, assuming the psychological methods can be applied in a method commensurate with a biblical worldview.

Organizational Culture Change Tools and Resources

Even most business models understand discovery must precede transformation. Terrence Deal and Kent Peterson wisely write, “Changing something that is not well understood is a surefire recipe for stress and ultimate failure. A leader must inquire below the surface of what is happening to formulate a deeper explanation of what is really going on. To be effective, school leaders must read and understand their school and community culture.”¹⁶⁹ But not all business literature focuses on understanding before changing, some even seem to have contempt for that sort of leadership process.

For the purposes of maintaining church health, the culture transforming principles of Price Pritchett and Ron Pound should be avoided. They challenge, “Your

¹⁶⁷Livermore’s four-step cycle, “(1) CQ Drive: What is your motivation for this assignment? (2) CQ Knowledge: What cultural information is needed to fulfill this task? (3) CQ Strategy: What is your plan for this initiative? (4) CQ Action: What behaviors do you need to adapt to do this effectively?” David Livermore, *Leading with Cultural Intelligence: The New Secret to Success* (New York: AMACOM, 2010), 4.

¹⁶⁸Livermore, *Leading with Cultural Intelligence*, 20.

¹⁶⁹Deal and Peterson, *Shaping School Culture*, 86.

approach to changing the culture should be highly out of character for the organization. Choose methods that stand in stark contrast to standard operating procedures. From the very outset you must free yourself from the existing culture and conceive a plan of action that starts to liberate the organization from its past.”¹⁷⁰ They bemoan, “Culture change moves at a slow crawl if the existing culture gets to call the shots on methodology. Or to put it another way, you’ll have trouble creating a *new* culture if you insist on doing it in ways that are consistent with the old one. Remember, the *old* culture is designed to protect itself, not to bring about its own demise.”¹⁷¹ Pritchett and Pound finally warn, “Don’t get bogged down in the endless task of ‘culture analysis.’ Culture change should be guided by where the organization needs to go, not by where it’s been.”¹⁷² Perhaps Pritchett and Pound would recognize churches as exceptions to their highly abrasive business practices, but even if they would not, there is much truth in what they say. Established cultures are tenacious, and working through them takes much longer than ignoring them and imposing an outsider’s perspective and methods.

Understanding Personality Types as an Organizational Culture Tool

Each congregation exhibits unique cultural traits, and every member of the congregation interacts from a unique and individual personality and temperament. The focus of this research is on anthropological tools and resources; however, an extensive study on personality types for the purposes of pastoral ministry could serve as an excellent tool in the hands of pastors. One helpful resource for beginning a study on the influence of personalities on churches is Helen Palmer’s book, *The Enneagram: Understanding Yourself and the Others in Your Life*. The Enneagram, among other

¹⁷⁰Price Pritchett and Ron Pound, *High-Velocity Culture Change: A Handbook for Managers* (Dallas: Pritchett, 2007), 2.

¹⁷¹Pritchett and Pound, *High-Velocity Culture Change*, 2.

¹⁷²Ibid.

personality and psychological tools and resources, could buttress a pastor's understanding of root causes of interpersonal conflict, but these tools must also be implemented with discernment and biblical balance.¹⁷³ Perhaps local churches would benefit from scholars in the Biblical Counseling field developing tools and resources to help pastors better understand their people's personality influences on the culture of the church. Though personality works through and exhibits culture, leaders need to understand the difference.

Another helpful personality discovery tool is the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI). Roy Oswald and Otto Kroeger write, "We have a strong conviction that learning the categories of type increases effectiveness in parish ministry."¹⁷⁴ They later write, "The MBTI instrument has produced much healing in staff relations in business and industry. It's time now that it be more widely used within the church."¹⁷⁵ Personality, closely associated with an individual's psychology, is an important area of research that could help pastors in understanding their churches.

Anthropological Insights from Paul Hiebert

Since the bulk of this dissertation is guided by the work of Paul Hiebert in *Anthropological Insights for Missionaries*, and the work of Aubrey Malphurs in *Look before You Lead*, the closing section of this literature review will serve as a brief introduction to the two authors. Paul Hiebert is a seminal anthropologist and missiologist whose writings are still bearing much fruit, years after his ink has dried. The following section presents a brief introduction to his thoughts on culture and systems.

Paul Hiebert poses the question,

How should we, as missionaries, pastors, and church workers, prepare for our

¹⁷³Helen Palmer, *The Enneagram: Understanding Yourself and the Others in Your Life* (San Francisco: Harper San Francisco, 1988), xii.

¹⁷⁴Roy M. Oswald and Otto Kroeger, *Personality Type and Religious Leadership* (New York: Alban Institute, 1998), 9.

¹⁷⁵Oswald and Kroeger, *Personality Type and Religious Leadership*, 8.

ministries? It is increasingly clear that we must master the skill of human exegesis as well as biblical exegesis to meaningfully communicate the gospel in human contexts. We need to study the social, cultural, psychological, and ecological systems in which humans live in order to communicate the gospel in ways the people we serve understand and believe.¹⁷⁶

Hiebert believes, “As Christians, we are often unaware that our beliefs are frequently shaped more by our culture than by the gospel. We take our Christianity to be biblically based and normative for everyone. We do not stop to ask what parts of it come from our sociocultural and historical contexts, and what parts come from Scripture.”¹⁷⁷ He recognizes, “Most monocultural people are largely unaware of the cultures in which they live, or the depth to which these contexts shape how and what they think and do.”¹⁷⁸ Currently, the world has developed, through the connectivity of the Internet, into a place when monocultures are scarce. Hiebert’s point regarding monocultures, however, is applicable to established churches. Most pastors are unaware of how their home church has shaped their perceptions of the “proper” way of doing church.

Hiebert additionally proposes working within and through cultures in a *systems approach*. Hiebert writes,

Systems approaches to integration see causality as multidirectional. . . . Thus in systems, one variable is the underlying cause for change. Social changes can lead to cultural, psychological, and biological changes. But changes originating in culture will bring about changes in social organization, personality types, and material culture. Similarly, spiritual transformations will affect social, cultural, and other dimensions of human life. And, there are feedback loops in which changes in one variable cause changes in other variables that, in turn, affect the original variable.¹⁷⁹

A good illustration of Hiebert’s systems understanding in a local church context would be a deacon who begins to develop dementia. The root cause is biological, but can result in strong pastoral/deacon conflict that could spill over into the life of the church. Or suppose most of the ministry is going great, but suddenly the church has to

¹⁷⁶Hiebert, *The Gospel in Human Contexts*, 12.

¹⁷⁷Hiebert, *The Gospel in Human Contexts*, 18.

¹⁷⁸*Ibid.*, 19.

¹⁷⁹*Ibid.*, 133.

begin paying taxes on its considerable property. The resultant stress and anxiety could generate unrest and division in the congregation. Then, imagine a new pastor moving to that church field nearly a year and a half later. The church has lost 50 members and is not meeting budget. If left in the dark by the membership, the new pastor will try to deal with the symptoms of a disrupted system without understanding the actual cause.

Hiebert divides his systems into *organic* and *mechanistic*. Mechanistic systems are closed systems like clocks and computers. “Organic systems are open systems. Examples are living beings such as cells, organs (liver, heart), and organisms (plants, animals, humans). These also include larger systems of organisms, such as ant colonies and bee hives. In human systems, these include groups, organizations, societies, and, ultimately, the global human web.”¹⁸⁰ Under this definition, churches would be considered organic systems. Hiebert believes systems thinking can yield fruitful results in ministry contexts. He writes, “A system-of-systems approach in Christian ministries helps us exegete individuals and groups of people.”¹⁸¹

Hiebert considers systems investigation as an essential component of ethnographic research. He argues, “Ethnographic research is essential to our understanding of, and ministry to, all face-to-face communities. Any ministry to them must begin with a deep understanding of their social and cultural systems and their histories.”¹⁸² Paul Hiebert’s research and writing guide the discussion of anthropological research in chapter three.

Church Leadership According to Aubrey Malphurs

Aubrey Malphurs is one of the leading voices in church leadership resources and consulting. He believes the primary indicator for successful pastor-congregation

¹⁸⁰Hiebert, *The Gospel in Human Contexts*, 134.

¹⁸¹Ibid., 159.

¹⁸²Ibid., 164.

relationships is the aptitude and temperament of the pastor. Malphurs explains, “It is imperative that anyone going into ministry ask a number of questions at the onset. The critical question that few ever ask when called to an older, traditional church is, Am I a change agent? The answer lies in the assessment process.”¹⁸³ He believes men need to be a high “D” or “I” on the DISC survey scale if they are going to try to lead a congregation through change. Malphurs also accepts the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator as a helpful tool in discovering those best equipped to become change-agents in churches.

Malphurs further believes that cultural dissimilarity between the pastor and his congregation is helpful in church revitalization. He looks to Nehemiah as a quintessential outsider, and therefore specially equipped to transform the status quo among God’s people. Nehemiah, as an outsider, brought a fresh perspective to the plight of his people. They had become immersed in their difficulties and accepted them as the status quo. Nehemiah viewed the situation from a different perspective and arrived in time to shake them out of their lethargy.¹⁸⁴

Although Malphurs values the new perspective an outsider will bring, he also values investigating the current realities of a congregation before seeking transformation. In his seminal work *Advanced Strategic Planning*, Malphurs presents three organizational questions that should guide strategic planning: (1) Who are we? (2) Where are we going? (3) How will we get there?¹⁸⁵ Malphurs explains that the question of “Who we are?” “gets at the church’s DNA.” The question of “Where are we going?” “identifies the

¹⁸³Aubrey Malphurs, *Pouring New Wine into Old Wineskins: How to Change a Church Without Destroying It* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1993), 43.

¹⁸⁴Malphurs, *Pouring New Wine into Old Wineskins*, 71.

¹⁸⁵Aubrey Malphurs, *Advanced Strategic Planning: A New Model for Church and Ministry Leaders*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2005), 25.

church's mission and vision." And, the question of, "How will we get there?" "addresses how the church will accomplish its mission and vision."¹⁸⁶

Another way Aubrey Malphurs advises both churches and pastors is through the exploration of values. Malphurs warns,

I advise a pastor who is considering a call to a church or is candidating with a church to make an effort to discover the church's values. First, the candidate should ask for a credo or values statement but should not be surprised if they do not know what he is talking about. Second, he should request a copy of the current budget. Then he should visit the church, either anonymously or by request, and observe and listen. Observe the facilities and the people. If they do not know who you are, observe how well you are treated. Did they greet and welcome you? Are people friendly? Listen to what people talk about as they enter the church and walk its corridors.¹⁸⁷

He likewise encourages the potential church to do their due diligence in researching their prospective pastor.¹⁸⁸

Malphurs also notes the great difficulty inherent in entering into an established congregation. He warns,

Few established churches are willing to hand over the reins of leadership completely to a new pastor. Before these pastors can become leaders in the church, they must build credibility and win the trust of the congregation. This can take anywhere from four to eight years, and some churches will never let the pastor lead. In a sense new pastors are like new members; they're joining the congregation and it will take time for them to prove themselves.¹⁸⁹

Malphurs makes valuable contributions toward effectively respecting and seeking to understand an established church culture. He comes to many of the

¹⁸⁶Malphurs, *Advanced Strategic Planning*, 25.

¹⁸⁷Ibid., 114.

¹⁸⁸For the prospective church he writes, "I counsel churches that are looking for a pastor to pursue any or all of the following with promising candidates. First, ask them for a core values statement, but do not be surprised if they do not know what one is. Second, send them the Core Values Audit found in appendix E and ask them to complete it and send you the results. Third, send them a copy of this book and ask them to read this chapter and interact with you over its contents either by phone or face-to-face. Fourth, ask them to describe for you their vision of the ideal church. Also ask them what they would not be willing to compromise. This will bring their values to the surface." Ibid., 114, 15.

¹⁸⁹Aubrey Malphurs, *The Nuts and Bolts of Church Planting: A Guide for Starting Any Kind of Church* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2011), 9.

conclusions of anthropologists, but without demonstrating to his readers how to conduct a full discovery through the implementation of anthropological tools and resources. His work serves in guiding the discussion of church leadership principles in chapter four.

The Need for Cross-discipline Research

In regard to integrating missiology and the social sciences Michael Pocock writes, “In spite of the fact that missiology presupposes the value of the sciences, there are many evangelicals who are wary of attempts to integrate the two. There are, of course, dangers. We tend to either reject the sciences or adopt and apply them with insufficient discrimination.”¹⁹⁰ This dissertation is an attempt to seek a balanced approach to integration that should set a pattern of biblical faithfulness with an eye toward contextualization and effective pastor-congregation relationships. The work of church leadership could carry on without considering the formal nomenclature of anthropology and its tools or resources, but it cannot carry on effectively without implementing many of its discovery tools and principles. The integration of church leadership principles with anthropological tools and resources could have a very positive effect on pastor-congregation relationships, resulting in healthier churches and greater Kingdom impact through them.

This literature review has demonstrated the fact that the field of cultural anthropology offers a myriad of tools and resources that could be implemented in church leadership. It seems many of the church leadership authors already understand the idea of congregational culture. They are even employing some of the tools and resources of anthropologists in engaging congregational cultures. Evangelical authors, in general however, seem to overlook the value of exploring all that cultural anthropology has to offer the world of church leadership. This literature review begs the question, where are

¹⁹⁰Edward Rommen and Gary Corwin, *Missiology and the Social Sciences: Contributions, Cautions and Conclusions* (Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library, 1996), 11.

the evangelical authors who can begin to lead the way in employing cultural anthropology in the field of church leadership?

CHAPTER 3
ANTHROPOLOGICAL INSIGHTS FOR MISSIONARIES
AS A PARADIGM FOR IMPLEMENTING
ANTHROPOLOGICAL TOOLS
AND RESOURCES

Introduction

The outline of Paul Hiebert's book *Anthropological Insights for Missionaries*, serves as the outline for this chapter. This outline helps to narrow the discipline of anthropology to a manageable number of anthropological insights. Classifying the discipline of anthropology under chapter and section divisions could be repeated with Eugene Nida's *Message and Mission*, or Charles Kraft's *Anthropology for Christian Witness*, or Brian Howell and Jeneell Paris' *Introducing Cultural Anthropology*, or some sort of combination of cultural anthropology sources.

The most important component of this chapter is the compilation of the anthropological tools and resources gleaned for application in an established church context. Paul Hiebert's book was written with the intent of applying anthropological principles to the task of missions. His book serves as a natural cross-discipline work that provides anthropological insights for pastors. Ultimately, I desire this dissertation be helpful in encouraging and equipping pastors in their task, and in provoking further research surrounding the applications of anthropological tools and resources in the pastorate.

Since Hiebert's *Anthropological Insights for Missionaries* helped spur me in this research direction, it is fitting that the major divisions of the book serve as the divisions of this chapter. I follow Hiebert's basic outline, but I make necessary adaptations toward established churches as the cultural context for pastors. Therefore, I

present an anthropological paradigm for aiding the work of local church pastors by presenting anthropological tools and resources for understanding and working through the culture of an established church. In addition to Hiebert's works, many prominent anthropologists'/missiologists' distilled ideas and principles are presented herein.

Anthropological Insights for Missionaries has four main divisions and eleven separate chapters; therefore, this chapter will be divided into corresponding first-level and second-level headings. The four major headings are (1) The Gospel and Human Cultures (2) Cultural Differences and the Pastor (3) Cultural Differences and the Message and (4) Cultural Differences and the Bicultural Community.

The Gospel and Human Cultures

Bruce Ashford writes of Paul Hiebert, "Hiebert, an evangelical anthropologist and missiologist, has sought to combine the best insights from several schools of anthropology, including Malinowski's functionalism and Geertz's symbolic anthropology, and apply them to missiology."¹ Hiebert's scholarly integration of anthropological and missiological principles serves as a pattern to be followed when integrating anthropological and missiological principles within established church leadership practices. As Ashford has noted, Hiebert's work is a synthesis of several schools of anthropological thought and therefore it functions as a well-rounded representation up to the time of his writing *Anthropological Insights for Missionaries*. Further research could be conducted to integrate more of the anthropological tools and resources that have been developed since the writing of Hiebert's book, but that research must be left to another. My intention is to use one primary Christian cultural anthropologist as an interlocutor

¹Bruce Riley Ashford, "The Gospel and Culture," in *Theology and Practice of Mission: God, the Church, and the Nations*, ed. Bruce Riley Ashford (Nashville: B&H Publishing, 2011), 111. Arnold Cook writes of Donald MacGavran, "He became the architect of the new discipline of the 1970s called 'missiology.' It has been correctly defined as 'the harnessing of the social sciences,' i.e., sociology, anthropology, education and psychology, but always rendering them subservient to the queen of the sciences, theology." Arnold L. Cook, *Historical Drift: Must My Church Die? How to Detect, Diagnose and Reverse the Trends* (Camp Hill, PA: Christian Publications, 2000), 36.

with Aubrey Malphurs and his work *Look before You Lead*. And, since Hiebert is one of the principal authors who provoked me to do this research in the first place, and, since he is so well respected in both the anthropological world and the missiological world, it is therefore fitting that his work serves in this dissertation as a foundational introduction to cultural anthropology for established church leadership.

Hiebert's research is important to the work of local church pastors because, as Ashford notes, "Hiebert's work provides a social science model that is informed by, and complements, the biblical doctrines of creation and man."² Hiebert's evangelical epistemological foundations make him an especially important figure for evangelical pastors who have tended to neglect the discipline of anthropology as it relates to mission. Hiebert is also helpful because he teaches specialized anthropological foundational understandings in ways that are readily accessible to non-specialists, like local church pastors.

Cross-cultural missiological applications were the primary impetus for Hiebert's research. He believed the application of anthropological principles to modern missiology was important and necessary. As he put it, "The modern mission movement was born during a time of Western colonial and technological expansion, and too often Western missionaries equated the gospel with Western civilization."³ Hiebert's desire was to correct the colonial mindset of missionaries and to use anthropological tools and resources to respectfully engage the various cultures of the world.

The following quote displays one of Hiebert's strong rebukes to the colonial mindset and ethnocentric missions patterns. Hiebert writes,

Today the young churches planted by the early missionaries are speaking out, calling us to be more aware of human cultures and their differences, and reminding

²Ashford, "The Gospel And Culture," 111.

³Paul G. Hiebert, *Anthropological Insights for Missionaries* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1985), 9. Hiebert notes exceptions, stating, "Here and there individual missionaries identified closely with the people they served, and learned their ways." Ibid.

us that God is not a tribal God, but the God of the world; that the gospel is for everyone; and that church is one body that breaks down the walls of ethnicity, class, and nationalism that divide humans into warring camps. At the same time, there has been a growing awareness in the social sciences, particularly in anthropology, of the need to understand people in their cultural settings. Out of this has come the growing realization that missionaries today need not only a solid understanding of the Scriptures, but also a deep knowledge of the people they serve.⁴

Hiebert's correction to faulty colonial missions' efforts informed missionaries regarding their need to understand the cultures of the peoples they serve, and to provoke those missionaries to gain the needed understanding through the implementation of anthropological tools and resources. Therefore, he writes, "This book is an attempt to provide young missionaries with some basic tools for understanding other cultures and for understanding themselves as they enter these cultures."⁵

Hiebert is not alone in seeing the value of applying anthropological principles to the missiological task. Louis Luzbetak, a conspicuous Catholic missiologist writes, "We call our field missiological anthropology because it is a blend of missiology and anthropology: its scope and purpose are missiological, whereas the processes and analyses are anthropological. Missiology suggests the issues, parameters, and goals; anthropology provides the particular (culturological) perspective."⁶ Though Hiebert and Luzbetak tended to focus on missionaries and their contexts, the principles in their writings could also be distilled and implemented in the task of applying anthropology within the context of an established local church, as I demonstrate in the concluding chapter of this dissertation.

The discipline of anthropology provides missionaries, as well as local church pastors, with an assortment of principles, tools, and resources for cultural engagement and ministry. Nevertheless, because of the naturalistic philosophical assumptions of many

⁴Hiebert, *Anthropological Insights for Missionaries*, 10.

⁵Ibid.

⁶Louis J. Luzbetak, *The Church and Cultures: An Applied Anthropology for the Religious Worker* (Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library, 1970), 12.

anthropologists, the implementation of these principles, tools, and resources requires biblical worldview discernment.⁷ Charles Kraft lists three distinct areas where this worldview discernment is needed when implementing the tools provided by behavioral sciences. First, pastors/elders need to be aware that the behavioral sciences *tend to be naturalistic, as if there were no God*, or, if God exists, He is not considered very important. Second, the *extreme relativism* that anthropology and the other behavioral sciences tend to assume is another weakness. A third problem Kraft draws attention to is the *emphasis on human diversity*. Often, the incorrect impression is given that people of different societies are so different from each other that they really have very little in common.⁸ Aside from these philosophical errors of presupposition, cultural anthropology still has much to contribute to the work of missionaries and pastors.

The Pastorate and Anthropology

Paul Hiebert argues for a holistic approach to understanding humans. He warns against the Christian tendency of segmenting man's makeup and instead argues for holism. According to Hiebert, holism, in the anthropological sense, is "a broad integrated

⁷Hiebert explains his philosophy of anthropology as it relates to worldview: "Another stream of thought that emerged after the rejection of theories of cultural evolution was cultural anthropology. This focused its attention upon systems of ideas and symbols. 'Culture' came to mean not merely the aggregates of human thought and behavior, but both the systems of beliefs that lie behind specific ideas and actions and the symbols by which those ideas and actions are expressed. Cultures are seen as integrated wholes in which the many parts work together to meet the basic needs of their members. Far from reducing beliefs and behavior to predetermined responses, this concept of culture makes rational human thought and choice both possible and meaningful. It has helped us to understand how people communicate with one another and build larger societies without which life would be impossible. It has also helped us to understand cultural differences, the nature of cross-cultural communication, and how societies change. These understandings are invaluable in the mission task. Anthropologists have recently focused their attention on the fundamental assumptions that underlie explicit cultural beliefs. Each culture seems to have its own world view, or fundamental way of looking at things. If this is so, cross-cultural communication at the deepest level is possible only when we understand the world views of the people to whom we minister. It also means that people will understand the gospel from the perspective of their world view. Consequently, missionaries must understand not only the explicit symbols but also the implicit beliefs in a culture if they are to communicate the gospel to its people with a minimum of distortion." Hiebert, *Anthropological Insights for Missionaries*, 21.

⁸Charles H. Kraft, *Anthropology for Christian Witness* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1996), 90.

understanding of human beings that deals with the full range of human existence.”⁹

Regarding a holistic approach, Hiebert explains, “We must learn what theology and the sciences have to teach us about people and weave these insights into a comprehensive understanding of humans as whole beings, realizing that our knowledge is always imperfect and incomplete.”¹⁰

Although most missionaries and pastors have a pretty good grasp on a theological understanding of anthropology (the doctrine of man), Paul Hiebert believes there is much room for improvement in evangelicals understanding of anthropology as a social science. Hiebert writes, “As evangelicals we emphasize knowledge of the Bible, but rarely stop to examine the people and cultures we serve.”¹¹ Hiebert says his goal is to “look at what anthropology has to contribute to our study of different peoples in their historical and cultural contexts and examine the implications these insights have for our ministries. These are areas in which many evangelical missionaries are weak.”¹² I agree with Hiebert’s assessment, and I argue that this weakness permeates modern established church leadership as well. To combat this deficiency established church pastors must attempt to know all they can about human cultures, especially congregational culture.

I understand congregational culture to be the more or less integrated system of beliefs, feelings, and values created and shared by a particular congregation that enable the people to function as a church and are communicated by means of their systems of symbols and rituals, patterns of behavior, and their material products.¹³ The discipline of

⁹Hiebert, *Anthropological Insights for Missionaries*, 22.

¹⁰Ibid., 26.

¹¹Ibid., 14.

¹²Ibid., 16.

¹³This definition is a combination of Hiebert’s definition for culture, Hiebert, *Anthropological Insights for Missionaries*, 30, and Aubrey Malphurs’ definition of congregational culture, Aubrey Malphurs, *Look before You Lead: How to Discern and Shape Your Church Culture* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2013), 20.

studying congregational culture could be referred to as congregational cultural anthropology, and in the following sections I present some of the anthropological tools and resources mentioned in Paul Hiebert's book that could be implemented in this discipline.

When a pastor enters an established church he is entering a system of culture. And, in order to be effective in working through the established church the pastor must understand his own culture, the culture of the congregation's context, and the culture of the congregation itself. Another way to look at the cultural understanding a pastor needs to develop is alluded to by Eugene Nida and David Hesselgrave. They believe that effective Bible communicators need to understand three cultures in order to effectively communicate: the culture of the original context of the Scriptures, their own culture, and the culture of the audience.¹⁴ In the case of a local church pastor, his audience would be twofold, the congregation and the unchurched. He must work through the former to effectively reach the latter (Eph 4:12).

The primary task of the pastor is to teach the people of God to live in obedience to the Word of God. Without formal training or study, established pastors might overlook the fact that the Scriptures were originally delivered in culturally appropriate ways. Hiebert argues that anthropological considerations are essential to the culturally sensitive task of hermeneutics. He writes, "Since we are all given the right to read and interpret the Scriptures, our first task is to remain faithful to biblical truth. This begins with careful *exegesis*, in which the message of the Bible is understood within a specific cultural and historical context."¹⁵ If a pastor fails to understand the original

¹⁴Eugene A. Nida, *Message and Mission: The Communication of the Christian Faith* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1960), 33-48. David J. Hesselgrave, *Communicating Christ Cross-Culturally: An Introduction to Missionary Communication* (Grand Rapids: Academie Books, 1978), 72, 73.

¹⁵Hiebert, *Anthropological Insights for Missionaries*, 19.

meaning of the text within its cultural framework, he may also miss the application of the text for himself and his hearers.

Once a pastor understands the original cultural context of the Scriptures he must then make application within his current cultural context. Hiebert reasons, “Our second task is to discover what the meaning of the biblical message is for us in our particular cultural and historical setting and then determine what our response should be. This is *hermeneutics*. Although the message of the Bible is supracultural—above all cultures—it must be understood by people living within their own heritage and time frame.”¹⁶ The task of the pastor is to understand the Bible, his own cultural understandings and practices, and those of his congregation. He then is to bring the Bible to bear upon the minds and hearts of his congregation.

Paul Hiebert and Eloise Meneses propose a three-step process for identifying and understanding a local culture. “The first step in ministry is to analyze different types of societies and cultures from a phenomenological or descriptive point of view. Our purpose is to understand them as those living in them do. We refer to this as an *emic* approach to the study of cultures.”¹⁷ Hiebert and Meneses also emphasize that the goal is to seek to understand, rather than evaluate, the validity of the events and thoughts of the ones studied. To gain a comprehensive understanding Hiebert and Meneses propose the implementation of anthropological categories and methods.¹⁸

The second step in their paradigm is to decipher *ontology*. Hiebert and Meneses write, “We must move on to ontology and test these beliefs to determine which are true.”¹⁹ In ontological discoveries, Hiebert and Meneses propose using *reality testing*

¹⁶Hiebert, *Anthropological Insights for Missionaries*, 19.

¹⁷Paul G. Hiebert and Eloise Hiebert Meneses, *Incarnational Ministry: Planting Churches in Band, Tribal, Peasant, and Urban Societies* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1995), 14.

¹⁸Ibid., 14-15.

¹⁹Ibid., 15. Hiebert and Meneses warn, “If we stop with phenomenology, as many social

based upon integrating scientific and anthropological observation. They also propose testing reality by Scripture in *theological testing*. Here they promote intercultural theological dialog and discovery. After truly understanding a people's ways of believing and behaving, those beliefs and behaviors need to be measured against the teachings of Scripture.

Next, Hiebert and Meneses write, "The third step in our approach to planting and nurturing churches is ministry. Phenomenological analysis and ontological critique help us understand reality. We cannot stop there, however; we must invite people to faith in Jesus Christ and fellowship with his people."²⁰ It does not matter how much a missionary or pastor knows about the Bible, himself, or the people to whom he is assigned if he never brings the Bible to bear on their lives.

Hiebert and Meneses urge missionaries to record their observations. This type of anthropological research and recording falls under the discipline of *ethnography*. According to David Fetterman, "Ethnography is the art and science of describing a group or culture."²¹ James Spradley further explains, "Ethnographic fieldwork is the hallmark of cultural anthropology."²² He nuances the term a bit by writing, "Rather than *studying people*, ethnography means *learning from people*."²³ Ethnographic research and recording

scientists do, we are left with a philosophical relativism in which every belief is treated as true and every cultural practice as good. This does not fit our human experience, nor does it square with Scripture." Hiebert and Meneses, *Incarnational Ministry*, 15.

²⁰Ibid., 18.

²¹David M Fetterman, *Ethnography: Step by Step* (Newbury Park, CA: Sage, 1989), 11.

²²James P. Spradley, *Participant Observation* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1980), 3.

²³Ibid., 3. Clifford Geertz writes, "In anthropology, or anyway social anthropology, what the practioners [sic] do is ethnography. And it is in understanding what ethnography is, or more exactly *what doing ethnography is*, that a start can be made toward grasping what anthropological analysis amounts to as a form of knowledge. This, it must immediately be said, is not a matter of methods. From one point of view, that of the textbook, doing ethnography is establishing rapport, selecting informants, transcribing texts, taking genealogies, mapping fields, keeping a diary, and so on. But it is not these things, techniques and received procedures, that define the enterprise. What defines it is the kind of intellectual effort it is: an

is an effort to understand the meaning of actions and events from the perspective of the people studied.²⁴ This type of cultural discovery could prove beneficial to pastors, as well as missionaries.

Spradley believes, “In doing field work, ethnographers make cultural inferences from three sources: (1) from what people say; (2) from the way people act; and (3) from the artifacts people use.”²⁵ Ethnographers generate hypotheses based on observing and recording the ways of the people, and these hypotheses must be tested and refined “until the ethnographer becomes relatively certain that people share a particular system of cultural meanings.”²⁶ The ethnographer is then ready to present an adequate cultural description.

David Fetterman describes the details of what is to be recorded in an ethnography, or ethnographic report: “Verbatim quotations are extremely useful in presenting a credible report of the research. Quotations allow the reader to judge the quality of the work—how close the ethnographer is to the thoughts of natives in the field—and to assess whether the ethnographer used such data appropriately to support the conclusions.”²⁷ According to Fetterman, “The ethnography can be written in many styles and in many formats. A typical ethnography describes the history of the group, the geography of the location, kinship patterns, symbols, politics, economic systems, educational or socialization systems, and the degree of contact between the target culture

elaborate venture in, to borrow a notion from Gilbert Ryle, ‘thick description.’” Clifford Geertz, *The Interpretation of Cultures: Selected Essays* (New York: Basic Books, 1973), 5, 6.

²⁴James Spradley, *The Ethnographic Interview* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1979), 5.

²⁵Ibid., 8.

²⁶Ibid.

²⁷Fetterman, *Ethnography: Step by Step*, 22.

and the mainstream culture.”²⁸ Typical ethnographic research and reporting requires at least six months of research and writing, and could take up to two years, or longer.

The anthropological discipline of ethnographic research provides valuable tools and resources for established church pastors. In *The Gospel in Human Contexts*, Paul Hiebert emphasizes the ethnographic methods of: observation, participant-observation, conversations and interviews, key informants, ethnosemantics, case studies, grounded theory,²⁹ and participatory research and action.³⁰

The aforementioned are some of the more accessible tools and resources from the field of anthropology. Hiebert’s consistent argumentation for a holistic understanding of humans liberates missionaries to implement anthropological tools and resources on the mission field. Upon reading this dissertation, pastors should also understand that these tools and resources have the potential to improve their understanding of, and relation to, their respective congregations.

Gospel and Culture

Obedience to gospel proclamation results in cultural transformation. Paul Hiebert defines culture as “the more or less integrated systems of ideas, feelings, and values and their associated patterns of behavior and products shared by a group of people who organize and regulate what they think, feel, and do.”³¹ Hiebert points to the

²⁸Fetterman, *Ethnography: Step by Step*, 22

²⁹Anselm Strauss and Juliet Corbin describe a grounded theory approach: “They mean theory that was derived from data, systematically gathered and analyzed through the research process. In this method, data collection, analysis, and eventual theory stand in close relationship to one another. A researcher does not begin a project with a preconceived theory in mind (unless his or her purpose is to elaborate and extend existing theory). Rather, the researcher begins with an area of study and allows the theory to emerge from the data.” Anselm Strauss and Juliet Corbin, *Basics of Qualitative Research: Techniques and Procedures for Developing Grounded Theory*, 2nd ed. (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 1998), 12.

³⁰Paul G. Hiebert, *The Gospel in Human Contexts: Anthropological Explorations for Contemporary Missions* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2009), 164-72.

³¹Hiebert, *Anthropological Insights for Missionaries*, 30.

Jerusalem council of Acts 15 as an example of the early church and culture. In the text many of the Jewish followers of Jesus found it difficult to transition from past religious observances into the era of the New Covenant. These “Judaizers” expected new believers to observe their traditional patterns of worship. They even went as far as requiring circumcision for a right relationship with God. Thereby, the Judaizers failed to properly understand the grace that had come through Christ; instead, they wanted to force new Gentile believers into their traditional ways of doing things. The council’s conclusion was to admonish the Gentiles to “abstain from what has been sacrificed to idols, and from blood, and from what has been strangled, and from sexual immorality. If you keep yourselves from these, you will do well” (Acts 15:29).

As one looks at these admonitions, and compares them to Christ’s commands in the New Covenant, he can discern sexual immorality is in every case a sin. The other warnings against eating food sacrificed to idols, blood, and strangled animals can be interpreted as sins of influence, as Paul describes in Romans and Corinthians (Rom 14:13-23; 1 Cor 10:23-33). Therefore, the Jerusalem council called the Gentiles to cultural sensitivity for the sake of the furtherance of the gospel among the Jews and greater harmony within the body of Christ. The Jerusalem council’s decision was, in large measure, the application of anthropological understandings of culture.³²

Paul Hiebert argues, “the gospel belongs to no culture. It is God’s revelation of himself and his acts to all people. On the other hand, it must always be understood and expressed within human cultural forms. There is no way to communicate it apart from human thought patterns and languages.”³³ Culture and the gospel cannot be separated. As Hiebert goes on to note, “God has chosen to use humans as the primary means for making himself known to other humans. Even when he chose to reveal himself to us, he

³²Certainly the Jerusalem council could be understood as a theological argument against profaning the body of Christ but one cannot ignore the cultural factors involved.

³³Hiebert, *Anthropological Insights for Missionaries*, 30.

did so most fully by becoming a man who lived within the context of human history and a particular culture.”³⁴ The Jews maintain the cultural history of the Law and the Prophets (Rom 3:1-2), but God also receives glory as the gospel takes root among all the nations and peoples (Rev 5:9). In the meantime, there are local bodies of Christ composed of representatives of the world’s cultures, and, in turn, each of these local congregations generates its own distinct culture as it interacts within itself and in its cultural context. Navigating these complex congregational cultures is one of the primary tasks of the pastor.

In *Anthropological Insights for Missionaries*, Hiebert presents three dimensions of culture. His illustration is composed of three concentric triangles. The outer-most triangle represents the Cognitive Dimension: knowledge, logic, and wisdom. The second outer triangle represents the Affective Dimension: feelings and aesthetics. The innermost triangle represents the Evaluative Dimension: values and allegiances.³⁵ These three dimensions of culture provide a categorical framework for missionaries and pastors.

Hiebert describes the outer or cognitive dimension of culture as “the knowledge shared by members of a group or society. Without shared knowledge, communication and community life are impossible.”³⁶ Hiebert further explains, “Cultural knowledge is more than the categories we use to sort out reality. It includes the assumptions and beliefs we make about reality, the nature of the world, and how it works.

³⁴Hiebert, *Anthropological Insights for Missionaries*, 30.

³⁵Ibid., 31. Aubrey Malphurs’ apple metaphor is described in detail in chapter 4 of this dissertation. It can be seen on page 26 of *Look before You Lead*. Louis Luzbetak has also written, “There are three levels of culture: (1) the surface level of *forms*—the symbols as such apart from their meaning, the ‘shape’ of the cultural norms; (2) the middle level of *functions*—the meanings of symbols, the logic, purposefulness, and other relationships underlying and connecting the forms; (3) the deepest level of culture—namely the *psychology* of a society, the basic assumptions, values, and drives, that is, the starting-points in reasoning, reacting, and motivating.” Luzbetak, *The Church and Cultures*, 74, 75.

³⁶Hiebert, *Anthropological Insights for Missionaries*, 30.

Our culture teaches us how to build and sail a boat, how to raise a crop, how to cook a meal, how to run a government, and how to relate to the ancestors, spirits, and gods.”³⁷

The next area addressed under Hiebert’s three dimensions of culture is what he terms *the affective dimension*. Hiebert explains, “Culture also has to do with the feelings people have—with their attitudes, notions of beauty, tastes in food and dress, likes and dislikes, and ways of enjoying themselves or experiencing sorrow.”³⁸ In addition to these personal affections, Hiebert notes the importance of understanding the affective dimension as it relates to group interaction. “Emotions also play an important part in human relationships, in our notions of etiquette and fellowship. We communicate love, hate, scorn, and a hundred other attitudes by our facial expressions, tones of voice, and gestures,” writes Hiebert.³⁹ These affections are demonstrated further through what Hiebert terms *expressive culture*. Hiebert illuminates, “Feelings find particular outlet in what we call ‘expressive culture’—in our art, literature, music, dance, and drama. These we create not for utilitarian purposes but for our own enjoyment and emotional release. This is obvious whether we attend a rock concert or an opera.”⁴⁰

Finally, Hiebert illustrates the evaluative dimension with the innermost of the three concentric triangles. This dimension has to do with values and allegiances. According to Hiebert, “Each culture also has values by which it judges human relationships to be moral or immoral. It ranks some occupations high and others low, some ways of eating proper and other ways unacceptable.”⁴¹ Hiebert believes these value judgments can be subdivided into three distinct types. “First, each culture evaluates

³⁷Hiebert, *Anthropological Insights for Missionaries*, 31.

³⁸Ibid., 32.

³⁹Ibid., 33.

⁴⁰Ibid.

⁴¹Ibid., 33.

cognitive beliefs to determine whether they are true or false.”⁴² Second, Hiebert writes, “Each cultural system also judges the emotional expressions of human life. It teaches people what is beauty and what is ugliness, what to love and what to hate. In some cultures people are encouraged to sing in sharp, piercing voices, in others to sing in deep, mellow tones.”⁴³ Although cultures tend to share a general consensus, according to Hiebert, “Even within the same culture likes and dislikes vary greatly according to settings and subcultures.”⁴⁴ For instance, a teenage boy could head bang to “Enter Sandman” (a hard rock song by Metallica) with his high school football team in the locker room on Friday night, and then croon “Amazing Grace” with his church on Sunday.

For Hiebert’s third type of value judgment he explains, “Each culture judges values and determines right and wrong.”⁴⁵ Practices considered inappropriate in one culture may be considered acceptable in others. For example, is it a sign of disrespect to wear shoes as a guest in a home? Or, should one tell a lie in order to show deference and respect to an elder? Each culture, over time, develops culturally accepted classifications of what is right and wrong behavior.

In addition to the cognitive, affective, and evaluative dimensions of culture, Hiebert mentions the importance of understanding behavior, products, and symbols. He expands on the intricacies of his definition of culture by writing, “Another part of our definition of culture involves ‘behavior and products.’ These are the manifestations of culture that we can see, hear, or experience through our other senses.”⁴⁶ Of behavior, he

⁴²Hiebert, *Anthropological Insights for Missionaries*, 33.

⁴³Ibid.

⁴⁴Ibid.

⁴⁵Hiebert notes, “Each culture has its own moral code and its own culturally defined sins. It judges some acts to be righteous and others to be immoral.” Ibid., 33.

⁴⁶Ibid., 35.

records, “To a great extent people are taught how to behave by their culture. In North America they learn to shake hands, to eat with their forks, to drive on the right side of the road, and to compete with one another for better grades or more money.”⁴⁷ Additionally, he writes, “In formal situations behavior is precisely defined. For example, at a banquet our clothes, behavior, and speech are carefully circumscribed. But everyday life is usually less formal, and we are allowed to choose from a range of permissible behaviors.”⁴⁸

Hiebert also notes the importance of products in cultural understanding. He lists some products, or material objects, such as, “houses, baskets, canoes, masks, carts, cars, computers, and the like.”⁴⁹ Some of the products of a local church could include a decorative cross, a baptistery, the church building, the furniture, technological instruments, and the like.

The next category covered by Hiebert is symbols. “In one sense a culture is made up of many sets of symbols. For instance, speech, writing, traffic signs, money, postage stamps, sounds such as sirens and bells, and smells such as perfumes are but a few of the sets of symbols in Western cultures. Even dress, in addition to its utilitarian value as protection and warmth, conveys feelings and meanings.”⁵⁰ According to Hiebert’s understanding, the cross, in the aforementioned example, functions both as a cultural product and a cultural symbol. There are myriads of symbols in local church settings that present the pastor with opportunities for cultural knowledge and communication. The most powerful cultural symbols used by pastors are those used in their speech.⁵¹

⁴⁷Hiebert, *Anthropological Insights for Missionaries*, 35.

⁴⁸*Ibid.*

⁴⁹*Ibid.*, 36.

⁵⁰*Ibid.*, 37.

⁵¹In this regard Hiebert explains, “It is the shared nature of cultural symbols that makes human communication possible.” *Ibid.*, 38. Hiebert also writes, “But symbols become culture only when a group

Paul Hiebert believes the interactions between the gospel and culture can be understood through the lens of three paradigms: the gospel versus culture, the gospel in culture, and the gospel to culture. Regarding *the gospel versus culture* Hiebert urges, “First, the gospel must be distinguished from all human cultures. It is divine revelation, not human speculation. Since it belongs to no one culture, it can be adequately expressed in all of them.”⁵² Hiebert’s statement reveals the eschatological intention of our all-wise God. God desires all the nations bow before Him (Rev 5:9), singing praise in the representative languages of the world. Additionally, Hiebert warns, “The failure to differentiate between the gospel and human cultures has been one of the great weaknesses of modern Christian missions. Missionaries too often have equated the Good News with their own cultural background.”⁵³ This is also a temptation for pastors. They often fail to realize the cultural elements of their discipleship and tend to evaluate the churches they are now pastoring according to the cultural values they were enculturated in when they were initially discipled. Due to this cultural trap, pastors need to understand the essentials of the gospel, apart from the cultural expressions of that gospel within established churches.

Regarding Hiebert’s second paradigm, *the gospel in culture*, he writes, “Although the gospel is distinct from human cultures, it must always be expressed in cultural forms. Humans cannot receive it apart from their languages, symbols, and rituals. The gospel must become incarnate in cultural forms if the people are to hear and believe.”⁵⁴ This reality should protect pastors from attempting to rid the gospel of its cultural expressions within the local church context. Hiebert elaborates on the idea, “On

of people associate the same meanings with specific forms” (38).

⁵²Hiebert, *Anthropological Insights for Missionaries*, 53.

⁵³Ibid.

⁵⁴Ibid., 54.

the cognitive level, the people must understand the truth of the gospel. On the emotional level, they must experience the awe and mystery of God. And on the evaluative level, the gospel must challenge them to respond in faith. We refer to this process of translating the gospel into a culture . . . as ‘indigenization,’ or ‘contextualization.’”⁵⁵ Hiebert infers, “All cultures can adequately serve as vehicles for the communication of the gospel. If this were not so, people would have to change cultures to become Christians.”⁵⁶ According to this reality, in order to apply this anthropological principle to the task of pastoring a local church, pastors need not fear their congregations doing things in ways that are foreign to the pastor. As a matter of fact, the pastor has failed to contextualize properly if his new church becomes just like the church that disciplined him.

Hiebert’s third paradigm for viewing the gospel and its relation to culture is *the gospel to culture*. Hiebert announces, “Third, the gospel calls all cultures to change. Just as Christ’s life was a condemnation of our sinfulness, so the kingdom of God stands in judgment of all cultures.”⁵⁷ He later explains that the gospel must be both contextualized and prophetic.⁵⁸ According to this understanding, the pastor has a responsibility to understand and work through the existing culture of an established church, but he also has the responsibility to lead the church toward spiritual transformation in areas where the fellowship falls short of living the gospel. Often, pastors are quick to be bothered by, and attempt to change, cultural expressions of the gospel in order to suit their own cultural values. Instead, they should attempt to work through the cultural expressions, but ensure that what is communicated, understood, and lived out is the gospel of Jesus Christ and obedience to the Scriptures.

⁵⁵Hiebert, *Anthropological Insights for Missionaries*, 54.

⁵⁶Ibid., 55.

⁵⁷Ibid.

⁵⁸Ibid.

Thorough cultural understanding cannot be achieved by observing behavior alone. As Paul Hiebert explains, “Much of the knowledge of a culture is explicit. In other words, there are members of the culture who can tell us about it. But behind such knowledge are basic assumptions about the nature of things that are largely implicit. Like foundations, they hold up the culture, yet they remain largely out of sight.”⁵⁹ Hiebert warns, “Those who challenge these assumptions are considered crazy, heretical, or criminal, for if these underpinnings are shaken, the stability of the whole culture is threatened.”⁶⁰ This truth explains the root of many cultural conflicts between new pastors and their congregation. Pastors cannot assume that their congregations assume that which they themselves assume.

Pastors in North American congregational cultures will encounter most of the following value assumptions presented by Paul Hiebert:

Production and profit, Quantification, Assembly-line mentality, Individualism, Search for identity, Self-reliance, Contractual groups, Need to be liked, Private ownership, Humanitarianism, Equality, Informality, Competition and free enterprise, Direct and confrontational, Cooperation, Priority of time over space, Linear time, Future-oriented, Emphasis on youth, Time over space, Emphasis on sight, Abstract knowledge, Storage of information in writing, Emphasis on knowledge, Systematic.⁶¹

American culture is built upon the expectation of fulfilling the “American dream.” This is a land of opportunity with capitalistic tendencies. Therefore, the Americans who attend churches will tend to value the ideas mentioned on Hiebert’s list, and American

⁵⁹Hiebert, *Anthropological Insights for Missionaries*, 42.

⁶⁰Ibid.

⁶¹Ibid., 120-37. Edward Stewart and Milton Bennett write, “People typically have a strong sense of what the world is really like, so it is with surprise that they discover that ‘reality’ is built up out of certain assumptions commonly shared among members of the same culture. *Cultural assumptions* may be defined as abstract, organized, general concepts which pervade a person’s outlook and behavior. They are existential in that they define what is ‘real’ and the nature of that reality for members of a culture. Assumptions are not themselves behavior, which is concrete, discrete, and specific. Additionally, cultural assumptions exist by definition outside of awareness. That is, we cannot readily imagine alternatives to them.” Edward C. Stewart and Milton J. Bennett, *American Cultural Patterns: A Cross-Cultural Perspective*, rev. ed. (Yarmouth, ME: Intercultural Press, 1991), 12.

congregations will express these values in the ways they think, feel, and act. These values are part of the fabric of a typical American worldview.

Worldviews are incredibly complex and permeate every facet of human existence. Paul Hiebert has conducted extensive research dealing with worldviews and worldview transformation. He summarizes his understanding of worldview within five main points. “First, our world view *provides us with cognitive foundations* on which to build our systems of explanation, supplying rational justification for belief in these systems. In other words, if we accept our world-view assumptions, our beliefs and explanations make sense. These assumptions themselves we take for granted and rarely examine.”⁶² According to Hiebert’s understanding, worldviews are built upon philosophical assumptions and therefore it is important for local church pastors to understand what these assumptions are.

Hiebert writes further, “Second, our world view *gives us emotional security*. Faced with a dangerous world full of capricious and uncontrollable forces and crises of drought, illness, and death, and plagued by anxieties about an uncertain future, people turn to their deepest cultural beliefs for emotional comfort and security.”⁶³ According to this explanation, changing worldviews within a local church setting will inevitably lead to discomfort and a relative amount of insecurity.

Worldviews not only affect the emotional culture of a church they also guide the actions of the congregation. Hiebert continues, “Third, our world view *validates our deepest cultural norms*, which we use to evaluate our experiences and choose courses of action. It provides us with our ideas of righteousness—and of sin and how to deal with it.

⁶²Hiebert, *Anthropological Insights for Missionaries*, 48.

⁶³Ibid. Hiebert also writes, “It is not surprising, therefore, that world-view assumptions are most evident at births, initiations, marriages, funerals, harvest celebrations, and other rituals people use to recognize and renew order in life and nature”

It also serves as a map for guiding our behavior. . . . World views serve both predictive and prescriptive functions.”⁶⁴

For his fourth worldview point, Hiebert writes, “Our world view *integrates our culture*. It organizes our ideas, feelings, and values into a single overall design. In doing so it gives us a more or less unified view of reality, which is reinforced by deep emotions and convictions.”⁶⁵ Worldviews generate strong emotions and their violation leads to conflict.

Hiebert points out, finally, that one’s worldview affects his acceptance of cultural change, “We are constantly confronted with new ideas, behavior, and products that come from within our society or from without. These may introduce assumptions that undermine our cognitive order. Our world view helps us to select those that fit our culture and reject those that do not. It also helps us to reinterpret those we adopt so that they fit our overall cultural pattern.”⁶⁶ This argument can give pastors hope that worldviews can be changed over time through incremental transformation. Hiebert devotes an entire book to this topic, *Transforming Worldview: An Anthropological Understanding of How People Change*.⁶⁷ One could assume that all Bible believing Christians should share basically the same worldview, however, much of one’s worldview is culturally rather than biblically informed.

⁶⁴Hiebert, *Anthropological Insights for Missionaries*, 48.

⁶⁵*Ibid.*

⁶⁶*Ibid.*, 48, 49. Paul Hiebert writes, “The integration of cultural traits, complexes, and systems into a single culture whole has considerable significance for missionaries. First, as we shall see later, the more integrated cultures are, the more stable they are—but also the more they resist change. Second, when we introduce change into one part of a culture, there are often unforeseen side affects in other areas of the culture” (49).

⁶⁷Paul Hiebert, *Transforming Worldviews: An Anthropological Understanding of How People Change*. (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2008). A research project that seeks to apply the concepts in *Transforming Worldviews* to local church contexts could prove very fruitful.

An individual's worldview is affected by his interactions with others. Paul Hiebert writes, "All human relationships require a large measure of shared understandings between people. They need a common language, whether verbal or nonverbal, a shared set of expectations of one another, and some consensus of beliefs for communication to take place. In other words, they must share to some extent in a common culture."⁶⁸ Understanding that a group of individuals can share in a common culture informs one's understanding of congregational culture.

A local church evidences the common culture of the community in which the members live, but it can also develop a common sub-culture.⁶⁹ Hiebert prefers to refer to these distinct subcultures as "cultural frames."⁷⁰ Churches are one of Hiebert's examples of a cultural frame. Hiebert explains, "A cultural frame is a social setting that has its own subculture—its own beliefs, rules for behavior, material products, symbols, structures, and settings."⁷¹ He writes, "Individuals in complex societies move from one frame to another, from one group to another, and from one culture to another, 'shifting gears' as they move. Depending on the frame, they may wear different clothes, change their ways of speaking, express different attitudes, and talk about different things."⁷² Individuals have the capacity to operate within varied sets of cultural norms. They can abide by one set of cultural expectations for their vocation, another for their recreation, one more for

⁶⁸Hiebert, *Anthropological Insights for Missionaries*, 51.

⁶⁹Hiebert explains, "Each social institution, for example, is a cultural frame—it has its own community of people, social structure, and subculture." *Ibid.*, 52.

⁷⁰Hiebert writes, "In complex societies, such as the United States or Canada, it is hard to speak of a single culture. Some beliefs and practices may be accepted by all, such as driving on the right side of the road. But the differences are also significant. In such societies it is useful to speak of 'cultural frames.'" *Ibid.*, 41.

⁷¹Hiebert, *Anthropological Insights for Missionaries*, 41. Hiebert writes, "In complex societies, such as the United States or Canada, it is hard to speak of a single culture. Some beliefs and practices may be accepted by all, such as driving on the right side of the road. But the differences are also significant. In such societies it is useful to speak of 'cultural frames'" (41).

⁷²*Ibid.*, 52.

worship, and another for a civic duty, etc. “To an outsider they often seem to be different people in the various contexts,” according to Hiebert.⁷³ These cultural frames accent the discontinuity of an individual’s culture. Hiebert reasons, “Cultural frames are linked to each other in local cultures. The schools, banks, hospitals, and churches in a city are not only made up of many of the same people, they are also related by systems of laws, economic trade, and networks of communication.”⁷⁴ As mentioned by Hiebert, the local church is one of the many cultural frames that exhibit their own distinct cultural expectations. Church members flow in and out of their various cultural frames and know the general expectations of each one. Experienced members understand the cultural frame and expectations of a local congregation, but a new pastor has to make deliberate efforts to understand these cultural expectations.

Even individual congregations represent unique cultural frames when compared to other churches. Though some churches may differ very little, there will always be differences. One very obvious difference would be the place where the church meets and the people who meet together; no two gatherings are ever going to be the same in every respect. And, to follow the logic a little further, particular congregations exhibit differing cultural frames as they add and subtract members, and as they change their meeting spaces. Therefore, the unchanging gospel message must be continually applied to an ever-changing congregation. And, since holistic understanding is essential to effectiveness, congregational cultural anthropology is an unending task.

⁷³Hiebert, *Anthropological Insights for Missionaries*, 52.

⁷⁴Ibid. Paul Hiebert writes, “Local cultures are integrated into larger regional and national cultures. For instance, people and institutions in the United States share a common cultural history and beliefs in freedom and democracy, use the same money and postage stamps, and have other cultural ties. In this sense we can speak of different levels of cultural integration, beginning with cultural frames at the bottom and ending with national or even international cultures at the top” (52).

Cultural Differences and the Pastor

Cultural Differences and the New Pastor

As the pastor enters a new congregation, an element that has significant repercussions for him, his family, and his respective congregation is the influence of culture shock. Pastors tend to prefer a culture that is most familiar to them; however, the typical pastoral ministry entails serving in congregations in other cities, states, and even different countries, where the established church culture is different than their home church. Their struggle to fit into the new culture increases personal stress and frustration, resulting in varying degrees of culture shock. According to Paul Hiebert, “Culture shock is the disorientation we experience when all the cultural maps and guidelines we learned as children no longer work. Stripped of our normal ways of coping with life, we are confused, afraid, and angry. We rarely know what has gone wrong, much less what to do about it.”⁷⁵ Culture shock can even be experienced to a lesser degree among pastors who are serving within a near culture, perhaps even just across the county or state.⁷⁶

The entire pastoral family will experience culture shock to some degree; this added stress of home tensions compounds the pastor’s difficulties in shepherding his new church. Paul Hiebert explains, “In our home culture we carry out efficiently such tasks as shopping, cooking, banking, laundering, mailing, going to the dentist, and getting a Christmas tree, leaving ourselves time for work and leisure. In a new setting, even simple jobs take a great deal of psychic energy and more time, much more time.”⁷⁷ Again,

⁷⁵Hiebert, *Anthropological Insights for Missionaries*, 66.

⁷⁶Paul Hiebert has written, “The severity depends upon the extent of the differences between the cultures, the personality of the individual, and the methods used to cope with the new situations.” Ibid. Also, pastors will not experience the same level of culture shock as missionaries who enter cultures with differing languages. Paul Hiebert writes, “The first shock we often experience in a new culture is our inability to communicate.” (66).

⁷⁷Ibid., 67.

though the level of discomfort may not be as great as that of cross-cultural missionaries, pastor's families have to figure out new rhythms of life in their new cultures.

Culture shock is also accentuated by the difficulty associated with leaving old friendships and establishing new ones.⁷⁸ Additionally, the members of the pastoral family have to reestablish their roles and statuses in the new culture. Hiebert explains, "Added to all this is our loss of identity as significant adults in the society. In our own society we know who we are because we hold offices, degrees, and memberships in different groups. In the new setting our old identity is gone. We must start all over again to become somebody."⁷⁹ Hiebert adds, "In a new culture much of our old knowledge is useless, if not misleading."⁸⁰

Hiebert deals with culture shock in accordance to his three cultural dimensions: cognitive, affective, and evaluative. He writes, "Culture shock has a cognitive dimension, but it also involves emotional and evaluative disorientation. On the emotional level, we face both deprivation and confusion."⁸¹ The emotional impact of culture shock should not be overlooked. Many pastors wonder if they have made a mistake after the proverbial "honeymoon" comes to an abrupt halt. For the cross-cultural missionary Hiebert notes, "After the initial excitement of being abroad, we become homesick and begin to dislike the unfamiliar ways. We feel guilty because we cannot live up to our own expectations.

⁷⁸Hiebert writes, "Maintaining relationships in our own culture, where we understand what is going on, is hard enough. In another culture, the task seems almost insurmountable." Hiebert, *Anthropological Insights for Missionaries*, 68.

⁷⁹Ibid., 68.

⁸⁰Ibid., 69. Hiebert writes, "Culture shock is not a reaction to poverty or to the lack of sanitation. For foreigners coming to the U.S. the experience is same [sic]. It is the shock in discovering that all the cultural patterns we have learned are now meaningless. We know less about living here than the children, and we must begin again to learn the elementary things of life—how to speak, greet one another, eat, market, travel, and a thousand other things. Culture shock really sets in when we realize that *this now is going to be our life and home*." Paul G. Hiebert, "Cultural Differences And The Communication Of The Gospel," in *Perspectives on the World Christian Movement*, 3rd ed., ed. Ralph D. Winter and Steven C. Hawthorne (Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library, 1999), 374.

⁸¹Hiebert, *Anthropological Insights for Missionaries*, 69.

We are angry because no one told us it would be this way and because we make such slow progress in adjusting to the new culture.”⁸² A pastor, who moves into a new cultural setting, though it may be similar to his home culture, can still experience frustration with the new and unfamiliar rhythm of life and ways of doing church.

One variant of culture shock that may also have application to the task of the pastor is “reverse culture shock.” According to this paradigm missionaries who come back home after serving on a foreign field experience mal-adjustment when trying to re-enter their home culture. From personal experience I have noticed many seminary students who have begun to adopt ideas regarding ecclesiology that are foreign to the churches they are serving. I changed much during my own seminary career and the changes I experienced caused me sometimes to feel more at home among fellow seminarians than among my local church members. This experience of reverse-culture shock could be the subject of a dissertation by itself.⁸³ Reverse culture shock can also happen when a pastor spends several years away from his home church or association and then attempts to come back “home.”

There is great value in learning as much as possible about the culture of a church before actually committing one’s life to ministry there. A mismatch between the pastor and his congregation can lead to great difficulty and significant harm to the pastor, his family, and the church. Although obtaining cultural insight before taking the position could prevent a mismatch, the greatest understanding of church culture only comes from living among the people and participating in their everyday lives.⁸⁴ This fact makes it impossible for a pastor to fully understand a people before he begins to serve among

⁸²Hiebert, *Anthropological Insights for Missionaries*, 70.

⁸³Ibid., 78-80.

⁸⁴Hiebert writes, “We learn a culture best by being involved in it. Although it helps to read all we can about a culture before we arrive, there is no substitute for participating in the lives of the people.” Ibid., 82.

them. Those who wonder how one is to know for sure he is to serve in a particular congregation must work with the information available to him, the consent of the people, and the guidance of the Holy Spirit. Most pastors, however, tend to gather significantly less information than they should before accepting a pastoral position. Much of this neglect can be attributed to the desperation on the part of the potential pastor to secure his family, and the desperation on the part of the congregation to fill their open pastorate. Congregations can also be guilty of overlooking the shortcomings of the pastor when they see he is particularly gifted in something the congregation greatly values.

Assuming the pastor and church is a God-ordained match, Paul Hiebert teaches that approaching a culture as an anthropologist actually generates more receptivity among the host culture. He writes, “When we enter another culture as genuine students, the people are usually anxious to teach us, for they are proud of their culture. While learning about the culture, we build relationships that make us part of the community.”⁸⁵ Being a genuinely interested student of an established church demonstrates respect and gives the congregation an opportunity to tell its story in its own parlance. A byproduct of this investigative interaction is increased trust between the congregation and its pastor. As Paul Hiebert points out, “Trust building begins with an *interest in* and *acceptance of* those among whom we serve.”⁸⁶

Pastors must be careful not to become disingenuous in their discovery efforts.⁸⁷ Further, pastors must not use anthropological methods in such a way that makes the

⁸⁵Hiebert, *Anthropological Insights for Missionaries*, 82.

⁸⁶Paul Hiebert argues, “Learning to know a new culture and appreciate its ways is not enough. We can do this and still remain outsiders whom the people view with suspicion. As Marvin Mayers (1974) points out, the most important step in entering a new culture is to build trust. Only when people trust us will they listen to what we have to say.” Ibid., 83.

⁸⁷Ibid. Paul Hiebert puts it this way, “Our interest in others must be genuine. People soon detect and deeply resent our building relationships simply to carry out our own goals, for this is a subtle form of manipulation. They feel ‘used’” (83).

congregation feel like the people are an experiment or they are being measured against other congregations.⁸⁸

The longer a pastor serves in a particular congregation the more he will become enculturated in its ways of doing things. Enculturation is explained by Louis Luzbetak, “Ants and bees and other social animals *inherit* through instinct their particular set of rules for the game of successful living. Human beings, by contrast, must *learn* their set of rules from their societies. This they do through the process of *enculturation*.”⁸⁹

According to Louis Luzbetak,

Enculturation is a kind of indoctrination, insofar as it makes one blind to other possible ways of behaving. The individual learns his lessons so well that, in spite of his intellect and free will, his actions, assumptions, motivations, values, the things he makes and does, the speech he uses, and the very thoughts he thinks seldom conflict with those of his group. He learns the “standard” behavior and abides by it. The accepted behavior becomes so automatic and natural that the individual takes his culture for granted and as “normal,” that is, normal for any human being, little realizing that there may be other ways of thinking, speaking, and acting that are just as “proper.” If while learning the “proper” ways he happens to be reminded that some people do have other behavioral patterns, these patterns are presented as “strange,” “boorish,” or even “savage,” and definitely “undesirable” or at least “not quite right.”⁹⁰

Enculturation that is in accordance with and not contrary to the clear teachings of Scripture is desirable for pastors entering into an established congregation. The pastor will, however, retain much of the congregational culture of his home church.⁹¹ The more

⁸⁸The best way to avoid causing the church to feel uneasy about anthropological investigation is to heed Hiebert’s advice, “True interest expresses itself in many ways. It is seen in our desire to learn about the people, their lives, and their culture. It is reflected symbolically in our willingness to wear their type of clothes, try their food, and visit their homes. It is demonstrated in hospitality, when we invite the people into our homes and let their children play with ours. And it is shown in formal rituals, through official visits, exchanges of gifts, ceremonial banquets, and polite introductions.” Hiebert, *Anthropological Insights for Missionaries*, 83, 84.

⁸⁹Luzbetak, *The Church and Cultures*, 64. Italics in original.

⁹⁰*Ibid.*, 74.

⁹¹Hiebert writes, “[W]e can never fully erase the imprint of our original culture on the deepest levels of our thoughts, feelings, and values.” Hiebert, *Anthropological Insights for Missionaries*, 95.

a pastor enculturates within the context of the church he pastors the better will be the pastor-congregation relations.

The Incarnational Pastor

Pastors are as prone to ethnocentrism as cross-cultural missionaries. The primary precursor to ethnocentrism is a failure to understand one's own cultural characteristics. Gary Weaver puts it this way, "the way to find your culture is to leave it and enter another culture."⁹² To cross cultures is to become aware of differences between oneself and the host culture. Eugene Nida warns, "Fully equipped with our own sets of values, of which we are largely unconscious, we sally forth in the world and automatically see behavior with glasses colored by our own experience."⁹³ Everett Rogers and Thomas Steinfatt write, "*Ethnocentrism* is the degree to which individuals judge other cultures as inferior to their own culture. The concept of ethnocentrism comes from two Greek words (*ethnos*, people or nation, or *ketron*, center) which mean being centered on one's cultural group (and thus judging other cultures by one's cultural values)."⁹⁴ Louis Luzbetak contends, "Ethnocentrism is the tendency (to some degree present in every human being) to regard the ways and values of one's own society as the normal, right, proper, and certainly the best way of thinking, feeling, speaking, and doing

⁹²Gary R. Weaver, ed., *Culture, Communication and Conflict: Readings in Intercultural Relations*, 2nd ed. (Boston: Pearson Publishing, 2000), 1.

⁹³Eugene A. Nida, *Customs and Cultures: Anthropology for Christian Missions* (Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library, 1954), 2.

⁹⁴Everett M. Rogers and Thomas M. Steinfatt, *Intercultural Communication* (Long Grove, IL: Waveland Press, 1999), 50. Hiebert writes, "The root of ethnocentrism is our human tendency to respond to other people's ways by using our own affective assumptions, and to reinforce these responses with deep feelings of approval or disapproval. When we are confronted by another culture, our own is called into question. Our defense is to avoid the issue by concluding that our culture is better and other people are less civilized." Hiebert, *Anthropological Insights for Missionaries*, 97. Hiebert notes, "Ethnocentrism can also be found within a society. Parents and children can be critical of one another because the cultural frames in which they were raised are different. People from one ethnic group see themselves as better than those in another; urban folk look down on their country cousins; and upper-class persons are critical of the poor" (98). Hiebert writes, "The solution to ethnocentrism is empathy. We need to appreciate other cultures and their ways." (98).

things, whether it be in regard to eating, sleeping, dressing, disposing of garbage, marrying, burying the dead, or speaking with God.”⁹⁵ This tendency is exhibited by the disposition of pastors who are quick to change the accepted ways of doing things within congregations, usually based on their ingrained congregational cultural values, feelings, and knowledge.

Instead of operating from an ethnocentric posture, the local church pastor must seek to understand and accept the church for what it is. Paul Hiebert says, “Acceptance begins when we love people as they are, not as we hope to make them. At first this may be hard to do, in part because they are so different from us, and in part because we come with strong desires to bring about change.”⁹⁶ This acceptance relieves the pastor of the stress of seeing immediate results under his leadership. His primary motivation should be to thoroughly understand a congregation before he attempts to change its behaviors. And, he should accept, from the beginning, that the congregation should never become just as he is in every respect. Instead, he should attempt to become one of them as quickly as possible.⁹⁷

Some may see this paradigm of molding oneself to fit the congregation as compromise, but the molding process should operate within the bounds of biblical absolutes. In the first several years of a pastorate the pastor is earning the right to lead long-term. Paul Hiebert urges, “No task is more important in the first years of ministry in a new culture than the building of trusting relationships with the people. Without these, the people will not listen to the gospel, nor will we ever be accepted into their lives and

⁹⁵Luzbetak, *The Church and Cultures*, 65.

⁹⁶*Ibid.*, 84.

⁹⁷Hiebert reflects on research by Alicja Iwanska and writes, “We all tend to treat strange people and new cultures as scenery. We also tend to see those who work for us as machines, whether they are secretaries, nurses, or servants. The most crucial change that must take place in our adjustment to a new culture is to learn to see its people as ‘people’ –as human beings like ourselves—and their culture as our culture. We need to draw a mental circle around them and us and say ‘we.’ We need to break down the barrier that separates us into ‘we’ and ‘they.’” Hiebert, *Anthropological Insights for Missionaries*, 89.

communities.”⁹⁸ Many have proposed that the best way to build trust within a new culture is to identify with them through *incarnational* ministry.

Paul Hiebert refers to the process of getting the message of the Bible to the people as an Incarnational Bridge. Hiebert writes, “We must know the biblical message. We must also know the contemporary scene. Only then can we build the bridges that will make the biblical message relevant to today’s world and its people everywhere.”⁹⁹

Though Hiebert’s statement is in reference to cross-cultural missionaries, what he has to say has direct application to pastors. Pastors have a responsibility to biblically instruct their congregations in their indigenous language.

A pastor must know the church in order to become one of them. As Hiebert argues, “The first barrier to fully entering another culture is misunderstanding. As the term denotes, this has to do with cognitive block—a lack of knowledge and understanding of the new culture—and that leads to confusion.”¹⁰⁰ He goes on to explain, “There are two types of misunderstanding that we need to overcome: our misunderstanding of the people and their culture, and their misunderstanding of us.”¹⁰¹ Hiebert proposes, “To overcome the first of these, we must enter the new culture as learners. We must make the study of the culture one of our central concerns throughout our missionary ministry, for only then will we be able to communicate the gospel in ways the people understand.”¹⁰² For the missionary, as well as the pastor, this understanding can be achieved through the implementation of anthropological tools and resources.

⁹⁸Hiebert, *Anthropological Insights for Missionaries*, Ibid., 85.

⁹⁹Ibid., 14.

¹⁰⁰Ibid., 92.

¹⁰¹Ibid., 93.

¹⁰²Ibid. Hiebert writes, “In learning another culture and sharing our own, we soon become aware that there is more than one way to look at a culture. First, we all learn to see our own culture from the inside. We are raised within it and assume it is the only and right way to view reality. Anthropologists refer to this insider’s perspective an ‘emic’ view of a culture” (94). Regarding an etic perspective, Hiebert explains, “When we encounter another culture, however, we soon realize that we are looking at it as

Although pastors should desire to become fully participating and accepted members of the congregations they serve, they will rarely ever be fully regarded as “one of us” by the members of the church. Therefore, it is best for pastors to realize this fact from the outset so that they can develop realistic expectations in accordance with their outsider status. “[E]ven after we have identified with it as closely as we can, we recognize that in some sense we are still outsiders,” writes Hiebert.¹⁰³ And, though a pastor is an outsider and naturally has an *etic* perspective he should attempt to see the people and their ways as they see themselves, or from an *emic* view. Paul Hiebert explains, “Such an outsider’s perspective, not tied to any one culture, is an ‘etic’ view of culture. Anthropology has specialized in developing etic models for the study and comparison of cultures, but in a sense all bicultural people create them, for communication between and understanding of different cultures would be impossible without such a view.”¹⁰⁴ Further, “Emic and etic understandings of a culture complement each other. The former is needed to understand how the people see the world and why they respond to it as they do. The latter is needed to compare one culture with other cultures and test its understandings of the world against reality.”¹⁰⁵ Therefore, a pastor who enters a new congregation should focus initially on his etic observations and then begin to learn an emic perspective through his congregants. While he is seeking to understand his people, they will begin to better understand him—thereby pastor-congregation relationships will continue to improve.

outsiders. We examine its cultural knowledge by using the categories of our own. Later we discover that the people of the other culture are looking at our ways through their own cultural assumptions.” Hiebert, *Anthropological Insights for Missionaries*, 94.

¹⁰³Ibid., 95.

¹⁰⁴Ibid., 96.

¹⁰⁵Ibid., 97.

Cultural Assumptions of Western Pastors

In Paul Hiebert's section regarding cultural assumptions he exposes the perennial root of cultural conflict, "misunderstandings and premature judgments."¹⁰⁶ He believes much of our cultural confusion could be combatted by entering new cultures with humility, and as perpetual students of the people. Cross-cultural ministers must first understand their own worldview, which will become more apparent when contrasted with the worldview of the host culture. In addition to understanding one's own worldview, he must begin to understand the worldview of the people to whom he hopes to minister. In determining the host culture's worldview, Hiebert proposes, "As we study a people's culture, we must infer their basic assumptions from their beliefs and practices. We need to look for similarities that seem to run like a thread through a wide range of cultural beliefs and behavior and that make sense out of them."¹⁰⁷ Hiebert believes this can be accomplished by examining language to discover the categories used by the people, and by studying their symbols and rituals.¹⁰⁸ Established congregations have nuances to their language and a diversity of symbols. Though Christians, in general, should share a biblical worldview, culture and tradition often influence what a congregation thinks, feels, says, and does.

Hiebert also uses this section of the book to list many of the worldview assumptions Western missionaries bring to cross-cultural contexts. The cultural values listed by Hiebert can also be found, to varying degrees, working themselves out in established North American churches. Some of these cultural assumptions run contrary to biblical principles and must be combatted through patient teaching.¹⁰⁹

¹⁰⁶Hiebert, *Anthropological Insights for Missionaries*, 111.

¹⁰⁷Ibid., 112.

¹⁰⁸Ibid.

¹⁰⁹The cultural assumptions mentioned by Hiebert can be found on pages 111-37. Ibid.

Cultural Differences and the Message

The primary task of the pastor is to shepherd God's people through the preaching of the Gospel, but sometimes the message intended is not the message received. Words are symbols, and symbols have different meanings depending on the context. A rainbow is a sign of God's promise in a Sunday School classroom, but a symbol of homosexual activism when found on the bumper of a Subaru. One's cultural assumptions will affect how he interprets symbols, even the message conveyed through the Bible preaching and teaching of a church pastor.

Cultural Differences and Communication

Paul Hiebert explains the potential of symbols, "Through symbols we communicate ideas, feelings, and values."¹¹⁰ These symbols can have both denotative and connotative meanings. Hiebert writes, "These meanings in which symbols point to some things and not to others are sometimes called *denotative* meanings."¹¹¹ And, regarding connotative meanings he writes, "These are meanings that we give to symbols that come from other domains of thought and feeling. For instance, when we speak of 'red neck,' 'Reds,' 'red-eye special,' and 'to be in the red,' the word no longer means the color red, but has taken on other meanings in the realm of politics, travel, or economics."¹¹² Denotative and connotative meanings apply to the preaching of established church pastors. Christian doctrine is filled with metaphorical language that requires an understanding of the connotative meanings of words. For instance, when one is washed in the blood of the Lamb he becomes white as snow (Rev 7:14, Isa 1:18). Even the word *church* is usually understood first as a religious building instead of as the people of God.

¹¹⁰Hiebert, *Anthropological Insights for Missionaries*, 144.

¹¹¹Ibid.

¹¹²Ibid.

These variations in definitions of symbols, along with misunderstandings regarding the meanings of artifacts, signs, and rituals should cause pastors to be careful in their public communication in order to ensure that the messages they intend to send are in fact the ones being received by their churches.¹¹³ The pastor must also remember that words are not the only types of symbols we use to communicate.

Hiebert lists a variety of symbols including: spoken language, paralanguage, written language, pictorial, kinesics, audio, spatial, temporal, touch, taste, smell, ecological features, silence, rituals, and human artifacts.¹¹⁴ Hiebert warns,

While we focus on transmitting one message, we unconsciously communicate a great many more. For example, in ordinary conversation we concentrate on expressing ideas, but by our facial expressions, gestures, tones of voice, body postures, standing distances, and use of time we communicate feelings and values

¹¹³Hiebert writes, “Human thought and behavior often lead to the production of material artifacts or tools.” Paul Hiebert, *Cultural Anthropology*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1983), 29. Hiebert also writes, “On the surface, culture is manifest in the material world. People make clothes, make tools, build houses, farm the land, cook food, and fly planes. These cultural products display the knowledge of the people and often manifest deep assumptions about the nature of reality.” Hiebert, *Transforming Worldviews*, 81. Also, “In addition to words, we create a great many other signs to experience and communicate the world in which we live. A sign is anything that stands for something else in the minds of the users. We use facial expressions to communicate feelings, lines to create lanes on roads, bells to announce worship, and perfumes and flowers to speak of love. As humans, we experience and comprehend reality mediated through words, gestures, drawings, and other signs that link our experiences to images in our heads. We live in the webs of signs that we create to sort and comprehend our world.” Ibid. Regarding rituals, Hiebert explains, “At the heart of cultural behavior are rituals. They range from simple rites such as shaking hands, bowing, or embracing, to fiestas, New Year’s celebrations, fairs, festivals, weddings, masked dances, pilgrimages, banquets, memorial days, and sacred rites” (81). Hiebert further explains, “On one level, rituals maintain social order in human communities by enacting the norms that order relationships between people as they form families, groups, communities, and societies. On another level, they give visible expression to the deep cultural norms that order the way people think, feel, and evaluate their worlds. They give public expression to the moral order that people believe was created by the gods, defined by the ancestors, or instituted by the culture’s heroes when they taught people to be civilized and human. Because rituals dramatize in visible form the deep beliefs, feelings, and values of a society, they are of particular importance in studying worldviews” (82, 83).

¹¹⁴Hiebert, *Anthropological Insights for Missionaries*, 145. James Spradley writes, “All cultural meaning is created by using symbols. All the words your informant used in responding to your questions in the first interview were symbols. The way your informant dressed was also a symbol, as were your informant’s facial expressions and hand movements. *A symbol is any object or event that refers to something*. All symbols involve three elements: the symbol itself, one or more referents, and a relationship between the symbol and referent. This triad is the basis for all symbolic meaning.” Spradley, *The Ethnographic Interview*, 95.

such as distrust, concern, disdain, inattention, agreement, and love. And often we are unaware of these secondary messages.¹¹⁵

He goes on to explain, “Secondary or paramessages provide the immediate context within which communication takes place and determine the way in which the primary message is to be understood. They tell us, for instance, whether we should interpret the meanings of the words as irony, sarcasm, humor or double entendre, or whether we should take them straight.”¹¹⁶ Hiebert’s warnings regarding paramessages are especially important for local church pastors. Their task is very public and often they are found communicating in front of the church as a whole. Pastors would do well to heed Hiebert’s warnings, “Our most fundamental messages are our paramessages, and when these are not congruent with our explicit message, the people will come to distrust us.”¹¹⁷ Hiebert expands,

Normally we are less conscious of paramessages because they are out of focus. But they are no less real. In fact, in retrospect, we often recall the communicated feelings more vividly than the ideas. We also trust paramessages more than primary messages. It is harder to tell a lie in a secondary message because we are not aware of what we are saying on this level. For instance, a child denies stealing a cookie from the cookie jar, but we see guilt written all over his face. This is why we like to see people when we converse.¹¹⁸

Pastors may be tempted to believe that paramessages are universal in church culture, but that would be a dangerous assumption. For instance, a pastor may enter a church culture where the pulpit speaks authority and mistakenly believe that stepping out from behind the pulpit and sitting on a stool for the entirety of the sermon would gain him a better hearing. What he has communicated to the more traditional enculturated church is that he is not truly preaching, because if he were preaching, as the church understands preaching, he would stand behind the pulpit when he delivers the message.

¹¹⁵Hiebert, *Anthropological Insights for Missionaries*, 160.

¹¹⁶Ibid.

¹¹⁷Ibid.

¹¹⁸Ibid.

Another example is when a pastor goes from a “revivalistic” church atmosphere to a “high church” culture. The shouting and frenetic preaching that was so well-received in his revivalistic church culture is seen as excessive, undignified, and lacking in reverence to many in the high church culture. These types of cultural mismatches will lead to cultural tensions and possibly even pastoral resignation or termination.

Instead of assuming too much, the new pastor should attempt to learn the congregation’s preferable paramessages beforehand. But even in ideal situations, where the pastor has invested much forethought and study, he will still need to continue to learn as he goes along. To learn the paramessages of a congregation the pastor needs to follow Paul Hiebert’s advice, “We need to be sensitive to people’s facial expressions, gestures, tones of voice, and body postures, which say much about their attitudes and responses to the message.”¹¹⁹ The pastor also needs to remember that paramessages are not universal or completely trustworthy; the man folding his arms may just be cold, or mad at his wife, instead of actively resisting the pastor’s message.

Another way of seeing if a pastor is communicating what he intends to communicate is through processing feedback. Paul Hiebert notes,

In many types of communication, such as preaching, teaching, radio broadcasting, and literature distribution, we need more formal methods for getting feedback. A teacher can encourage discussion and listen to it carefully. A missionary can ask the people how they understood the message. Those in media can use such formal research methods as questionnaires and interviews to determine who is listening or reading and what they understand from the message. In all of these situations we must accept the audience as judge. If they have not understood the message, it is we senders who have not communicated it clearly.¹²⁰

Hiebert further contends, “Feedback should modify our communication, immediately and continually. If we see that people do not understand the message on the cognitive level, we need to slow down, simplify the material, go over it again, illustrate it

¹¹⁹Hiebert, *Anthropological Insights for Missionaries*, 164.

¹²⁰Ibid.

with concrete examples, or stop and let them ask questions.”¹²¹ And finally, “If they are hostile, dubious, or rejecting, we must stop to build trust and examine our own paramessages for possible sources of misunderstandings on the affective level.”¹²² Pastors must be sensitive to feedback and adapt their teaching to their audience; this discipline is often called *contextualization*.

Critical Contextualization

An important anthropological and missiological tool that has implications for the work of missionaries and pastors is contextualization. Craig Ott, Stephen Strauss and Timothy Tennent write, “Contextualization means relating the never-changing truths of scripture to ever-changing human contexts so that those truths are clear and compelling. It is the process of engaging culture in all its varied dimensions with biblical truth.”¹²³

Authors like René Padilla use the word *contextualization* in lieu of using the term *incarnationalism*. In his book *Mission Between the Times*, Padilla has written,

The incarnation makes clear God’s approach to the revelation of himself and of his purposes: God does not shout his message from the heavens; God becomes present as a human being among human beings. The climax of God’s revelation is Emmanuel. And Emmanuel is Jesus, a first-century Jew! The incarnation unmistakably demonstrates God’s intention to make himself known from within the human situation. Because of the very nature of the gospel, we know it only as a message contextualized in culture.¹²⁴

How to contextualize as a pastor should be determined by the beliefs, values, and behaviors of the established congregational culture. Bruce Ashford adds, “In the

¹²¹Hiebert, *Anthropological Insights for Missionaries*, 164, 65.

¹²²Ibid.

¹²³Craig Ott, Stephen Strauss and Timothy Tennent write, “The word *contextualization* seems to have been first used by Shoki Coe (1976) to call for connecting the gospel and culture in way that would go beyond *indigenization* or *adaptation*.” Craig Ott and Stephen J. Strauss With Timothy C. Tennent, *Encountering Theology of Mission: Biblical Foundations, Historical Developments, and Contemporary Issues* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2010), 266.

¹²⁴C. René Padilla, *Mission Between the Times* (Cumbria, CA: Iangham Monographs, 2010), 103.

process of contextualization, participants from within a culture need to take the lead. They have both explicit and implicit (tacit) knowledge of their culture that the cultural outsider will never match.”¹²⁵ Therefore, contextualization is context dependent, and the content of a contextualized message should be communicated in the language of the people receiving the message.

In Eugene Nida’s book *Message and Mission*, he noted that the Bible was originally written in Greek and Hebrew, and then it had to be translated into English for those of us who speak English. He then noted that, in missions, we would have to again translate the Scriptures into the native tongue.¹²⁶ In addition to the communication of the words of the Bible, culture is also communicated or learned. The context in which the Scriptures were originally received was a cultural context that is different than that of modern churches; therefore the principles of the Scriptures must be contextualized within our own church cultures today. In critical contextualization, the symbols change, but the truth remains unaltered.

When one attempts to reach a culture different than his own with the message of Christ he will need to consider again the basic principles of the Scripture and how they can be lived out in the particular culture he is attempting to teach. Although tempted to work from his own cultural framework, the missionary must attempt to lay aside his cultural applications in favor of those of the host culture. This sort of humility is also required of a local church pastor going to serve in a church culture different than his own.

David Hesselgrave builds on Nida’s model of three languages and speaks of “The Bible Culture, the Missionary’s Culture, and the Respondent Culture.”¹²⁷ The local

¹²⁵Ashford, “The Gospel and Culture,” 123.

¹²⁶Nida, *Message and Mission*, 46.

¹²⁷The terms are all capitalized in Hesselgrave’s illustration. David J. Hesselgrave, *Communicating Christ Cross-Culturally: An Introduction to Missionary Communication* (Grand Rapids: Academie Books, 1978), 73. Nida’s model points to, first, the language of the peoples who originally received the Scriptures, second, the language of the missionary who teaches the Scriptures, and third, the

church pastor is tasked to reach his community with the gospel, and that community has a general culture, mentioned in Hesselgrave's paradigm as a "respondent culture." The pastor has to work through his local congregation in order to fulfill this commission. The pastor's responsibility is to "equip the saints for the work of the ministry" (Eph 4:12). That being the case, the pastor must work through the local congregation in order to reach the surrounding community. Although the local church is a cultural frame within society, and will be a representation of the culture of the surrounding community, it will still have unique values, artifacts, and ways of doing things.¹²⁸ Therefore, a local church pastor must know his own culture, the culture of the Bible, his congregation's culture, and the culture of the surrounding community. He must equip his congregation (the first respondent culture) to reach their respondent culture (the surrounding community).

Hiebert rejects *uncritical contextualization* in cross-cultural work. He reasons that uncritical contextualization "overlooks the fact that there are corporate and cultural sins as well as personal transgressions. . . . The gospel calls not only individuals but societies and cultures to change. Contextualization must mean the communication of the gospel in ways the people understand, but that also challenge them individually and corporately to turn from their evil ways."¹²⁹ Hiebert says of *critical contextualization*, "old beliefs and customs are neither rejected nor accepted without examination. They are first studied with regard to the meanings and places they have within their cultural setting and then evaluated in the light of biblical norms."¹³⁰ Hiebert's method of critical contextualization will enable pastors to develop a paradigm for determining what things

language of those who the missionary is attempting to teach the truths of Scripture. Nida, *Message and Mission*, 46, 47.

¹²⁸Hiebert, *Anthropological Insights for Missionaries*, 41.

¹²⁹Ibid., 185.

¹³⁰Ibid., 186.

actually need to change in a church culture and those things that are innocuous cultural practices.¹³¹

Hiebert roots critical contextualization, carried out by the receptive faith community, in the priesthood of all believers. He writes, “With critical contextualization, decisions are made not by the leaders for the people, but by all of the believers.”¹³²

Hiebert envisions leading the people of God through a process of self-reflection and correction where needed. He writes, “[O]ld beliefs and customs are neither rejected nor accepted without examination. They are first studied with regard to the meanings and places they have within their cultural setting and then evaluated in the light of biblical norms.”¹³³

Hiebert presents a diagram that advises a four-step process for effective critical contextualization. First, “Gather information about the old.” Second, “Study biblical teaching about the event.” Third, “Evaluate the old in the light of biblical teachings.” And

¹³¹Paul Hiebert announces, “Discerning the areas of life that need to be critiqued is one of the important functions of leadership in the church, for the failure of a church to deal with its surrounding culture opens the door for sub-Christian practices to enter the Christian community unnoticed. This can be seen in the way we in the Western churches have often indiscriminately adopted the dating practices, weddings, funerals, music, entertainment, economic structures, and political traditions around us. We must never forget that our faith calls us to new beliefs and to a changed life.” Hiebert, *Anthropological Insights for Missionaries*, 186.

¹³²It appears Hiebert is open to the members of each cultural context developing their own theological treatises. Although I value the diversity created through such an enterprise, and the potential new insights gained for the church worldwide, I would hope that all new theologies would be filtered through Scripture, the teaching of the Apostles and church fathers, and orthodox church history. I also hope Hiebert would have been open to other evangelical input; seeking to avoid critical theological errors that have developed in centuries and cultures of the church heretofore, and those yet imagined. Hiebert’s position, however, may be narrower than it appears here. He writes, “Leaders and missionaries throughout history have often felt threatened by this approach to biblical hermeneutics. Since they believe themselves better trained, they claim for themselves the exclusive right to make theological decisions. They are afraid things might get out of hand if the laity were involved in interpreting the Bible and in applying its message to their everyday lives.” *Ibid.*, 191. Hiebert provides three checks against false teaching: (1) “The Bible is taken as the final and definitive authority for Christian beliefs and practices. (2) The priesthood of believers assumes that all the faithful have the Holy Spirit to guide them in the understanding and application of the Scriptures to their own lives. (3) There is the constant check of the church” (191). Hiebert refers to the church as a “hermeneutical community” (192).

¹³³*Ibid.*, 186.

fourth, “Create a new contextualized Christian practice.”¹³⁴ Hiebert’s teaching regarding the process of critical contextualization could serve as a helpful paradigm for pastors who are looking to lead their churches through change.

First, Hiebert argues the church must recognize its need to allow the Bible to regulate all areas of the people’s lives. If the Bible is not the recognized authority for the congregation then the pastor will have a difficult time establishing what exactly the church should be doing. Pastors should know if a church recognizes the authority of the Scriptures before taking the position of pastor. However, it is often the case that churches say the Bible is the final authority until it deals with their own sin, then, they may make personal exceptions. In such a situation the pastor should patiently teach the authority of the Scripture, and then move on to a process of critical contextualization. The pastor must lead the congregation in determining what areas of church life need to be evaluated in light of Scripture.¹³⁵

Second, Hiebert writes, “local church leaders and the missionary must lead the congregation in *uncritically* gathering and analyzing the traditional customs associated with the question at hand.”¹³⁶ Hiebert explains, “The purpose here is to understand the old ways, not to evaluate them. If we show any criticism of the customary beliefs and practices at this point, the people will not openly talk about them for fear of being condemned. We will only drive the old ways underground.”¹³⁷ “Why?” is an important question for the pastor to keep before the people during this phase of critical contextualization. Often, pastors fear the statement, “We have never done it that way before.” Instead, pastors should value rather than fear such a statement. Inherent in the

¹³⁴Hiebert, *Anthropological Insights for Missionaries*, 188.

¹³⁵*Ibid.*, 186.

¹³⁶*Ibid.* Italics in original.

¹³⁷*Ibid.*

statement is an awareness that the pastor is trying to lead the church to do something that has not been a part of its culture. Not to say the people will never “do it that way,” but the pastor should slow down and lead the church through a process of self-discovery and then lead it toward its own resolve to follow the Scriptures.

For the third step, Hiebert urges leaders to lead the church in a Bible study that is related to the cultural practice in question. He writes, “This is a crucial step, for if the people do not clearly understand and accept the biblical teachings, they will be unable to deal with their cultural past.”¹³⁸ Hiebert adds that this is a stage in which the pastor’s gift in teaching becomes an essential tool in cultural change. The pastor must lead the people to see the Scriptural application to their current situation.

Finally, Hiebert explains,

The fourth step is for the congregation to evaluate critically their own past customs in the light of their new biblical understandings and to make a decision regarding their use. It is important here that the people themselves make the decision, for they must be sure of the outcome before they will change. It is not enough that the leaders be convinced about changes that may be needed. Leaders may share their personal convictions and point out the consequences of various decisions, but they must allow the people to make the final decision if they wish to avoid becoming policemen. In the end, the people themselves will enforce decisions arrived at corporately, and there will be little likelihood that the customs they reject will go underground.¹³⁹

Hiebert rightly acknowledges that the congregation knows their old beliefs and practices better than the pastor. He gives one final word of caution in this critical contextualization, “The [pastor] may not always agree with the choices the people make, but it is important, as far as conscience allows, to accept the decisions of the local Christians and to recognize that they, too, are led by the Spirit of God.”¹⁴⁰ According to Hiebert, “The church grows stronger by consciously making decisions in the light of

¹³⁸Hiebert, *Anthropological Insights for Missionaries*, 186.

¹³⁹*Ibid.*, 187.

¹⁴⁰*Ibid.*, 190.

Scripture, even when the decisions may not always be the wisest, than when it simply obeys orders given by others.”¹⁴¹

The Fourth Self

In his next major section, Paul Hiebert instructs Western missionaries in a process of establishing “four-self” churches. His idea is an adaptation of the “three-self” model of John Nevius, Rufus Anderson, and Henry Venn. The three-self model envisioned churches being self-propagating, self-supporting, and self-governed. Hiebert stretches that paradigm to a “fourth self,” “self-theologizing.”¹⁴² He believes diverse cultures pose different cultural problems that need to be addressed from Scripture. The Christians from these diverse cultures have the same Bible and Holy Spirit as the missionaries who establish the work, and they should therefore seek to answer their particular cultural questions from the Scriptures themselves.

Hiebert understands this philosophy of theological formation could cause evangelicals to fear the development of heretical doctrines. He asks, “Do churches in other cultures have the same right to understand and apply the gospel in their own settings? Is there not a danger that they will go theologically astray?”¹⁴³ Hiebert concludes, “The answer to both of these questions is yes.”¹⁴⁴ He then attempts to lead his readers through some measures that will help in protecting against error. He even envisions the day when the world’s Christians will work together to contribute to a “transcultural theology.”¹⁴⁵

A transcultural theology, according to Hiebert, would “build a worldwide

¹⁴¹Hiebert, *Anthropological Insights for Missionaries*, 190.

¹⁴²Ibid., 196.

¹⁴³Ibid., 208

¹⁴⁴Ibid.

¹⁴⁵Ibid., 216, 17

fellowship of believers.”¹⁴⁶ It would cause Christians worldwide to “share in the mission of the church.”¹⁴⁷ And, finally, a transcultural theology would “help us see more clearly the cultural biases in our theologies and help us avoid the syncretisms that emerge when we contextualize our theologies uncritically.”¹⁴⁸

Hiebert believes basic doctrines should remain the same from culture to culture. He also believes proper theology changes cultures. He writes, “The message of the gospel must not only be expressed in the categories and world view of the local culture, it must also fill them with biblical substance and so revolutionize them.”¹⁴⁹ He also encourages patience in teaching theology by noting, “The molding of an individual’s theology and world view to fit biblical teachings is a lifelong process.”¹⁵⁰

This section of Hiebert’s book is an attempt to cause missionaries to oversee the formulation of systematic and biblical theologies that are indigenous to the culture in which they are taught. He is attempting to wrestle with the fact that all truth is God’s truth, and no one culture fully expresses all the truths of God. All God’s children, regardless of their cultural heritage, can learn from and teach the universal people of God.

It is difficult to understand how Hiebert’s “fourth-self” section has application for established church pastors who serve in Western churches. The church in the United States enjoys a diverse and well-developed catalog of theological literature and teaching. What this section of Hiebert’s book may best demonstrate is that every principle taught by Hiebert, or, developed in his anthropological principles for missionaries, is not readily transferable to the work of an established church pastor in the United States. At the very

¹⁴⁶Hiebert, *Anthropological Insights for Missionaries*, 219

¹⁴⁷Ibid.

¹⁴⁸Ibid.

¹⁴⁹Ibid., 215

¹⁵⁰Ibid., 206

least, Hiebert's fourth-self, if communicated to the hearts of pastors and their congregations in the United States, could teach pastors to embrace some degree of theological humility towards their brothers and sisters around the globe.

Cultural Differences and the Bicultural Community

Paul Hiebert's next section focuses on the cultural mix that occurs when a missionary moves to the field. The new missionary can leave cultural imprints on the people he serves, and the host culture can affect the cultural practices of the missionary as well. Together, the missionary and his host culture are transformed through their interactions.

The Bicultural Bridge

According to Hiebert,

A bicultural community is a localized society in which people from different cultures relate to one another on the basis of well-defined social roles. It begins when people from one culture move into another, set up house, and start to interact with the local people. In time, social patterns emerge and a new type of community is formed, one made up of people from two cultures. As the community develops, it creates a new culture that draws upon the ideas, feelings, and values of both, a culture that is neither 'native' nor 'foreign,' but is made up of both natives and foreigners.¹⁵¹

An established church usually falls under the category of a bicultural community. One form of biculturalism, in an established church, occurs when a pastor and his family move to a new church field. Wise pastors attempt to assimilate within the established church culture, but even those who excel in their efforts will import many of their ways of thinking and behaving into the established body. In addition to the bicultural community generated by a new pastor, healthy churches also become bicultural by gaining new members. Some of these new members will be recent converts and others will be members who are transferring from another church, and therefore have their own

¹⁵¹Hiebert, *Anthropological Insights for Missionaries*, 228.

enculturated ways of church life. Therefore, congregational cultures are usually changing based on the influence of those who are joining the fellowship.

The exchange of ideas between the established church and her new pastor empowers the pastor as what Hiebert calls a “culture broker.”¹⁵² Pastors tend to bring their inherited tendencies from their previous congregational culture(s) to merge with the culture of their current church. Missionaries, as well as pastors are culture shapers, but they generally fall short of full cultural integration. Hiebert warns, “Missionaries and national leaders are marginal people. They are simultaneously members of two or more different cultures and do not identify fully with any of them.”¹⁵³ It is good for missionaries, as well as pastors, to understand that they will never truly be fully enculturated members of any particular church culture. Typically, over time, their degree of acceptance as part of the community will continue to grow.¹⁵⁴

To learn how to function in a bicultural community, Paul Hiebert instructs, “There is a fundamental difference between learning a primary culture and learning a biculture. We are raised in the first and *enculturated* into its ways as we grow up. Then we learn by observing and imitating and are taught informally and formally how to think and act.”¹⁵⁵ Hiebert then writes, “Later, as adults, we are *acculturated* into the biculture. We already have at our core social and cultural ways to which we add the overlay of the biculture. The result, as we have already seen, is a bicultural person who must deal

¹⁵²Hiebert, *Anthropological Insights for Missionaries*, 229.

¹⁵³Ibid., 229, 30.

¹⁵⁴Paul Hiebert explains, “We who live in the bicultural community are generally marginal people who in many ways do not fit anywhere. Since we live on the borderline between different worlds, we find that no matter where we are, we are not quite at home. We are never fully assimilated into our second culture, but after a while we no longer fit our first culture either, because we have been changed and influenced by our experiences.” Ibid., 238. Everett Rogers and Thomas Steinfatt write, “*Assimilation* is the degree to which an individual relinquishes an original culture for another. When individuals are assimilated into a mainstream culture, they lose their previous culture.” Rogers and Steinfatt, *Intercultural Communication*, 190. Italics in original.

¹⁵⁵Hiebert, *Anthropological Insights for Missionaries*, 230.

internally with the tensions of two cultural worlds.”¹⁵⁶ Simply put, pastors who have been enculturated in a previous church must then be acculturated to the new church, which tends to result in a bicultural community.¹⁵⁷

Luzbetak writes, “Cultural and subcultural (and even subsubcultural) groups tend to overvalue and overdefend their own ways and values and at the same time to underappreciate the ways and values of other groups.”¹⁵⁸ Knowing this to be true, the pastor must ask himself a simple question, “Is it easier to change the culture of this group of people, or, to change my own culture?” In the beginning of a pastorate it is primarily the pastor who will have to change his cultural ways in order to contextualize within the established patterns of the congregational culture.¹⁵⁹ As time progresses, he can begin to influence the congregation to change its cultural practices to come under the authority of Scripture, and to meet the larger cultural context of the surrounding community.

The Pastoral Role

Paul Hiebert’s next section in *Anthropological Insights for Missionaries* is “the missionary role.” For the purpose of this dissertation, applications to the pastoral role can be substituted in the place of a missionary. Hiebert writes, “Every society has certain behavioral expectations of people who occupy a certain status. . . . We refer to the behavioral expectations associated with a specific social status as its ‘role.’”¹⁶⁰ Hiebert

¹⁵⁶Hiebert, *Anthropological Insights for Missionaries*, 230. Italics in original.

¹⁵⁷Everett Rogers and Thomas Steinfatt write, “*Acculturation* is the process through which an individual is socialized into a new culture while retaining many aspects of a previous culture.” Rogers and Steinfatt, *Intercultural Communication*, 190. Italics in original.

¹⁵⁸Luzbetak, *The Church and Cultures*, 177.

¹⁵⁹Lydia Rappaport, in her Thesis for Princeton Theological Seminary, created a survey to measure a church’s congregational culture by asking a group of influential and knowledgeable members (gatekeepers) to describe their worship services. Rappaport’s questions are listed in Appendix 3. Lydia M. Rappaport, “Rapid Assessment of Congregational Culture: Discovering a Congregation’s Unique Reality through Descriptions of Worship and Ritual Experience,” (PhD diss., Princeton Theological Seminary, 2007), 111.

¹⁶⁰Hiebert, *Cultural Anthropology*, 142.

emphasizes the fact that individuals may have numerous roles and statuses. He explains, “The term ‘role set’ is often used to designate the group of roles associated with any one status.”¹⁶¹ Hiebert says of a teacher, “he may be a Democrat, a Presbyterian, a husband, a father, a member of the bowling club, and have many other statuses in addition to his status as a teacher. Each of these statuses has its own role set and, taken together, all of the statuses constitute his ‘status set.’”¹⁶²

An established church pastor has multiple roles, including preacher, chaplain, counselor, leader, etc. He could also have multiple statuses, depending on the cultural expectations of his church and community, as well as how involved he is in other areas associated with his work as a pastor. For instance, in an associational system, the pastor may have the status of pastor as well as associational moderator, executive board member, hospice chaplain, etc.

For the local church pastor, some statuses are ascribed and others are achieved. Hiebert writes, “People are born to certain statuses. A woman may be born a princess, an heir to an industrial empire, or an outcaste. In fact, through birth, everyone acquires certain characteristics, such as sex, class, ethnicity, and geographic location that affect his social position. These statuses are called ‘ascribed’ statuses.”¹⁶³ In addition to ascribed statuses one can achieve status. Hiebert writes, “Achieved” statuses . . . are gained by effort or by circumstances. A person may acquire wealth, education, or vocation by his own efforts.”¹⁶⁴ As a pastor one may have the achieved status of brother, reverend, elder, bishop, CEO, or chaplain, among others.

¹⁶¹Hiebert, *Cultural Anthropology*, 142.

¹⁶²Ibid., 142, 43. Hiebert adds, “Furthermore, some statuses in a status set form a natural “status cluster”—a group of statuses that commonly go together. For instance, the status of husband often leads to that of father and, later, grandfather. Likewise, a laborer may be expected to become a labor union member.”

¹⁶³Ibid., 150.

¹⁶⁴Hiebert, *Cultural Anthropology*, 150. Hiebert writes, “To participate in a society, then, we

Hiebert explains that the roles associated with certain statuses may change. He explicates, “Role expectations may change over time. The ideal American father of a century ago was an authoritarian figure, a man of strength, and the sole breadwinner. Today he is expected to be a companion to his son and a true partner to his wife. When such changes occur, social disagreements and confusion can arise.”¹⁶⁵ Role confusion is a source of constant tension for the pastor. From personal pastoral experience in traditional churches in Kentucky, older members tend to want a preachy orator who resists familiarizing himself with his congregation. Younger members tend to desire a conversational servant leader who demonstrates transparent integrity. Additionally, the job description expectations of the pastor will be different for each individual member.

Hiebert surmises, “One type of confusion arises when two cultures have similar statuses, but these are associated with different roles.”¹⁶⁶ Two churches can call their leader “pastor” and yet have very different ideas of what a pastor is and what the congregation’s expectations of him should be. Hiebert also warns, “A second type of confusion arises when the roles we play in our original society do not even exist in our new society.”¹⁶⁷ For instance, a pastor could transition from a church where the pastor is expected to be an authoritarian decision maker. He may even be expected to manage the finances in his original church context. What happens when that pastor accepts a pastorate in a church that does not make any decisions, even trivial ones, without the consensus of the congregation present at a monthly business meeting? The new pastor

must occupy one or more of the statuses within that society. . . . Some of these status assignments, such as being a daughter or son, an heir to the throne, or a member of a particular ethnic group, we acquire by birth. These we call *ascribed statuses*. Others, which we call *achieved statuses*, such as student, doctor, or missionary, must be earned. Taken together the statuses an individual occupies play an important part in his or her sense of identity and self-worth.” Hiebert, *Anthropological Insights for Missionaries*, 256.

¹⁶⁵Ibid., 260.

¹⁶⁶Ibid.

¹⁶⁷Ibid.

could live a frustrated life by having to painstakingly go before the congregation for every small decision. Or, the congregation could experience the conflict inducing tension of having a pastor who thinks he can do whatever he wants without their input. Preferably, the pastor would be willing to work within the established business meeting structure until he can lead the church to embrace a new paradigm for making decisions. Thereby, he could lead the congregation to accept a new set of roles for both the congregation and himself, but at a speed commensurate with the understanding and acceptance of the congregation.

The Unfinished Task

In Paul Hiebert's final section of *Anthropological Insights for Missionaries* he urges his readers to view the future work of the church in light of its history. That is also my hope regarding this final section on anthropological insights for pastors. It seems that much of the irreparable cultural clashes that occur between churches and their respective pastors could be circumvented by matching churches with pastors who will gladly work through the established congregational culture.

Churches need more effective ways to interview potential pastors and pastors need more effective ways to determine if they are good fits for the congregation. Desperation on the part of churches and their prospective pastors can cause them to overlook serious mismatches with eyes of naiveté. Churches and pastors are perpetually in high-pressure situations that cause them to want to make quick decisions. This reality is not likely to change anytime soon, therefore, churches and pastors could greatly benefit from a rapid assessment prior to agreeing to serve together.

James Beebe gives some hope in this regard even though his method of rapid assessment is not geared specifically toward established churches. Beebe writes,

My experience has convinced me that, in a relatively short time, a multidisciplinary research team, including insiders as well as outsiders, can make significant progress toward understanding a problematic situation. My objective in writing this book is to convince you that such an approach is possible, to provide you with enough

examples and information about specific techniques that you will be willing to experiment with the approach, and to ensure that you recognize its limits.¹⁶⁸

Beebe defines the Rapid Assessment Process, or RAP, as, “intensive, team-based qualitative inquiry using triangulation, iterative data analysis and additional data collection to quickly develop a preliminary understanding of a situation from the insider’s perspective.”¹⁶⁹ This insider’s perspective would be helpful for a congregation in understanding who it truly is and for its prospective pastor to understand the same.

Regarding the rapid assessment process, Beebe writes, “The primary means for data collection is to talk with people and to get them to tell their stories, as opposed to answering your questions.”¹⁷⁰ Beebe also advises,

RAP uses the techniques and shares many of the characteristics of ethnography, but differs in two important ways: (1) more than one researcher is always involved in data collection and the teamwork is essential for data triangulation; (2) more than one researcher is involved in an iterative approach to data analysis and additional data collection. . . . RAP allows a team of at least two individuals to quickly gain sufficient understanding of a situation to make preliminary decisions for the design and implementation of applied activities or additional research. Results can be produced in one to six weeks.¹⁷¹

For the purposes of RAP in a church, a six-week time of investigation ought to fall within an acceptable parameter.¹⁷² In cases where it is only the prospective pastor who wants to know more about the church he may find it nearly impossible to conduct

¹⁶⁸James Beebe, *Rapid Assessment Process: An Introduction* (Walnut Creek, CA: Altamira Press, 2001), xv.

¹⁶⁹*Ibid.* Beebe writes, “I have chosen the phrase ‘qualitative inquiry’ instead of ‘ethnography’ out of respect for those who have helped define ethnography and argue it always requires prolonged fieldwork.” (xv). Beebe also explains, “RAP is defined by the basic concepts of triangulation and iterative analysis, and additional data collection, and NOT by the use of specific research” (7). All formatting is in original.

¹⁷⁰*Ibid.*, xv.

¹⁷¹*Ibid.*, 6, 7.

¹⁷²Carol McKinney mentions “RAPID RURAL APPRAISALS (RRA)” and “PARTICIPATORY RURAL APPRAISALS (PRA).” Carol V. McKinney, *Globe-Trotting in Sandals: A Field Guide to Cultural Research* (Dallas: SIL International, 2000), 279. Formatting in original. The PRAs are without time constraints and performed by the community being studied. RRAs are accomplished by an outside team with a goal of completing a quick study.

RAP without the consent and aid of the prospective congregation. Therefore, any strategy including RAP will need to be implemented through the established church. A potential help in this regard could be local and state associations.

When conducting a RAP, Beebe argues, “Semistructured interviews based on guidelines are the key to RAP. The most important way of learning about local conditions is to ask local people what they know. The goal is to get people to talk on a subject and not just answer questions. Sufficient time must be invested to establish a rapport and to explain the purpose of the RAP.”¹⁷³ These interviews along with participant observations and other qualitative and quantitative investigative methods mentioned in this research could help churches to determine their cultural preferences, and prepare them to call pastoral candidates who are likely to succeed in their cultural environments. The idea of formulating a rapid assessment process for established churches is explored further in the concluding chapter.

Conclusion

Paul Hiebert’s book *Anthropological Insights for Missionaries* is a comprehensive explanation of some of the ways anthropological principles can enhance the effectiveness of cross-cultural missionaries. This chapter has looked primarily at this one resource with an eye toward application of these principles in an established North American church. This type of cross-discipline interaction can open new doors of effectiveness for established church pastors. In fact, the current church revitalization movement among church leadership authors would benefit greatly from thoughtful interactions with Christian anthropologists like Paul Hiebert.

¹⁷³Beebe, *Rapid Assessment Process*, 35. James Beebe writes, “Following Honadle’s (1979, 45) strategy for avoiding biases when investigating organizations, the RSAP team could ask for the names of one or more individual respondents who are known to disagree with all decisions, generally promote trouble, and never cooperate with programs. Responses from these persons can provide valuable cross-checks and insights not available from other interviews” (45).

CHAPTER 4
OPPORTUNITIES FOR IMPLEMENTING
ANTHROPOLOGICAL TOOLS AND
RESOURCES IN CHURCH
LEADERSHIP RESOURCES

Introduction

This dissertation argues that pastors can benefit from the implementation of anthropological tools and resources in the task of shepherding established churches. In this chapter I demonstrate helpful ways church leadership authors are rightly thinking of churches as exhibiting cultures, but I also note how church leadership research and writing could be enhanced, by interacting with anthropological tools and resources.

Aubrey Malphurs' book *Look before You Lead*, provides a fitting example of an evangelical work that instructs readers on how to work through the culture of established churches.¹ Therefore, *Look before you Lead* serves as the primary work for interaction in this section. An adapted outline of the book formulates the outline of this chapter. Focusing on Malphurs' work serves to streamline the applications of anthropological tools and resources in church leadership material. Chapter three formed around the outline of Paul Hiebert's *Anthropological Insights for Missionaries*, demonstrating how one specific Christian anthropological resource can be brought to bear on contemporary church leadership. Chapter four will demonstrate a similar

¹As noted chapter 2, this dissertation approaches the topic at hand from an evangelical perspective. There are already several helpful works and institutions that approach this topic from a mainline perspective. I mentioned some of them in the second chapter. Aubrey Malphurs' book *Look before You Lead* is one of only a handful of evangelical resources that attempt to study congregational culture in any depth. Therefore, this chapter may appear to have a narrow focus on Malphurs' book, but only because it appears to be the best evangelical resource known to exist, and it provides a good contrast with Paul Hiebert's book *Anthropological Insights for Missionaries*.

cohesiveness by using Aubrey Malphurs' book *Look before You Lead* as the primary interlocutor, and demonstrating how one specific church leadership resource could be expanded and improved by introducing anthropological tools and resources.

Many evangelical church leadership books relate to established churches as cultures, but they tend to do so while consulting an anemic consortium of cultural anthropology sources. For instance, Robert Lewis and Wayne Cordeiro, in their two hundred and twenty-seven page book, *Culture Shift: Transforming Your Church from the Inside Out*, appear to footnote only one anthropologist, Geert Hofstede.² The problem is not that Lewis and Cordeiro have written a useless book—the problem is that they could have accessed years of scholarship and resources that would have improved their work, and opened a world of resources to their readers. Those in the church leadership field should be learning from and interacting with anthropologists. Just as missionaries have learned the value of anthropology for mission it is time for evangelical church leaders in the West to do the same.

Therefore, with Aubrey Malphurs' book outline serving as the outline and the primary text of this chapter, I explore how to navigate congregational culture from a church leadership perspective. Most of the material comes from church leadership texts; however, some works are from the fields of business and organizational culture. The materials from the fields of business and organizational culture are included because they are particular works referenced in church leadership materials. In accordance with *Look before You Lead*, the major divisions of this chapter are, Part 1—The Basics of Congregational Culture, Part 2—Reading Congregational Culture, and Part 3—Shaping Congregational Culture.

²Robert Lewis and Wayne Cordeiro, *Culture Shift: Transforming Your Church from the Inside Out* (San Francisco: Jossey-bass, 2005), 12.

The Basics of Congregational Culture

Aubrey Malphurs is a prodigious author in the area of church leadership.³ His book *Look before You Lead* is the best I have found in dealing with congregational culture from an evangelical perspective. Malphurs rightly focuses on the value of understanding and working through the culture of an established church. Due to the evangelical vacuum for this type of material, and due the inherent value of Malphurs' work, my critiques of this work are mainly in regard to his missed opportunities. Malphurs could have created a better book by acknowledging and implementing the tools and resources of anthropologists. I do not want to diminish the enormous usefulness that his book already provides, and my criticisms are given with the understanding that Malphurs may have intentionally avoided the discipline of anthropology for the sake of clarity, brevity, or lack of knowledge. Malphurs' only reference to anthropological sources is his acknowledgement of Edgar Schein's influence on his understanding of organizational culture and leadership.⁴

³Malphurs' book *Look before You Lead* was released during my initial research on the topic of congregational culture. In the midst of my writing he released another church leadership book Aubrey Malphurs, *Re: Vision: The Key to Transforming Your Church* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2014). Some of his other well-known works include Aubrey Malphurs, *Advanced Strategic Planning: A 21st-Century Model for Church and Ministry Leaders* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2013). Aubrey Malphurs, *The Nuts and Bolts of Church Planting: A Guide for Starting Any Kind of Church* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2011). Aubrey Malphurs and Steve Stroope. *Money Matters in Church: A Practical Guide for Leaders* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2007). Aubrey Malphurs, *A New Kind of Church: Understanding Models of Ministry for the 21st Century* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2007). Aubrey Malphurs, *Leading Leaders: Empowering Church Boards for Ministry Excellence, a New Paradigm for Board Leadership* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2005). Aubrey Malphurs and Will Mancini. *Building Leaders: Blueprints for Developing Leadership at Every Level of Your Church* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2004). Aubrey Malphurs, *Values-Driven Leadership: Discovering and Developing Your Core Values for Ministry* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1996). Aubrey Malphurs, *Planting Growing Churches for the 21st Century: A Comprehensive Guide for New Churches and Those Desiring Renewal* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1998). Aubrey Malphurs, *Developing a Vision for Ministry in the 21st Century* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1999). And, Aubrey Malphurs, *Pouring New Wine into Old Wineskins: How to Change a Church without Destroying It* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1993). Malphurs produced the aforementioned, as well as many other books, articles, and recordings.

⁴Aubrey Malphurs, *Look before You Lead: How to Discern & Shape Your Church Culture* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2013), 20. He references Edgar H. Schein, *Organizational Culture and Leadership*, 2nd ed. (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1997). Schein released a 4th ed. of the book in 2010. Since Malphurs quotes the 1997 version, he leads me to believe that he has not interacted the two latest updates. This is important because Schein is the only anthropological type resource mentioned in *Look before You*

Malphurs begins his book, “A primary responsibility of today’s strategic church leaders is to create, implement, and re-implement an organizational culture that rewards and encourages movement toward the church’s mission and vision.” Through the lens of this opening statement one can see Malphurs’ emphasis is ultimately placed on changing church cultures. He intends to equip pastors to transform ineffective congregational cultures (often plateaued or declining) into cultures that reflect “God’s mission and vision for his church.”⁵ Malphurs’ opening statement assumes congregational culture is something the pastor needs to strongly influence. His statement also assumes every congregation needs to have a stated mission and vision in order to be effective.

In this foundational chapter, Malphurs pleads, “It’s most important that every leader in general and pastors in particular be able to define *culture* and understand the culture in which they lead and minister.”⁶ He explains, “The way to understand culture is to read or exegete it. Just as we exegete the Scriptures to better understand the Bible, so we exegete a culture to better understand it, shape it, and move it toward accomplishing God’s mission and vision for his church.”⁷ In these statements Malphurs presents an excellent opportunity to interact with anthropological sources, but falls short.⁸

Lead.

⁵Malphurs, *Look before You Lead*, 8.

⁶Ibid.

⁷Ibid. Malphurs mentions exegeting culture, but neglects interacting formally with anthropological tools and resources.

⁸I found out about Malphurs’ book after I had already narrowed my dissertation to the topic of looking at churches as cultures and implementing anthropological tools and resources in the pastorate. I assumed, after reading the title of his book, that he had already accomplished what I had hoped accomplish in my dissertation. When I read his book, however, I noticed he failed to interact with anthropological sources and seemed to ignore anthropological nomenclature. Malphurs has since coauthored another book with Gordon E. Penfold, *Re: Vision: The Key to Transforming Your Church* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2014). *Re: Vision* has a chapter on “Creating a Culture for Change” that summarizes the principles in *Look before You Lead*, and again he decides not to interact with anthropological resources.

Although Malphurs' book is all about working in and through church culture, his purpose statement illuminates the fact that Malphurs' ideas regarding culture do not come from the primary discipline of anthropology, but from the business world's application of anthropological principles in the field of organizational culture.⁹

Malphurs does benefit from organizational culture principles, and he rightly leads pastors to glean wisdom from the fields of organizational culture and behavior.¹⁰ The application of organizational culture principles is valuable for church leadership and should continue; but, church leadership authors should follow organizational culture resources to their philosophical roots in the field of cultural anthropology. Even Edgar Schein, Malphurs' only anthropology related source, notes, "Over the past several decades, organizational culture has drawn themes from anthropology, sociology, social psychology, and cognitive psychology."¹¹ Schein later argues for the need to "build on the deeper, more complex anthropological models. Those models refer to a wide range of observable events and underlying forces."¹² Schein presents eleven anthropological categories for organizational culture observation and investigation.

Malphurs seems to follow Schein's paradigm of culture, but with different nomenclature. Schein uses the categories of "artifacts, espoused beliefs and values, and basic underlying assumptions."¹³ Malphurs presents a similar triad represented by an apple metaphor. He writes, "We will focus specifically on how a church culture's shared

⁹Malphurs, *Look before You Lead*, 8.

¹⁰Gavin Sinclair, Dee Cuttall, Rodney Vandever, and Michael Menefee define organizational behavior as "the study of human behavior in organizations, the interaction between people and the organization with the intent to understand and predict human behavior. It is simply a study of the interpersonal skills needed for a successful career in today's very diverse world." Gavin Sinclair et al., *Human Behavior in Organizations*, 4th ed. (Boston: Pearson Custom Publishing, 2002), 6.

¹¹Schein, *Organizational Culture and Leadership*, ix.

¹²Ibid.

¹³Ibid., 23-34.

beliefs and values interact to explain its behavior in general and display its uniqueness in particular.”¹⁴ It seems Malphurs’ emphasis on changing church cultures causes him to gloss over a more thorough representation of the anthropological principles found in works like Edgar Schein’s *Organizational Culture and Leadership*. Malphurs is not alone in this regard. In their book, *Culture Shift: Transforming Your Church from the Inside Out*, Robert Lewis and Wane Cordeiro only reference Geert Hofstede’s *Culture and Organizations*, and they do so without interacting with any of his anthropological principles. It also appears that Will Mancini composes his book *Church Unique: How Missional Leades Cast Vision, Capture Culture, and Create Movement* without referencing one anthropological source. These church leadership works, among others, demonstrate the fact that evangelical leadership authors largely neglect interactions with anthropological tools and resources while teaching on culture.

The Importance of Culture

Churches have layers of cultural influence from their doctrine, history, denominational and associational affiliation and interaction, and various other cultural shaping factors. Each church develops unique assumptions, patterns of behavior, and artifacts over time. Due to the development of culture within congregations, anthropological tools and resources are not only important for the pastor to understand, but also for the congregation. Congregations that fail to understand many of their ways of doing things are cultural and subjective will be much more rigid when it comes time to lead toward biblical fidelity or contextual cultural effectiveness. Therefore, anthropological tools and resources, as foundational disciplines for understanding and working with and through cultures, should be taught to church members as well as church leaders in order to generate better pastor-congregation relations.

¹⁴Malphurs, *Look before You Lead*, 8.

Aubrey Malphurs rightly warns pastors, “When pastors are hired to lead existing churches, they go into and have to adjust to an already established church culture. The better they read and understand that culture, as well as their own, the better their potential to shape or lead and minister well in that culture. If they fail to read the culture well, it . . . will lead and manage them.”¹⁵ Malphurs’ warning is true and needed, but his weakness is in actually providing tools and resources necessary for discovery.

Malphurs’ biggest contribution seems to be his encouragement to pastors to seek like-minded churches in the area of values. He provides a good questionnaire and even discusses other areas of culture that should be evaluated, but his lack of interaction with anthropological sources causes him to fall short of providing his readers with many of the typical anthropological tools used in ethnographic research.

As far as Malphurs’ desired affect in authoring the book, he writes,

One major purpose of this book is to help pastors understand their own culture preferences and an established church’s culture before they accept a position to lead it. Thus early in the pastoral candidating phase, the pastor should read or exegete the church’s culture. If he decides to accept a call to pastor the church, he will go in with his eyes wide open—he knows what he’s getting into. He has the cultural navigational tools in place to ply the congregational waters that lie before him. He sees many of the cultural sandbars before he encounters them along the ministry journey.¹⁶

Malphurs seems to be on the right track, but he leaves investigative and navigational gaps that could be filled by the implementation of anthropological tools and resources. My

¹⁵Malphurs, *Look before You Lead*, 15. This idea is also found in Schein: “The bottom line for leaders is that if they do not become conscious of the cultures in which they are embedded, those cultures will manage them. Cultural understanding is desirable for all of us, but it is essential to leaders if they are to lead.” Schein, *Organizational Culture and Leadership*, 22. Robert Lewis and Wayne Cordeiro write, “Culture is the most important social reality in your church. Though invisible to the untrained eye, its power is undeniable. Culture gives color and flavor to everything your church is and does. Like a powerful current running through your church, it can move you inland or take you farther out to sea. It can prevent your church’s potential from ever being realized, or—if used by the Holy Spirit—it can draw others in and reproduce healthy spiritual life all along the way.” Lewis and Cordeiro, *Culture Shift*, 3. Lewis and Cordeiro seem to present culture the way many present worldview, with the analogy of glasses: “Your culture is the lens through which you view your life. If you change the lens, you change your outlook. Change the culture, and everything else changes, including the future” (12).

¹⁶Malphurs, *Look before You Lead*, 15.

questions for Malphurs here are, (1) What are the tools one could use to discover his culture preferences? (2) How can one get an accurate culture picture of a congregation without spending time among the people? (3) What is an acceptable level of culture knowledge and agreement before entering an established congregation? (4) What are the “navigational tools in place”?¹⁷ And, (5) How should the pastor compile the acquired information?

Malphurs’ book is written with the intention of helping pastors change ineffective churches. He infers that the longer a church has been in existence the more resistant the congregational culture will be toward change. Malphurs writes, “When you first start pouring concrete, it’s soft and very manageable. However, the longer it has had time to set up, the more difficult it is to change. And so it is with culture.”¹⁸ He urges pastors to consider the great difficulty in changing long-standing cultures and even warns that some churches should be completely avoided.

Often, optimistic (or perhaps desperate) pastors overlook great cultural difficulties. Malphurs warns that skipping over culture, especially a “toxic culture” results in an effort that wastes time and resources. Malphurs cautions, “Many leaders who attempt to implement strategic envisioning in a church discover that a toxic culture cannibalizes the strategic envisioning meat off its organizational bones.”¹⁹

Though Malphurs’ obvious goal is to change ineffective congregational cultures, mainline authors urge caution against presumptuous modification of congregational cultures.²⁰ The authors of *Studying Congregations* warn that seeking to understand the congregational culture should precede any attempts at congregational

¹⁷Malphurs, *Look before You Lead*, 15

¹⁸Ibid., 16.

¹⁹Ibid., 17.

²⁰Aubrey Malphurs’ ideas regarding “effective” and “ineffective” churches are explained later in this chapter.

transformation. They write, “Before new programs can be implemented or administrations reorganized or new ministries begun, clergy and other leaders need to understand the well-established ways of life that will be disrupted by these changes.”²¹

The differences between *Look before You Lead* and *Studying Congregations* are mainly differences in emphasis. The authors of *Studying Congregations* focus much more than Malphurs on understanding congregations. Therefore, they work much more deeply with anthropological tools and resources.

Those from a mainline perspective tend to emphasize understanding over change, and those from a more evangelical position tend to emphasize change over understanding. Therefore, evangelicals are much less likely than mainline authors to spend time studying congregations and much more likely to spend time seeking ways to transform congregations. Hence, evangelicals have yet to thoroughly trace the origins of business/organizational culture principles to one of their fountainheads in cultural anthropology. An accurate understanding of the discipline of cultural anthropology would provoke evangelical church leaders to value understanding a congregation before seeking to transform it.

The Definition of Culture

Aubrey Malphurs’ definition of congregational culture is presented in the following: “I define the church’s *congregational culture* as the *unique expression of the interaction of the church’s shared beliefs and its values, which explain its behavior in general and display its unique identity in particular.*”²² “In short, a church’s

²¹Ammerman et al., *Studying Congregations: A New Handbook* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1998), 82. *Studying Congregations* is from a more mainline rather than evangelical perspective. The authors believe anthropological study of congregations should be implemented as soon as possible. They write, “One of the most common times when a congregation’s culture needs to be understood is when any new person arrives. Especially when clergy begin their work in a new place, they need to know much more than mere annual reports and orders of worship can tell them.” Ibid.

²²Malphurs, *Look before You Lead*, 20. Italics in original.

congregational culture is its unique expression of its shared values and beliefs,” says Malphurs.²³

Malphurs’ definition of culture is very helpful, and that is why I combine parts of Malphurs’ definition with the components of Paul Hiebert’s definition of culture. Malphurs’ definition is directly applicable to congregational culture because of its organizational cultural influence. Hiebert’s definition is an example of a purely anthropological definition. A good combination of the two, for the purpose of defining congregational culture, is, The more or less integrated system of beliefs, feelings, and values created and shared by a particular congregation that enable the people to function as a church and that are communicated by means of its systems of symbols and rituals, patterns of behavior, and its material products.²⁴ This combined definition helps spell out the particulars of Malphurs’ “unique expression” through the use of Hiebert’s “systems of symbols and rituals, patterns of behavior, and their material products.”²⁵ In the concluding chapter of this dissertation I outline a proposed anthropological investigative process that provides pastors a way to study established churches’ systems of symbols and rituals, patterns of behavior, and their material products by implementing anthropological tools and resources.

For the purposes of illustrating culture, Malphurs uses the metaphor of an apple. The three layers of the apple: the skin, the flesh, and the core represent three facets of culture. He likens the church’s outward behavior to the apple’s skin. Malphurs explains, “Churches express themselves through their behaviors and outward appearance.

²³Malphurs, *Look before You Lead*, 20. Italics in original. Malphurs then makes some arguments of what culture is not. “Culture isn’t evil. Culture isn’t a product of the fall. Culture isn’t independent of the Godhead. Culture isn’t temporal. Culture isn’t always good. Culture isn’t an end in itself.” Ibid., 22-24.

²⁴Hiebert, *Anthropological Insights for Missionaries*, 30.

²⁵Ibid.

We can say that they are behavior-expressed.”²⁶ He goes on to note, “The behaviors and outward expressions are what an observer, such as a visitor, would see, sense, and hear as he or she encounters a church’s culture. Some examples are the church’s physical presence (facilities), language (multi- or monolingual), clothing, symbols, rituals, ceremonies, ordinances, technology, and so forth.”²⁷ These visible cultural expressions fall within the anthropological category of “artifacts.”

Artifacts, expressions, and outward behaviors are included in Paul Hiebert’s anthropological categories of “systems of symbols and rituals, patterns of behavior, and their material products.”²⁸ Although Malphurs’ definition and categories are obviously anthropological, he misses a great opportunity to strengthen understanding on the part of his readers because he overlooks interacting with authors from the field of anthropology. Malphurs’ expertise is centered in church leadership, but it seems that he may even be unaware that his readers could expand their research by studying the works of notable anthropologists and missiologists. Malphurs’ definition of culture, and understanding of the “skin” of the apple, could be made clearer with a little help from Hiebert’s definition of culture and interaction with other anthropological sources.

Next, Malphurs presents his understanding of the apple’s flesh in his metaphor. The flesh for Malphurs is the church’s values. Malphurs writes, “Congregational culture includes at the second level the church’s shared values, which are represented by the

²⁶Malphurs, *Look before You Lead*, 21.

²⁷Ibid. Terrence Deal and Kent Peterson write, “Culture takes form as, over time, people cope with problems, stumble onto routines and rituals, and create traditions and ceremonies to reinforce underlying values and beliefs.” Terrence E. Deal and Kent D. Peterson, *Shaping School Culture: The Heart of Leadership* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1999), 49. Fons Trompenaars and Charles Hampden-Turner write, “An individual’s first experience of a new culture is the less esoteric, more concrete factors. This level consists of **explicit** culture.” Fons Trompenaars and Charles Hampden-Turner, *Riding the Waves of Culture: Understanding Cultural Diversity in Business*, 2nd ed. (London: Nicholas Brealey Publishing, 1997), 21. Bold in original. They go on to note, “Explicit culture is the observable reality of the language, food, buildings, houses, monuments, agriculture, shrines, markets, fashions and art. They are symbols of a deeper level of culture. Prejudices mostly start on this symbolic and observable level.” Ibid., 21.

²⁸Hiebert, *Anthropological Insights for Missionaries*, 30.

apple's flesh. Churches are behavior-expressed but values-driven. The inward values drive and explain the church's outward behavior."²⁹

An interesting thing to note when comparing Paul Hiebert's book *Anthropological Insights for Missionaries*, and Aubrey Malphurs' book *Look before You Lead*, is they both use a triad to illustrate the layers of culture. If Hiebert's illustration were an apple he would place values as the core and not the flesh of the apple. One of the reasons for this difference is Malphurs' understanding of culture is focused on congregational culture and Paul Hiebert's understanding is focused on culture expressed by an individual within a community. Hiebert's triad is difficult to merge with Malphurs' because they are looking at culture in two distinct manners. Malphurs' metaphor is better for those who are not specialists in anthropology because of its observational simplicity. Hiebert's metaphor is more complex because it delineates the reasons and motivations behind expressions of culture.

Malphurs sees values as secondary to beliefs. He writes, "When a church culture acts on its beliefs, they become its actual values."³⁰ The core of Malphurs' metaphor is a representation of the congregation's beliefs. Says Malphurs, "Churches are behavior-expressed, values-driven, and beliefs-based."³¹ Malphurs further explains,

When Christians hear the term beliefs, they often think of the doctrines of the Christian faith that might be found in the church's doctrinal statement, creed, bylaws, and constitution. Certainly these beliefs or convictions are an important part of the church's culture. However, the church's beliefs also include other fundamental aspects of the church's life, such as how it views time (is the church living in the past or the present?), how it views human nature (is man good or bad?), how it communicates internally and externally (the bulletin, announcements), how it

²⁹Malphurs, *Look before You Lead*, 21. Fons Trompenaars and Charles Hampden-Turner's middle layer of culture includes norms and values. They write, "**Norms** are the mutual sense a group has of what is "right" and "wrong". Norms can develop on a formal level as written laws, and on an informal level as social control. **Values**, on the other hand, determine the definition of "good and bad", and are therefore closely related to the ideals shared by the group." Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner, *Riding the Waves of Culture*, 21. Bold in original.

³⁰Malphurs, *Look before You Lead*, 21.

³¹Ibid.

handles power (who has the power and who doesn't?), what the role of tradition is, what the church believes is the proper role of women, what it believes about the use of technology (is it high-tech or low-tech?), what it believes about the use of musical instruments in worship, and other similar views."³²

Following Malphurs' logic, if a pastor entered a new congregation and observed the church consistently used an orderly bulletin on Sunday mornings one could conclude the congregation values orderly bulletins because they believe orderly bulletins are important. Also, according to this procedure, beliefs can only be inferred and not observed. The values expressed are what the pastor should observe.

Malphurs further explicates the apple metaphor, "I will also refer to these beliefs or convictions as assumptions, because they are taken for granted as well as shared by the majority of the congregation."³³ Malphurs advises, "If those who seek to understand or read a church's culture don't properly identify its basic beliefs, they will not know how to read its actual values nor interpret the congregation's outward expression of itself."³⁴ Malphurs' logic regarding beliefs may seem at first to be circular reasoning; however, Malphurs sees the core of his apple as the "why" of culture and the skin and flesh of the apple as the "what of culture." This type of understanding harmonizes with anthropological investigation. Anthropologists begin with the recording of observable cultural expressions and later attempt to explain "why" the culture exhibits said expressions, preferably in the words of cultural participants.

Malphurs knows this sort of investigation is a necessarily repeatable process for each individual congregation. He writes, "Because no church has the exact same beliefs, values, and behavior, each church will have its own individual, unique nature or

³²Malphurs, *Look before You Lead*, 21, 22.

³³Ibid., 22.

³⁴Ibid.

identity.”³⁵ Malphurs’ only anthropological source, Edgar Schein, also teaches that each organization has a distinct identity, and is composed of distinct subcultures.³⁶

It will take patience and discernment on the part of the pastor to refrain from making judgments before understanding the underlying beliefs of a congregation. He should patiently employ the anthropological tools and resources of participant observation, surveys and questionnaires, and interviews to bolster his understanding, and thereby benefit pastor-congregation relations.

When studying congregational culture, it is important to remember that the definition of culture leaves room for congregational culture to be perpetually changing. John Shultz makes a good point regarding organizational culture and its process of change.³⁷ Shultz explains,

Groups go through a maturation process. People who have worked together and associated with one another over a period of time are more proficient than those who have not been together long. Newly formed groups will spend a while sorting out relationships with each other. Members need to figure out their relative rank, worth, and standing with others in the group—how behaviors and skills will mesh so the nitty-gritty job of work is done. In due time, however, individuals will build

³⁵Malphurs, *Look before You Lead*, 22. Lovett H. Weems Jr. writes, “Culture is in essence ‘who we are and how we do things around here.’ It captures all the spoken and unspoken assumptions that make up a particular community of faith. A congregation’s culture will share countless similarities with that of other churches, but the way those elements are expressed and especially how they are combined makes each culture unique.” Lovett H. Weems, *Take the Next Step: Leading Lasting Change in the Church* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2003), 59. David Livermore defines cultural intelligence (CQ) as, “the capability to *function effectively across a variety of cultural contexts*, such as ethnic, generational, and organizational cultures.” David Livermore, *The Cultural Intelligence Difference: Master the One Skill You Can't Do without in Today's Global Economy* (New York: AMACOM, 2011), 5.

³⁶Edgar Schein notes that in most organizations there are “three generic subcultures.” The “Operator Subculture” could represent the average congregant in a local church. The “Engineering/Design Subculture” could represent the teachers, deacons, trustees, board etc. or a local church. And, the “Executive Subculture” could be applied to the paid staff, especially the pastor(s) of an established church. These three cultures will have differing basic underlying assumptions. Schein, *Organizational Culture and Leadership*, 57-66.

³⁷Hans Finzel writes, “To leaders, organizational culture is the unseen set of rules and expected behaviors that embody the values of the group.” Hans Finzel, “Creating the Right Leadership Culture,” in *Leaders on Leadership*, ed. George Barna (Ventura, CA: Regal, 1997), 266. Finzel later writes, “The leader who fails to understand the culture of his organization can never hope to harness it for visionary purposes” *Ibid.*, 267.

trust and develop unwritten rules to guide working relationships, establish norms, and develop a degree of cohesiveness.³⁸

Shultz's principles explain why it is so difficult for new members to enter into long-standing, established churches. This process seems even more difficult for new pastors who have the power to threaten the established cultural patterns and hierarchy. These facts should also alert pastors to the reality that they will have to earn the right to lead through longevity of tenure while serving through ingrained cultures. Most pastors fail to stay in one church long enough to effect sustainable change. And, as Malphurs argues later in this chapter, sadly, due to their resistance against becoming healthy and effective, some churches should be left alone.

The Church's Expression of Culture

Cultural expressions are the fruits of rooted values and beliefs. Many summarize culture as “the way we do things around here.” But Malphurs cautions, “This is true, but true only of the first layer or the skin of the apple. It doesn't reveal enough. For example, it doesn't address why they do things the way they do—their values—or the beliefs or assumptions on which they're based. Both are vital to discovering culture.”³⁹ Malphurs compares the expressions of a church's culture to the tip of an iceberg (10 percent, with the other 90 percent hidden).⁴⁰

Although it is true that most congregational cultural factors are hidden from observation, the expressions a pastor can observe and record through ethnographic

³⁸John Roland Schultz, *Four-Cornered Leadership: A Framework for Making Decisions* (Boca Raton, FL: CRC Press, 2014), 77. Shultz focuses on four basic learning styles: listeners, watchers, doers, and conceptualizers (113). In another place John Shultz writes, “Organizational longevity is rooted in culture—the display of collective behavior. Culture is influenced by a set of shared norms and values that have developed over time” (126). Finally Shultz warns, “Unfortunately, culture is a powerful force that is often difficult to overcome and then alter. If, for example, the current culture is inwardly focused and more concerned about preserving methods and ideas that in the past have been successful, then the organization may not be able to respond to changing market conditions adequately.” Ibid. Shultz's warning should inform Malphurs' tendency to react to the cultural context of the church.

³⁹Malphurs, *Look before You Lead*, 27.

⁴⁰Ibid.

research can point the pastor toward the values and beliefs that lie behind the congregation's symbols and rituals, patterns of behavior, and their material products.⁴¹

Malphurs has created a helpful list of these observable and recordable cultural traits within the context of an established church:

Neighborhood or community, demographics, language, facilities, parking, grounds, signage, attendants, vehicles, clothing, friendliness, emotions, security, manner of address, technology, communication, ordinances, symbols, worship, disciple-making ministries, outreach ministries, missions, the scriptures, discipline, visible behavior, vision, values, atmosphere, ceremonies, women, myths and stories, visitors, pastor, staff, doctrinal beliefs, leadership development, and finances.⁴²

Additionally, Malphurs provides a list of questions that the pastor can use to discover the aforementioned observable cultural expressions. His questionnaire is a perfect example of an anthropological tool, though he fails to refer to it as such. These questions can be found in appendix A of *Look before you Lead*, and in appendix 4 of this dissertation.⁴³

There would probably be considerable difficulty associated with motivating complacent congregations to complete any anthropological questionnaires. Struggling congregations may even fear what such questionnaires would reveal. Due to this

⁴¹Aubrey Malphurs writes, "Change agents as leaders must be aware that leadership always takes place within a context. In the marketplace this context is called the corporate culture. In the church it is the congregational culture. The congregational culture consists of the traditions and values the church has acquired over the years of its existence." Malphurs, *Pouring New Wine into Old Wineskins*, 82, 83. Malphurs writes, "When a person in the church reacts to change with the slogan 'We've never done it that way,' he responds out of the congregational culture" (83).

⁴²Malphurs, *Look before You Lead*, 28-31.

⁴³*Ibid.*, 209-19. Malphurs' anthropological questionnaire is very valuable for pastors and therefore deserves inclusion in the appendix of this dissertation. Another concept Malphurs introduces in *Values-Driven Leadership* could prove to be a fruitful tool for the pastor as ethnographer. He refers to the discipline as psychographics. Malphurs teaches, "Demographics and psychographics supply much helpful information. Most leaders who have been in a community for a while know and understand the organization's people. However, new leaders, especially those from outside the area, can greatly benefit from demographic and psychographic data." Malphurs, *Values-Driven Leadership*, 135. Malphurs goes on to write, "Psychographics help leaders discover why their people do what they do. In the marketplace, demographics aid a business in discovering who its customer is; psychographics help to discover why that customer buys. Psychographics describe a community's attitudes—how people feel about various issues. They also describe people's values—moral, organizational, and so on" (135).

difficulty, one option potential pastors could explore is soliciting the assistance of third parties such as consultants, local associations, or state conventions.

Even visitors to churches are subconsciously evaluating the markers noted in Malphurs' cultural categories. Malphurs says of visitors, "They are there to check out the church to see if it's the kind of culture they want to be a part of. Often they're looking for a culture similar to one that has had a powerful impact on their lives in the past."⁴⁴

Malphurs also notices, "Those, however, who have been at the church for a while tend, with some exceptions, to have accepted the culture the way it is and hardly notice it until someone calls it into question or attempts to change it."⁴⁵

A pastor who is new to a congregation tends to evaluate the new congregation through the lens of his own congregational cultural heritage.⁴⁶ In order for such a pastor to develop healthy pastor/congregation relations, he must first recognize this fact and check his motivations in order to make sure he is seeking biblical faithfulness rather than congregational cultural transformation just to satisfy his own cultural ways of doing things. Even when his motivation is to move the congregation toward biblical fidelity, he will still generate some necessary conflict as he draws attention to existing cultural practices and proposes change. Then, if the pastor hopes to overcome resistance and see

⁴⁴Malphurs, *Look before You Lead*, 31. In, *Studying Congregations*, the authors write, "No two congregations are alike. Each gathering of people creates its own ways of doing things, its own ways of describing the world, its own tools and artifacts that produce its distinctive appearance. Congregations, in other words, are subcultures within a larger culture." Ammerman et al., *Studying Congregations*, 78.

⁴⁵Malphurs, *Look before You Lead*, 31.

⁴⁶Hans Finzel writes, "We may think one church is like the next, but in reality each has its very distinct culture, built on the heritage of its leaders. To understand the culture is to learn what makes this group unique in its contribution to the world. These values form the bedrock for developing mission statements, vision and momentum." Finzel, "Creating the Right Leadership Culture," 267. Bob Burns, Tasha Chapman, and Donald Guthrie write, "Misunderstanding and premature judgments can harm our ministries. Our lack of cultural awareness can be a primary cause of this damage. If we assume our perspective reflects the viewpoint of everyone else in our growing multicultural environment, then our interpretations of others' actions will likely be inaccurate and inappropriate." Bob Burns, Tasha Chapman, and Donald Guthrie, *Resilient Ministry: What Pastors Told Us about Surviving and Thriving* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Books, 2013), 148.

cultural transformation, he will first have to lead the congregation toward an accurate understanding of its own cultural expressions in light of Scripture. In this process, the pastor will immediately be confronted with the problem of how to effectively communicate culture to the whole congregation.

Fons Trompenaars and Charles Hampden-Turner believe cultural self-knowledge is essential in transformative leadership. They write, “I believe understanding our own culture and our own assumptions and expectations about how people ‘should think and act’ is the basis for success.”⁴⁷ The pastor needs to learn both his own congregational cultural expressions and those of the congregation he serves. And, he needs to lead the congregation to understand their own congregational culture and where it falls short of biblical parameters.

The Church’s Cultural Values

As Malphurs’ metaphor moves from the skin to the flesh of the apple, he transitions from expressions of culture to the philosophical assumptions that cause congregations to display their congregational culture. Malphurs understands the underlying motivations to be cultural values. For Malphurs, these values answer the question, “Why do we do what we do?”

The foundational values of a particular congregation are referred to as core values by Malphurs.⁴⁸ He writes, “*Core values are the constant, passionate shared core beliefs that drive and guide the culture.*”⁴⁹ Malphurs explains core values are constant:

⁴⁷Trompenaars and Hampden-turner, *Riding The Waves of Culture*, 2.

⁴⁸Aubrey Malphurs writes, “Every institution has a core set of organizational values. We have seen the importance of these key values in driving the organization. (I refer to these as *organizational, institutional, or corporate values.*) Malphurs, *Look before You Lead*, 42. 43. Malphurs writes, “My research indicates that most churches have from five to ten core values” (52).

⁴⁹*Ibid.* 40. Italics in original.

“That is, they don’t change easily or quickly. They hang on tenaciously to life.”⁵⁰

Malphurs believes the congregation’s tenacious hold on core values can work for or against the new pastor’s leadership.⁵¹

Next, Malphurs teaches core values are passionate. He explains, “*Passion* is a feeling word. It’s what you feel strongly and care deeply about. . . . If your soul isn’t stirred by your stated core values, they aren’t at the culture’s core.”⁵² A congregation’s passionate embrace of its core values explains why there are “church fights” and “worship wars.” Pastors who attempt to change the core values of an established congregation must understand they will not do so without provoking emotional responses.

Third, Malphurs teaches that for congregational values to be core values—they need to be shared. “Another term for this is *common cause*,” writes Malphurs.⁵³ Congregations are composed of individuals, families, and various affinities and sub-cultures, but for their values to be core values they must be recognized and shared by the majority of the congregation.

Next, Malphurs points to the assumptions that lie behind a congregation’s core values—their *core beliefs*. Regarding core beliefs, Malphurs writes, “*A belief is a conviction or opinion that you hold to be true, though based on limited proof.*”⁵⁴ Malphurs further explains,

The beliefs that the culture acts on become actual values as well as beliefs. Those the culture doesn’t act on remain beliefs and aspirational values at best. A classic

⁵⁰Malphurs, *Look before You Lead*, 40.

⁵¹Pastors may be in for a hard fought transition if the church operates under the assumption of unbiblical core values. Malphurs writes, “On the other hand, resisting change is good when a church has embraced good, biblical core values, such as those in Acts 2:42-47.” Ibid.

⁵²Ibid., 40.

⁵³Ibid. Italics in original.

⁵⁴Ibid., 40, 41. Italics in original.

example is evangelism. Theologically conservative churches believe in evangelism. It's a core belief. However, it's not a core value until many in the culture begin to share their faith.⁵⁵

According to this definition, core beliefs can remain hidden from observation. Often, churches publish more aspirational values than actual values.⁵⁶ Knowing this to be true, the established church pastor can implement the anthropological tools of interviews, participant observation, and questionnaires and surveys in order to discover the actual values and congregational beliefs.

Finally, Malphurs believes core values will drive and guide congregational culture. He illustrates, "Core values are to the church what an engine is to a ship."⁵⁷ Further, "Not only do values drive the church, they guide or give direction to the congregation, much as a ship's rudder guides a ship. They make sure the culture ship is moving in the right direction, and they are the red flag that waves when it isn't."⁵⁸

From this information we can infer that ensuring the congregation embraces biblical core values is one of the most important tasks of a pastor.⁵⁹ Malphurs has written multiple works on shaping the values of a congregation to align with a biblical vision.⁶⁰ In most cases, congregations are unaware of their actual values and hold them at the subconscious level.⁶¹

⁵⁵Malphurs, *Look before You Lead*, 41.

⁵⁶Malphurs explains, "Aspirational values are beliefs that the individual or organization does not currently act on. These values identify what should or ought to be, not what is; they may be values that the leadership or culture would like to adopt in the future. Until they are adopted, however, they remain aspirational values." *Ibid.*, 43.

⁵⁷*Ibid.*, 41.

⁵⁸*Ibid.*

⁵⁹Malphurs writes, "Luke provides us with the Jerusalem Church's actual core values in Acts 2:42-47. They are worship, fellowship, biblical instruction, evangelism, and ministry." *Ibid.*, 43. Conducting this study of values has helped me to understand the genius behind Rick Warren's Purpose Driven model. Although I have never implemented Warren's model, I do see his intentional methods create a congregational culture built upon shared core beliefs and values that are biblically based.

⁶⁰Malphurs' latest book deals with values and vision. Malphurs and Penfold, *Re: Vision*.

⁶¹Malphurs, *Look before You Lead*, 42.

When members within a congregation hold differing core values, whether in their conscious or subconscious, tension and conflict is unavoidable. This may be the reason why Paul and Barnabas parted company in Acts 15. During their conflict, Paul seemed to express a higher value for faithfulness and integrity, and Barnabas seemed to express a higher value for forgiveness, restitution, and cooperation.

Differences in core values often lead to turbulent pastor-congregation relationships. Pastors need to be willing to contextualize within the culture already established by the congregation. The process will start with a pastor understanding the fact that congregational culture exists, and that both he and his new congregation may possess distinct congregational cultures. One of the key cultural markers to be discovered by the pastor is congregational values, and these values are best discovered through the implementation of anthropological tools and resources.⁶²

In addition to Malphurs' behaviors audit, he proposes a core values audit and exploring the budget in order to discover the values of a congregation.⁶³ This portion of

⁶²Aubrey Malphurs gives nine essential reasons why core values are important for pastor-congregation relationships: (1) Values determine ministry objectives. Malphurs writes, "A ministry based on clearly articulated core values drives a fixed stake in the ground that says to all, 'This is what we stand for; this is what we are all about; this is who we are; this is what we can do for you.'" (2) Values dictate personal involvement. Malphurs explains, "People involve themselves more and last longer in a ministry culture if they know from the beginning that they share the same or similar core values." (3) Values communicate what is important. (4) Values guide change. (5) Values influence overall behavior. (6) Values inspire people to action. Malphurs explains, "People need and want something they can commit to, something they feel is worthy of their best efforts. They are willing, even eager, to commit voluntarily and work for that which is truly worthwhile, that which is larger than themselves, that which creates meaning in their lives. Churches can play an enormous role in infusing their people's lives with such meaning." (7) Values enhance credible leadership. Says Malphurs, "As leadership goes, so goes the organizational culture." And, "All leaders are values-driven, and the ministry cultures they build are expressions of their values." (8) Values shape ministry character. (9) Values contribute to ministry success. Malphurs concludes, "Any organization, Christian or non-Christian, must have and adhere to a sound set of fundamental beliefs if it is to achieve success." Here it seems Malphurs substitutes beliefs for values. Finally, Malphurs writes, "Success is the accomplishment of the ministry's mission and vision (Matt. 28:19-20) without compromising its vital, bottom-line values. A church that is winning lost people in its ministry community and is moving its new converts and older converts toward maturity—Christlikeness—while maintaining its distinctive, primary biblical values is successful because it is accomplishing its biblical mission and vision without sacrificing its core values." Malphurs, *Look before You Lead*, 35-39.

⁶³Ibid. Malphurs discovery process seems to assume that the pastor is already serving within the congregation. In other places in the book he does urge pastors to discover congregational values before

Malphurs' book provides a great opportunity for him to alert his readers to the wealth of tools and resources found within the field of cultural anthropology.⁶⁴ Instead, Malphurs' lack of interaction with even one missiologist or anthropologist demonstrates the general lack of communication between church leadership authors and Christian anthropologists and missiologists.

The Church's Beliefs

Behind every value lies a belief. Aubrey Malphurs warns, "Poor beliefs such as those that do not align in some way with Scripture or contradict Scripture result in ineffective ministry."⁶⁵ One could wonder at this point, "what are the measurements for 'effective' ministry?" It seems that Malphurs' understanding of effectiveness is closely

they agree to serve as pastor. He provides a helpful values audit in appendix B of his book.

⁶⁴Part of the conclusion of my research proposes a way to implement anthropological tools and resources to determine values before accepting a pastoral position. Lewis and Cordeiro intend for their readers to identify their church culture by imagining the evaluation perceptions of visiting "outsiders." The four investigative questions they want church leaders to ask are: (1) "What values are communicated most strongly when someone approaches your church from the outside?" (2) "What would an outsider, after sitting through several worship services, say your church values most?" (3) "What are outsiders' two or three leading perceptions of your church, after they have participated for a month in a variety of your church's programs and ministries?" (4) "How would an outsider describe the spirit (or attitudes) most prevalent at your church?" Lewis and Cordeiro, *Culture Shift*, 46, 47. After thinking through the church's values, Lewis and Cordeiro challenge leaders to actually bring in a focus group and to compare the focus group report to the leader's evaluation of the church (47). Values are key to understanding a particular congregational culture, but authors like James F. Hopewell believe culture is too complex to be understood so simply. Hopewell warns, "So unexpectedly complex is the congregation that it requires comprehension from four quite different perspectives. It cannot be correctly understood without an exploration of the textual qualities that tie it to its larger context. Nor does its function become clear without analysis of the mechanist qualities that trace its dynamics and performance. Nor does this household of God come to life without organicist [sic] attention to its growth in community. And the observation of a congregation's symbolic interaction discloses its identity and web of meanings." James F. Hopewell, *Congregation: Stories and Structures*, ed. Barbara G. Wheeler (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1987), 31, 32.

⁶⁵Malphurs, *Look before You Lead*, 57. Aubrey Malphurs provides ten reasons why beliefs are important: (1) They reveal what a church does and doesn't believe. (2) They are key to effective or ineffective ministry. (3) They are vital to accomplishing change in the church. (4) They explain the presence or absence of core beliefs. (5) They are the basis for people's expectations of the church. (6) They guide the church in problem solving. (7) They help people make sense of the church world. (8) They provide people with mental and emotional stability. (9) They may determine a leader's "fit" in a church. (10) They are often a product of past success. *Ibid.*, 60.

akin to church growth, both spiritual and numerical. As mentioned in an earlier footnote, Malphurs' belief and values ideals are based on Acts 2:42-47.

Malphurs gives an example of faulty beliefs, "For example, a church has people of all ages, but most are elderly and believe that the form of worship that best honors God is traditional. Thus they'll pursue traditional worship regardless of its effectiveness or ineffectiveness."⁶⁶ Following Malphurs' logic, it would seem that one of the first values that must align between the pastor and his congregation is in regard to "effectiveness." If Malphurs hopes to instruct his hearers to change church culture for spiritual and numerical growth then the congregation is going to have to begin to value spiritual and numerical growth. If the congregation values spiritual and numerical growth more than they value traditional worship, then perhaps the people will allow the pastor to lead change in their worship style. But, following Malphurs' earlier logic, before a congregation can value spiritual and numerical growth it must hold the belief that spiritual and numerical growth is something to be valued.

Leading a church to begin to value spiritual and numerical growth may prove to be a great challenge. As Malphurs notes, "Churches cling tenaciously to their beliefs, especially their core assumptions. They are bedrock beliefs."⁶⁷ Malphurs rightly concludes, "If change is going to take place, it has to happen at the assumptions or beliefs level."⁶⁸ This type of change falls under the category of worldview transformation; it will take significant time and be met with opposition.⁶⁹

⁶⁶Malphurs, *Look before You Lead*, 57.

⁶⁷Ibid., 57, 58.

⁶⁸Ibid.

⁶⁹Ibid. Beliefs are typically a foundational component of an overall worldview. Malphurs uses James Sire's definition for worldview for his "church view:" "A worldview is a set of assumptions (beliefs) that may be true, partially true, or entirely false, which people hold (consciously or unconsciously, consistently or inconsistently) about the basic makeup of our world" (64). James Sire, *The Universe Next Door: A Basic Worldview Catalog* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 1997). So, Malphurs defines a church view as "a set of beliefs that may be true, partially true, or entirely false that a church holds consciously or

Fundamental congregational assumptions and beliefs can work against the pastor actually leading the church to do anything different.⁷⁰ What if one of the congregation's fundamental assumptions is that the pastor's role is to serve as a chaplain who caters to their ministerial needs?⁷¹ Other congregations may believe a pastor's role is just to be their "preacher," and others believe a pastor's role is to handle the administration of the church. These assumptions on the part of the congregation will work against the pastor demonstrating strong leadership, and may cause the church to resist or resent any change that is initiated by the pastor. In such a case, the pastor must implement anthropological tools and resources to discover the assumed process of change

unconsciously, consistently or inconsistently about the basic makeup of its world." Malphurs, *Look before You Lead*, 58. Italics in original. Malphurs' readers would benefit at this point from consulting with Paul Hiebert's anthropological work on changing worldviews. Hiebert's seminal work, *Transforming Worldviews: An Anthropological Understanding of How People Change*, (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2008), would provide an excellent starting point. Malphurs proposes seven questions that could be used by pastors in determining a congregation's worldview: (1) What is really real? (2) What is the nature of the world around us? (3) What is a human being? (4) What happens to a person at death? (5) Why is it possible to know anything at all? (6) How do we know what is right and wrong? (7) What is the meaning of human history? *Malphurs, Look before You Lead*, 64. Malphurs builds on these basic worldview questions in an attempt at more specific application and investigation. He proposes the following worldview questions regarding congregations: (1) What for the church is real? (2) How does the church determine truth? (3) What is the nature of the church? (4) What is the purpose of the church? (5) What is the mission of the church? (6) What are the church's theological beliefs (the church's doctrine, traditions, and so on)? (7) What does the church believe about the Trinity? (8) What does the church believe about Christ? (9) What does the church believe about salvation? (10) What is the church's polity (how does it handle authority issues)? (11) What is the nature and role of the pastor? (12) What is the nature and role of the congregation? (13) What is the role of women? (14) How does the church view time? (15) How does the church view space? (16) How does the church view technology? (17) How does the church view change and innovation? (65-66). The answers to these worldview questions can be determined through the implementation of anthropological tools and resources; including participant observation, interviews, and surveys and questionnaires. Therefore, pastors should seek to implement anthropological tools and resources in order to know and understand the church's fundamental beliefs, or worldview.

⁷⁰Aubrey Malphurs writes, "A ministry's beliefs are its assumptions that largely go unquestioned by its members. Over the years the beliefs become assumptions that are so entrenched and accepted that there's little if any debate about them or challenge to them. Church people have come to believe in and share them. They're not even discussable, because people take them for granted. Actually, to question them would cause much anxiety and defensiveness. This makes them extremely difficult to change. If you want to discover how mature and patient a church is, simply challenge their assumptions." Malphurs, *Look before You Lead*, 63. Malphurs' argument should provide a strong warning to pastors who are desperate to take a church just so they will have a place to preach or food on their table. The argument should also cause pastors to understand they have to be accepting of some level of congregational tension.

⁷¹*Ibid.*, 58.

within the congregation, and work through those channels. Or, he could overlook the culturally accepted ways of the congregation and strongly disrupt the church.

Instead, the pastor can listen to the way the congregation relates to him and how it talks about his functions through participant observation. He can note the ways the congregation has related to pastors in the past by studying the history of the church and reading the minutes of business meetings.⁷² He can also discover how church decisions are made through personal interviews, or in questionnaires and surveys.⁷³ The information gathered will alert the pastor as to his role expectations, and the best way he can work through his role to lead the congregation towards “effectiveness.”

In his investigation, the pastor may discover that the congregation has unbiblical beliefs that are causing it to be ineffective. One way to subvert these false beliefs is through patient teaching. Malphurs explains, “In time, people will either adopt the church’s new view, try to change the church, or leave the church.”⁷⁴ Regarding the false beliefs of the established congregation Malphurs notes, “When people discover and believe that an assumption no longer works or simply isn’t true, they’re more open to change and may be willing to accept an alternative belief.”⁷⁵ It is the pastoral task to poke holes in false beliefs through his preaching and teaching, and to provide acceptable alternative beliefs from Scripture.

⁷²Sue Mallory writes, “You . . . need to immerse yourself in the history of your church. Who can tell you why things are the way they are? If there is no written or photographic history of the church, encourage the people to start compiling one. You will learn a lot if you can get people to talk about the past. The stories everyone knows should become familiar to you as well, for in these stories you will find insights about the culture of your church and community.” Sue Mallory, *The Equipping Church: Serving Together to Transform Lives* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2001), 62.

⁷³Aubrey Malphurs urges pastors to discover a congregation’s beliefs by having them fill in a beliefs format: “We believe/assume _____?” Malphurs also provides a beliefs audit in appendix D of *Look before You Lead*, 224-30.

⁷⁴Malphurs, *Look before You Lead*, 65.

⁷⁵*Ibid.*, 58.

Some church leadership authors advocate seeking change from the very beginning; however, unless there is an issue of open heresy, or open and unrepentant sin, the pastor should typically lead at a speed that ensures a maximum number of buy-in and followers. If the pastor spends his leadership capital on quick change, and then leaves in three to five years, he will leave behind a church that will revert to their suppressed beliefs and values. Instead, the pastor should patiently lead the congregation to understand what their beliefs and values should be from Scripture, and then lead them to walk in the ways that they are convinced are the right paths for them as a congregation.⁷⁶

The Church's Relationship to Culture

Churches exist within the context of the larger culture. The established church pastor is called to equip the saints (his congregation) for the work of the ministry (Eph 4:12). Much of that work is to be performed outside the four walls of the church—within the congregation's cultural context. Often, churches are ineffective at making disciples of those in the surrounding culture.

Aubrey Malphurs teaches, in general, there are three primary ways that a church can interact with its surrounding culture, “isolation, accommodation, and contextualization.”⁷⁷ Malphurs dismisses isolation and accommodation as unhealthy pursuits. Isolation is disobedience to the great commission and accommodation is a failure to remain true to the “faith once for all delivered to the saints” (Jude 1:3). He recommends contextualization as the biblical pattern for cultural engagement.

⁷⁶Larry Seen and Jim Hart write, “New leaders have what we call “stranger’s eyes.” As they come into an organization, most of the cultural problems are very apparent to them, yet they may be invisible to people who have been there for years. The new leader often has a sense of urgency about making change and starts to take on some of the culture’s “sacred cows” in terms of both customs and people. Since organizations, like all organisms, fight to maintain the status quo, sometimes the leader wins and sometimes the culture wins. Most commonly, the change comes far slower than the leader would like, which can lead to years of frustration on both the part of the leader and the people within the organization.” Larry Senn and Jim Hart, *Winning Teams Winning Cultures*, 2nd ed. (Huntington Beach, CA: Senn-delaney Leadership Consulting Group, 2010), 14.

⁷⁷Malphurs, *Look before You Lead*, 68.

Malphurs argues that contextualization “uses indigenous cultural forms and practices or expressions to communicate biblical truth.”⁷⁸ He is well aware that the thought of contextualization could cause many traditional congregations to rise in opposition, due to their tendency to value the “old way” of doing things. Since this tendency prevails, in order to contextualize through an established congregation, the pastor is going to have to lovingly and patiently teach the congregation to believe contextualization is a wise and biblical practice, and to value its application.

Malphurs, like many other authors, sees the incarnation of Christ as the ultimate illustration of appropriate contextualization. Malphurs writes, “Jesus’ incarnation is a great example of contextualization. He incarnated himself in a human body, learned a language, and lived among and learned from men (Luke 2:52).”⁷⁹ This section in Malphurs’ book provides another opportunity for Malphurs to consult with anthropological works like Paul Hiebert and Eloise Meneses’ *Incarnational Ministry*, or Paul Hiebert’s *The Gospel in Human Contexts* or *Transforming Worldviews*.⁸⁰ Malphurs’ book is geared, understandably, toward the average pastor; however, evangelicals need someone to start connecting the dots between anthropological/missiological literature and that of modern church leadership.

It is because of these types of interdisciplinary connections that the modern church growth movement began in the first place. Not everyone is satisfied with the fruit

⁷⁸Malphurs, *Look before You Lead*, 71.

⁷⁹*Ibid.*, 72. In addition to the incarnation of Christ, Malphurs finds evidences of contextualization in the life of the Apostle Paul. Malphurs notes, “Paul, rather than impose his own culture on those to whom he ministered, chose, instead, to adapt to them and the morally acceptable elements of their culture” (72) Malphurs points to Paul’s words in 1 Cor 9:19-22, where Paul became “all things” to men in order to bring them to Christ.

⁸⁰Paul G. Hiebert and Eloise Hiebert Meneses, *Incarnational Ministry: Planting Churches in Band, Tribal, Peasant, and Urban Societies* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1995). Paul G. Hiebert, *The Gospel in Human Contexts: Anthropological Explorations for Contemporary Missions* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2009). Paul G. Hiebert, *Transforming Worldviews: An Anthropological Understanding of How People Change* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2008).

of the modern church growth movement, but history demonstrates the fact that men like Henry Venn, Rufus Anderson, and later Donald McGavran connected anthropological tools and resources to the field of missiology. In time they used these same anthropological tools and resources to generate church growth principles in the United States.⁸¹ The use of anthropological tools and resources during the church growth movement was for the purpose of effectively contextualizing the gospel within culture. Now, evangelical leaders need to implement these same tools and principles in the work of revitalizing established churches.

These established congregational cultures will always exhibit some resistance to change, even if the change seems to be biblical contextualization—the more radical the change the more intense the resistance. Therefore, pastors must truly understand the culture of their established congregations (this understanding can be gained by the implementation of anthropological tools and resources). They must also understand the culture of the community surrounding the church (again, through the implementation of anthropological tools and resources). The pastor must work to lead the congregation to embrace the biblical idea of contextualization, and then lead the congregation to understand and work through its cultural context.

Malphurs surmises pastors are usually guilty of neglecting culturally informed leadership processes.⁸² Thankfully, this sort of neglect is a diminishing bane in

⁸¹Men like Henry Venn, Rufus Anderson, John Nevius, Roland Allen, A. R. Tippett, and Hudson Taylor attempted to establish indigenous churches by understanding and working through the culture of the people they were attempting to evangelize and disciple. Donald McGavran, in *The Bridges of God*, depends on his years of people-group research in India. McGavran, the father of the modern church growth movement, noticed the cultural tendency of the people of India to respond collectively rather than individually. Thom Rainer argues, “The Church Growth Movement has depended on research to understand its potential field from the very earliest days of the movement. The modern era of church growth, however, has witnessed an explosion of information coming from sociologists and demographers. . . . Church growth advocates, however, are not limiting themselves to books written strictly by Christians or from a Christian perspective. Any research that helps one understand the people who need to be reached for Christ is considered valuable to the movement.” Thom S. Rainer, *The Book of Church Growth: History, Theology, and Principles*, (Nashville: B&H, 1993), 64.

⁸²Malphurs, *Look before You Lead*, 72.

international missions—North American churches, however, are a step behind. Despite this lag, many churches in the U.S. are beginning to embrace critical contextualization instead of a “become like us in order to follow Christ” message.⁸³ Church leadership authors need to continue to provoke pastors to embrace the value of cultural understanding, and the implementation of contextualization within established church contexts.⁸⁴

In seeking to contextualize, Malphurs in no way diminishes the importance of the unchanging Gospel. He contends, “First, the gospel is supracultural in its origin and essence but cultural in its interpretation and application. . . . Therefore we must understand that though supracultural in function, the gospel exists in some cultural context. And the clarity of the gospel is enhanced by an understanding of that culture.”⁸⁵

Malphurs is rightly instructing church pastors and planters in the importance of contextualization within a culture and within the bounds of Scripture. Where his work could be improved is in recognizing the fact that these pastors and planters could become

⁸³Malphurs points to colonial practices in Africa as a bad example and then writes, “The point is that, as we reach out to our communities for Christ, we need to be students of their culture, determining what we can and cannot embrace for the gospel’s sake.” Malphurs, *Look before You Lead*, 73.

⁸⁴Timothy Keller offers some valuable insights regarding a proper method of contextualization. He writes, “Contextualization is not—as is often argued—‘giving people what they want to hear.’ Rather, it is giving people the *Bible’s answers*, which they may not at all want to hear, *to questions about life* that people in their particular time and place are asking, *in language and forms* they can comprehend, and *through appeals and arguments* with force they can feel even if they reject them.” Timothy Keller, *Center Church: Doing Balanced, Gospel-Centered Ministry in Your City* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2012), 89. Italics in original. Keller further writes, “Sound contextualization means translating and adapting the communication and ministry of the gospel to a particular culture without compromising the essence and particulars of the gospel itself. The great missionary task is to express the gospel message to a new culture in a way that avoids making the message unnecessarily alien to that culture, yet without removing or obscuring the scandal and offense of biblical truth. A contextualized gospel is marked by clarity and attractiveness, and yet it still challenges sinners’ self-sufficiency and calls them to repentance. It adapts and connects to the culture, yet at the same time challenges and confronts it. If we fail to adapt to the culture or if we fail to challenge the culture if we under or overcontextualize our ministry will be unfruitful because we have failed to contextualize well” (89) Keller later explains, “So the first task of contextualization is to immerse yourself in the questions, hopes, and beliefs of the culture so you can give a biblical, gospel-centered response to its questions” (121).

⁸⁵Malphurs, *Look before You Lead*, 73.

more thoroughly equipped for cultural engagement by understanding and implementing the tools and resources of cultural anthropology. His readers could further benefit from knowing the history of how Christian missionaries have implemented anthropological tools and resources in contextualizing within foreign cultures. If the pastors who read books like Malphurs' were more often exposed to these anthropological tools and resources they would be better equipped to work through the culture of their established churches, and better equipped to preach the Gospel of Christ within their greater cultural contexts.

The Gospel never changes, but the cultural contexts in which it is to take root are always changing; therefore, the cultural expressions of the Gospel should always be changing as well. One small example of the need to keep up with cultural change is the need for updated English translations of the Bible. Even cultural language changes over time. Malphurs mentions, "Cultural expressions, such as the use of organ music, hymns, altars, pews, collection plates, kneelers, stained-glass windows, a distinct architecture, and robes are Western European, not biblical, in origin."⁸⁶ He even goes so far as to assert, "I'm convinced that as much as 80 to 90 percent of what we do in our churches is culturally, not biblically, directed."⁸⁷

If Malphurs' statistics hold, then much more needs to be written on congregational cultures. Additionally, if Malphurs truly believes his statistics then it is time that he informs his writing with, and introduces his readers to, the prodigious archives of anthropological tools and resources. Malphurs excels at demonstrating the need for cultural understanding in pastoral leadership, but his work could be buttressed with further research, and cross-discipline interaction with anthropological tools and resources.

⁸⁶Malphurs, *Look before You Lead*, 75.

⁸⁷*Ibid.*, 76.

Reading Congregational Culture

The next major section of *Look before You Lead* deals with reading the congregational culture of the church, and reading the culture of the pastor. In this section Malphurs provides valuable insights for pastors, but again neglects any interaction with anthropological resources. In the following pages I interact with Malphurs' major points, provide additional resources from church leadership materials, and point to opportunities for capitalizing on the availability of anthropological tools and resources for reading the cultures of churches and individuals.

Reading the Church

Under his section on reading the congregational culture of the church, Malphurs tells pastors that the first step is to “observe the church’s culture.”⁸⁸ In this regard, James P. Wind argues, “The discovery of congregational culture poses an interpretive challenge as sizable as that presented by the scriptures [sic] themselves. Think of how much we invest in preparing people to read the scriptures. We need to make an equal investment in preparing people to interpret congregational life.”⁸⁹

Considering the great difficulty associated with observing and understanding the congregational culture of an established church, Malphurs would do well in this section of his book to point his readers to anthropological tools and resources for assistance. Instead, he mainly relies on his own experience and other church leadership expertise from a perspective primarily influenced by principles associated with studying businesses and organizational cultures.

Despite his lack of anthropological source engagement, Malphurs does provide some valuable anthropological tools. He writes, “My assignment for pastors and churches is not to make a few observations here and there but to make two hundred observations of

⁸⁸Malphurs, *Look before You Lead*, 84.

⁸⁹James P. Wind, “Congregations, Discovering Congregational Cultures,” *The Christian Century*, February 2010, 105-10.

the church culture, and once you think you can't make any more, return to the culture and make two hundred more observations."⁹⁰ Malphurs encourages his readers to make observations by seeking the answers to the question, "Specifically, what do you see, hear, and feel as you carefully observe the culture?"⁹¹

Though not recognized as such by Malphurs, this type of investigation falls under the category of anthropological tools and resources.⁹² In such a case the pastor serves as a participant observer. And, as participant observer, he is able to investigate the details of the congregational culture, and he can compile the results of his research in an ethnographic report of the data. In addition to this type of anthropological investigation, Malphurs even encourages pastors in this section to implement the surveys he has provided in the appendices of his book.

It is important for the pastor to remember that what he observes in the congregational culture before entering as a pastor is the culture he will have to work through once he becomes pastor. Additionally, the congregational culture observed beforehand is typically a "best foot forward" on the part of the congregation. A cautious skepticism may be the best approach to forming the pastor's expectations of the culture he is agreeing to serve. Pastors often ignore the present cultural reality, and in their minds they skip over the necessary work of cultural understanding and navigation in the cultural

⁹⁰Malphurs, *Look before You Lead*, 85.

⁹¹The answers fit in the format: "*Expressions Format*: 'We see, hear, feel _____.'" Ibid. Scott Thumma and Warren Bird, in their book *The Other 80 Percent*, studied twelve congregations. They approached the task like anthropologists, "We joined the worship services, dropped in on Sunday schools or other Sunday ministries, toured the facilities, conducted an all-church survey, and most of all interviewed lots of people." Thumma and Bird, *The Other 80 Percent*, xiv. Scott Thumma and Warren Bird further write about the research, "We had a lot of fun during random conversations as well as through our structured focus groups. At each church one focus group was with newcomers; another was with long-term members; a third, with lay leaders; and a fourth, with the leadership staff. We also interviewed the senior pastor and various staff members. Our overall task was to ask: Why do people choose this church? How do they get involved? How do they grow spiritually?" Ibid.

⁹²Malphurs' questioning could fall under the category of qualitative sociological investigation; but, since his topic is "culture," and not "society," his research is primarily anthropological in nature.

transformation process. Much of the established culture will have to remain in order to maintain cohesion in the church during any attempts at cultural transformation.⁹³

After observing the congregational culture, Malphurs encourages his readers to interpret the data. Malphurs writes,

Examine the results of both the Behaviors Audit and Core Values Audit (especially those that align) and attempt to identify the basic beliefs of the church. Do you observe any alignment between the church's behaviors and values? This alignment points to the church's beliefs. Look for the underlying or supporting beliefs or assumptions that would explain why the church does what it does and values what it values. What beliefs would lead to or support these values and the ensuing behavior?⁹⁴

Malphurs encourages pastors, after they have discovered the core beliefs that lie behind the core values and the behaviors of the congregation, to make the necessary application to the church's culture.

In making application, Malphurs encourages pastors to move through a four-step process.⁹⁵ First, "*Determine the Church's Commonalities and Uniqueness.*"⁹⁶ This can be accomplished by asking, "*What does the church culture have in common with other cultures?*"⁹⁷ Malphurs presents some excellent questions for pastors to ask in determining the congregation's commonalities and uniqueness:

Is the church growing, plateaued, or declining? Do the people expect the pastor to

⁹³Lovett H. Weems Jr. writes, "If the leader ignores the need to be attentive to the church's culture, the leader runs the risk of destroying the very culture and cohesion needed to sustain the new vision. Leaders have to work hard at preserving the continuity of strong cultural values at the same time that efforts for change are taking place. In fact, the more change that is taking place, the more a church will need to focus on its common, shared values." Weems, *Take the Next Step*, 58.

⁹⁴Malphurs, *Look before You Lead*, 89.

⁹⁵Malphurs' four-step process is another way of acquiring what Burns, Chapman and Guthrie term CQ, or, Cultural Intelligence. They explain, "Developing CQ [Cultural Intelligence] requires humility: humility toward other people and humility under the authority of Scripture. CQ assumes a learning process, in which we recognize that our perceptions of reality and our assumptions about 'the way things ought to be' have many errors. Working on CQ requires that we abandon the assumption that everyone thinks and perceives the world the way we do." Burns, Chapman, and Guthrie, *Resilient Ministry*, 149.

⁹⁶Malphurs, *Look before You Lead*, 91. Italics in original.

⁹⁷*Ibid.*, Italics in original.

do the work of the ministry, or are they willing to be involved? Does the church expect the pastor to be a leader with a clear, compelling vision, or is he a chaplain who takes care of everyone? Can the church identify its core values that empower and guide it? Does the church have a biblical mission, or does it have little direction? Does it have a clear simple pathway for making disciples, and do people understand and know where they are along the pathway?⁹⁸

Next, Malphurs encourages the pastors to evaluate themselves by responding to application questions. “Are you equipped to lead such a church? Can you help it develop in any of the above areas where the church might be deficient? Do you know what to do? In addition, are you open to getting outside help, such as that of a consultant or mentor?”⁹⁹

Malphurs also urges pastors to ask what things are unique to their particular congregation. He wants pastors to consider whether or not they match the unique culture of the established congregation.¹⁰⁰ One key feature Malphurs deals with in another work is felt-needs.¹⁰¹ The best way to determine felt needs is through the implementation of anthropological tools and resources.

The second step in Malphurs’ four-step process is to “*Discover the Church’s*

⁹⁸Malphurs, *Look before You Lead*, 91.

⁹⁹Ibid.

¹⁰⁰In, *Studying Congregations*, the authors write, “One of the things you may discover rather quickly, both from surveys and from interviews, is that no congregation is ever really just one unified culture. There are subcultures within that may be more or less distinct, groups that spend a good deal of time with each other and perhaps relatively little with others in the congregation. A subculture may be organized around commonalities.” Ammerman et al., *Studying Congregations*, 80. In another place Nancy Ammerman et al. write, “The shape of a congregational culture is also affected by its size. The larger the congregation, the more diverse the cultures within it and the more subcultures there are likely to be” (81).

¹⁰¹In his previous work, *Putting New Wine in Old Wineskins*, Aubrey Malphurs explains discerning “felt needs” is essential to local church transformation. He writes, “Every man, woman, and child passes through this life with certain basic needs. However, it is their felt needs that demand action. Discover people’s felt needs and you will know what gets their attention and dictates much of their behavior. Felt needs are the keys that unlock the closed mind and touch even the most calloused heart.” Malphurs, *Pouring New Wine into Old Wineskins*, 79, 80. Regarding changing traditional, established congregational cultures through addressing felt-needs, Malphurs writes, “The alert pastor of change will capture their attention and fuel a desire for change by pointing to the need for the kind of church that will reach their children and their grand-children. He touches a felt need by asking, What would you be willing to do to reach your kids and your grandkids for the Savior?” (81).

*Strengths and Weaknesses.*¹⁰² Malphurs lists some of the areas that tend to be important areas to consider: “communication, evangelism, leadership, leadership development, lay involvement in the ministry, organization, openness to change, follow-through, mission, vision, and strategy.”¹⁰³ Malphurs urges leaders to ask themselves, “How well could you lead a church with these strengths and weaknesses? What are your training and experience, and how might they affect your leadership in such a culture? Do you know what to do to see the weaknesses become strengths?”¹⁰⁴ Malphurs allows for the possibility that a potential pastor may have no idea as to how to correct the church’s weaknesses, but he wants pastors to be open to seeking the training to correct the congregation’s cultural weaknesses.

The third step in Malphurs’ four-step process is to “*Discern if the Culture is Spiritually Mature or Immature.*”¹⁰⁵ Malphurs ties spiritual and cultural maturity together, arguing that a church cannot be culturally immature while maintaining spiritual health. He provides a spiritual maturity audit in appendix G of his book. He bases spiritual maturity on texts such as 1 Corinthians 2-3; Galatians 6:1-2; Hebrews 5:11-14; Revelation 2:6, 3:1-4, etc.¹⁰⁶ Malphurs points out in this section that some congregational cultures are “toxic.” He argues, “If it’s carnal and toxic, the best solution may be to close its doors.”¹⁰⁷

In his final step, Malphurs leads pastors to “*Determine Where You as a Leader Will Be Most Effective.*”¹⁰⁸ Malphurs poses the question, “How does the church culture

¹⁰²Malphurs, *Look before You Lead*, 92. Italics in original.

¹⁰³Ibid.

¹⁰⁴Ibid.

¹⁰⁵Ibid. Italics in original.

¹⁰⁶Ibid.

¹⁰⁷Ibid., 93.

¹⁰⁸Ibid. Italics in original.

align with your culture or the one you would bring with you to the church? How do the two cultures not align?”¹⁰⁹ Malphurs’ four-step method is for pastors already serving an established congregation, those looking to accept a position at an established church, those who are looking to plant a church, and those who are looking to adopt another congregation into the life of their current church.

R. Paul Stevens and Phil Collins are also church leadership authors who seek to understand pastor fit.¹¹⁰ They write, “But to equip the church, equipping pastors must join the church that exists; they must hold their own agendas lightly and join with the people in discovering what is God’s agenda for the people.”¹¹¹ Understanding congregations as living systems, Stevens and Collins believe pastoral failure is usually due to the pastor’s insensitivity to the cultural system that is already in place. They write, “The people reject the programs and the pastors feel rejected, when in actual fact it is they—the pastors—who have rejected the new churches. Pastors may end up judging the churches as being intransigent, inflexible, and unresponsive to the Holy Spirit; they may leave.”¹¹² Stevens and Collins’ systems approach echoes the appeal for cultural contextualization on the part of the pastor.

¹⁰⁹Malphurs, *Look before You Lead*, 94.

¹¹⁰R. Paul Stevens and Phil Collins evaluate pastoral congregational relationships based on a systems approach. Stevens and Collins write, “Because leaders normally have a unique, symbolic identity in the body of Christ, it is crucial that there be an isomorphic fit with their congregations. But this can happen only if pastor and people have shared common goals, a shared way of relating, and a shared view of the outside world. Leaders thrive and effectively lead precisely because they are *like* the system, like the people. I (Collins) have seen this over and over again in my experience of ‘settling’ of pastors in congregations. Sometimes pastors have short-lived pastorates because they do not fit. Their presence violates the systems theory of commonality. Rather than being an isomorphic fit, they prove tragically to be ‘nonfit.’ So using the systems ideas of wholeness, synergy, and isomorphism, we conclude that a systemic approach to church leadership implies that a pastor can never make a difference in the system if the pastor is outside the system or attempts to make the system fit him or her.” R. Paul Stevens and Phil Collins, *The Equipping Pastor: A Systems Approach to Congregational Leadership* (New York: Alban Institute, 1993), 6.

¹¹¹Ibid.

¹¹²Ibid.

Aubrey Malphurs urges pastors to understand congregational culture beforehand and Stevens and Collins call pastors to work to fit within the system once they are on the field. Regarding pastoral failure they write, “The programs did not fail as programs. They failed because the new leaders did not join the churches. Joining makes one a part of a living organism and whatever emerges—for the system is prior to the programs—has to come out of the systemic life of the church.”¹¹³ The larger body of believers can reject pastors when they work contrary to the continued operation of the established system.¹¹⁴

In addition to systems thinking, yet another way to understand the culture of a congregation is through focusing an anthropological study on the past and present leadership. Lewis and Cordeiro ask, “Who are the culture setters in your church? (Are they the elected or appointed leaders, or are there unelected leaders who shape the church culture more? Who is *the* leader in setting the culture here at this church?)”¹¹⁵ Lewis and Cordeiro also explain, “In your church, one or two leaders may dominate everyone else. Is there a prominent family or persons in the church who control the pastor even through they may not be in a formal leadership position?”¹¹⁶ Often, these leaders are connected to particular families, subcultures, or tribes.¹¹⁷ Lyle Shaller compares congregations to tribes

¹¹³Stevens and Collins, *The Equipping Pastor*, 6.

¹¹⁴In their book *Diagnosing and Changing Organizational Culture: Based on the Competing Values Framework*, Kim S. Cameron and Robert E. Quinn write, “We were motivated to write this book because of our own observation that organizations often fail in their change and improvement efforts because of their inability to bring about culture change.” Kim S. Cameron and Robert E. Quinn, *Diagnosing and Changing Organizational Culture: Based on the Competing Values Framework*, 3rd ed. (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2011), ix.

¹¹⁵Lewis and Cordeiro, *Culture Shift*, 49.

¹¹⁶Ibid.

¹¹⁷Rick Warren wrote the foreword to Steve Stroope’s book *Tribal Church*. In it Warren summarizes Stroope’s emphasis: “Every congregation is a fellowship of fellowships, a communion of communities, a combination of associations, interest groups, and constituencies. Steve Stroope calls them ‘tribes.’” Steve Stroope, *Tribal Church: Lead Small, Impact Big* (Nashville: B&H, 2012), xiii.

in his book *Getting Things Done*. Shaller writes, “The four most frequently followed organizing principles among tribes are (a) a common ancestry, (b) a common enemy, (c) a religious covenant, or (d) a long-tenured charismatic leader.”¹¹⁸

Shaller provides pastoral insight by recognizing the similarities between tribes and churches. He writes, “the tribal analogy helps one understand why a substantial majority of all Protestant congregations have a natural and predictable tendency to be exclusionary and find it difficult to attract, receive, and assimilate new members, especially if they speak a different language, come from another nation, or represent a different culture.”¹¹⁹ Tribes are yet another anthropological principle that has potential to deepen pastoral understanding of congregational cultures.

In addition to tribes, another anthropological category that informs an understanding of established churches is artifacts. Kim Cameron and Robert Quinn write, “Artifacts are represented by the buildings in which we work, the clothes we wear, the sizes or shapes of our offices, and the arrangements of our furniture. They are also exemplified by logos, themes, mission statements, formal goals, and the kinds of recognition that organizations use.”¹²⁰ Artifacts often come in the form of symbols.¹²¹ Established churches are filled with cultural artifacts; in fact, at least one dissertation could be written on the placement and function of cultural artifacts within local

¹¹⁸Lyle E. Shaller, *Getting Things Done: Concepts and Skills for Leaders* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1986), 51.

¹¹⁹*Ibid.*, 58.

¹²⁰Cameron and Quinn, *Diagnosing and Changing Organizational Culture*, 20. Edgar Schein divides culture into three levels: artifacts, espoused beliefs and values, and basic underlying assumptions. He presents *artifacts* as “visible and feelable structures and processes” or “observed behavior.” Schein lists espoused beliefs and values as, “ideals, goals, values, aspirations, ideologies and rationalizations.” And, he defines basic underlying assumptions as “unconscious, taken-for-granted beliefs and values.” Schein, *Organizational Culture and Leadership*, 24.

¹²¹Terrence Deal and Kent Peterson write, “Symbols represent intangible cultural values and beliefs. They are the outward manifestation of those things we cannot comprehend on a rational level. They are expressions of shared sentiments and sacred commitment. Symbols infuse an organization with meaning, and they influence behavior.” Deal and Peterson, *Shaping School Culture*, 60.

congregations. Budgets, instruments, types of seating, preaching attire, pictures on the walls, and a whole host of other cultural artifacts have been the focal point of many pastor-congregation conflicts.

Cultural informants can provide the insider perspectives on the artifacts, beliefs, values, and behaviors of a particular congregation. Melvin Williams explains, “The selection of informants from the congregation is crucial for the quality of the final report. Rooted in the culture of the congregation, informants are the experts on the language and symbols of the community being studied.”¹²² Pastors will need to pick informants who share the cultural assumptions of the majority of the congregation. The best informants are not always the ones who seek out the pastor.

When a pastor seeks to read the culture of a congregation, his interpretation of that culture will be informed by his own cultural preferences. The pastor has the remnants of his own congregational culture affecting his evaluation, and that is why it is so important that he understand his own congregational culture heritage.

Reading the Pastor

Many, if not most pastors are largely unaware of the research presented in this dissertation. Aubrey Malphurs rightly concludes, “Regardless of their training or lack thereof, most potential leaders and established pastors lack an understanding of congregational culture. Too many pastors aren’t aware of the importance that culture plays in their lives and that of their churches.”¹²³

¹²²Melvin D. Williams, “The Conflict of Corporate Church and Spiritual Community: An Ethnographic Analysis,” in *Building Effective Ministry: Theory and Practice in the Local Church*, ed. Carl S. Dudley (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1983), 55. Melvin Williams writes, “The task of the analyst is to discover [key informants] and to make the researcher’s ambiguous social role more clear, so that the informants’ rights, interests, and sensitivities are protected” (55).

¹²³Malphurs, *Look before You Lead*, 97. Robert Lewis and Wayne Cordeiro, in their book *Culture Shift: Transforming Your Church from the Inside Out*, write, “Culture Shift, born out of a passion we both hold deeply, is written to help you develop an irresistible culture in your congregation. The idea of church culture is often ignored, in part because so little material is available about it. Yet we believe *culture is to the church what a soul is to the human body*. It is a overall life force that the Holy Spirit uses to give

The pastor's culture is formulated through his own personal discipleship and ministry experience. Aubrey Malphurs leads pastors through a four-step process for discovering their own congregational culture.¹²⁴ (1) Discover the Source of the Leader's Culture. (2) Observe the Leader's Culture (3) Interpret the Leader's Culture. (4) Make Application to the Leader's Culture.¹²⁵ This process follows the pattern set out by Malphurs in my previous section on discovering the church's culture; therefore, many of the same comments and applications made previously can be carried over, so I will not repeat them here.

The sources of a pastor's culture are varied. One of the primary congregational cultural influences tends to be another congregation. Malphurs points to the church where the leader was raised, the church where the leader came to faith, a church of profound impact, or, a combination of sources.¹²⁶ Most of the time a pastor carries over the congregational cultural practices he was enculturated in through his earlier church experiences. Malphurs notes that an earlier church can also produce a reactionary culture, "Your early experiences can also have the opposite effect. You may have rejected the

energy, personality, and uniqueness to everything a body of believers says and does." Lewis and Cordeiro, *Culture Shift*, xxi. Italics in original.

¹²⁴One prominent author who has reservations regarding the effectiveness of self-study is Lyle Schaller. Schaller writes, "I am very skeptical of the self-study approach in which congregational leaders are expected to analyze their own situation and produce a prescription from their own diagnosis. Self-studies can be useful, but that is a very limited usefulness." Lyle E. Schaller, "A Practitioner's Perspective: Policy Planning," in *Building Effective Ministry: Theory and Practice in the Local Church*, ed. Carl S. Dudley (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1983), 161. Schaller values the work of outside consultants more than congregations and pastors evaluating themselves. His book *The Interventionist*, (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1997), focuses on training pastors, consultants, denominational workers, etc. for discovering congregational culture through query and analysis. In another work Lyle Schaller notes that even the consultant's past cultural engagements will affect his consulting. Schaller explains, "I am overwhelmingly convinced, as the foundation of my approach that the assumptions, beliefs, prejudices, value system, understanding of contemporary reality, academic preparation, theological stance, age, biases, life experiences, denominational background, and other baggage carried by the consultant constitute the most important single dynamic or variable in determining what happens in a parish consultation." Schaller, "A Practitioner's Perspective," 160.

¹²⁵Malphurs, *Look before You Lead*, 106.

¹²⁶*Ibid.*, 98, 99.

culture of the church in which you were raised.”¹²⁷ Some other sources of possible cultural influences are books, seminary, and personal heroes.¹²⁸

Once the pastor has determined some of his cultural influencers, Malphurs urges him to explore the cultural source through investigative questions. The following quote contains some of his observation questions, which are actually anthropological investigative questions.

What is the church’s setting/environment (its location and facilities)? Do people carry Bibles? What ministries do they offer? How does the church do worship? What language do people speak? What symbols do you see (crosses, a crucifix, candles, a baptistry, and others)? What kind of clothing do people wear (dressed up or casual)? What rituals do you observe (an order of worship, reciting a creed, and so forth)? What ceremonies do you see (the ordinances, a baby dedication, and so forth)?¹²⁹

Malphurs provides an observation question and answer format, “I see, hear, feel _____.”¹³⁰ The questions listed by Malphurs are a small representation of the hundreds of anthropological questions that could be asked of any congregation.

¹²⁷Malphurs, *Look before you Lead*, 98.

¹²⁸Ibid. The congregational cultural expectations that seminarians develop in the classroom often clash with the realities they find in their subsequent ministry contexts. James P. Wind writes, “If we assume that every congregation is this complex and intricate, we need to consider the implications for those called to lead them. We need, first, to recognize that many clergy, teachers and religious leaders have unwittingly collided with congregational cultures for centuries, and that they have often perpetrated acts of violence against those cultures. That is a serious charge, but one that I am not alone in making. For years, people who have watched fledgling clergy move from seminary to congregation have commented on the clash of cultures that occurs when a new pastor crosses the threshold into his or her first charge. My sense is that the problem is even deeper and more complex than such comments suggest.” Wind, “Congregations, Discovering Congregational Cultures,” 105-10. Wind concludes, “During their years of professional education seminarians go through a process of cultural immersion—but it is into the culture of a seminary, not a congregation.” Wind, “Congregations, Discovering Congregational Cultures,” 105-10. Roy Oswald and Otto Kroeger warn, “Armed with spirituality that is academically and intellectually grounded, NT [Intuitive Thinkers] clergy may begin their ministry in the parish by attempting to make the parish into a smaller version of the seminary community. Having been captivated by “seminary religion,” the NT may see his/her mission as converting men and women to this expression of Christianity.” Roy M. Oswald and Otto Kroeger, *Personality Type and Religious Leadership* (New York: The Alban Institute, 1988), 67.

¹²⁹Malphurs, *Look before You Lead*, 100.

¹³⁰Ibid.

Upon discovering and observing his own congregational culture, Malphurs then urges the pastor to interpret his own culture.¹³¹ He starts the discovery process with the investigation of personal values, and then moves to the beliefs that lie behind those values. Next, Malphurs proposes pastors discover their strengths and weaknesses, decide if they are spiritually mature or immature, and discern where they will be most effective.¹³²

For the fourth and final step, Malphurs urges leaders to make application regarding their cultural discoveries. He provides the same possibilities here referenced in regard to discovering church culture. One additional area he emphasizes is “divine design.”¹³³ Malphurs believes God’s divine design for an individual can be discerned by evaluating his design, direction, and development.¹³⁴ Malphurs writes, “The first D is your design. It asks: Who are you? How has God put you together?”¹³⁵ For church leadership, Malphurs believes the paramount question is, “do you have a gift of leadership?”¹³⁶ Next, under the heading of design, Malphurs invites pastors to determine where their true passions lie. Malphurs believes, “Often passion directs the ministry of your gifts. For example, if you have the gift of leadership, your passion may serve to identify whom you’ll lead best, such as a particular age group. For a pastor it would

¹³¹Bob Burns, Tasha Chapman, and Donald Guthrie find a lack of cultural self-awareness to be a predominant factor in unhealthy pastor-congregation relationships. They write, “Another root cause of misunderstanding stems from a lack of critical observations regarding our *own* cultural makeup. Everyone is culturally biased. To grow out of our bias, we need to learn to name our cultural values. Then, seeing that these values are not absolute, we can either affirm or challenge them. This will free us to appreciate other cultures. In God’s common grace, all cultures will have areas worth emulating and areas needing biblical correction.” Burns, Chapman, and Guthrie, *Resilient Ministry*, 148.

¹³²Malphurs, *Look before You Lead*, 101-3.

¹³³Ibid., 104.

¹³⁴Ibid.

¹³⁵Ibid., 105.

¹³⁶Ibid.

likely be a mixed group, such as a congregation.”¹³⁷ Finally, Malphurs presumes one’s temperament is a vital part of his divine design. He explains, “Studies reveal that some temperaments favor the leadership role more than others.”¹³⁸ Malphurs points to the DISC profile and the Myers-Briggs Temperament Indicator as helpful temperament evaluation tools.¹³⁹

Once the pastor has evaluated his design, Malphurs encourages him to look at his direction. Malphurs explains, “This isn’t rocket science. For example, if you have a natural and/or spiritual gift of leadership, then God wants you to lead and/or train others to lead.”¹⁴⁰ And, finally, Malphurs encourages leaders to look at their divine design by looking at their development. Malphurs writes, “For example, if God has designed you to be the leader of a church culture, then how will you prepare? Some attend seminary or Bible college. Others join a staff and are coached in how to grow and develop as a leader.”¹⁴¹ After leading his readers through a process of cultural understanding, Malphurs hopes to help his readers change ineffective congregational cultures.

Shaping Congregational Culture

Aubrey Malphurs has a burden to mitigate the decline of the church in America. Instead of decline, he wants to see healthy renewal and growth among established churches, and the planting of new churches. He writes, “We must plant more churches, revitalize established churches, and encourage healthy churches to adopt

¹³⁷Malphurs, *Look before You Lead*, 105.

¹³⁸*Ibid.*

¹³⁹*Ibid.*

¹⁴⁰*Ibid.*

¹⁴¹*Ibid.*, 105, 106.

smaller, struggling, established churches.”¹⁴² Malphurs believes, “For each approach, an understanding of congregational culture is vital.”¹⁴³

The Church Planter as Culture Architect

For Aubrey Malphurs, “In essence planting a church involves shaping or creating a culture. Church planters are culture architects and builders who design and build cultures.”¹⁴⁴ Malphurs acknowledges that there are no perfect church cultures. He also recognizes the fact that not everyone is equipped to serve as a church planter.

The types of cultural markers Malphurs values for planting and growing healthy congregations are: different ethnicities, diverse languages, adequate parking, clean facilities, good signage, parking attendants, greeters, warm and inviting people, good communication, good follow-up, quality worship, good phone etiquette, in-depth Bible teaching, happy and excited children and youth.¹⁴⁵ In addition to these practical expressions of a compelling culture, Malphurs points to the church at Jerusalem for a set of ideal biblical values.

From Acts 2:41-45 Aubrey Malphurs points toward the five essential core values of a church plant: (1) Evangelism (Acts 2:41, 47) (2) Biblical instruction (Acts 2:42) (3) Fellowship (Acts 2:42, 43-6) (4) Worship (Acts 2:42-3, 46-7) and (5) Service (Acts 2:45). These values could serve as goals for the church planter, and as ideals for the pastor serving in an established congregational culture. Some would parse the values of

¹⁴²Malphurs, *Look before You Lead*, 105, 111.

¹⁴³Ibid., 105, 111, 112. Erwin Raphael McManus writes, “Cultures sing their own songs, tell their own stories, and carry their own aromas. A culture is a beautiful art piece that uses people as its canvas. A culture’s formation is both spiritual and natural. Uniting a crowd into a community requires spiritual leadership, and what emerges in the process is the generation of a common culture built upon commonly held beliefs, values, and worldviews.” Erwin Raphael McManus, *An Unstoppable Force: Daring to Become the Church God Had in Mind* (Loveland, CO: Flagship Church Resources, 2001), 112.

¹⁴⁴Malphurs, *Look before You Lead*, 112.

¹⁴⁵Ibid., 117-19.

the Jerusalem church by including prayer as a sixth value. These ideals should, at the very least, serve as aspirational values for any congregation that doesn't presently possess them.

The Church Pastor as Culture Sculptor

Although Malphurs tends to follow organizational culture or business model methods more than missiological or anthropological models, he still warns pastors that they must prepare their congregations for cultural change. Malphurs writes, "There is a myth about change that has destroyed many leaders' careers in both the business and the church world. They assume that preparing their culture for change is a waste of time."¹⁴⁶ Malphurs outlines a six-step process in preparation for change: "pray for change, do a church analysis, read the church's culture, learn why people resist change, know how churches and their leaders respond to change, and use the tools that facilitate God-honoring, spiritually healthy change."¹⁴⁷ Notice Malphurs' process assumes, even before cultural analysis, change is necessary because the church is either plateaued or declining. There are, however, instances when a healthy church could be plateaued, or even in decline. Examples of effective churches in decline could include: a major factory leaves town, or the church splits over biblical doctrine, or the church sends a portion of its members to plant another church or campus, etc.

Malphurs rightly emphasizes the importance of understanding congregational culture before attempting to change it. *Look before You Lead*, however, like most church leadership books, spends more time on how to change a congregation than it does on seeking to understand a congregation. This tendency is not a glaring weakness in

¹⁴⁶Malphurs, *Look before You Lead*, 130.

¹⁴⁷Ibid.

Malphurs' book because he actually provides more than most on how to understand and work through established church cultures.¹⁴⁸

For Malphurs, values and vision appear to be foundational in giving direction to needed change. He writes, "The culture change agent must cast a clear, compelling vision of 'what could be.'"¹⁴⁹ Vision casting is something that needs to be done from the pulpit and also on a personal level. Malphurs explains, "The culture change agent needs to identify those in the church with vested interests and spend some one-on-one time with them, ministering and communicating the new vision for the church. Communication and overcoming the problems of miscommunication are half the battle!"¹⁵⁰ Malphurs further acknowledges that pastors will encounter conflict as they tread into areas of tension; such as felt needs, the status quo, vested interests, distrust of leadership, the stress of change, sacred cows, the complexity of change, and self-centeredness.¹⁵¹

As the leader goes forward, his congregation will commit itself to the proposed changes at different speeds and stages. Malphurs explains, "When a leader introduces change into a church's culture, the people will fit into one of four categories, depending on how they respond: early adopters, middle adopters, late adopters, and those who never adopt."¹⁵² Malphurs teaches that a wise strategy would be to build leadership teams composed of mostly early adopters. He writes, "The strategy is to move these people [early adopters] who are spiritually qualified into positions of strong leadership in the

¹⁴⁸Lovett H. Weems Jr. writes, "Therefore, it is never enough to be 'right' in the sense of knowing technically what the church should do. For example, it is not enough to know how much parking is needed, how many worship services are needed, what type of worship is needed, where the church should relocate, and so forth. Leaders must find ways for any proposed change to be right for the particular church's culture. Only this type of applied wisdom will lead to beneficial change." Weems, *Take the Next Step*, 57.

¹⁴⁹Malphurs, *Look before You Lead*, 135.

¹⁵⁰Ibid., 136.

¹⁵¹Ibid., 134-39.

¹⁵²Ibid., 140.

church, such as the board and various influential committees.”¹⁵³ He does confess, “This may prove difficult because they may be the younger members of the church who have not yet attained the necessary credibility and seniority. Still there is hope, because usually major changes are initiated by a tiny minority, not a majority.”¹⁵⁴

Another important insight from Malphurs is: “In the process of leading middle adopters through change, leaders need to maximize communication. They must clearly and carefully confront middle adopters with all of the facts behind their reasons for change.”¹⁵⁵ These middle adopters need to come along for the change, or the harmony of the church will be in danger. By observing and evaluating the current models of communication, through anthropological investigation, the pastor will be able to determine the most effective ways to communicate change to the majority of the congregation.

Also, Malphurs warns pastors about the influence of the church patriarchs and matriarchs, “It is doubtful that change will happen without their support.”¹⁵⁶ These gatekeepers can be a pastor’s greatest ally, or his greatest hindrance. Often pastors fail to give proper deference to patriarchs and matriarchs. Pride keeps many pastors from becoming wise and tenured leaders; instead, they often take a fraction of the church on their culturally preferred leadership path. The church typically resets to its established culture after the prideful pastor’s soon departure.¹⁵⁷

¹⁵³Malphurs, *Look before You Lead*, 142.

¹⁵⁴Ibid.

¹⁵⁵Ibid., 143. Malphurs writes, “The middle adopters are between the two extremes of the continuum. Clearly they are in the majority, for they make up 60 to 80 percent of the church. They are key because their response to the leadership of the change agent will determine whether the church is revitalized” (142).

¹⁵⁶Ibid., 146.

¹⁵⁷Zach Williams asks the question, “Is it worth it? This one question will arise in your head each and every day as you transition. The answer depends on how willing you are to fight for the transition. Is it worth it? If goal [sic] is to reach the lost and that is the goal you want to accomplish, then yes, it’s

When effecting change, Malphurs writes, “The tools that the change agent must put to use are faith, insightful questions, change language, good communication, implementation teams and ad hoc committees, and an understanding of the different kinds and levels of change.”¹⁵⁸ Malphurs further explains, “Any communication of change must be positive. Find the plus in every change no matter how difficult the situation.”¹⁵⁹ The congregation can be provoked to alter its course when the proposed change is in line with its values and beliefs. When necessary change is not in line with the congregation’s values and beliefs the pastor must first work for worldview transformation through patient teaching and preaching to realign the congregation’s values and beliefs.

Lyle Schaller provides insight that should cause pastors to lead change at the speed of the congregation. He writes, “In the small membership congregation the people will seek to discover whether the new minister really loves them, or whether this is merely a post-seminary apprenticeship or a stepping-stone in the new minister’s career.”¹⁶⁰ The new pastor must keep his heart centered in love for Christ and His church. If he leads in love, the congregation will overlook a multitude of shortcomings (1 Pet 4:8).

In addition to the pastor, churches are often under the direction of elders, staff, committees, and/or deacon boards. These various groups represent distinct subcultures that make many decisions on behalf of the church. Pastors must learn how to work

worth it.” Zach Williams, *Transitioning the Church: Leading the Established Church to Reach the Unchurched* (Nashville: Rainer Publishing, 2014), 11.

¹⁵⁸Malphurs, *Look before You Lead*, 146.

¹⁵⁹Ibid., 149. Malphurs believes there are three effective kinds of change, “change by addition, change by subtraction, and change by replacement” (149).

¹⁶⁰Lyle E. Schaller, *Activating the Passive Church: Diagnosis & Treatment* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1981), 131. From a business perspective, Larry Senn and Jim Hart write, “Have you ever wondered why a CEO or other leader who is very successful at one firm has a hard time getting on track when moving to a new firm? In more cases than not, he or she has not figured out or been able to overcome the new culture. A recent study showed that 40 percent of new chief executives fail within 18 months.” Senn and Hart, *Winning Teams Winning Cultures*, 14.

through these subcultures to sculpt the congregational culture. Because of the complexity of such leadership, Malphurs seems to believe most pastors are not equipped for the challenge of leading a congregation through change. He argues, “The bad news for the church is that most pastors aren’t sculptors. This could be true of as many as 80 percent of pastors, because 80 to 85 percent of churches are in decline.”¹⁶¹

The logic behind Malphurs’ statement seems to infer culture-sculpting pastors will always produce numerical growth.¹⁶² This sort of simplistic analysis seems to value numerical growth above all. It also discourages pastors who find themselves in situations where the cultural turn-around may take years of investment. Instead of telling 80 to 85 percent of pastors they should probably find something better to do with their time, Malphurs would do well to continue to equip pastors to patiently lead their congregations to reflect the congregational values found in the Jerusalem church in Acts.¹⁶³

In spite of Malphurs’ philosophical presuppositions, he does offer a needed warning to those who would seek to be pastors apart from a call and equipping from God. Malphurs writes,

In the church world the idea is that if anyone wants to be a pastor and lead a church, then he should go for it, and it will happen. The biblical truth is that we cannot be or do whatever we want to do. God has bestowed on each of us a wonderful, unique divine design that consists of many of the things that we will look at in this chapter (including gifts, passion, and temperament). We cannot do anything we want,

¹⁶¹Malphurs, *Look before You Lead*, 155.

¹⁶²Matthew Guest, Karin Tusting, and Linda Woodhead warn against a numbers based church growth influence, “Because supply nearly always rises to satisfy demand, there arose a great company of consultants to congregations. Conservative churches were most likely to judge their success or failure in terms of membership growth, since that was the most direct measurement of the degree to which they were spreading a true message and being rewarded by God for it. An entire field of evangelical consulting developed in the 1970s as the Church Growth Movement.” Matthew Guest, Karin Tusting, and Linda Woodhead, eds., *Congregational Studies in the UK: Christianity in a Post-Christian Context, in Explorations in Practical, Pastoral, and Empirical Theology* (Hampshire, England: Ashgate, 2004), 29.

¹⁶³Thom Rainer writes, “Acts 2:42-47 provides a snapshot of the early Jerusalem church. It is our first picture of the new Christian church immediately following Pentecost. We sometimes call this passage “the model church” because it describes so clearly the five purposes of the church.” Thom Rainer, *High Expectations: The Remarkable Secret for Keeping People in Your Church* (Nashville: B&H Publishers, 1999), 148.

because God has designed us in a wonderful way to accomplish his ministry or what he wants. Only as we discover how he has wired us will we be able to understand what specifically he wants us to accomplish for him in this life, whether it's through pastoring a church or some other important ministry.¹⁶⁴

Some, like Sue Mallory, believe congregational culture is primarily the result of the pastor's leadership. Mallory writes, "LIKE IT OR NOT, the current church culture in the United States still begins and ends with the senior pastor. . . . In any case, deep-rooted cultural *change* in the church also begins with the pastor."¹⁶⁵ Robert Lewis and Wayne Cordeiro also write, "As a leader, you consciously or unconsciously pull everything you do toward the things you really value. That's why it's so important that you be honest about what your values are and how they fit into the values of the church you help to lead."¹⁶⁶

Despite their potential impact, pastors are often denied the opportunity to sculpt a congregation's culture. According to Aubrey Malphurs,

Some people dislike change because they distrust those who would lead them through the change process. For example, older people, on the one hand, prefer leaders who have some experience and maturity under their belts. They find it most difficult to follow a leader whom they suspect is a novice—a recent seminary graduate, a pastor with little or no experience, a pastor without credentials, and so on. These people require pastor credibility before they will follow that leader.¹⁶⁷

This quote from Malphurs could somewhat negate what he said earlier about "culture sculptors." In some cases, even culture sculpting pastors have to overcome significant cultural barriers in order to gain the privilege to lead the church to a point where it begins

¹⁶⁴Malphurs, *Look before You Lead*, 155. Most of Malphurs' advice regarding the pastor's personality and giftedness seems to overlook the possibility of a plurality of elders. Instead, Malphurs seems to assume the single pastor model. A multi-elder model could overcome some of the weaknesses of any one individual pastor. Perhaps his statistics and findings could be leveraged in an argument in favor of a multi-elder model.

¹⁶⁵Sue Mallory, *The Equipping Church: Serving Together to Transform Lives* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2001), 56. Formatting in original.

¹⁶⁶Lewis and Cordeiro, *Culture Shift: Transforming Your Church from the Inside Out*, 48. Lewis and Cordeiro pose another searching and important motivational question, "Is it my passion to build a kingdom culture that honors and serves God, or a culture that rewards me?" Lewis and Cordeiro, *Culture Shift*, 50.

¹⁶⁷Malphurs, *Pouring New Wine into Old Wineskins*, 86.

to grow spiritually and numerically. The better a pastor understands these cultural obstacles, the more likely he will be to overcome them. And, the better a pastor understands the difficulties associated with congregational cultures, the more open he will be to the implementation of anthropological tools and resources in his ministry.

Another potential hindrance to a pastor becoming a culture sculptor could be significant personalities in the historical memory of the congregation. Stephen M. R. Covey writes, “In some situations, you may even have had to pay an ‘inheritance tax’ when you’ve stepped into a role that was occupied by someone who created distrust before you.”¹⁶⁸ Covey goes on to write, “When you move into a new personal or work relationship, or if you step in as the new leader in a low-trust culture, it’s possible that you’re being taxed 30, 40, 50 percent, or more for something you didn’t even do!”¹⁶⁹ Again, this type of deeper cultural understanding runs contrary to Malphurs’ assessment that points to a non-growing church being the result of an ineffective pastor. Congregational culture is extremely complex; anthropological tools and resources could aid pastors in navigating these complex cultures.

Conflict in leading an established congregation is inevitable and necessary, but much of the conflict in churches is due to a mismatch between the congregation and the pastor.¹⁷⁰ It is important that the existing culture of a potential church be near to the pastor’s ideals for a church. As Lovett H. Weems writes, “It is not likely that one will be

¹⁶⁸Stephen M. R. Covey and Rebecca R. Merrill, *The Speed of Trust: The One Thing That Changes Everything* (New York: Free Press, 2006), 6.

¹⁶⁹Ibid.

¹⁷⁰Alfred Poirier confesses, “I know I am called to be a peacemaking pastor, but I must confess that I hate conflicts. Even hearing about another one makes me cringe. I either go on the attack or take off running. The one thing I do not do naturally is move to make peace.” Alfred Poirier, *The Peacemaking Pastor: A Biblical Guide to Resolving Church Conflict* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2006), 18. Alfred Poirier defines conflict as, “a difference in opinion or purpose that frustrates someone’s goals or desires” (29). Poirier writes, “That is, conflict results when my desires, expectations, fears, or wants collide with your desires, expectations, fears, or wants” (29, 30)

able to destroy a culture and then rebuild another one strong enough to carry a vision in the time most people are in leadership positions.”¹⁷¹

Aubrey Malphurs presents yet another discipline as a church leadership tool when he looks to 1950’s German-American psychologist, Kurt Lewin for what he believes to be the best model for change. It is interesting to note that Malphurs makes apology for his use of a secular source in church leadership. Malphurs explains, “While I don’t know if Lewin was a Christian, I do believe that all truth is God’s truth regardless. And I’m convinced that God has allowed Lewin to tap into his truth (natural revelation) when it comes to the change process and how it takes place.”¹⁷²

I agree with Malphurs’ sentiments regarding the value of secular research, and his argument for the use of Lewin is the very reason why Malphurs should be interacting with anthropological resources. Further, he could rest in knowing that men like Paul Hiebert and David Hesselgrave are Christians, and their applications of anthropological principles to local churches, have already been tested on the mission field.

Malphurs seeks to follow Kurt Lewin’s three-step process in revitalizing churches. Malphurs writes, “Kurt Lewin—a German-American psychologist who in the 1950s did research on organizations—has developed the best model for understanding organizational change. His model involves a three-stage process that consists of unfreezing a culture, changing the culture, and then refreezing it.”¹⁷³

Malphurs urges pastors to read the current congregational culture. Next, thaw out the current culture. Then, transition the culture to a new level. Finally, re-form the

¹⁷¹Weems, *Take the Next Step*, 59. Gary McIntosh and Charles Arn believe, “The first requirement in leading a turnaround church is a willingness to be present for the long haul—seven years at least.” Gary L. McIntosh and Charles Arn, *What Every Pastor Should Know: 101 Indispensable Rules of Thumb for Leading Your Church* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2013), 236.

¹⁷²Malphurs, *Look before You Lead*, 268.

¹⁷³*Ibid.*, 175.

new culture at the new level.¹⁷⁴ Malphurs believes pastors must change the congregation's cultural values, and the beliefs that lie behind them.¹⁷⁵ He explains that pastors should begin by observing the skin of his apple (or behaviors of the church), and then work their way through the flesh (or values of the church), to get to the core (or beliefs) of the congregation.

Starting with the observable behaviors, Malphurs writes, "You can accomplish this by exegeting the current culture that involves [sic] three steps: observation, interpretation, and application. The result is that you better understand the established church's culture and are in the best position to shape or change it for the better."¹⁷⁶ The congregation's understanding of the present cultural reality, made apparent through observation and investigation, is the catalyst that Malphurs hopes to use to invoke change.

One of the hindrances to change will be persons of influence. Malphurs warns, "With change everyone goes back to zero in terms of influence. Whatever leverage they had under the old culture paradigm is nullified by the new. Such leaders will put up strong resistance to change, based on the potential loss of benefits."¹⁷⁷ Malphurs believes leaders can overcome this resistance by making the influencers uncomfortable with the

¹⁷⁴Malphurs lays out the full process in detail. Malphurs, *Look before You Lead*, 176-198. Malphurs quotes Christian Schwartz, and his book, *Natural Church Development*: "Schwartz believes that growing, healthy churches exhibit eight characteristics: empowering leadership, gift-oriented ministry, passionate spirituality, functional structures, inspiring worship, holistic small groups, need-oriented evangelism, and loving relationships" (196).

¹⁷⁵Aubrey Malphurs writes, "Change agents must change their church's values before attempting to change its programs. The key is to understand and change the plateaued or declining church's philosophy of ministry." Malphurs, *Pouring New Wine into Old Wineskins*, 84. Aubrey Malphurs writes, "Pastors who desire to lead churches through revitalization . . . must discover and understand their own philosophy of ministry so that they know their ministry values. These values affect them deeply and strongly influence their vision and leadership of the church. The critical question is, Does their philosophy of ministry line up with the church's philosophy of ministry?" (83).

¹⁷⁶Malphurs, *Look before You Lead*, 176.

¹⁷⁷*Ibid.*, 178.

present reality of the church. He explains, “One way to initiate change is to inflict emotional pain. . . . The change agent may have to make the present state or the status quo significantly uncomfortable before change comes about.”¹⁷⁸ One question Malphurs proposes is, “Do you want to be remembered as the generation who let the church die? Will people point to you and say, ‘It happened on their watch’?”¹⁷⁹

Malphurs seems to think the church should make cultural relevance a top priority. He writes, “The world outside the church is the world you read about in the newspaper and online or hear about on the evening news. It comprises what is taking place locally, statewide, nationally, and internationally. Knowing this information serves to keep you current with the culture.”¹⁸⁰ He wants church leaders to gather this information in a systematic way:

You will find it helpful to break the important information you encounter into at least five sectors: the social sector (lifestyle issues, people movements, crime, race, and so forth), the technological sector (computers, the internet), the economic sector (the economy, Social Security, taxes, employment, and so on), the political/legal sector (church and state issues, preferential tax treatment for churches, and other issues), and the philosophical sector that would include religion in general and churches in particular.¹⁸¹

This information is important for this dissertation because it points to the fact that Malphurs wants the congregational culture to continue to reform in response to the surrounding culture of the world. Though I do not know to what degree I would incorporate Malphurs’ processes of mirroring the culture at large, I do know that anthropological tools and resources have proved extremely valuable in gathering the surrounding cultural data.

Casting vision is one of the most important components of Aubrey Malphurs’

¹⁷⁸Malphurs, *Look before You Lead*, 179.

¹⁷⁹Ibid.

¹⁸⁰Ibid., 194.

¹⁸¹Ibid.

philosophy of how pastors can sculpt the congregational culture to become relevant within the context of the larger culture. Malphurs writes, “Not only must a congregation become famished over *what is*, they must crave *what could be*. Disrupting the congregational status quo by itself is not enough to implement change. . . . The key to implementing intentional congregational change is to cast or recast a powerful, significant vision.”¹⁸²

Malphurs believes vision is important because “People in the church see what is, but do they see what could be—the exciting possibilities of the future? This becomes the responsibility of the visionary leader of change.”¹⁸³ Malphurs prefers that the vision be solidified in a memorable vision statement. According to Malphurs, “The vision statement creates a picture in the minds of the participants of what the ministry will look like as it accomplishes its vision.”¹⁸⁴

Thom Rainer and Chuck Lawless warn, “The pastor who unilaterally determines the vision of the church without any awareness of the spiritual giftedness and passions of the people is headed for trouble. He may have a game plan with no players. The wise ‘coach’ develops his strategy for the ‘team’ according to the ‘talent’ already present.”¹⁸⁵ Malphurs would probably agree with Rainer and Lawless, vision should consider the unique culture of the congregation. Generating buy-in for a vision will require harmony between the values of the congregation and the values expressed in the vision statement.

¹⁸²Malphurs, *Pouring New Wine into Old Wineskins*, 133.

¹⁸³Ibid. In another work, Malphurs writes, “A vision answers the question, What are we going to do? It gives the ministry its direction; it announces to all where it is going.” Malphurs, *Values-Driven Leadership*, 32.

¹⁸⁴Ibid., 44.

¹⁸⁵Rainer and Lawless, *Eating the Elephant*, 40.

Regarding these organizational values, Hans Finzel writes, “An effective leader must get a handle on the culture of his organization and shape it in such a way as to build a positive, empowering, enabling setting that will foster the very best in people. One of the core essentials today’s leaders must develop is a deep understanding of the core values that drive the group.”¹⁸⁶ Lyle Shaller adds, “The values of any organization control priorities, provide the foundation for formulating goals, and set the tone and direction of the organization.”¹⁸⁷ Common values between the pastor and his congregation make for a relatively harmonious leadership experience.¹⁸⁸

According to Aubrey Malphurs, “Core values answer the question, *Why* do we do what we do? They supply the reasons behind our vision, or what we do. While evangelism may be the vision of a parachurch ministry, it could be one of a church’s core values under the umbrella of the Great Commission vision.”¹⁸⁹ Later, Malphurs writes, “I define an organization’s core values as the constant, passionate, biblical core beliefs that drive its ministry.”¹⁹⁰

Common values are a cultural category in which Rick Warren displays brilliant insight and application. He bases his purposes, or values, on Matthew 22:37-40 and Matthew 28:18-20, the “Great Commandment” and the “Great Commission.” From these foundational texts Warren has launched a network of churches that are built around the common values of worship, fellowship, discipleship, ministry, and mission. Warren’s

¹⁸⁶Finzel, "Creating the Right Leadership Culture," 264.

¹⁸⁷Shaller, *Getting Things Done*, 153.

¹⁸⁸Aubrey Malphurs writes, “Leaders and organizations have both actual and aspirational core values. Actual values are the beliefs they own and act on daily. They come from inside the person. They exist in the present and they have to do with what is true about the ministry right now. Aspirational values are beliefs that the individual or organization does not currently own. They deal with what should or ought to be, not with what is; they may be values that the leadership or organization would like to adopt in the future.” Malphurs, *Values-Driven Leadership*, 52.

¹⁸⁹Ibid., 32.

¹⁹⁰Ibid., 34.

intentionality in common values (or purposes), has aided in developing congregations that tend to grow numerically in various cultural contexts.¹⁹¹

Closely akin to vision in church leadership resources is the term *mission*. Malphurs writes, “The ministry should also have a mission statement. It is essentially the same as the vision statement, but it is a planning tool, not a seeing tool. It is key not to the casting of the vision but to the planning that must take place if the organization is to accomplish its vision.”¹⁹² Mission and vision should be guided by biblical principles and sensitive to the congregational culture and the greater cultural context of the church. Therefore, an adequate mission and vision is dependent on the implantation of anthropological tools and resources in the cultural discovery and navigation process.

This section demonstrated that there are many areas to consider while attempting to sculpt a church culture. Malphurs’ work is geared toward change, but only after achieving an adequate level of understanding regarding the culture that is present. The final, and smallest section of his book, introduces the thought of adopting church cultures.

The Church Pastor as Culture Blender: Adopting Established Church Cultures

Aubrey Malphurs concludes with the ideas of revitalization, a funeral, or a merger of established churches. Malphurs argues,

The primary objective of this book is to shape or form cultures that honor Christ and spread the gospel. One way to accomplish this is to plant a new culture (chapter 9). Another is to revitalize a struggling established church (chapters 10-12). A third possibility that’s begun to receive some notice of late is merging two or more cultures together to form a new culture. This chapter addresses this third option with seven questions: What is the state of the American church? What are some options for the church? What is the thinking behind a merger? Do church mergers work?

¹⁹¹Rick Warren, *The Purpose Driven Church: Growth Without Compromising Your Message & Mission* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1995).

¹⁹²Malphurs, *Values-Driven Leadership*, 44.

Why don't mergers work? Is there a way to make them work? What is the future of church mergers?¹⁹³

Regarding revitalization, Malphurs writes, "One option is for the declining church to pursue revitalization. The pastor could read a book or even take a course on church renewal and then attempt to apply the principles to his struggling culture."¹⁹⁴ Malphurs knows that this method is least likely to effect real change. Therefore, he suggests, "A better option would be to bring in an outside ministry that specializes in turning church cultures around, such as my ministry (The Malphurs Group). The advantage is we've been down this road many times and know where all the cultural 'road bumps' are."¹⁹⁵ Finally, Malphurs explains, "Also congregants trust people who are from the outside, who aren't involved in their church's politics. In general, the success of a potential turnaround is deeply impacted by the depth of decline or decay and how long the culture has been in decline."¹⁹⁶

These suggestions by Malphurs seem to point to the relative futility of training local church pastors, when compared to bringing in outside specialists. Due to Malphurs' many years of research and work in the consulting field, one would have to conclude that there is much truth to his claims. In spite of the weaknesses of pastors in turning around congregational cultures, Malphurs must believe there is some value in equipping the average pastor to lead change, otherwise, he would not continue to publish so many books in the field. The research of this dissertation is aimed at opening the field of evangelical church leadership to the input of anthropological tools and resources. The more a pastor understands congregational culture, both his and that of the church, the better he will be equipped to lead cultural change. And, the best way to understand

¹⁹³Malphurs, *Look before You Lead*, 199.

¹⁹⁴Ibid., 200.

¹⁹⁵Ibid.

¹⁹⁶Ibid.

congregational culture is through the implementation of anthropological tools and resources.

CHAPTER 5
FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

Introduction

This final chapter synthesizes and summarizes the findings of this dissertation into an abbreviated practical proposal for engaging established churches with anthropological tools and resources. Much of the previous argumentation is assumed and a concrete and streamlined plan for engaging in the discipline of congregational cultural anthropology is presented.

Understanding anthropological tools and resources, from an interaction with Aubrey Malphurs' *Look before You Lead* and Paul Hiebert's *Anthropological Insights for Missionaries*, helped lay the groundwork for generating conclusions that explain how pastors and other church leaders can implement anthropological tools and resources in established churches. Specifically, this dissertation argues that the pastor(s)/elders, and/or potential pastor(s)/elders, of established local churches, should know and implement many of the tools and resources of cultural anthropology within their ministry context in order to enhance understanding and communication between the pastor and his congregation, resulting in healthier pastor-congregation relations, healthier churches, and greater Kingdom effectiveness.

Aubrey Malphurs' book, *Look before You Lead*, came out early in my research. When I first read his title, I thought he had probably covered the ground I intended to cover with my dissertation. Upon reading his work, I found it does provide helpful insight for pastors who want to understand the cultures of established churches. Malphurs' work is a step in the right direction, and I am persuaded that he provides the best evangelical

treatment of engaging the context of an established church culture that is currently available. Where his work could be strengthened and expanded is in acknowledging the fountainhead of cultural investigation, anthropology. Therefore, this conclusion is in some ways an expansion of Malphurs' work. Yet, at the same time, I am attempting to provoke the formal development of a new discipline in church leadership, the discipline of congregational cultural anthropology. In the following pages I present a short summary of this cross-discipline (church leadership and cultural anthropology) research and engagement method for pastors/elders. The following application of congregational cultural anthropology demonstrates the value of the tools and resources of anthropology in established pastor-congregation relationships.

This final chapter presents six main findings and conclusions: (1) The discipline of congregational cultural anthropology, (2) The primary tools and resources for congregational cultural anthropology, (3) A process for implementing congregational cultural anthropology, (4) A process for implementing congregational cultural anthropology in a rapid assessment of an established church, (5) A plan for implementing congregational cultural anthropology from within an established church, (6) A plan for engaging in critical contextualization for transforming congregational cultures.

Congregational Cultural Anthropology

Congregational cultural anthropology is a new idea for most evangelical church pastors. Even Aubrey Malphurs falls short of making a formalized connection between the discipline of cultural anthropology and established church leadership. Some evangelicals have rightly made the connection between anthropology and the task of understanding their surrounding community's culture, but the discipline of anthropology for understanding and working through established congregations has only been popular among mostly moderate and mainline authors, at least up to this point.¹

Congregational cultural anthropology has as its fundamental assumption an understanding that each congregation exhibits a distinct culture, or congregational culture. My definition of congregational culture is the fruit of the overlap of Paul Hiebert's definition of culture, and Aubrey Malphurs' understanding of the term *congregational culture*.² Congregational culture is the more or less integrated system of beliefs, feelings, and values created and shared by a particular congregation that enables the people to function as a church, and are communicated by means of the congregation's systems of symbols and rituals, patterns of behavior, and their material products.³

Church leadership authors are beginning to describe established churches as exhibitors of distinct cultures. Since culture is primarily the field and nomenclature of anthropology and anthropologists, church leadership authors and Christian cultural anthropologists should begin to work together to develop the new field of congregational cultural anthropology. Congregational cultural anthropology is the study of the more or less integrated system of beliefs, feelings, and values created and shared by a particular congregation that enable the people to function as a church, and are communicated by means of its systems of symbols and rituals, patterns of behavior, and its material products.

¹Most of the materials produced regarding implementing anthropological tools and resources are from moderate and mainline institutions. These institutions include, The Lilly Endowment (which has funded several research projects on congregations), The Alban Institute, the Yokefellow Institute, National Evangelistic Association (Herb Miller) and the Center for Parish Development. All these agencies and institutions lean to the theological left and therefore have little interaction with conservative evangelical scholars. Also, their research seems to have failed to generate interest among evangelical church leadership authors. Nancy T. Ammerman et al., *Studying Congregations: A New Handbook*, ed. Nancy T. Ammerman et al. (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1998), 12.

²Aubrey Malphurs, *Look before You Lead: How to Discern and Shape Your Church Culture* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2013), 20. Perhaps Malphurs' less technical definition is easier for pastors to grasp, but it also leaves less room for a robust development of the discipline of congregational cultural anthropology.

³Paul G. Hiebert, *Anthropological Insights for Missionaries* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1985), 30.

And, since those who study the other fields of cultural anthropology are anthropologists, I propose developing congregational cultural anthropologists for the sake of leveraging cultural anthropology within the context of established churches. Congregational cultural anthropologists would further develop the field of congregational cultural anthropology in order to equip pastors and other church leaders to utilize anthropological tools and resources to study and navigate the congregational culture of established churches. This development, and the implementation of its discoveries, will aid in improving pastor-congregation relations, improve church health, and promote Kingdom effectiveness among said churches.

The Primary Tools and Resources of Congregational Cultural Anthropology

One of the goals of this research is to make the connection between anthropology and local church leadership—a connection that is usually assumed or overlooked by evangelical authors. Evangelical church leadership authors are fully aware that pastor-congregation relationships are incredibly complex, often overwhelmingly so. Therefore, any additional tools and resources that can equip church leaders to maintain church health and Kingdom effectiveness are desirable.

The tools and resources of cultural anthropology are too broad and numerous to cover adequately in this conclusion. Many of the available tools and resources, and some of their potential uses in established churches, have already been covered in the preceding chapters. Therefore, what I provide in this concluding section are the anthropological tools and resources that could most easily be understood and implemented by non-technical pastor(s)/elders and/or potential pastor(s)/elders, those without formal training in cultural anthropology.⁴

⁴The formal field of congregational cultural anthropology needs to be developed at the professional level by congregational cultural anthropologists. The applications of congregational cultural anthropology, however, should always be ultimately geared toward helping local churches. This concluding

The tools and resources presented in this conclusion should be implemented before and during a pastoral tenure. The cumulative benefits of the implementation of these anthropological tools and resources, however, will be commensurate with the amount of time spent among the people. Despite the obvious benefit of extensive time among the people, pastors often need to make important decisions regarding potential congregations before they move to the church field. So, these conclusions assume pastors need to be able to evaluate congregational culture as soon as possible, and without formal training in cultural anthropology. Therefore, because of necessity, this summary of the implementation of anthropological tools and resources may fall short of professional cultural anthropologist ideals for the amount of time spent on the field, and depth and quality of investigation and reporting.⁵

The primary anthropological tools and resources for implementation in congregational cultural anthropology are: observation, participant observation, conversations, interviews, questionnaires and surveys, a computer, audio and video equipment and software, field notebooks, rapid assessment processes, and critical contextualization.⁶ The disciplines of observation and participant observation serve as the

chapter is an attempt to apply the discipline of congregational cultural anthropology for the benefit of local church pastor(s)/elders and/or potential pastor(s)/elders.

⁵The lack of formal training and the lack of depth and time in the qualitative investigation process will certainly diminish the depth of true cultural understanding. Despite this drawback, some congregational cultural understanding is vastly superior to what most evangelical pastors are currently experiencing.

⁶Most of these tools and resources are found in Hiebert's, *The Gospel in Human Contexts*, 164-72. There are other tools and resources referenced in the same section of Hiebert's book. The ones provided here are those most easily implemented by established church pastors. Critical contextualization is explained in chapter 7 of Hiebert, *Anthropological Insights for Missionaries*. The rapid assessment process is primarily from principles found in James Bebee, *Rapid Assessment Process: An Introduction* (Lanham, MD: AltaMira Press, 2001). Rapid assessment is also covered in Lydia Rappaport's dissertation. Lydia M. Rappaport, "Rapid Assessment of Congregational Culture: Discovering a Congregation's Unique Reality through Descriptions of Worship and Ritual Experience," (PhD diss., Princeton Theological Seminary, 2007). It is understandable that some would balk at considering video and audio equipment as "anthropological tools and resources," however; these are practical tools for the anthropologist in the same way a pulpit and microphone are for a preacher.

foundations for directing and implementing many of the other tools and resources. Even Aubrey Malphurs, in *Look before You Lead*, urges his readers to use observation and participant observation.⁷ Malphurs also wisely implements interviews, surveys, and questionnaires throughout his book.

Implementing Congregational Cultural Anthropology

In accordance with my combined definition of culture, culture is communicated by means of systems of symbols and rituals, patterns of behavior, and material products.⁸ Observing, recording, and understanding these cultural markers are the primary tasks of a cultural anthropologist. Therefore, a congregational cultural anthropologist should implement the anthropological tools of observation, participant observation, conversations, interviews, questionnaires and surveys, a computer, audio and video equipment and software, field notebooks, and a rapid assessment process in order to study, record, and understand a congregation's systems of symbols and rituals, patterns of behavior, and material products.

Again, to apply my combined definition, the result of implementing the aforementioned anthropological tools and resources for observing, recording, and understanding the systems of symbols and rituals, patterns of behavior, and material products, will help church leaders better understand the underlying system of beliefs, feelings and values created and shared by the congregation. This understanding is foundational to healthier pastor-congregation relationships. It is also foundational for a pastor engaging in critical contextualization, which will, in turn, transition the church

⁷Malphurs does not typically use any of the terms associated with cultural anthropology, although he does use several of the tools of the discipline. Aubrey Malphurs, *Look before You Lead*, 83-107.

⁸Hiebert, *Anthropological Insights for Missionaries*, 30.

toward obedience to the Scriptures in culturally appropriate ways, greater church health, and greater Kingdom effectiveness.⁹

A pastor should begin engaging in rudimentary congregational cultural anthropology from the time he gains knowledge of a congregation to which he is considering applying.¹⁰ It is often the case that congregations and pastors get a long way in the application and interview process before they discover the potential match is not wise for one or both parties. And, since it is often the case that individual pastors have their resumes in broad circulation, they should continually be implementing the anthropological tools and resources of congregational cultural anthropology, to varying degrees, among the potential congregations they are considering.

The information the pastor should collect in the beginning of the interview process will tend to be more general and superficial than the information he collects as the process continues. The result of engaging in rudimentary congregational cultural anthropology, in the beginning of a pastor-congregation relationship, may be that the pastor will sooner, rather than later, discover that he is either not a match for the congregation or does not want to overcome the cultural differences between him and the potential congregation. Or, the pastor may discover reasons to more faithfully pray for the church to allow him the opportunity to serve as its pastor. These are adequate reasons to begin engaging in congregational cultural anthropology as soon as possible, but before a pastor can adequately understand the congregational culture of a potential church he must first understand his own congregational culture.¹¹

⁹I discuss the process of critical contextualization later in this conclusion.

¹⁰Early in the discovery process the pastor should only begin to research the basic beliefs, values, and behaviors of a congregation. This discovery will be limited to the level of interest on behalf of the pastor, the availability and access of information on the congregation, and the amount of time resources available for the pastor to conduct research.

¹¹Aubrey Malphurs provides information on a pastor understanding his own congregational culture in chapter 7 of *Look before You Lead*. He also provides valuable questionnaires in his appendixes: A Core Values Audit in appendix B, A Beliefs Audit in appendix D, A Spiritual Maturity Audit in

Implementing Congregational Cultural Anthropology for the Purpose of Self-understanding

Malphurs delineates two major purposes for *Look before You Lead*: (1) to help pastors understand their own cultural preferences, and, (2) to help pastors understand an established church's culture before they accept a pastoral position.¹² I agree with Malphurs' two-pronged approach, and I would also emphasize self-understanding ahead of understanding the particular church the pastor hopes to engage. Until a pastor truly understands culture in general, and how it permeates his life, behavior, and artifacts in particular, he will not be able to properly observe the cultural markers in others. Additionally, it is wise for pastors to understand the congregational culture of the established churches in which they are currently participating. Therefore, potential and current pastors should seek to understand their own congregational cultures as early as possible in their ministerial development and training, and then engage in congregational cultural anthropology among established churches.

In this section I propose a three-step process for employing congregational cultural anthropology for the purpose of self-understanding. (1) Develop a personal statement of faith. (2) Investigate and record the cultural markers of your primary congregational cultural influencers. (3) Compose a summary of your preferred ways of functioning as a church.

My proposed definition of congregational culture is a helpful guide for a pastor who seeks to understand his own congregational culture. Congregational culture is the

appendix G, A Character Assessment for Leadership in appendix H, A Spiritual Gifts Inventory for Leaders in appendix I, and, Temperament Indicators in appendixes J-M. These tools and resources are also helpful for pastoral self-discovery. I do believe Malphurs has proven wisdom in matching certain capacities and personal temperaments to the task of pastoring; however, God can use a crooked stick to draw a straight line, and a true calling and equipping from God, and a recognition on behalf of the congregation are the primary requirements for serving in the office of pastor, assuming the man also meets the qualifications for the office found in 1 Timothy 3 and Titus 1.

¹²Malphurs, *Look before You Lead*, 15.

more or less integrated system of beliefs, feelings, and values created and shared by a particular congregation that enables the people to function as a church and that are communicated by means of its systems of symbols and rituals, patterns of behavior, and its material products.¹³ In this definition, the underlying “beliefs, feelings, and values” serve as the foundations of expressed culture. Observable systems of symbols, rituals, patterns of behavior, and material products are the expressions of these underlying beliefs, feelings, and values.

Normally, a cultural anthropologist would begin anthropological investigation by studying the observable systems of symbols, rituals, patterns of behavior, and material products, instead of trying to discover the underlying beliefs, feelings, and values. This order is not necessary when studying one’s own culture. Not that the pastor does not need to know, in detail, his own observable congregational cultural markers, but, since he is the subject and the observer, he has the opportunity to get straight to the hidden beliefs, feelings, and values that lie behind his of his own congregational cultural expressions. Therefore, when seeking to understand his own congregational culture, the pastor should first begin to note and categorize his own foundational system of beliefs, feelings, and values. After delineating his own personal system of beliefs, feelings, and values, the pastor can then observe and categorize his own observable systems of symbols, rituals, patterns of behavior, and material products. As both Malphurs and Hiebert note—Malphurs in the “skin” of his cultural apple, and Hiebert in “behavior and products”—the cultural markers that can be observed in a cultural setting are the outward workings of the more or less integrated systems of ideas, feelings, and values of a group of people.¹⁴ Potential pastors should be aware of their own congregational cultural behaviors and

¹³Hiebert, *Anthropological Insights for Missionaries*, 30.

¹⁴Ibid. Malphurs, *Look before You Lead*, 20, 21.

products (Malphurs' apple skin), but they should be most aware of their own underlying worldview assumptions.

Developing a personal statement of faith. Since beliefs are foundational to feelings and values, and their corresponding behaviors and products, the first interview question a pastor must ask himself is, "What do I believe?" In response to this question, a pastor should be able to craft his own personal statement of faith. This statement of faith should delineate his personal understanding of the doctrines most valued and debated among evangelicals in general and his denomination in particular. He should be especially aware of what he believes regarding Scripture (its origin, transmission, and authority), God (Father, Son, and Holy Spirit), man, salvation (especially regarding grace, the atonement, regeneration, justification, and adoption), heaven and hell, baptism and the Lord's Supper, the church, the Kingdom, a general hermeneutical framework (dispensational, covenantal, etc.), the Lord's Day, evangelism and missions, pastors/elders and deacons, the role of women in the church, church membership (including discipline), and church polity (how should decisions be made in the church). Although this list is not exhaustive, it is a good basis for making pastors aware of potential theological conflicts between churches and their pastors.¹⁵

The process of a pastor crafting his own personal statement of faith is the implementation of an impersonal interview of sorts. The pastor is observing and recording his own answers to the question, "What do I believe?" While compiling his personal statement faith, the pastor should highlight doctrines for which he is especially passionate. Also, he should make note of doctrines for which he lacks a deep understanding. These two points of emphasis will help the pastor when he begins to

¹⁵I readily acknowledge that this list is my own personal triage list and is colored by my own doctrinal convictions. Other evangelicals may develop their own list of doctrines. For my own denomination, *The Baptist Faith and Message 2000* serves as a good starting guide for discerning important doctrines.

evaluate and interview with potential churches. During the evaluation and interview process he should listen to the doctrinal emphasis of the churches and make sure there is alignment between his beliefs and theirs. It is also important that the pastor seek to understand how the potential church defines the words they use when describing their beliefs. These definitions are often spelled out in a formal statement of faith. The pastor would be wise to use the statement of faith as a guide to investigate whether the representatives of the church believe what their church's statement says they believe.

In summary, the pastor's personal statement of faith is a collection of the underlying beliefs behind the pastor's congregational culture. This document will serve the pastor in several valuable ways. First, once a pastor has generated a personal statement of faith, he is better prepared to evaluate the beliefs of other congregations in light of his own convictions. Second, a pastor's personal statement of faith could be held in reserve for pulpit committees and churches that want to know more about the pastor's beliefs. Third, the process of crafting a personal statement of faith can help the pastor understand those doctrines that he most strongly values and those that he would not be willing to compromise to any degree.

Since the primary work of the pastor is to equip the saints for the work of the ministry (Eph 4:11-12), one of his main responsibilities among his potential congregation will be to teach the people to believe and value the truths that they may not yet fully believe and value. He will additionally clarify and strengthen the biblical values and beliefs the congregation already holds. Although the church may not yet embrace the doctrines the pastor intends to teach them over the span of his pastorate, he must consider the potential disruption the teaching of some beliefs will generate between him and his congregation. One example of a belief that is currently engendering conflict between pastors and their congregations in Southern Baptist Convention churches is the 1 Corinthian 5 teaching regarding the value of exercising church discipline. Congregations

that do not yet believe or value church discipline will be resistant to its implementation. A pastor who believes discipline to be a biblical practice had better be careful how he introduces it to a congregation that does not.

It is important, in congregational cultural transformation, that a pastor first lead the church to embrace beliefs that align with Scripture. In the case regarding church discipline, the congregation must first believe in and value church discipline, and then the outward behavior of exercising church discipline will be obediently carried out. All the while, the pastor needs to be as careful and as certain as he can that his teaching regarding discipline clearly syncs with biblical instruction. This painstaking process of leading congregational cultural change is why evangelical pastors should be certain that a potential congregation acknowledges the authority of the Scriptures and agrees to place their beliefs and practices under its subjection. In the long run, this process of critical contextualization will help establish healthier pastor-congregation relationships, develop healthier churches, and lead toward greater Kingdom effectiveness.¹⁶

Investigating primary congregational cultural influencers. The second question a pastor must ask himself in discovering his own congregational culture is: “Who are my primary congregational cultural influencers?” This question is important because culture is never the product of one person alone, but is the product of the interactions of groups of people. According to my adaptation of Hiebert’s definition, congregational culture is created and shared by a particular congregation and enables the people to function as a church. Therefore, it is the congregation’s observable symbols and

¹⁶Paul Hiebert’s method of critical contextualization is employed later in this conclusion. Aubrey Malphurs’ “Beliefs Audit” in appendix D of *Look before You Lead* can be helpful in determining the beliefs of the pastor, his cultural influencers, and his potential congregation. I do not believe all evangelical congregations must embrace a strict regulative principle, but I am acknowledging the fact that there must be some sort of final authority in the life of the congregation regarding doctrinal disagreements. Evangelicals disagree over particular aspects on many of the doctrines mentioned, but potential pastors should seek congregations where there is a high level of beliefs and values alignment between the pastor and the congregation.

rituals, patterns of behavior, and material products that the pastor needs to evaluate. In discovering his own congregational culture, a pastor needs to discover the congregation(s) that have most influenced his own beliefs, feelings, and values. He needs to understand the congregation(s) that have most influenced his symbols and rituals, patterns of behavior, and material products. I would like to term any congregations that have strongly influenced one's own congregational culture as *congregational cultural influencers*.¹⁷

A pastor's congregational culture was developed in community, and those beliefs, values, and behaviors enculturated and acculturated in the life of the pastor still remain. Therefore, in his process of congregational cultural self-discovery it would be wise for the pastor to explore the sources of his current congregational cultural beliefs, feelings, and values, by exploring the congregational culture of his congregational cultural influencers. These congregational cultural influencers will present the pastor with observable and recordable evidences of how his congregational cultural beliefs, feelings, and values work themselves out in systems of symbols and rituals, patterns of behavior, and their material products.¹⁸

When researching his congregational cultural influencers, the expedient pattern for the pastor would be to begin with his most recent congregational cultural influencer(s). There is no arbitrary amount of time spent within a congregation that can serve to denote a particular congregation as a significant congregational cultural influencer. The pastor could have spent twenty years in a congregation, which today has less influence on his congregational culture than the church he has served or attended for

¹⁷Congregational cultural influencers are generally churches, but can also be influential authors or teachers, seminaries or schools, parachurch organizations, preachers, etc.

¹⁸Congregational cultural influencers will never be an exact representation of any single member of the congregation, but they will display observable evidences akin to those the one influenced by them would generate on their own.

the past three years. These congregational cultural influencers are not only particular churches, they can also come in the form of a favorite preacher/podcast or author, the general congregational cultural expectations communicated by a Bible college or seminary, a fellowship of pastors, or denominational or parachurch influences, etc.¹⁹ Unlike many of his potential congregants, pastors tend to have multiple congregational cultural influencers.

The first step for a pastor exploring his congregational cultural influencers would be to determine at least two or three of his top congregational cultural influencers.²⁰ Once he has determined his top two to three cultural influencers the pastor should begin to observe and note what he likes best about the manner in which each of them exhibits or teaches the behaviors and products of a church. He should make detailed notes regarding their doctrine, methodology, internal calendars, schedules, and systems of operation and discipleship.

A pastor can make some observations regarding his congregational cultural influencers from memory, but he would be better served by actually visiting a service. During this visit he could employ observation and participant observation and make video recordings of architecture, buildings and grounds, and various congregational cultural artifacts (hymnbooks, screens, instruments, baptismal facilities, Lord's Supper devices and elements). He can also obtain copies of budgets, constitutions and by-laws, bulletins, and any other readily available published material. Of course, in the day we live, the pastor should get as much information as he can from online publications and the church website. The pastor should begin to compile his observations on a computer or a

¹⁹The reason an individual like a preacher can communicate congregational cultural values to their hearers is because they themselves are part of a community of culture.

²⁰Most current pastors would feel overwhelmed by the guidelines presented here for congregational culture self-discovery. These guidelines for self-discovery, especially regarding congregational cultural influencers, are best executed while in seminary or preparation for the pastorate.

field notebook. In his discovery, the pastor should focus on discovering the cultural influencer's systems of symbols and rituals, patterns of behavior, and material products. Observing a congregational cultural influencer will help the pastor see how his own congregational culture looks, sounds, and feels when lived out in the life of an established congregation. The pastor's observations regarding his congregational cultural influencers will give him concrete descriptions of the congregational culture he would potentially exhibit on his own.²¹

When the pastor visits his congregational cultural influencer, he should, if feasible, record (before or after the service) the signage, order of service, bulletins, other communication materials, and the manner in which all the cultural artifacts are arranged, etc. He could accomplish this, in part, by drawing his own map of the facilities and its corresponding artifacts, and/or products. In the congregational culture map of his cultural influencer the pastor should make special note of the placement and use of symbols in the church: flags, crosses, stained glass, communion table, offering plates, Bibles, etc. He should also note how the people are dressed, and how they behave before, after, and during the service. Additionally he should note other material products like padded pews or chairs, chandeliers or recessed lighting, carpet, wood, paint, etc.²² All these recorded observations will aid the pastor in understanding his own cultural influencers; and, will help him, in turn, further understand why he believes the things he believes, feels the way he feels, and values the things he values. Many of a pastor's congregational cultural feelings and values are the result of his beliefs being lived out in the life of a particular

²¹This is necessary because culture is only generated in community. This is not to say that a pastor should go into a new congregation and attempt to mold it into his preferred congregational culture. In fact almost the opposite is true in practice. A pastor should enter a congregation with complete humility and a willingness to become one of them. The reason for understanding his own congregational culture is so that he will be better equipped to lay aside ethnocentrism and contextualize.

²²Aubrey Malphurs provides an excellent "Behaviors Audit" questionnaire for observing the behaviors and products of a congregation culture in appendix A of *Look before You Lead*. Those who have access to his work would be wise to implement it in discovering the culture of their congregational cultural influencers. Malphurs, *Look before You Lead*, 209-19.

congregational cultural influencer. When a pastor, and/or potential pastor, implements congregational cultural anthropology to better understand the culture of his primary congregational cultural influencers, he will be one step closer to the ultimate goal of understanding and navigating the culture of the established church he hopes to serve as pastor.

Compose a summary of your preferred ways of functioning as a church.

Since congregational culture is expressed by “the way we do things around here,” a pastor who has established his personal statement of faith, and observed and evaluated the congregational culture of his significant cultural influencers, can begin to compose a statement of his preferred ways of functioning as a church. This statement of an ideal church is part of a systematic way of fleshing out his understanding of his own preferred congregational culture.

In his statement of a preferred congregational culture, the pastor should prioritize the cultural systems of symbols and rituals, patterns of behavior, and their material products that he believes have Scriptural warrant and a high value to him personally. This list of cultural priorities is similar to what Mark Dever has done with his nine marks. The difference is that this list should be much more expansive and detailed. This list is the pastor’s opportunity to express, in writing, his idea of the perfect church. He could include everything from building and grounds, to policies and procedures, the full worship experience, church calendar, and membership matters, etc.²³ Or, the list could be a short summary of the pastor’s ideal church, the thicker the description the better the self-understanding. This list should be a personal statement of, “Knowing my beliefs and my congregational cultural influencers, If I could instantly materialize a

²³This step could be involved as the pastor has time to make it. It could be a single sheet describing his ideal church, or, it could become a thorough description like the one mentioned above.

church that would be my cultural ideal, this is how it would look, sound, and feel . . .²⁴

Once a pastor has a thorough self-understanding of his own congregational culture, he can then work toward understanding congregations he is interested in serving as pastor. Without self-understanding, a pastor is much less likely to be able to adequately engage in congregational cultural anthropology among other established churches.

Implementing Congregational Cultural Anthropology for the Purpose of Understanding an Established Congregation

The purpose of this dissertation is to argue that the pastor(s)/elders, and/or potential pastor(s)/elders, of established local churches, should know and implement many of the tools and resources of cultural anthropology within their ministry context in order to enhance understanding and communication between the pastor and his congregation, resulting in healthier pastor-congregation relations, healthier churches, and greater Kingdom effectiveness. In the previous section I explained a three-step process for implementing congregational cultural anthropology for the purpose of self-understanding. In the following, I want to present a basic process for implementing congregational cultural anthropology for the purpose of understanding an established congregation.

Technically, from the perspective of the pastor, these pastor-congregation relationships begin the moment he becomes aware of a potential congregation. In accordance with my adaptation of Paul Hiebert's definition of culture, from the moment a pastor discovers a potential congregation, he should begin researching the congregation's

²⁴It may be appropriate here to once again mention that pastors should not look to turn churches into their cultural ideals. The reason for composing this list is for self-understanding. Faithful pastors need to understand that their cultural light should not be their new congregation's law. It seems that self-awareness is an important component of mitigating ethnocentrism and freeing a leader to personally own the reality, "They are not me, neither should they be."

“more or less integrated system of beliefs, feelings, and values . . . systems of symbols and rituals, patterns of behavior, and its material products.”²⁵ Therefore, since the pastor can only infer the underlying “beliefs, feelings, and values,” he should immediately begin to accumulate qualitative data surrounding the congregation’s “systems of symbols and rituals, patterns of behavior, and material products.”

The pastor can begin to acquire this data by implementing the congregational cultural anthropology tools of observation, participant observation, conversations, interviews, questionnaires and surveys, a computer, audio and video equipment and software, and field notes, and rapid assessment. The implementation of these anthropological tools and resources, even before the pastor is called to the church, can help the pastor better understand and relate to the potential congregation.²⁶

I propose a four-step process for implementing congregational cultural anthropology for the purpose of understanding an established church: (1) Begin accumulating data and making observations.²⁷ (2) Determine if the church recognizes the authority of the Word of God. (3) Conduct informal interviews. (4) Begin a series of visits to the church.

²⁵Hiebert, *Anthropological Insights for Missionaries*, 30. The amount of qualitative data a pastor should collect on a church should match his level of interest and the level of likelihood of him actually serving as a pastor of the church. A simple visit to the church’s website may be all that is required to either disqualify the church or provoke the pastor to learn more.

²⁶Pastors should only begin to implement these tools when they are relatively certain they are a conceivable candidate for the potential congregation. Also, potential pastors do not have the time or resources to explore more than two to three congregations at a time. Therefore, pastors should limit this sort of research to congregations they truly desire, and congregations that they have a good chance of being invited to pastor. Pastors should especially engage in this type of congregational cultural anthropology when they receive an invitation to interview. The level of information the pastor gathers on a potential congregation should grow in proportion to his progress in the application and interview process. A pastor who is “preaching in view of a call” should strive to know all that he possibly can about the congregation by that point.

²⁷The pastor should be recording data and making observations throughout the process.

Begin accumulating data and making observations. A computer, tablet, or field notebook is one of the most important tools for a pastor who is conducting anthropological research among potential churches. In his field notebook, computer, or tablet the pastor should begin a separate folder or section for each congregation he believes he may actually pastor next (typically, a pastor should not be researching more than two to three churches at a time). In these folders, he should begin to collect qualitative data on the congregations. He can begin obtaining this data by mining information from the church website, denominational sources, any affiliated recommending agencies, and/or the person who made him aware of the congregation in the first place. If available, he should begin to read and record the congregation's history, beliefs, purposes, values, vision, ministries, goals, attendance, facilities, etc. The pastor should also engage in light ethnography by beginning to make his own personal observations regarding the congregation in a Word document.

Determine if the church recognizes the authority of the Word of God. At this point in the pastor's investigation he should have already established his own personal statement of faith, and he should have a good idea regarding what would disqualify a church from being one he would consider pastoring. Since this dissertation is for the purposes of encouraging evangelical pastors to use anthropological tools and resources, I would again recommend that the pastor only consider congregations that recognize the Word of God as the final authority in all matters of faith and practice. If the Word is not the final authority, then the pastor will have no footing on which to transition the church toward biblical fidelity when it comes to the process of critical contextualization. If the pastor discovers that the congregation at least acknowledges the authority of the Word of God, he may have a congregation with which he can work. Of course, information obtained online only begins to scratch the surface as to the reality of the congregation's stance toward the authority of the Scriptures. Also, this early online

and informal interview research may not generate an accurate representation of the current congregational culture.

If the pastor believes he has any chance of serving as the congregation's pastor then this process of early anthropological discovery is never a waste of time. The information gathered will help the pastor to discern whether the congregation may be for him to pastor. It may be the case that early in the process the pastor discovers that the church has obstacles that he is not willing to pay the price to overcome, or obstacles he believes he is not capable of overcoming. Thereby, a pastor may begin an ethnographic research file on a congregation and conclude shortly thereafter that he should not proceed further. If that were the case, the pastor should, after prayer and counsel, withdraw his name from consideration.

Begin to conduct informal interviews. After discovering all that the pastor can discover through online sources, and possibly through histories and library sources, the pastor should then seek out persons with whom he can have conversations and qualitative interviews regarding the church. In a Baptist structure, he could conduct an informal phone interview with the state convention regarding statistics and cooperation.²⁸ He could also ask for a phone conversation, or sit down interview, with the local association director, or other local officials who are likely to know the church from the outside. During these conversations and interviews the pastor should record copious field notes. At the end of each day, the pastor should log all the information that he has accumulated in the respective folders and handle it with full integrity.²⁹

²⁸When talking with denominational representatives it would be wise to request all of the statistical information available.

²⁹These instructions are assuming a best-case scenario, where the pastor is not working a full-time job and has his potential congregations narrowed down to a short list of two or three potential churches. Many pastors will not be able to collect a lot of information on the front end because of present ministry or work obligations, but for the pastor who can, the more information he gathers to guide his decision the better.

The calling of a pastor to a particular congregation is a long and drawn-out process. Personally, I don't believe a pastor should submit his resume to scores of churches indiscriminately. The best process is for a pastor to know what he believes, understand his established congregational culture, and only allow his name to be recommended to churches where he nor the congregation would be required to radically change any of their foundational beliefs to match. He would also be wise to only allow his name to be considered in congregations where he would be able to be content loving the people just the way they currently are, praying, and preaching the Word, without changing any of the congregational cultural markers.³⁰ Assuming a pastor has followed this advice, the number of churches where his resume has been entered may be relatively small. And, assuming the process is slow, it may be up to three to six months between the time a church begins accepting resumes and interviews its first candidate. Also, only one man, out of sometimes hundreds of applicants, will get the pastoral position. Therefore, the suggestions I make in the following are subject to the church showing interest in further exploring the potential pastor for their position, i.e. they send a questionnaire to the pastor, or call or message him to set up an interview.

Begin a series of visits to the church. When things begin to get serious between a pastor and a congregation, he should then attempt to make a series of three to four distinct visits to the church for the purposes of engaging in congregational cultural anthropology.³¹ For the first visit, the pastor should try to find a time when he can visit the church facilities unnoticed. During this first visit he should go with field-notebook,

³⁰The exception to this rule, of course, is when the congregational cultural practices are in clear violation of the plain teachings of Scripture.

³¹Again, the pastor must use wisdom and discernment in this process. If he lives far away, or if he is working a full-time job, then he may only be able to make one visit. The pastor should only be "dating" congregations that he is prepared to "marry." He should only "marry" a congregation from which he is sure he will not seek a divorce. Anthropological study before accepting a pastorate could pre-empt a lot of the mismatches that occur between pastors and congregations.

pen, and camera in hand. He should walk as much of the premises as is allowed and unobtrusive, and make scores of notes on the buildings and grounds, etc. This is a good time to begin to accumulate the data that would be in accordance with Aubrey Malphurs' Behaviors Audit.³² No conclusions are needed at this time.

Also, it is important for the pastor to remember on this first visit that these anthropological tools and resources are not a substitute for the leading of God's Spirit, but a means that God can use to lead and guide His churches. Therefore, the pastor should use this and any other visit as an opportunity to ask the Lord of the Church to direct this congregation in the way He would have them go. Pastoring is hard enough when the pastor serves in a church of God's choosing, don't make the mistake of desiring another man's church.

If the pastor is encouraged during the first visit that the church may be one that God would have him pastor then he should plan a second visit. This second visit would ideally be in accordance with one of the congregation's public services, preferably its most well attended service. If at all possible, the pastor should attend this service incognito. If he can visit undetected, he will see a more accurate picture of the current cultural situation within the church. If the congregation knows that he is a potential pastor, they will probably attempt to hide their flaws and put their best foot forward.

During this second visit, the pastor's anthropological discovery should be focused on the collective expressions of systems of symbols and rituals, patterns of behavior, and their material products.³³ At this point he should be able to observe particular details about the people themselves. How do they behave before, during, and

³²Aubrey Malphurs, *Look before You Lead*, appendix A, 209-19

³³Hiebert, *Anthropological Insights for Missionaries*, 30.

after the service? What are they wearing? How do they sound? Again, Aubrey Malphurs' "Behavior Audit is worth revisiting to answer some of his questionnaire questions."³⁴

Due to the amount of time investment, a potential pastoral candidate should not make his third visit to the church until the congregation (or committee) has expressed serious interest in bringing the candidate for the consideration of the church.³⁵ At this point, in order for the pastor to really begin to learn a lot about the congregation, and help him and the congregation in the long run (whether he is called as their pastor or not), he would be wise to attempt to set up and lead an anthropological discovery process for his visit. In this discovery process, first, it would be wise to have already completed Malphurs' Core values audit himself, and to ask the pulpit committee or proper representative to secure the completion of the audit by a large representation of the regular attenders. The pastor can take it upon himself to communicate the value of knowing the congregation's core values for both the potential pastor (whoever it ends up being) and for the established congregation itself. During this third visit, in addition to the anthropological tool of the values audit, the pastor should conduct as many informal interviews as naturally possible. He should also be open to fully participating in any cultural activities offered. This process will help the pastor better know individuals within the congregation and their ways of doing things. It will also help the congregation continue to get to know him. This third visit would also be an excellent time to begin to introduce the pastor's family to the congregation. Pastors' wives often see and understand things that escape the pastor's notice.

³⁴I provide a copy of Malphurs' Behaviors Audit in appendix 3. Other helpful tools during the pastor's second visit could be Lydia Rappaport's Rapid Assessment in appendix 3, and James Wind's Investigative Questions in appendix 1.

³⁵This process assumes a congregational church government. Other evangelical churches need to consider their pastoral interview process in order to know the appropriate time for a third visit.

If this third visit proves fruitful, and if there seems to be significant values alignment between the pastor and the congregation, and if the congregation intends to extend a trial sermon or vote for affirmation, the potential pastor may want to seize this opportunity to schedule one final four day to weeklong visit among the congregation.³⁶ During this extended visit the pastor could spend significant time among the people out in the church field, where they live and work. He should seek out the help of an existing staff person(s), deacon(s), and/or other key informant(s). These key informants can become significant sources of information, and can introduce the potential pastor to various representatives from within the congregation. The pastor would be wise to request informal meetings with several types of members from within the congregation (not just members, but also attenders and former members). He should set up informal interviews with the deacons, the budget committee/treasurer, trustees, the WMU (or any other women's auxiliary), and the building and grounds committee and keepers. Another important visit the pastor should attempt to make is an informal interview with a person who recently left the church.³⁷ The pastor cannot possibly conduct all of these interviews in one day. But, he should keep in mind the fact that if he accepts the pastorate he will have to be able to work with and through these various groups, so why not start off leading them from day one? In certain situations the pastor may even want to have voice recordings of the interviews (if acceptable). He should also ask if it is satisfactory if he jots down some notes, and remind his informants that both he and the congregation are on the verge of a life changing decision.

³⁶This four-day to weeklong visit is an excellent opportunity for the pastor to engage in a Rapid Assessment Process. I detail this RAP in the next section.

³⁷A pastor would be wise to be careful in how he interviews someone who recently left the church. He does not want to undermine trust with those who remain and continue to lead the existing congregation.

Congregational cultural anthropology, for the purpose of understanding an established congregation, can help pastors find the right church to pastor. They should first engage in congregational cultural anthropology to understand their own congregational culture. Then, they implement congregational cultural anthropology for the understanding and navigating the culture of their short-list of potential churches. Because of the time restraints and uncertainty of a pastoral search process, the pastor may want to conclude his anthropological discovery process of a church he is considering by engaging in a rapid assessment process.

Rapid Assessment Process for Congregational Cultural Anthropology

Rapid Assessment Process, or RAP, for congregational cultural anthropology, holds great promise for improving pastor-congregation relations, positively influencing church health, and improving effective Kingdom effectiveness among established churches. James Beebe summarizes the Rapid Assessment Process as an “intensive, team-based qualitative inquiry using triangulation, iterative data analysis and additional data collection to quickly develop a preliminary understanding of a situation from the insider’s perspective.”³⁸

Beebe believes this rapid qualitative inquiry can be accomplished in as little as four days. For the purposes of conducting a RAP among an established church, since many congregations still have some sort of Bible study, prayer meeting, or small group meeting during the week, it would be best if the pastor were to schedule a RAP for a

³⁸Beebe writes, “I have chosen the phrase ‘qualitative inquiry’ instead of ‘ethnography’ out of respect for those who have helped define ethnography and argue it always requires prolonged fieldwork.” James Beebe. *Rapid Assessment Process: An Introduction*. (Walnut Creek, CA: Altamira Press, 2001), xv. Beebe also explains, “RAP is defined by the basic concepts of triangulation and iterative analysis, and additional data collection, and NOT by the use of specific research.” James Beebe. *Rapid Assessment Process: An Introduction* (Walnut Creek, CA: Altamira Press, 2001), 7.

Wednesday through Sunday, or Sunday through Wednesday, or whenever four to five days among the people would expose his RAP team to a maximum amount of congregation interaction.

An important component of a RAP procedure, that may be difficult for potential pastors to obtain, is a RAP team. This problem is one of the reasons why consultants like The Malphurs Group exist. Malphurs, Rainer, Schaller, and others have developed tested systems and processes for thorough congregational cultural assessment. Consultant teams are valuable experts, but there are at least two major drawbacks for the pastor in hiring an outside team. First, the cost would often be a prohibiting factor, unless the pastor could lead the potential congregation to embrace the assessment and pay for it. Second, if the pastor hires a third-party consulting team then he probably forfeits his own personal connection with the discovery process. The value for the pastor personally observing, interviewing, and administering questionnaires and surveys, and recording his own field notes cannot be overstated. If the pastor were personally involved in administering the RAP he would have a built-in test case of his ability to influence and lead the congregation toward a common objective. This intensive time among the people could provide him significantly more congregational culture insight than the typical pastor interview process, and could really help him discern whether to accept or reject a call from the congregation.

The negatives for a church that hires outside consultants are along the same lines. First, there is the negative of the associated cost. Second, the church that hires an outside consultant gets to see less of the personality and leadership style of its potential pastor. The major positive for an established congregation hiring a professional consulting team is the quality and depth of assessment the congregation will receive. Also, a relatively objective team, who is not seeking the pastorate, will be less likely to manipulate the process for personal gain.

From a practical standpoint, most pastors are not going to be able to develop a large team for a Rapid Assessment Process. Also, most pastors are not going to know how or what to study in the congregation without some sort of guidance from a congregational cultural anthropologist. In order to overcome these two primary objections to a RAP, first, a congregational cultural anthropology handbook, which will lead team members through the rapid assessment process from start to finish, needs to be developed and published.³⁹ Second, in order to develop an extensive pool of co-laborers in the administration of a RAP, the Southern Baptist Convention, state conventions, and local associations should promote awareness of the availability of the tool and train denominational workers and pastors in its implementation. In the meantime, pastors should involve other pastors, church members, their wives, and mature children in the team process. Also, local association missionaries, or even a key informant or two from within the congregation, would make excellent team members. James Beebe recommends at least two persons serve to complete a RAP, and he also highly values the participation of a cultural insider.⁴⁰ Therefore the team could be composed of the pastor, his wife (or some other choice), and an available informant from within the potential congregation.

The proposed congregational cultural anthropology RAP handbook should have a small introductory summary section on understanding congregational culture and the value of congregational cultural anthropology. This section is primarily for the uninformed and those not yet enthused about the implementation of congregational cultural anthropology. Subsequent sections should help RAP team members follow a

³⁹One popular handbook of this sort from mainline tradition is *Studying Congregations: A New Handbook* by Nancy T. Ammerman, Jackson W. Carroll, Carl S. Dudley, and William McKinney, Ammerman et al, *Studying Congregations*. On a personal note, I knew early in my pastoral experience that I needed to learn more about my congregation and was looking for a diagnostic tool. I came across *Studying Congregations*, but I found it lacked the simple practical value for which I was looking. If this research generates interest then I would like to team up with a Christian cultural anthropologist, and/or possibly a church consultant, and develop a congregational cultural anthropology RAP handbook.

⁴⁰James Beebe, *Rapid Assessment Process*, 1.

step-by-step process for understanding their own congregational culture and that of the potential church. A final section should propose a way to implement critical contextualization within the established church.

This handbook should be a tool that pastors believe adds value to their leadership and one that they would actually want to use. The handbook can be offered in app or online form, as well as in print, but it has to be relatively non-technical, easy to use, and somewhat versatile for various applications. For instance, the handbook needs to be useful for pastors before and during their pastorates, but it also needs to be useful for individual member or team applications. The guidebook should have a way to compile the research of multiple team members into a consolidated report. Each team member should be able to work through his or her handbook, or electronic resource individually, and then work together with the team as they triangulate their results.⁴¹

When a team of three to five is compiled and equipped with its research handbooks, its members should then simply follow the path of investigation outlined in the book. The process outlined in the book should be along the lines of those outlined in preceding sections of this conclusion. The goal is to seek to understand one's own congregational culture, and the potential congregation from its emic, or insider's perspective.

As noted by Beebe, the main way to learn the congregational culture is to get people to tell their stories in their own language, instead of asking hundreds of questions.⁴² Therefore, the RAP handbook can lead the team members to conduct informal interviews. In addition to these qualitative interviews, the RAP team should engage in the same observation, participant observation, and questionnaires mentioned under the previous headings. Additionally, the RAP team should gather all available

⁴¹See James Beebe's chapter on triangulation. *Ibid.*, 17-57.

⁴²Beebe, *Rapid Assessment Process*, 17.

budgets, bulletins, and other printed materials. As well as completing Malphurs' Behaviors Audit, Core Values Audit, and Beliefs Audit, and Lydia Rappaport's Rapid Assessment, and James Wind's Investigative Questions for Congregations.

Upon the RAP team's completion of the anthropological investigation, and the filling out the Congregational Culture Handbooks, the potential pastor should be able to compile the results in a detailed ethnographic report. This report should ideally be compiled in an electronic format that will also be made available to the appropriate congregational representatives.

In the future, if there is demand for this type of congregational cultural evaluation, a congregational cultural anthropology consultant group could generate an app that takes each member of the investigation team through a step-by-step cultural discovery process. If a congregational cultural anthropologist consultant group were developed, it could also begin to work with other social science researchers in developing quantitative methods for classifying the current reality of a particular congregational culture.⁴³ These are all relatively easily attainable goals for skilled cultural anthropologists, but for now they are theories of application of congregational cultural anthropology methods in a rapid assessment process.

However the data is accumulated and reported, assuming the potential pastor is called by God to serve in that capacity, the findings of an RAP ethnographic report should weigh heavily in deciding whether the pastor and congregation are a match. RAP research, conducted before a pastor accepts the pastorate, will certainly prepare the pastor to enter into his new congregation with a much better chance of pastoring it well. Also,

⁴³This quantitative research could be something along the lines of what Angela Ward attempted, but with a different series of cultural markers and quantifiers. Angela Joan Ward. "Church Organizational Culture: Construct Definition and Instrument Development." PhD diss., The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2011.

this pre-emptive research is never a waste of time if it results in strategic members of the congregation understanding their own congregational culture.

Conceivably, the potential pastor could go through the RAP investigative process and decline the pastorate. In such a case the pastor should still submit a copy of the results to the leaders of the congregation. He should also make the results available to the local and state denominational agencies for caretaking, and for guidance in the development of further church revitalization tools and resources.

If the pastor is still interested in pastoring the congregation after completing the RAP, he should then formulate a hypothesis for the congregation regarding who they are, what they prefer, how open they are to change, and what type of leadership they will require. He should then ask himself the honest question, “Am I God’s man for this congregation?” If he is fully persuaded by his Scriptural convictions, and the information he has at hand, that he is the pastor the congregation should have, then it would be appropriate to proceed. This RAP process is one further anthropological tool to help prevent mismatches between pastors and congregations. Its implementation could strengthen pastor-congregation relations, help maintain healthier churches, and result in greater Kingdom effectiveness.

Congregational Cultural Anthropology from within the Pastorate

Congregational cultural anthropology is not only a discipline with valuable tools and resources for understanding one's self or a potential congregation; it is also a valuable discipline for pastors who are currently serving established congregations. In fact, the tools and resources of congregational cultural anthropology are most valuable when implemented over a period of time longer than a week, preferably six months or longer. Typical anthropological research requires months of living among the people. This time allows the pastor to truly begin to know and understand a congregational

culture, and the time also helps the pastor get past the guarded displays of culture he may encounter when first beginning to know a particular congregation. The ways of implementing congregational cultural anthropology mentioned earlier in this chapter can be implemented at any point during a pastor's relationship with a congregation. But, it is only after considerable time spent among the people in observation and participant observation that the pastor will begin to fully understand the meanings of symbols, paramessages, kinship structures, and his role and status in the congregation.

One of the biggest mistakes I made in my first pastorate was assuming that after four years of ministry among the congregation it would not matter if I replaced the red King James pew Bibles with black English Standard Version Bibles. At that point I had already been using the ESV regularly in my preaching and no one had complained. I bought the ESVs with my own money, and one Sunday afternoon I replaced all the red KJVs with the black ESVs. I eagerly awaited the arrival of the congregation on the first Sunday night after the Bibles were replaced. The first lady in the auditorium noticed the absence of the red pew Bibles right away and angrily snapped at me, "Where are the real Bibles?!" My faulty assumption in this leadership blunder was that a symbol that was seldom used by the congregation would not be missed when it was gone; I should have known better and worked a wiser plan.

An anthropological understanding of symbols, and how people change, could have helped me better navigate that pastoral leadership situation. In fact, most pastors could better navigate congregational culture, even after years on the field, with the implementation of anthropological tools and resources. The implementation of these tools and resources could result in better pastor-congregation relations, healthier churches, and more effective Kingdom ministry and missions.

One area where the implementation of anthropological tools and resources especially adds value is in the understanding of cultural symbols within the context of an

established congregation. Established church pastors tend to overlook congregational symbols because they are familiar and ubiquitous. From the Bible and the pulpit, to the elements of the Lord's Supper, and the various crosses and expressions of feelings, symbols are everywhere in congregational cultures. Understanding cultural symbols falls largely under the discipline of cultural anthropology. The anthropological tools of observation and participant observation, when carried out faithfully, bring to light seemingly insignificant details regarding the use of symbols. Rightly understanding and navigating congregational symbols can prevent pastors from triggering potential cultural landmines in pastor-congregation relations.

Paul Hiebert lists a variety of symbols pastors need to pay particular attention to in the context of an established congregation: spoken language, paralanguage, written language, pictorial, kinesics, audio, spatial, temporal, touch, taste, smell, ecological features, silence, rituals, and human artifacts.⁴⁴ Ideally the pastor would be able to begin to note “the way we do things around here” regarding symbols before he takes the lead. Once he begins his pastorate, an understanding of the congregation's use of symbols will help the pastor know when he is introducing change. In order to change symbols he can do the necessary work of leading the congregation to embrace beliefs and values that are consistent with, and not contrary to, the plain teachings of Scripture.

An important symbol that an established church pastor must become very aware of is paramessages.⁴⁵ Paramessages are the feelings and emphasis communicated

⁴⁴Hiebert, *Anthropological Insights for Missionaries*, 145. James Spradley writes, “All cultural meaning is created by using symbols. All the words your informant used in responding to your questions in the first interview were symbols. The way your informant dressed was also a symbol, as were your informant's facial expressions and hand movements. *A symbol is any object or event that refers to something*. All symbols involve three elements: the symbol itself, one or more referents, and a relationship between the symbol and referent. This triad is the basis for all symbolic meaning.” James P. Spradley. *The Ethnographic Interview*. (New York: Holt, Rinehart And Winston, 1979), 95. Italics in original.

⁴⁵According to Paul Hiebert, “Secondary or paramessages provide the immediate context within which communication takes place and determine the way in which the primary message is to be understood. They tell us, for instance, whether we should interpret the meanings of the words as irony, sarcasm, humor or double entendre, or whether we should take them straight. . . . Our most fundamental

to the hearer by the speaker. With his words a pastor may say, “Bless your heart,” but the way he says it may communicate something derogatory to the hearer. Paramessages are not always trustworthy guides, but they can help the pastor understand what people are really trying to communicate. Understanding the congregants’ paramessages is also a first-step for the pastor in making sure that he is communicating the things he intends to communicate. A member who walks by, shakes the pastor’s hand, and says “good sermon preacher” (while his eyes never make contact and he mumbles as he slowly drifts by) communicates an entirely different message than the member who walks up, stands flat-footed before the preacher, looks the preacher in the eye, grasps his hand firmly and says, “that was a good sermon preacher!” The pastor can observe the paramessages of his congregants from the pulpit, in general conversation, and how members interact with one another. Through observation and participant observation the pastor can hear the tone and true meaning of messages by observing the way people communicate what they communicate, or their paramessages.

Along the same lines, the pastor must be aware of his own paramessages. Paul Hiebert warns that exhibiting paramessages that conflict with the actual message can undermine the level of trust that the people have for the pastor.⁴⁶ The best recommendation for established church pastors is to observe and record how respected leaders within the congregation employ paramessages. Then, the pastor would be wise to continue to remain true to who he is as a person in Christ, but to begin to mirror many of the congregation’s acceptable paramessages in personal conversations. In his pulpit ministry, he should again be true to who he is in Christ but he should attempt to

messages are our paramessages, and when these are not congruent with our explicit message, the people will come to distrust us.” Paul Hiebert, *Anthropological Insights for Missionaries*, 160.

⁴⁶Ibid., 160. I dealt with many of the difficulties associated with paramessages in chapter 3.

communicate in ways that are not culturally distracting, or in ways that undermine trust on the part of his hearers.

Another important anthropological category that the pastor will learn more about through time spent on the field is the concept of kinship systems.⁴⁷ Who is related to whom? What families have a history of interpersonal conflict? Which families wield the power in the congregation? Family systems tend to wield greater influence in smaller congregations. So, those who pastor congregations with an active participation under one hundred will need to be much more sensitive to kinship systems than pastors who serve congregations with active participation rates above three hundred. And, even though this principle is generally true, pastors must be aware that there are certain families in every church that can cause very significant disruption if not properly navigated. The discipline of navigating interpersonal relationships, and especially kinship systems, is one of the reasons why the personality type of the pastor can work for or against his congregational cultural influence.⁴⁸ I would not go as far as Malphurs in dissuading pastors who do not fit the “turn around pastors” mold, but pastors definitely need to be aware of their interpersonal strengths and weaknesses and how these qualities can affect their ability to navigate kinship systems.⁴⁹

Two of the most important anthropological categories for a pastor to understand in order to navigate the culture of an established congregation are role and status.⁵⁰ In particular, he needs to find out through informal interviews, and

⁴⁷Paul Hiebert, *Cultural Anthropology*. 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1988), 221-42.

⁴⁸Malphurs, *Look before You Lead*, 154-174.

⁴⁹Malphurs discusses what non-turnaround pastors should do. *Ibid.*, 172, 73.

⁵⁰According to Hiebert, regarding status, “To participate in a society, then, we must occupy one or more of the statuses with that society. In one social setting a man may be a husband, in another a shopowner, and in a third a layman at church. Some of these status assignments, such as being a daughter or son, an heir to the throne, or a member of a particular ethnic group, we acquire by birth. These we call ascribed statuses. Others, which we call achieved status, such as a student, doctor, or missionary, must be

questionnaires and surveys, what the congregation believes to be the role and status of their pastor. Do they think of their pastor(s)/elders as preachers, chaplains, administrators, community organizers, therapists, etc.?

Closely tied to the congregation's perception of the pastor's status is his role. A congregant's perception of a pastor's role answers the question, "What should the pastor be doing with his time?" It is an impossible task to get every member of the congregation to agree, in every detail, regarding what the pastor's role and status should be. For the purposes of navigating the culture of an established congregation, the pastor needs to develop a good understanding of the general consensus of the congregation's expectations regarding role and status.

The first step in determining the pastor's role and status, according to the emic perspective of the congregation, is to research the existing documents of the church related to pastoral duties. The church's constitution and bylaws would be an excellent place to begin this search. Second, the pastor should be noting, from the beginning of his interaction with the church, how the members of the congregation refer to him in first person and third person conversations, "reverend, preacher, pastor, Dr. etc." Third, the pastor should let people answer the open-ended question, "If you were the pastor, how do you think you would use the time in your work week?" Chances are the first task mentioned holds the highest priority in their mind for the pastoral role. Asking the congregants this open-ended question gives them an opportunity to propose their own philosophy of pastoral triage. Also, the pastor will be able to tell more about the level of respect the congregants have for the pastor's status by how they entertain the question.

earned. Taken together the statuses an individual occupies play an important part in his or her sense of identity and self-worth." Hiebert, *Anthropological Insights for Missionaries*, 256. Regarding roles, Hiebert writes, "When one occupies a social status, he or she is expected to act in certain predictable ways. A teacher, for example, is expected to lead the class, to give students instruction regarding assignments, and to evaluate their work. A mother, on the other hand, is expected to take full responsibility for her own children. We call the behavior patterns associated with specific statuses 'roles'" (256).

Paramessages, kinship systems, and role and status are just of a few of the important anthropological categories that need to be explored by established church pastors in congregational cultural anthropology. Most of these categories are best explored through the implementation of the anthropological tools of observation, participant observation, surveys and questionnaires, as well as interviews. The picture of a particular congregation's kinship systems will become clearer and clearer as the pastor truly learns the names and family connections within the congregation. And, the discovery of appropriate paramessages will be the result, in part, of an intuitive response to interpersonal interactions. These paramessages will become a natural part of the pastor's communication, over time, as he acculturates within the established congregational culture. He can discover these culturally appropriate paramessages through the implementation of the anthropological tools of observation, participant observation, and making observations from video footage of the congregation. Finally, role and status is something the pastor better understand before he accepts the pastorate; but, the pastor's role and status, within a particular congregation, is something that will become clearer after sufficient time on the field. That clarity can be generated through the implementation of surveys and questionnaires, observation and participant observation, and informal interviews.

Much more could be said about specific anthropological tools and resources worthy of a pastor's attention, but a lot has already been covered within the preceding chapters of this dissertation. This concluding chapter is a partial attempt at demonstrating how the congregational cultural leadership ideas like those in Aubrey Malphurs' *Look before You Lead* could be supplemented with anthropological tools and resources. Another partial purpose of this conclusion is to present practical applications of anthropological tools and resources for pastors who intend to, or currently, serve as the shepherd of an established congregation.

Up to this point, my conclusions have focused, almost exclusively, on implementing anthropological tools and resources for understanding congregational culture. My proposed methodology is in contrast to most church leadership resources because they focus, almost exclusively, on changing church cultures. Even Malphurs' work, though it is much better than most, still tends to more strongly emphasize how to influence and change a congregation than how to understand a congregation. Church leadership resources that seem to perpetually emphasize change, above respect and understanding, are another reason why anthropological tools and resources need to become a mainstay in the church leadership toolbox. My hope for future church leadership resources is that congregational cultural anthropology, focused on true understanding before considering what needs to be changed, will become the rule rather than the exception. Change that emphasizes understanding before transformation will be long-lasting because the pastor will respect the congregation and lead them to embrace biblical beliefs, feelings, and values—the result will be better pastor-congregation relations, healthier congregational cultures, and greater Kingdom impact.

In spite of my pushback against an over-eagerness on the part of most church leadership authors to change established congregations without adequate understanding, I do acknowledge the fact that established congregations are always changing and need to be perpetually led toward healthy change. What every church needs to be becoming is more like Jesus, and more obedient to His Word. Yet, even when each established congregation follows this one Lord, they will each remain culturally distinct.

Church leaders like Rick Warren and Mark Dever have been able to summarize their visions of healthy congregational cultures in a few values statements (Warren with five purposes and Dever with the 9 marks). Aubrey Malphurs also believes that values alignment is one of the most important determinants on congregation-pastor

relationships.⁵¹ Therefore, even though pastors may enter congregations that do not completely match their own congregational cultural values, they would be wise to summarize their beliefs and values into vision statements for their potential congregation.

Warren, Malphurs, and others use Acts 2:37-47 as a source for proposing appropriate New Testament church values. Warren's five purposes have helped develop congregational cultures around common values. An established church pastor could benefit from leading his congregation to agree on common cultural values based on scriptural principles found in the New Testament.⁵² The way he can lead the congregation to embody these congregational cultural ideals is through the implementation of a significant anthropological tool presented by Paul Hiebert and others, critical contextualization.

Critical Contextualization for Congregational Culture Transformation

An application of Paul Hiebert and Eloise Meneses' four-step process for critical contextualization within the context of an established church would follow the following pattern: (1) Exegete the congregational culture, (2) Exegete the Scriptures, (3) Critical response, and (4) New contextualized practices.⁵³ The first step of exegeting the congregational culture has already been covered in this concluding chapter. The pastor should be exegeting and recording the congregational culture from the time he first becomes aware of it. During this process, the pastor is gathering as much data on the

⁵¹Mark Dever, *9 Marks of a Healthy Church*. Exp. ed. (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2004). Aubrey Malphurs. *Values-Driven Leadership: Discovering and Developing Your Core Values for Ministry*. (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1996). Rick Warren, *The Purpose Driven Church: Growth Without Compromising Your Message & Mission*. (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1995).

⁵²Aubrey Malphurs emphasizes vision and values statements in most of his books. This is a common theme among most church leadership books.

⁵³Paul G. Hiebert and Eloise Hiebert Meneses, *Incarnational Ministry: Planting Churches in Band, Tribal, Peasant, and Urban Societies* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1995), 168-71.

culture as possible. He should do so, in most instances, without criticizing the traditional ways.

Next, in the process of exegeting the Scripture, the pastor is going to teach the congregation to evaluate their current congregational cultural practices in light of the teachings of Scripture. This process should not be carried out in a spirit of attack, or “see here!” The goal is to help the congregation understand from the Scriptures what they should believe, feel, and value, and how it should affect their systems of symbols and rituals, patterns of behavior, and their material products.⁵⁴

It is really up to the pastor what areas he feels compelled to deal with first in critical contextualization. The values statements or purposes mentioned in the previous section could guide his choice of direction. Or, it may be that the pastor has noticed patterns of sin or neglect in the life of the congregation and he needs to bring the congregation toward obedience to the Word. Either way, the pastor will only be able to bring about lasting change in the congregational culture as he begins with the congregation’s beliefs, then works toward engraining values, which result in new symbols and rituals, patterns of behavior, and material products.

The third phase of critical contextualization is critical response. During this phase the pastor is not looking to change the congregational culture on his own. Instead, he has to lead the congregation to understand what they believe and facilitate a consensus among the congregation along the lines of, “this is what we ought to do.”

When the congregation understands what the Bible teaches and how they should respond, then they are ready to develop new contextualized practices. Of course, Hiebert and Meneses wrote their work with cross-cultural missionary encounters in mind, but the principles are the same. It is only when the congregation decides it needs to change, values the needed changes, and implements the changes under the direction of

⁵⁴Hiebert, *Anthropological Insights for Missionaries*, 30.

the pastor that something lasting has been affected in the life of the church. Often, this change needs to be a change in worldview that is fleshed out in a change in values and behaviors.⁵⁵

Congregational cultural anthropology provides an assortment of anthropological tools and resources that can be used to improve pastor-congregation relations, encourage church health, and work towards greater Kingdom effectiveness. The process of implementing these tools begins with self-discovery, then congregational discovery, and then a process of critical contextualization. Pastor(s)/elders and/or potential pastor(s)/elders should pick up these tools and resources and get to work

Conclusion

Evangelicals should begin to take serious the use of cultural anthropology for local church leadership. My interactions with Malphurs and Hiebert demonstrate many of the cross-discipline applications and possibilities for the implementation of anthropological tools and resources within the context of an established church. Though this dissertation is in no way an exhaustive melding of the fields of church leadership and cultural anthropology, it is a start.

The discipline of Congregational Cultural Anthropology should be further developed and expanded through a cross-discipline collaboration between Christian cultural anthropology experts and church leadership experts. Evangelical colleges and seminaries should begin to develop courses in congregational cultural anthropology and require them for anyone who hopes to influence or lead a local church, or ministry within

⁵⁵Paul Hiebert's work on transforming worldviews is excellent and could provide many opportunities for application in established churches for transforming a church view. One significant point made by Hiebert is the fact that old rituals must be replaced with new ones in order to affect real cultural transformation. Paul Hiebert, *Transforming Worldviews: An Anthropological Understanding of How People Change*. (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2008), 322.

an established church. The Southern Baptist Convention leadership at the North American Mission Board, and those in leadership in state conventions and local associations, should train and equip pastors in a Rapid Appraisal Process for congregational cultural anthropology. These institutions should also employ their best anthropological and church leadership minds in perfecting a standardized process that will eventually become part of the Southern Baptist Convention churches' "ways of doing things" in working through pastoral transitions. These sorts of efforts should be widely encouraged among all evangelical denominations.

This training in congregational cultural anthropology should educate and equip pastors and other church leaders to be competent congregational cultural anthropologists, especially in Rapid Assessment Processes, or RAP. There should also be a tool developed (either through an app, a website, a field notebook, or some hybrid model) to make the implementation of a RAP for congregational cultural anthropology accessible, even for those who have not been trained in congregational cultural anthropology. This tool should help pastors implement the anthropological tools and resources of observation, participant observation, conversations, interviews, questionnaires and surveys, a computer, audio and video equipment and software, field notebooks, RAPs, and critical contextualization within the context of an established church.

The goal in the implementation of these anthropological tools and resources is to navigate the congregational culture, or the more or less integrated system of beliefs, feelings, and values created and shared by a particular congregation that enable the people to function as a church and that are communicated by means of its systems of symbols and rituals, patterns of behavior, and their material products. When pastors have a broader understanding of congregational culture, follow the process of congregational cultural anthropology, and seek to lead their church to obey Scripture through the

implementation of critical contextualization, the result will be better pastor-congregation relations, healthier churches, and greater Kingdom impact.

APPENDIX 1

JAMES WIND'S INVESTIGATIVE QUESTIONS FOR CONGREGATIONS

James P. Wind, *The Nearby History Series*, ed. David E. Kyvig and Myron A. Marty, vol. 4, *Places of Worship: Exploring Their History* (Nashville: American Association for State and Local History, 1990), 40-43.

WHO-

1. Who were the people who created this congregation?
2. Who have been its leaders? Its quiet pewsitters? Its disconnected members?
3. Who have been the people who joined the congregation?
4. Who left and why?
5. Who have been the people who wanted to change things in the congregation's life? Who wanted to keep things the same?
6. Who have been the spiritual people in the congregation? Who have served as its moral consciences? Who have been the status seekers and the power brokers?
7. Who have been the congregation's neighbors? Who has the congregation sought for membership? Who has the congregation sought to keep out of its midst?
8. Who have shaped special interests of the congregation?
9. Who transmitted the congregation's identity and traditions to the next generation—and to newcomers?

WHAT-

1. What did the founders set out to achieve when they formed this congregation? What have new members sought here?
2. What have been the congregation's official reasons for being, its official beliefs, its stances on moral, social, and theological issues?
3. What questions or problems have caused conflict in the congregation? What has been this congregation's style for dealing with controversy? What means has it used for resolving conflict?
4. What self-image has his congregation maintained?
5. What have been this congregation's distinctive customs, traditions, and values?
6. What has this congregation been especially proud of? What has it been embarrassed by?
7. What have been key turning points in the life of the congregation? What were the factors that shaped those events? What happened in their aftermath?
8. What has this congregation believed about God, society, itself, and the individual?
9. What have been its greatest challenges? Achievements? Disasters? Failures?
10. What has held this congregation together? What threatened to pull it apart?

11. What heritage has it treasured? What tradition(s) has it claimed? What values has it esteemed of which it is unaware?

WHEN –

1. When did this congregation begin?
2. When has it experienced dramatic changes in membership?
3. When has it met for worship? For decision? For service? For social action?
4. When has it experienced controversy and turmoil?
5. When has it taken new directions? When has it reaffirmed old ways of doing things?
6. When has it been ahead of society as prophet? When has it lagged behind as preserver of the status quo?
7. When have significant changes in leadership taken place?
8. When have new groups formed in the life of this congregation?
9. When has this congregation celebrated significant milestones in its life?
10. When will/did the life of this congregation come to an end?

WHERE –

1. Where did this congregation's members come from?
2. Where have new members come from?
3. Where has it built its buildings?
4. Where has it placed its priorities?
5. Where have lay leaders and clergy come from?
6. Where have members gone when they left this congregation?
7. Where have congregation members spent their time?
8. Where has it located its mission?
9. Where has this congregation turned for help or for resources for its ministry?
10. Where have new ideas come from in the life of this congregation?
11. Where have the congregation's most powerful competitors – both secular and religious – be found?

WHY –

1. Why did this congregation come into being?
2. Why has it chosen the particular building designs it has? Why did it locate on this particular piece of earth?
3. Why have new leaders appeared on the scene? Why have old ones disappeared?
4. Why have this congregation's controversies or conflicts emerged when, where, and how they did?
5. Why have people continued/failed to join this congregation?
6. Why has this congregation made its significant changes – in worship, in organizational life, in membership requirements, in sense of mission, in sense of identity?
7. Why does this congregation handle its economic resources the way it does?
8. Why have people stayed in this congregation?

9. Why have young people dropped out at certain times in their lives and why have others seemed to join at particular moments in their life cycles?
10. Why have these people continued to gather, week in and week out?

HOW –

1. How has this congregation expressed its fundamental beliefs in specific practices?
2. How have membership patterns changed/stayed the same over the years?
3. How has power been distributed in this congregation?
4. How has this congregation made its decisions?
5. How has it spent its money?
6. How has it determined if it is succeeding or failing?
7. How has it responded to changes in society, denomination, neighborhood?
8. How has change been perceived in the congregation?
9. How has this congregation expressed its specialness?
10. How has this congregation told its story to new and younger members? How has it educated them or formed them spiritually?
11. How has this congregation expressed itself artistically, musically, theologically, socially?

APPENDIX 2

CAROL MCKINNEY'S FIFTEEN CAUSES OF CULTURE SHOCK

Carol V. McKinney, *Globe-Trotting in Sandals: A Field Guide to Cultural Research* (Dallas: SIL International, 2000), 55, 56.

1. An inability to understand and predict the behavior of others or to act appropriately within the new cultural situation;
2. The loss of control over events and one's ability to initiate events;
3. Intrapersonal factors such as a person's age, extent of previous travel, language skills, independence, expectations, assertiveness, courage, resourcefulness, ability to tolerate ambiguity, and similar characteristics.
4. One's physical condition, including special dietary and medical needs, and the ability to tolerate stress;
5. Interpersonal factors including your support group both at home and abroad. This support group includes resource persons whom you can call on when in need of medical, financial, mechanical, social, legal, and practical help;
6. Geopolitical factors including local, regional, national, or international tensions. These may critically affect you, as you may be perceived locally as a representative of your country of origin;
7. Spatial and temporal factors such as the place and length of the trip, the climate and problems associated with it, your need for and sense of privacy, travel conditions, sense of time and space, the degree of isolation, housing and its location. There may be a contrast between your time orientation, and the event or personal-relationship orientation of the people you work with;
8. Conceptual and ideological factors such as a fatalism that pervades some religious systems, and different etiologies for everyday events and illnesses;
9. Language factors such that you cannot communicate about even the most basic needs you have;

10. Employment factors such that your range of employment opportunities may be severely circumscribed;
11. Status factors such as being treated as a child because you are not married or do you have children;
12. Value difference, and behavior that derives from those values, between your home culture and the target culture. These value differences are in any number of areas including attitudes towards authority, toward those of different social and ethnic groups, towards moral issues, respect and politeness, food preferences, privacy, sanitation, health, and so on;
13. Daily inconveniences such as the breakdown of the infrastructure in the country. This may include mail being unreliable or opened and censored, the electricity and water being erratic, the sewer system being either nonexistent or problematic, traffic problems (e.g., it is no longer the car on the right that goes first, but the car whose driver has the higher status, or, in Mexico, when approaching a lone-lane bridge, it is the driver that flashes his headlights first that crosses the bridge first), washboard surfaces and numerous potholes in the road, and so on;
14. Differences in economics, These may involve rampant inflation, devaluation of the currency, high prices for basic subsistence needs including housing that you know costs much less in your home country, shortages or lack of availability of things you need or want; and
15. Feelings of alienation from people in your home culture, from the target culture, and from yourself.

APPENDIX 3

LYDIA RAPPAPORT'S RAPID ASSESSMENT

Lydia M. Rappaport, "Rapid Assessment of Congregational Culture: Discovering a Congregation's Unique Reality through Descriptions of Worship and Ritual Experience" (PhD diss., Princeton Theological Seminary, 2007), 111.

1. What two or three words would you use to characterize the worship of this congregation?
2. To someone who had never been here before, how might you describe it?
3. What one thing would you want to be sure a newcomer knows about how we worship?
4. What would you say are your strongest convictions about worship?
5. What are some of the things that help you feel most comfortable and "at home" in worship?
6. What helps you most experience God?
7. In what ways is the setting in which we worship important to you? Are there aspects of it that enhance or detract from your ability to worship? Are there particular features, items of décor, bulletins, at which you look?
8. How does the music of the worship add to worship experience? Does it ever detract?
9. Do you interact with other worshippers once you are in the sanctuary?
10. Do you have memories of any worship experiences that were exceptional or unusual in any way?
11. What aspects of worship would be the most important to keep the same? What would you most want to hold on to? What would you like to see added or changed?

12. What is your experience of those who greet you as you come to worship . . . the greeters, ushers, other worshippers?
13. Do you normally stay for the fellowship time following worship? [If yes, what can you tell me about your experience there?]
14. Is there anything else about worship or what happens on Sunday morning that would be important for you to share with me that we haven't yet touched on, or that you would like to revisit?

APPENDIX 4

AUBREY MALPHURS' BEHAVIORS AUDIT

Aubrey Malphurs, *Look before You Lead: How to Discern & Shape Your Church Culture* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2013), 209-19

Directions: Circle the response that best describes what a visitor to your church might see.

1. Neighborhood or community

- Is the neighborhood new, old, or in between?
- Is the church located in an urban, suburban, or rural area?
- Does it consist of apartments, houses, businesses, or a combination?
- Are the people who live in the community Anglo, Hispanic, Black, Asian, other, or a combination (multiethnic)?
- Are the people in the community of the same ethnicity as those who attend the church or are they different?
- Does the neighborhood seem to be declining or growing in numbers?
- Do you feel safe?
- Do the neighbors appear to be at home on Sundays (Unchurched)?
- Are there any signs that the community is interested in spiritual matters?
- Do the church's attenders park on the street in the neighborhood or on the church parking lot?

2. Demographics

- Is the congregation made up of Anglos, Blacks, Hispanics, Asian, other, or a combination (multiethnic)?
- Are the people poor, affluent, or somewhere between?
- Does the congregation appear to be undergoing some kind of transition?
- What is the congregation's collar color: white collar, blue collar, a combination?
- Are people mostly young, middle-aged, or elderly?
- Are there young families with kids?
- Does the congregation's observed demographics align or not align with the neighborhood's demographics?

3. Language

- What do you hear?
- What languages do people speak: English, Spanish, other?

- Is the church mono- or multilingual?
- Do people speak “temple talk” or “churchese”?
- Do you understand what’s being said?
- What languages are spoken as part of the service?
- Are there translators or translation available?
- Is one language spoken predominantly?

4. Facilities

- Do the facilities include educational space, a worship center or sanctuary, offices, other?
- Is the style of architecture unique or common?
- Does the facility “look” like a church?
- Do the buildings have “drive-by appeal”?
- Are the facilities clean and well maintained, especially the nursery, the bathrooms, and the kitchen?
- Are the facilities clean and well maintained but don’t look their best due to age?
- Are the facilities safe? For example, is there any exposed electrical wiring? Are there any steps that need to be repaired?
- During worship do people sit in pews, chairs, or both?
- Does the church have adequate seating for all attenders?
- Is any paint peeling off the facilities?
- Are there areas that need paint?
- Is there a lot of clutter?

5. Parking

- Is there plenty of available parking?
- Does the church provide visitor and handicapped parking?
- Is there special parking for the elderly and expectant moms?
- Are parking places reserved for the pastor and staff and their spouses?
- Are security or police vehicles present?
- Do people park out on neighborhood streets?
- If people park out in the neighborhood, does this appear to be a problem?

6. Grounds

- Are the grounds clean and well kept (clear of trash)?
- Is the lawn mowed and edged in the summer and leaves raked in the fall?
- Are the grounds attractive, with adequate grass, bushes, and flowers?

7. Signage

- Is there signage at the entryway to announce where to turn in to the church?
- Is there adequate signage so that visitors know where to park?
- Is there signage that tells visitors where to go to find information about the church?
- Is there signage for the bathrooms, nursery, auditorium, and classes?

8. Attendants

- Are there friendly, helpful attendants located in the parking lots to direct people where to park their cars?
- Are there attendants to direct visitors where to get help in finding their way around the facilities?
- Are there people available to direct visitors to the nursery or Sunday school classes?
- Are all of these people present in inclement weather?

9. Vehicles

- Are the vehicles people drive new, old, or somewhere between?
- Are they expensive, inexpensive, or in between?
- Do they appear to be well maintained or not?
- Are there any trucks?
- Does the church use any church vehicles, such as a church van or bus?

10. Clothing

- Are people wearing casual dress, business casual, or business formal?
- Are they stylish, wearing the latest styles?
- Is there a particular style of clothing (for example, Texas has a growing number of cowboy churches where most people wear blue jeans, cowboy hats, and cowboy boots)?
- Is there a particular style of clothing that reflects a certain ethnicity?
- Do clergy wear special clothing (robes or vestments) or do they dress like those in attendance?

11. Friendliness

- Are people friendly? For example, do they greet you?
- Do people answer your questions and offer to help visitors find their way around the church?
- Are people friendly to one another?
- Do people seem to care about one another?

12. Emotions

- Do people show their emotions? For example, are they emotionally expressive during worship time (wave their hands) or unemotional (pocket their hands)?
- Do people sometimes respond to a sermon with tears?

13. Security

- Are there police or security people in the parking lots, patrolling the facilities, present during the offering, and available at other times?
- Are there security cameras?
- Are the facility and grounds well lighted?
- Do people seem to feel safe visiting their church night or day?
- Do women feel safe—especially at night?

14. Manner of Address

- Do people call one another by their first names?
- Do people use titles, such as Mr., Brother, Mrs., Miss, Sister, and so on?
- How do people address the pastor? Do they use Pastor, Rev., Dr., or Rev. Dr., or do they use his first name?

15. Technology

- Is the church technologically astute? Is it high-tech or low-tech?
- Does it have front- or rear-screen projection?
- Does the church use their projection for announcements, teaching, other?
- Is there a soundboard?
- Is there a sound booth?
- Do they show film clips during the sermon?
- Does the church have a website?
- Do people have and use iPads or other electronic devices during the service?

16. Communication

- How does the church communicate with people? (Does it use bulletins, make announcements, email, send U.S. Postal Service, or other?)
- Does it seem to communicate well or poorly?

17. Ordinances

- Does the church practice the ordinances (baptism and the Lord's Supper)?
- How often are they observed (weekly, monthly, quarterly, annually)?
- Does the church immerse or sprinkle when they baptize people?
- Do they use wine or grape juice, cracker or matzo for communion?
- Do they observe foot washing as an ordinance?

18. Symbols

- Does the worship area or sanctuary contain symbols, such as the cross, a religious tapestry, stained-glass windows, an ixthus, a baptistery, an altar, or none of these?

19. Worship

- Is the church's worship style traditional, classical (liturgical), or contemporary? Is there any liturgy?
- What types of instruments, if any, are used in worship (organ, piano, guitars, drums, other)?
- Is there a choir?
- Does the choir consist mostly of men or women or both?
- Is there a worship leader?
- Do people worship by, for example, raising hands, weeping, swaying, dancing, or other?
- Does the church sing from hymnals, words projected on a screen, or both?
- Does worship attendance appear to be growing, plateaued, or declining?
- Are people joining the church

20. Disciple-making ministries

- Does the church have and communicate a clear, simple pathway for making disciples?
- Does the church communicate well its primary ministries (worship/preaching event, Sunday school, small groups)?
- Does the church communicate well that its secondary ministries (men and women's Bible studies, choir, and so forth) are important to its disciple-making process?
- Do you know what they are?
- Has the church identified and communicated well the characteristics of a mature disciple (they worship, study, and apply the Bible; fellowship with other Christians; do evangelism; and serve within or outside the church)?
- Does it have a nursery?
- Does it minister to toddlers?

21. Outreach ministries

- Does the church have and make known its community outreach ministries?
- Do they advertise them well?
- Does the church reach out to poor and oppressed people in or outside its community?
- Does the church do evangelism projects in the neighborhood?
- Does the church minister outside its facilities as much as inside?

22. Missions

- Does the church support in some way international missions?
- Does it support in some way local missions?

23. Scripture

- Does the church teach and preach from the Bible?
- Do people carry their Bibles to church, classes, and small group meetings?
- Are the Scriptures projected on a screen during the worship service?

24. Discipline

- Have you observed someone being disciplined?
- Have you ever heard of someone being disciplined?

25. Visible behavior

- Do people seem to manifest the fruit of the Spirit as found in Galatians 5:22-23 (love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control)?
- Do the majority of people appear to be spiritually mature?
- Do people appear to be happy and excited?
- Do the young people seem bored or excited about church?

26. Vision

- Does the church appear to have and communicate a vision?
- Is the vision clear and understandable?

- Is it compelling?
- Is it written down anywhere?
- Do you hear it regularly from the pastor or clergy person when preaching?
- Do you overhear people talking about it?
- Do people appear to be in favor of the vision?

27. Values

- Has the church identified and does it communicate well its values?
- Has it done the same for its core values?
- Are they written down somewhere?
- Does someone, such as the pastor, articulate them or preach on them at least annually?
- Some churches even mount them on the walls of their sanctuary so people will see and remember them—are they on the wall of this church?
- Based on what you observe, do you think you know the church's core values?

28. Atmosphere

- Do you sense that the church is warm and welcoming, cold and aloof, or somewhere in between?
- Does the church appear to be fast- or slow-paced?
- Do you feel excitement in the air?
- Do you ever feel tension in the air?
- Is there obvious conflict?

29. Ceremonies

- Does the church have baby dedications, infant baptisms, and ordination services?
- Does it observe and celebrate certain holidays, such as Easter, Christmas, Lent, and others?

30. Women

- Does the church appear to have more women attending than men?
- Are women involved in some way in worship?
- Do they ever preach and teach?
- Do they ever usher?
- Do they serve communion or baptize people?
- Do they seem to minister mostly to children?

31. Myths and stories

- Is there any particular person or persons that the church tells stories about? Who are its heroes?
- Is one of its heroes the pastor or a former pastor, such as the founding pastor?
- Does the church talk about villains, such as Satan, the Antichrist, atheists, and others?

- Does the church make heroes of some of its missionaries or longtime members?

32. Visitors

- Does the church seem prepared for visitors?
- Do they appear to care about visitors?
- Do they have parking reserved for visitors?
- Is there a welcome center that provides information about the church?
- Is it manned by friendly people who can take visitors to where they need to go (classrooms, worship center, nursery, and so on)?
- Does the church follow up visitors with a phone call and/or letter?

33. Senior pastor

- Is the senior pastor friendly and relational?
- Is the pastor a good preacher?
- Is the pastor a good leader?
- Does the pastor's dress tell you about his style of leadership (formal, informal, and so on)?
- Do you like him?
- Do others appear to like him?
- Do you sense that there may be others who lead or try to lead the church, such as a board person, a family, several families?
- Is the church without a senior pastor?

34. Staff

- Does the church have any staff persons (paid ministry people other than the senior pastor) who lead ministries?
- What ministries are they responsible for: youth, children, adults, women's/men's ministries, other?
- Do the ministries of the church tell you what the church thinks is or isn't important?
- Do people like the staff?

35. Doctrinal beliefs

- Does the church have doctrinal beliefs based on the Scriptures? Does it communicate these beliefs?
- Do the pastor and other teachers teach and preach regularly the church's doctrinal beliefs from the Bible?

36. Leadership development

- Have you heard if the church has a churchwide leader-development process for developing leaders?
- Have you heard if the church develops its small group leaders?

37. Finances

- Does the church appear to be struggling financially?
- Does the church appear to be doing well financially?

- Does the church say little about its finances?
- Does the church inform people of its finances in the bulletin, on the website, and in other visible places, such as a bulletin board?

38. Politics

- Have you heard if the church promotes certain political parties?
- Have you heard if the church endorses certain people for political offices?
- Is the church strongly affiliated with a particular denomination, as reflected in its name?
- Have you heard if the church speaks out on what some would call political issues (abortion, homosexuality, and so forth)?

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ABSTRACT

THE ANTHROPOLOGICAL PASTOR: NAVIGATING THE CULTURE OF AN ESTABLISHED CHURCH BY IMPLEMENTING ANTHROPOLOGICAL TOOLS AND RESOURCES

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This dissertation explores anthropological tools and resources and their potential usefulness in navigating the culture of an established church. The application of the principles contained herein can be used for church revitalization, pastor transitions, and established church leadership. These principles can also be applied to business and organizational cultures.

Chapter 1 presents the research question that serves as the investigative guide for the dissertation. This dissertation argues that the pastor(s)/elders, and/or potential pastor(s)/elders, of established local churches, should know and implement many of the tools and resources of cultural anthropology within their ministry context in order to enhance understanding and communication between the pastor and his congregation, resulting in healthier pastor-congregation relations, healthier churches, and greater Kingdom effectiveness. Further, this chapter proposes an amalgamation of the research from the fields of anthropology/missiology, relevant organizational culture literature, and church leadership materials.

Chapter 2 serves as a survey of much of the relevant literature surrounding the study of anthropology/missiology, church leadership, and relevant organizational culture literature. This literature review traces an overview of the development of

anthropological thought and the value of anthropological tools and resources. The review then demonstrates how anthropology is being discussed in church leadership materials, but without significant interaction with anthropological resources. Due to the scope of this research, the author narrows his interaction with church leadership material to materials that include sections that seem to recognize that each established churches exhibit culture.

Chapter 3 presents the author's findings from anthropological research most relevant to the work of a local church pastor. Paul Hiebert's book *Anthropological Insights for Missionaries* serves as a blueprint for the outline of the chapter. The chapter continues to look at available anthropological tools and resources, the ways they are understood and implemented by others, and potential applications toward established churches.

Chapter 4 examines church leadership literature resources that consider established churches to exhibit culture. Aubrey Malphurs' book, *Look before You Lead* serves as a blueprint for the outline of the chapter. The primary objective of this chapter is to demonstrate the fact that church leadership authors interact very little with the writings, research, paradigms, and tools of anthropologists or missiologists.

Chapter 5 presents the author's findings and conclusions. The focus is on developing the field of congregational cultural anthropology for the purpose of equipping pastors to understand and work through established church cultures. The author introduces a rapid assessment process (RAP) for understanding and navigating congregational culture. He concludes with an adaptation of Paul Hiebert's method for engaging in critical contextualization, but for the purpose of transforming congregational culture. He also proposes the development of a field handbook for rapid assessment processes among established churches and an expansion of the field of congregational cultural anthropology.

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