THE INTERSECTION OF POWER, KNOWLEDGE, SHARED PERSPECTIVES, AND
PARTICIPATORY PROCESSES IN ORGANIZATIONAL DIRECTION-SETTING:
A STUDY OF A CHURCH

by

RANDY WOLLF

B.A., Trinity Western University, 1990
M.R.E., Trinity Western University, 1994
M.A., The University of British Columbia, 2000

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Abstract

The abuse of power, dominance of certain shared perspectives, and reduction of personal values into so-called organizational core values are problems that plague traditional organizational direction setting. The purpose of this study was to explore how power intersects with the knowledge formation process, shared perspectives, and participatory processes within organizational direction setting.

The study used an ethnographic case study approach to focus on a church that went through a yearlong direction setting process. The church had lost its senior pastor and wanted to determine its direction before hiring a new pastor. The researcher was a participant in that process. His field notes and other documentation provided one source of data. The researcher also interviewed 20 people who participated in the process.

In terms of the intersection of power and knowledge formation, the study revealed that the discursive practices of the facilitator along with the voices of those in privileged groups, the outspoken, and those who had engendered trust in others carried considerable weight during the process.

At the intersection of power with shared perspectives, there were two major perspectives representing subgroup cultures: a traditional perspective that resisted change and a progressive perspective that wanted change. The progressives dominated the church’s privileged groups and exerted extensive influence on the direction setting process. The organizational symbols of church staff and worship music style served to galvanize some people in the battle over which perspective would prevail. Transparency functioned as a bridge that brought some on either side of the conflict closer together.

The research revealed two major types of power related to the intersection of power with participatory processes: the power of pain and intimidation. Both minimized the participation of some women, youth, and traditionalists.

All three intersections featured deployments of power that influenced the construction of directional knowledge. This knowledge helped to inform the rules of “appropriate” conduct within the organization’s emerging truth regime.

The study revealed that, in this case, robust directional knowledge would have accommodated personal, subgroup, and widely shared values in a state of dynamic equilibrium.

The researcher concluded with a discussion of implications for organizational leaders.
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CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION

Direction-setting is a common practice in North American organizations. Organizational leaders often unquestioningly accept traditional direction-setting strategies as best practices. Some organizations have incorporated participatory approaches to direction setting in an attempt to build the organization on the values and passions of its members, or at least to foster ownership of predetermined values through a process of joint decision-making. Yet, how does power influence direction-setting processes and the directional knowledge that those processes seek to generate? What happens to a direction-setting process when people group together around a shared perspective about what a church should look like? How does this sharing of perspectives intersect with power and knowledge? The outcome of most direction-setting processes is some sort of direction plan that often includes a mission statement, preferred core values, and a statement of vision. What factors influence the formulation of these kinds of direction plans? How representative is a condensed direction statement of the values of those who participated in a direction-setting process? What effect might the degree of representation have on the motivational levels of those asked to give themselves to the direction plan? These are critical questions because they draw attention to potential problems with typical direction-setting processes, even those that claim to be highly participatory in nature. In this introductory chapter, I will explore these potential problems and describe how my research study sought to generate insights about these issues. It is not my attempt in this chapter to probe the intricacies of these problems, as this will come in later chapters. However, in order to gain an appreciation for the relevance of this research study, it is important to see the larger issues that this study addresses.
Problems

I was a pastor at Langley Evangelical Free Church (LEFC) from 1989-2005. I started as a pastoral intern and then moved on to serving as an associate pastor in the areas of children’s ministry and adult ministry. During the last three years at the church, I carried out the role of an interim senior pastor as the church looked for a new senior pastor. It was during this time that LEFC went through an extensive direction-setting process from February 2002 to February 2003 resulting in the articulation of a ministry direction plan containing a mission statement, preferred core values, a vision, a ministry model, nine strategic initiatives, and a profile for a new senior pastor. The ministry direction plan represented directional knowledge for the church. It gave the church a sense of shared purpose and values. I no longer attend LEFC and so even though I was intricately involved in the ministry of the church, I can now view what happened in a more detached fashion. The following description will help provide an inside look at the research context and why I have chosen to study certain problems related to LEFC’s direction-setting process.

Abuse of Power

I became a non-voting member of the church board soon after starting as an intern in 1989. The senior pastor thought it would be good experience for me to see how a board worked. Once I was on the board, I never came off until I resigned from the church in 2005. At some point, my job description changed and I received voting rights. It did not take long to realize that, apart from a few major decisions, the board ran the church. The congregational members at a congregational meeting made the final decisions on major issues like budget, hiring of staff, and election of board members. Yet, they rarely went
against board recommendations. People could become LEFC members through a membership process that involved submitting an application to the Nominations and Membership Committee (NMC), going through an interview with the NMC, gaining board approval, having their name posted to see if anyone had concerns (these would be communicated to the NMC), and finally being voted in as a member at a congregational meeting. Congregational members had influence and yet, when it came to the direction of the church and the mechanics to get there, the church board led the way. Most of the time, the board would exercise its power judiciously. Sometimes, it would abuse its power by unduly maximizing its own position and/or inappropriately minimizing the position of other individuals or groups. When this happened, power intersected with knowledge formation.

In 2001, the board formed a sub-committee to look at a different leadership structure that would bestow more power on the staff and seven ministry teams in the church (representing all the programs in the church). The board recognized that they, as a group of volunteers, could not adequately oversee the details of church life in a church of almost 600 adults and children. They thought it would be beneficial to consider a structure that gave much of the ministry oversight to paid staff who in turn would work with ministry teams to manage their respective ministries. In essence, the change in structure would feature the staff overseeing the ministry teams as opposed to church board members representing the various ministry teams. The paid staff at that time included nine members: the senior pastor, church secretary, director of children’s ministries, minister of worship arts, assistant pastor of pastoral care, director of women’s ministries, associate pastor of youth and young adults, a worship arts intern, and me as the senior associate pastor. The senior pastor, the board chair, another board member and I participated on this sub-committee. We eventually convinced
the board to go along with the leadership-restructuring plan after almost a year of research and negotiations. After board approval, it still took over a year to implement the plan. During this time, I witnessed a power struggle between the board and the staff team. Some board members had trouble giving up control over the day-to-day functions of the church. A few times the board tried to block ministry decisions made by the staff or one of the seven ministry teams (regarding decisions that the board would have made in the past). By this time, the senior pastor had resigned and I was leading the charge to make the necessary structural changes. We ended up changing the church’s bylaws to accommodate the changes. This required congregational approval. The formal approval of the congregation came after LEFC’s refocusing process wrapped up in 2003. However, the staff team had been gaining considerable influence even during the refocusing process as some of the structural changes took effect (the board wanted to test out the structural changes before codifying them in the bylaws and that is why it took over a year to implement the changes after the board approved the plan). How did this increased staff influence play out during the refocusing process? Did these structural changes give me further power as the lead member of the staff team? How did the tension between the board and staff team influence the refocusing process? Both groups used their power liberally during the refocusing process. I wonder if they abused it.

When I think about the board and staff, I sometimes make the mistake of thinking that the groups themselves had a uniform identity simply because they presented their decisions as joint decisions. Yet, in reality, these groups functioned as collections of individuals and subgroups. Each board and staff team member came to the table with varying degrees of influence. How did we use our influence? Did we collude with others to strengthen our positions? An important subgroup within the board was the elders. This group, at the
beginning of the refocusing process, consisted of three elders and me as the pastoral representative. According to the church bylaws, the elders were to be men. The elders were responsible for the spiritual direction of the church. This involved thinking strategically in terms of vision and presenting visionary ideas to the rest of the board. It also involved administering church discipline, which took the form of confronting those who had engaged in unacceptable behaviour. The elders were also responsible for providing pastoral care to those who were struggling with their health or other issues. Some people viewed the elders as spiritual leaders, a position of respect and power. As spiritual leaders, their recommendations seemed to carry more weight than the rest of the board members known as deacons (men) or deaconesses (women). Even in Scripture, the deacons/deaconesses were typically responsible for looking after the operational details of the church while the elders acted as overseers.

Even though the church board consisted of 12 people, the four elders tended to dominate this larger group. The role of pastor seemed to carry more weight on the church board, as people perceived that the pastor had advanced training in spiritual matters and church affairs. A pastor’s presence on the elders’ team strengthened it even further.

As LEFC’s main pastor during the church’s direction-setting process, I constantly struggled with the degree to which I should influence the process. My job title was still “Senior Associate Pastor,” but the board had changed my job description to reflect an interim senior pastor role. I recognized that I had considerable power. I did not want to abuse this power and yet I felt that I had insights that I should contribute to the process. In retrospect, I think I probably exerted myself too much. I abused my power in my role as an interim senior pastor. I said too much in board meetings. Yet, I found that it was not only the position that gave me power, but also the longevity of relationships and accrued trust with people in the
church. I had stuck with the church through some dark times and people seemed to admire my perseverance. I remember one person commenting some time after I started in the role of interim senior pastor that I was the glue that was holding the church together.

I have described the influence of the board, the elders, and the staff team. From an official, hierarchical perspective, these groups exercised considerable influence during my years as a staff member at LEFC. The congregation approved most of the major board recommendations. Sometimes, the congregation would make minor adjustments to board recommendations, especially when it came time to approve annual budgets. What surprised me was how sometimes at a congregational meeting someone would make a suggestion that would elicit widespread support. Those with longevity in the church and former board members seemed to wield considerable influence at these congregational meetings. These same people also seemed to have less restricted access to the board and could influence the board more than others with less status in the church. At the board level, it almost seemed sometimes like non-board members with longevity at LEFC and previous stints on the board had more influence than rookie board members who were comparatively new to the church. Seeing the influence of non-board members helped me to realize that significant forces operated outside the official leadership structures of the church.

As I thought about the influence of individuals and groups within the church, I was curious about the use and abuse of power in church settings. I believe that the abuse of power was a problem at LEFC and one that most if not all organizations encounter. By abuse of power, I mean using or mediating the use of power in ways that hinder equitable participation within the church. Of course, even not using power could be an abuse of power when its use could make participation more equitable. Obviously, both individuals and groups can abuse
power. Yet, I am focusing on the individual abuse of power when I talk about abuse of power. I will look at how groups sometimes abuse their power when I describe the second problem I observed – perspective dominance. As I considered the problem of abuse of power, I wanted to understand how the exercise of power influenced LEFC’s refocusing process as a way of helping me understand that process. I also wanted to generate understanding about how the abuse of power can influence other direction-setting processes. Church leaders tend to shy away from discussions of power. I wanted to shed some light on this issue to help church leaders face the problem and deal with it in appropriate ways. From my experience at LEFC, the abuse of power tended to alienate people. This is unhealthy and goes against what the Bible teaches about people having equal value. If people feel marginalized in a direction-setting process, will they opt out of the process, or make a minimal contribution that will probably be in keeping with the preferences of those with the most influence? If this happens, everyone in the church suffers because not every part in the body is contributing to the working of the whole. The resultant knowledge of such a process only partially represents the collective wisdom of the church.

As I reflect upon my use of power at LEFC, my thoughts move to the topic of church perspective. By “church perspective”, I mean the way that people view the church. What do they perceive as being the most appropriate expressions of church life? Power and perspective seemed inseparably linked. For example, when I exerted myself in a board meeting (use of power), I was usually trying to project my value-laden ideas and preferences (projection of my personal perspective) onto the board. I was trying to get people to share my perspective. Obviously, appropriate perspective-projection is a necessary part of making group decisions. I observed in the board setting that an individual’s influence directly
affected the degree to which that individual could project their values onto others. Power became an important means by which board members could bring their perspectives to bear on a discussion. As I suggested earlier, it seemed to me that those with longevity in the church and prior experience on the board (more years on the board seemed to translate into more influence) could project their values on board members with greater success. I noticed that other factors such as forcefulness of personality, depth of relationships, and perceived spirituality also seemed to enhance one’s influence. Some board chairs were adept at evening out the playing field resulting in a spreading out of influence around the table. For example, I can think of one board chair who would sometimes ask the entire group one by one to give their viewpoint on a particular issue. I can also think of board chairs that would let the most expressive people dominate the meetings. I discovered that the board chair was instrumental in monitoring and minimizing power differences amongst board members. This meant trying to include everyone in the discussion and helping the group give due consideration to each idea. Other influential board members could also help even out the power differences around the table by making power available to others. For example, an influential board member could simply ask a less influential board member for their opinion on a particular issue. This action had the potential to give the less influential board member a voice and probably a louder voice than if they would have volunteered the information without any prompting. Of course, they could choose not to claim the available power. I found that the richest discussions were those where everyone participated. I must confess that for many years I tended to dislike contrary ideas, but over time grew to value diverse opinions. In fact, I now assume that divergent ideas are an essential part of creating meaning in community. When everyone respectfully engages in sense-making processes, it is possible to gain a better
understanding of the collective, unmixed values of the group. However, when people use or mediate the use of power in ways that hinder this kind of equitable participation, abuse of power has occurred.

**Perspective Dominance**

Even though individuals sometimes tried to push through their perspective, I observed that the sharing of a perspective by two or more people was also a powerful way of influencing others. During board discussions, coalescing around a certain perspective was a powerful way of pushing that perspective through. Sometimes, individual board members would use a phrase like, “I have heard from several people in the church” to bolster their position. The assumption was that a shared perspective is often more powerful than an unshared perspective. As I watched board members and others in the church, I noticed that some would typically support certain types of ideas and resist others. It was almost as if individuals possessed shared values that led them to make decisions in fairly consistent ways along with those in their subgroup. I saw this particularly with those who held to traditional values about what the church should be and those who had progressive values. In terms of worship service music, those with a traditional perspective were content with singing the hymns and older choruses. They preferred a more reverent service that was not too expressive. The progressives wanted songs that were more contemporary. Some of them liked a more lively service with freedom to clap and raise their hands. The grouping together around a shared perspective was powerful. However, it became a problem when those with one shared perspective minimized the perspectives of others. I call this a problem of perspective dominance.
Values Reductionism

The term “organizational culture” bothers me. It smacks of reductionism because it seems to suggest that it is possible for unique people to share a uniform identity. It reminds me of Borg-like assimilation as portrayed in Star Trek: The Next Generation. Even if it is possible to articulate a shared sense of culture, how does this accommodate the richness of individual cultures? For most of the years I was at LEFC, the church had a mission statement. I wonder about the efficacy of trying to reduce mission to a short statement that is supposed to grab peoples’ attention. At different times, we attempted to articulate core values. What did we mean by core? When I think of core, I think of something at the center, like an apple core. When we articulated core values (and we did this again during the refocusing process), were these values central for everyone, the majority of people, or only for those with considerable influence in the church? For those whom the values were core, were all of the values central or just some of them? When we talked about core values, were we dreaming about our preferred values? Were we articulating actual values? One discussion about core values stands out in my mind. About 30-40 leaders or people with influence had gone away for a weekend leadership retreat. During that time, we supposedly articulated the church’s core values. How can a small group of adults (about 10% of the church’s adult population) accurately describe the church’s core values? I wonder if our attempts to discern our organizational values were actually attempts to project our personal or subgroup values on others.

As I have thought about the projection of personal perspectives, I have come to wonder if meaningful organization-wide participation in direction-setting processes is an important part of growing a healthy organization. As people contribute their personal values,
it would seem prudent to view the detailed collection as a total package and not simply try to reduce it to a short statement of values. Of course, one would expect that within the diverse collection of perspectives that some people would share specific values. The sharing of values may encourage others to share those same values. I believe that this happened at LEFC. Over time, I began to realize that some values stood out as being more widely shared than others were. I fell into the trap of assuming that these widely shared values represented the core of the church. I found that one of the dangers of falling into this trap is that I began to marginalize those who did not share those same values. Yet, is it possible to include everyone’s core values in the collective if some of those values are apparently incompatible? Can opposing values coexist in a collective identity? In my thinking, I tended to prize conformity.

Apart from the leadership retreat episode I mentioned earlier and the refocusing process itself, I can recall only one other significant values-clarifying process I went through with a group at the church. For several years, I oversaw the children’s programs of the church. For one of my assignments for a strategic planning course at seminary, I pulled together the leaders of the various children’s programs. We brainstormed adjectives, or describing words that related to children’s ministry as a way of formulating a mission statement. People wrote each of their ideas on a cue card. After everyone wrote down adjectives, we negotiated the grouping together of adjectives into general categories. Some adjectives grouped together nicely. For example, three cards had the following adjectives: prayer, prayerful, and pray-filled (Wollf, 1994). We put those cards into a category called, “Prayerful.” Some adjectives were not so easy to categorize. We put ever-changing, colourful, interesting, adventurous, off the wall, and exciting into a category called, “Creative.” In this example, several individuals
contributed what they saw (or would like to see) in children’s ministry and reduced these rich and diverse ideas into a one-word adjective (which was not even one of the words that was in that grouping). How close is “adventurous” to “creative?” In one sweep of the pen, we lost values. I call this a problem of values reductionism. Would those who contributed adjectives like “adventurous” or “colourful” experience the same sense of excitement and meaning they had when they thought of the adjective when they saw the word “creative” in a mission statement? Might it be possible to focus on personal values and a shared sense of values at the same time? I was attempting to set direction for LEFC’s children’s ministry by capturing the related ministry passions of key leaders. Yet, I wonder if the result was an anaemic mission statement that did little to stir the original passions of those who helped craft it. If the mission statement did little to excite the passions of its creators, I wonder if it had any motivating affect at all on other stakeholders in LEFC’s children’s ministry.

The children’s ministry example highlights the problem of values reductionism, but it also shows an intersection with the abuse of power problem. At that time, people in the church considered me the children’s pastor. I had worked in LEFC’s children’s ministry for about five years. I had considerable influence. As the chair of the meeting, I guided the discussion in what I thought were profitable directions. I suggested summary titles for various adjectives. I proposed a draft of a mission statement. To be honest, I dominated the process of the meeting and the results. I abused my power by maximizing my ideas while minimizing the ideas of others. Why did I do it? I wanted my values to dominate. I filtered out values like “adventurous” that did not mesh with my values grid. Even though I probably was not aware of it at the time, I was manipulating the results to form something that I liked. I used my power to make sure that my perspective dominated the process and resultant
knowledge. To be fair, I think the values would have lost some of their potency through any process of categorization. Yet, I categorized them in my favour. This example shows the problems of abuse of power and values reductionism. It is important to realize that the values reductionism problem overlaps with both the individual abuse of power (abuse of power problem) and perspective dominance. Yet, it focuses particularly on participatory processes, such as consensus-building, that move people away from diversity at the individual level to conformity at a group level. Both individuals and perspective groupings exert power on these processes and sometimes do so in inappropriate ways.

My experience at LEFC has fuelled my interest in the individual and intersecting influence of the abuse of power, perspective dominance, and values reductionism on direction-setting processes. Do peoples’ personal values when expressed in a direction-setting process retain their meaning and potency when synthesized with other peoples’ values? How does organizing or bureaucratizing values into a statement of directional knowledge transform (or not transform) the original values? How can abuses of power and perspective dominance influence the knowledge formation process?

If LEFC and other organizations are producing direction plans distorted by abuses of power and perspective dominance and that do not capture the meaning and passion associated with the contributing values, it is imperative that organizational leaders re-examine the merits of traditional direction-setting processes. Are direction-setting processes helpful? Can leaders make them more effective? My study sought to address these critical questions.

In this section, I have described some of my experiences at LEFC that compelled me to conduct research on how the three problems of abuse of power, perspective dominance,
and values reductionism influence direction-setting processes. In the next section, I will delve deeper into the research context as a way of helping to frame these three problems within LEFC’s refocusing process.

**Research Context**

An examination of the research context will help to frame the three problems of abuse of power, perspective dominance, and values reductionism discussed previously. This involves examining the larger denomination context of which LEFC is a part and looking at LEFC from a demographic vantage point.

**Denomination**

LEFC is one of approximately 140 Evangelical Free churches in Canada that are member churches of a denomination known as the Evangelical Free Church of Canada (Unruh, 2004). I have included this description of the Evangelical Free Church of Canada (EFCC) because denominational heritage can be an important contributor to the values embraced by people within a local church. It points to a sense of shared culture. The term “Evangelical” in the denominational title refers to the denomination’s doctrinal perspective as seen in its doctrinal statement (see Appendix A). The doctrinal statement outlines the Evangelical Free Church of Canada’s position on the Bible, God, Jesus Christ, the Holy Spirit, sin, salvation, church ordinances of baptism and the Lord’s Supper, the church, church membership, Christ as Head of the church, the return of Christ, and the resurrection of the dead. A major emphasis of evangelical Christianity is the belief that God wants to have a personal relationship with all people and that this is possible through acceptance of Jesus Christ as Saviour and Lord. The term “Free” has historical connotations in that the
The Evangelical Free Church (EFC) doctrinal statement forms the foundation for belief and practice for the denomination. In addition to its doctrinal statement, the EFC holds to six “distinctives” (used as a noun) that are described in a 2001 edition of the Canadian EFC Pulse (Taylor, Enns, Bryers, Lawrence, Height & Seim, 2001). The first distinctive is that the denomination is inclusive, not exclusive. The EFC wants to rally around the major beliefs and practices of Christianity and not let differences about minor issues divide it. The second distinctive positions the denomination as evangelical, but not separatistic. The EFC holds to the teaching of Scripture, but does not believe in separating itself from others who hold different beliefs. The EFC is also ecumenical in spirit, though not in structure. The denomination is committed to cooperating with other like-minded evangelicals without merging organizational structures. The fourth distinctive of the EFC is the belief in liberty with responsibility. The assumption underlying this distinctive is that following God and His ways results in true freedom. The EFC also believes in both the rational and relational dimensions of Christianity. The denomination is committed to academic scholarship while encouraging the development of a personal relationship with God. The sixth distinctive is congregational government. Congregationalism seeks to provide a context where members
are included in the decision-making process and feel as if they are making meaningful contributions to the church’s present and future states. These six distinctive features of the EFC give broad parameters as to how individual Free Churches will carry out their ministries. As with the doctrinal statement, the distinctives point to a sense of culture that many within the EFCC would share.

What are some of the inherent biases of the EFC’s stated doctrines and distinctive characteristics? It is important to understand these biases as a way of understanding their potential influence on a study of one of its member churches. Obviously, the doctrinal statement and distinctive characteristics give direction to local churches within the denomination. Some of the beliefs such as the belief that Jesus is the only way to God promote exclusivity. The EFCC may claim to be inclusive, but their narrow beliefs make it exclusive to many people. For example, Muslims would be unlikely to attend an Evangelical Free Church, because people have to convert to Christianity to become formal members. Local churches can temper the exclusivity factor by genuinely reaching out to people with different beliefs. Even though those with different doctrinal beliefs cannot become formal members, those who are members of the church can still welcome all non-members warmly. Yet, there is still a possibility that this exclusive stance will function as a protective grid to minimize the influence of those who do not hold to what those with the most power would consider acceptable.

The shifting nature of congregationalism is also a potential challenge to the adoption of insights generated by this study. Taylor et al. (2001) admit that larger churches often have to modify congregationalism to suit their context. Congregationalism in the EFCC is a form of church government that features extensive involvement of its members in matters of
doctrine, ministry philosophy, and practice. Congregationalism is a form of participatory leadership. However, within the congregational model, it is possible for the church board, or in larger churches, the church staff, to make most of the major decisions with little or no input from congregational members. For many so-called “congregational” churches, congregationalism has evolved into two functions: electing board members and making major decisions at congregational meetings. I observed that LEFC had adopted this kind of board-run “congregationalism,” although it was becoming a bit more staff-run with the change to a ministry team structure. This form of congregationalism does not adequately represent a true form of congregationalism that features extensive and meaningful participation on the part of church members. True congregationalism occurs when everyone in the church has had the opportunity to contribute meaningfully in the past, or could be an important contributor to the organization’s present and future states. Many congregational churches, including some in the EFCC, are beginning to realize that current forms of congregationalism tend to fall far short of participatory leadership. The issue of widespread and meaningful participation in organizational decision-making is an important consideration as I look at the formation of direction plans that may bear little resemblance to the personal values and wishes of organizational members. It is problematic to force a diverse array of personal value sets into a generic and supposedly representative organizational values set. Could true congregationalism help address this problem of reducing personal values into nondescript organizational values? Perhaps, a full embracement of congregationalism would result in churches that give members the freedom to fully express their perspectives and associated values within the EFC doctrinal and distinctive characteristics framework (or even outside the framework). Would this widespread participation lead to richer descriptions of
organizational values that avoid a type of reductionism that tries to compress diverse values into a common mould? Might it be possible to have directional knowledge that embodies both shared values and individual values?

Acceptance of the EFCC doctrinal statement is a mandatory requirement for all EFCC churches and at LEFC was a prerequisite for becoming an official member of the church. How does this mandatory requirement mesh with the denominational distinctive of congregationalism? It would seem that the EFCC limits congregational expression by requiring member churches to adhere to certain beliefs. Does this position set a tone for the way individual EFCC churches operate internally? Do church leadership teams try to add to the untouchable doctrines and “distinctives?” When a leadership team sanctions a new direction plan, does it become sacrosanct in the minds of congregational members just like the denominational doctrines and “distinctives?” Does the blurring of the line between what is negotiable and what is not weaken congregationalism? Do church leaders sometimes capitalize on this dilemma by pushing through plans that would greatly benefit from organization-wide input? The reduction of the Bible into 12 statements of essential belief is problematic. It establishes a precedent for reducing rich descriptions with inherent tensions into broad generalizations. Do EFCC churches that engage in direction-setting processes follow this precedent by pressing diverse perspectives into sterile or even artificial commonalities? If this happens, do those with the most discrepant views feel marginalized? Do they hold back from contributing to the organization because of their perceived marginalization? Do they leave?

Denominational affiliation can influence the ways in which member churches and their members conduct themselves. The affiliation provides a sense of shared culture, at least
Church demographics also influence the formation of directional knowledge in a church organization.

Church Demographics

The church demographics that I will explore as a part of raising awareness about LEFC’s context are life stage groupings, socio-economic status, ethnicity, and gender. Looking at each of these areas provides helpful background information for understanding some of the factors at work before and during LEFC’s refocusing process. It also points to possible subculture groupings within the church.

LEFC became an incorporated church in 1948. It holds to the major tenets of evangelical Christianity as seen in the denominational doctrinal statement (see Appendix A). LEFC was comprised of approximately 574 adults and children (Short, 2004). A demographic study conducted at the church in 1998 (Wollf, 1998) shows that the congregation was made up of approximately 32% children (12 years-old and younger), 8% teenagers (13-18 years-old), 7% single adults (19-64 years-old), 32% who were classified as “homebuilders” (married people who were 19-45 years-old), 13% who were called “mature outlook” (married people 46-64 years-old), and 7% who were “seniors” (65 years-old or older). The study indicates that the church was comprised of a wide range of ages. However, it also shows that those under the age of 45 constituted approximately 72% of the church’s population, which gave the church a primarily younger orientation. This background information is important in understanding the context in which the refocusing process occurred.
The breakdown of ages at LEFC is an important consideration related to the configuration of the church board and staff team. Children and teenagers could not serve on the board. Based on the life stage groupings shown in Figure 1, a representative board would have the following adult composition: single adults (12%), homebuilders (54%), mature outlook (22%), and seniors (12%). In 2002, which is the year when LEFC’s direction-setting process began, there were 12 board members (Langley Evangelical Free Church Annual Reports 2001 and 2002). Five of these board members were seniors and the other seven were homebuilders. Based on the life stage groupings at LEFC, it is apparent that both the seniors (42% versus 12% in the larger church) and the homebuilders (58% versus 54%) were overrepresented on the board while the single adults and mature outlook had no representation at all. It is possible that the board configuration points to two subgroups in the church that had considerable power and to two groups that operated more on the fringes (children and youth were even further out on the fringes). On the eight-member staff team, there were three single adults, three homebuilders and two people in the mature outlook stage of life. Did the makeup of the staff team represent the larger adult population of the church? Based on the percentages given when I assessed the board composition, single adults were overrepresented (37.5% versus 12% in the church), homebuilders were underrepresented (37.5% versus 54% in the church), the mature outlook group was slightly overrepresented (25% versus 22% in the church) and the seniors were not represented at all (0% versus 12% in the church). When I combine the board and staff teams, the single adults were slightly overrepresented (15% versus 12% in the church), the homebuilders were marginally underrepresented (50% versus 54% in the church), the mature outlook group was underrepresented (10% versus 19% in the church), and the seniors were overrepresented
(25% versus 12% in the church). Looking at the board and staff teams as a combined group, they even each other out in terms of representing the larger congregation. At first glance, this may lead to the conclusion that the leadership team as a whole was representative of the various adult life groupings within the larger church. Yet, it is important to realize that the staff team was under the authority of the board. The two groups did not exercise equal authority. In fact, the differences in life stage makeup may have led to tensions between the two groups when one group’s perspective varied considerably from the other group. This tension was noticeable during the refocusing process when the church moved to a ministry team structure that gave more power to the staff team. Suffice to say, the board exercised considerable authority in the church, which is problematic because they represented only 66% of the adults in the church according to life stage groupings (the only groups represented on the board were the homebuilders and seniors which accounted for 66% of the adults in the church). It is also important to note that because of the overrepresentation on the board in two life stage groups, these groups had excessive influence, which may have decreased if there had been a better representation of the congregation on the board.

Socioeconomic status is an important demographic consideration. Unfortunately, I have not been able to obtain any detailed report on the socioeconomic status of LEFC’s adult population. However, based on how much people gave to the church as expressed in statistical terms in the annual reports and my own insider knowledge of people’s occupations, I would conclude that LEFC is mainly a middle class church. The board and staff configuration seems to reflect this socioeconomic orientation.

The issue of ethnicity is an important consideration as it relates to the importance of my study. The locus of my research is a predominantly Caucasian church. Of all the churches
in the EFCC, 80% are primarily Caucasian in composition (Unruh, 2004). LEFC has a smaller percentage of visible minorities when compared to the larger denomination where visible minorities make up 20% of the total church population. Approximately 5% of the 574 people recorded in the March 2004 LEFC church directory (Short, 2004) were visible minorities. How does that compare with the breakdown of visible minorities in the Langley area? According to the Greater Vancouver Regional District Planning Department (1998), approximately 6.2% of Langley City’s population was comprised of visible minorities. Langley Township’s percentage was slightly lower at 5.3%. LEFC is located on the southeast edge of Langley City. The church is in close proximity to both Langley City and the southwest portion of the Township. LEFC’s makeup of visible minorities was slightly lower than that of both the City and the Township. With that said, it is important to note that LEFC did not have any visible minorities on its board and its staff team during the direction-setting process. The total number of board members and staff members equalled 20 at the start of the direction-setting process. If approximately 5% of LEFC’s constituents were visible minorities, one would expect at least 5% of those in these upper leadership teams to be visible minorities. For adequate representation, the board and staff teams required the presence of one visible minority between them. There was none. How did the absence of visible minorities in top leadership positions influence the direction-setting process? During my 16 years at LEFC, I can only recall two visible minorities who served on the church board. As I look at LEFC’s direction-setting process, it is important to remember that LEFC’s visible minorities were not present in two groups that made significant decisions.

As it relates to gender composition, LEFC had more females (56%) than males (44%) in a study conducted two years before the start of its direction-setting process (Wollf, 2000).
Based on personal observation throughout the years, females tended to occupy children’s ministry leadership positions. Females could serve on LEFC’s board. However, during LEFC’s direction-setting process there was only one female on the board (LEFC Annual Report 2002). Prior to refocusing, I cannot remember there being more than one female on the board at any given time. It is my perception that some women viewed the board as an “old boy’s club” and did not feel comfortable serving in such a club. The Nominations and Membership Committee (NMC) was responsible for recommending potential board members to the congregation for their consideration. Anyone from the congregation could bring suggestions for board candidates to the NMC. In 2002, the committee consisted of two females (one was chair) and four males. In terms of gender, equitable representation on the board would have meant having seven female board members and five male board members. In reality, males were overrepresented on the board (92% compared to 44% in the congregation) while females were underrepresented (8% compared to 56% in the congregation).

At the beginning of the direction-setting process, the staff team was comprised of four females and four males. This ratio better reflects the gender composition of the church. It is interesting to ponder the possibility of tensions between a male-dominated board and a gender-balanced staff team. Did some of the power struggles stem from different perspectives based on gender composition?

During the congregational meetings where the members in attendance made major church decisions, I observed that there were usually more men present. Unfortunately, I do not have attendance records for any of the congregational meetings to verify this observation. For some of the couples with younger children, I would sometimes hear the rationale that the
wives had stayed home to watch the children. It is important to note that females were underrepresented at board meetings and possibly at congregational meetings where significant decisions about the church were made. How did this underrepresentation in two key decision-making forums influence LEFC’s direction-setting process? Perhaps a deeper issue relates to why women were underrepresented in these groups. Did they feel marginalized? Was this underrepresentation in upper leadership a reflection of larger issues in society? Did they feel that their viewpoints would not gain a fair hearing and so chose not to participate in what they perceived as male-dominated meetings? If this was the viewpoint of some women, did this affect their participation in the refocusing process when it came time to contribute personal ideas and feelings?

Understanding something of the denominational and local contexts is important because they represent the locations in which LEFC’s refocusing process occurred. The EFCC as the parent denomination valued autonomy and congregationalism and yet required member churches to adopt a prescribed list of doctrines and “distinctives.” LEFC, as a whole, was generally representative of the surrounding population in the Langley community. Yet, the board did not have this same kind of representation. Underrepresented groups included women, children, teenagers, single adults, those between the ages of 46 and 64 (mature outlook group), and visible minorities. How did these contextual factors influence the direction-setting process? Do they point to systemic and/or societal issues that influenced the process? In the next section, I will describe the purposes of my study.

**Purpose**

My journey at LEFC exposed me to three significant problems that can undermine the effectiveness of churches and other organizations: abuse of power, perspective dominance,
and values reductionism. How did these problems surface during LEFC’s refocusing process? Power is a key consideration. How did the use and abuse of power influence the directional knowledge generated during LEFC’s refocusing process? This brings up another important factor: knowledge. What is the relationship between power and knowledge? As I think about some of my experiences at LEFC, it is obvious that people sometimes grouped together along perspective lines. These groupings often exercised considerable power. Groups with different perspectives would sometimes clash. It was evident to me that shared perspectives played an important (even powerful) role in the knowledge formation process. With some of the stories I have shared in this chapter, I have pondered the influence of meaningful participation on the construction of knowledge. Does knowledge have more power for some people if they feel that they have contributed meaningfully to its formulation? Is it possible to have directional knowledge that accommodates both personal values and shared values? My desire is to generate insights that will help me and other organizational leaders understand and minimize the detrimental effects of abuse of power, perspective dominance, and values reductionism. The purpose of my study comes out of this desire: to explore how power intersects with the knowledge formation process, shared perspectives, and participatory processes within organizational direction setting.

**Significance of the Study**

The significance of this study rests in its potential to generate insights about how power, knowledge, shared perspectives, and participatory processes influenced LEFC’s refocusing process and may influence direction-setting processes in similar contexts. Many organizational leaders have adopted direction-setting processes that have been developed and used in organizations that are quite dissimilar to their own. Borrowing from business practice
is quite common. Does what apparently works in business work in a congregational church? An awareness of some of the shortcomings of direction-setting processes and possible ways that leaders might minimize these weaknesses is critical for those who want to strengthen their organization’s effectiveness.

If my study achieves its research purpose, what difference will it make? What impact will this understanding potentially have on the theory and practice of organizational planning as it applies to organizations similar to LEFC and those that are dissimilar? As I generate understanding about how power intersects with the knowledge formation process, shared perspectives, and participatory processes within organizational direction setting, I believe that I will improve my practice as a leader in a local church. I will also help fill the theory gap on the topic and assist leaders in churches and other organizations lead more effectively who choose to apply my findings in contextually-sensitive ways.

To visualize the significance of my study as it relates to organizational planning, it is helpful to think of significance in terms of the light that emerges from a flashlight in a dark room. The flashlight clearly illuminates objects that are closer in proximity because of the focused nature of the light at that range. The flashlight illuminates objects that are further away, but not to the same degree. In the same way, the understanding generated from my study will be most illuminating or helpful to those within my research context. Those who are serving or doing research in similar contexts will benefit from the research insights, but to a lesser degree. Those who serve in non-profit or for-profit organizations in dissimilar contexts may also benefit from the research insights but probably to a much lesser degree. To understand the significance of my study, it is important to look at each of the groups I have mentioned to see how the insights generated in my study will potentially influence them.
In an immediate sense, I have benefited from the research as I glean new insights about how power, knowledge, shared perspectives, and participatory processes influence direction-setting processes. Taking extensive time to reflect on LEFC’s refocusing process as a lived experience has helped me to mine it for its deeper meanings (Van Maanen, 1990). Although my study is an ethnographic case study and not an action research project, it does contain elements of action research that enhance its value for me as a researcher and for those in my immediate research context. Action research is a broad field with many diverse approaches (Rearick & Feldman, 1999). However, most action researchers would agree with Carr and Kemmis (1986) that the essential aims of action research are to involve and improve (Martin, 2000). The improvement phase is beyond the scope of my study, although I am hopeful that I will be able to use the findings to improve my practice as a leader. However, my study does feature the involvement of adults at LEFC. Having adults from LEFC participate in the study helps them to own the process and results. When people own the process, they are more likely to implement the findings later (Dickens & Watkins, 1999; McNicoll, 1999). People at LEFC had the opportunity to collaborate and co-create local theory as they shared their personal stories (Elden & Gjersvik, 1994; Winter, 1996). This sets the stage for the bridging of theory and practice if the participants decide to apply the knowledge generated during the study (Somekh, 1995). This knowledge is helpful to me as a growing leader, but it may also be helpful to the LEFC leadership team as they seek to improve their ministry effectiveness.

As a researcher, I am desirous to add to the body of knowledge about how power, knowledge, shared perspectives, and participatory processes work individually and together to influence direction-setting processes. I have benefited greatly from reading research
related to my study. However, there is a gap in the literature as it relates to how these factors intersect to influence direction-setting processes. My novel approach of studying these factors together generated understanding that will help fill the research gap.

My research has the potential of informing the practice of other churches. As I communicate my insights to other leaders in the EFCC, they may think about their own direction-setting practices. The application of my research findings in an EFCC or non-EFCC church must be done carefully with due consideration given to contextual factors. The potential transferability of this study’s findings to non-profit and for-profit organizations extends its significance even further. However, the interplay and relative importance of the four factors may be different from what they are at LEFC and similar church organizations.

My study is significant because it interrogates the widely accepted practice of organizational direction-setting. My questioning of this practice focuses on four factors that are part of direction-setting processes: power, knowledge, shared perspectives, and participatory processes. The insights from this study about how these factors work independently and together to influence direction-setting processes will potentially assist me in my development as a leader, help fill a theory gap, and aid others who want to lead their organizations in ways that are more effective.

**Organization of Chapters**

In this chapter, I have shared some of my thoughts about my years at LEFC and three problems that I encountered: abuse of power, perspective dominance, and values reductionism. I have painted a picture of the denominational and local church contexts as a way of further framing these problems within LEFC’s refocusing process. I have designed my research purpose to address the three problems. My purpose is to explore how power
intersects with the knowledge formation process, shared perspectives, and participatory processes within organizational direction setting. I have shown how a study of this nature is significant for me, for other researchers, for churches, and for other organizations. In the next chapter, I will look at relevant literature that provided a basis for a theoretical framework that guided my study. Research questions emerged from the theoretical framework that guided me in generating insights related to my research purpose. In chapter three, I will describe research methods, which assisted me in pursuing answers to my research questions. Chapter four features a chronological description of LEFC’s refocusing process. In chapter five, I will combine my story of refocusing from chapter four with those of 20 other participants to provide insights related to my research questions. Chapter six contains a discussion of how the relevant literature, the participant’s stories, and my story inform each other to form a more comprehensive understanding of the intersections of power, knowledge, shared perspectives, and participatory processes in organizational direction-setting. In chapter seven, I reflect on why I conducted the study, how I conducted it, what I learned, and what other organizational leaders might be able to glean from the study.
CHAPTER 2 LITERATURE REVIEW

In the previous chapter, I shared some of my recollections from 16 years of ministry at LEFC. I suggested that direction-setting processes that seek to produce a concise statement of preferred organizational values are problematic. The process of compressing the collective values of organizational members into a purported statement of organizational values is highly reductionistic. I called this problem, “values reductionism.” In a best-case scenario, the resultant list of preferred core values reflects a few widely shared values within an organization. It is questionable as to how much influence or power the resultant knowledge would exert on those who participated in a process that failed to capture the meanings and associated passions of their personal values. I also suggested that the use of power influences the constitution of knowledge during direction-setting processes. In my description of LEFC’s refocusing process, I surmised that the abuse of power occurs when people use or mediate the use of power in ways that lead to inequities in how people could participate in the knowledge formation process. When people abuse power, the resultant direction plan often reflects the perspectives of those with the most power in the organization. However, beyond individual influence, people sometimes group together along perspective lines. They rally around a shared perspective, which can be very powerful. When shared perspective groupings overstep their bounds, they engage in what I have called, “perspective dominance.” In order to address the three problems of abuse of power, perspective dominance, and values reductionism, I articulated a related research purpose:

My research purpose is to explore how power intersects with the knowledge formation process, shared perspectives, and participatory processes within organizational direction setting.
In this chapter, I will look at relevant literature on power, cultural perspectives within churches, and personal values as a way of developing an integrative theoretical framework that will frame my research study to accomplish this purpose.

**Power**

Throughout LEFC’s refocusing process, I noticed that certain people tended to have more influence than others did. I have called this influence “power.” What is power? Gordon and Grant (2004) have proposed three power categories: power-as-entity, power-as-strategy, and power-is-knowledge. In coming up with these three categories, Gordon and Grant surveyed a wide variety of literature related to power and knowledge management. They initially identified 4,235 periodical articles from between 1986 and 2004 that focused on the topic of “knowledge management.” Of these 4,235 articles, they noted that 138 focused specifically on “knowledge management and power.” Most of these articles tended to picture power as a determinable entity. Only four of the articles described power as a type of strategic relationship. Gordon and Grant found this dearth of articles on power-as-strategy problematic. They contend that even though viewing power as an entity is useful, it does not adequately take into account the power at play in strategic interactions. They use Foucauldian conceptions of power to describe how power-as-strategy might function in knowledge management processes. However, even though the literature on knowledge management and power focused on the power-as-entity and to a lesser degree the power-as-strategy approaches to power, they believed that a third major approach to power existed. Based on the works of neo-Foucauldian thinkers such as Flyvbjerg and Huagaard, they contend that power is in fact knowledge itself. Gordon and Grant’s conceptions of power provide a
complex understanding of power that encompasses both traditional and postmodern approaches to power. Gordon and Grant write from a knowledge management perspective, which is particularly relevant for direction-setting processes that involve the construction and management (even manipulation) of direction-oriented knowledge. Because of their comprehensive survey of the power and knowledge management literature and inclusion of postmodern ways of conceiving power, I have chosen to use their work as a framework for my discussion of power.

Power-as-entity Approach

The power-as-entity approach views power as a “convenient, manipulable and essentially deterministic resource; something that someone possessed and could use in order to get someone else to do something they would not otherwise do” (Gordon & Grant, 2004, p. 36). This approach views power as a resource of the privileged. This premise is problematic. It ignores the possibility that those who do not have positional power may also exert considerable influence based on other factors such as relationships. Another problem with the power-as-entity approach is that it is highly deterministic. The approach assumes that those with more positional power will exert more influence than those with less positional power. The approach is colonial, even feudalistic, in its perspective. It tends to breed a fatalistic acceptance of whatever those with positional power dole out. When those with positional power embrace this approach, it can lead to the abuse of power and a perpetuation of hegemonic practices that keep people without “standing” from expressing themselves. This approach to power tends to minimize individual and subcultural values. Empowerment theory counters this position by advocating leadership approaches where those with
positional power make power more available for those with less power so that they have the potential to contribute more fully to life within their given community (Small, 1995; Friere, 1970; Shor, 1993). Of course, people still have to claim any power made available to them. Feminism is a type of empowerment movement that seeks to bring about a more equitable distribution of the power entity by helping women become equal participants along with their male counterparts (Winter, 2000). These types of empowerment movements assume that power is not just an entity for the privileged, but that those with power can (and must) use it in ways that promote equitable approaches to power-sharing.

At first glance, the power-as-entity approach seems archaic and barely worthy of consideration. Gordon and Grant (2004) even describe it in the past tense. Yet, this notion of endowed power is firmly entrenched in the hierarchical structures of many North American organizations. The President or CEO of an organization has incredible power based on his position. Many churches function with this kind of hierarchical structure, as well. For example, in many churches, the elders and church board exercise considerable power. Christians often view eldership as a biblically sanctioned (even sacred) position of oversight in the church (1 Peter 5:2) and confer considerable power on elders. The current governmental requirements for incorporating as a church and the example from other non-church organizations with hierarchical structures lead many churches to create boards. The result is that congregational members not only view board members as spiritual leaders, but as members of the board that run the organization. In like manner, congregants often view the senior pastor as the head elder and the CEO of the organization. This perspective reinforces the inherent power of the senior pastor’s position. Organizational leaders who subscribe to a power-as-entity approach to power tend to exercise power in hierarchical ways.
When they want to determine direction for their organization, they may entertain ideas from non-leaders, but often give priority to the ideas suggested by those with positional power in the organization. Organizational change strategists, like Kotter (1996), believe that one of the steps for leading change is to put together a group with enough power to implement the changes. This direction-setting approach assumes that power is an entity that leaders can collect by creating a guiding coalition of people with positional power. It is problematic to think that positional power is the only source of power operative in direction-setting processes. Yet, organizational leaders often focus on the use of positional power to set organizational direction. The main leader or leadership team takes the initiative to articulate a supposed sense of shared direction for the organization. The power-as-entity approach and associated leadership approaches simply do not account for other ways (even better ways) that people might exercise influence over others leading to the articulation or understanding of stronger directional knowledge.

**Power-as-strategy Approach**

Gordon and Grant’s (2004) power-as-strategy approach counters the view that power is a deterministic resource. They borrow from Foucault (1980, p. 236) who believed that “power is not an institution, a structure, or a certain force with which certain people are endowed; it is the name given to a complex strategic relation in a given society.” Foucault was reacting to structural conceptions of power that viewed power as originating from hierarchical institutions such as governments. He did not see the main locus of power in position, but in relationships. This approach is problematic in that it ignores the obvious power that governments, employers, parents, and others in authority have in forcing us to
perform certain actions. Yet, the emphasis on relationships as the locus of power aligns with our increasingly postmodern context where people construct meaning and truth in community (Grenz, 1996). Foucault also linked knowledge and power by arguing, “truth is linked in a circular relation with systems of power which produce and sustain it, and to the effects of power that induce and extend it” (Foucault, p. 133). Foucault believed in an inextricable linkage between the production of knowledge and the struggle for power. This struggle is not restricted to the privileged, but it is a struggle that potentially involves everyone along relationship lines. Cervero and Wilson (1994) also believe that power, or the capacity to act, results from certain enduring social relationships. The power-as-strategy approach assumes that the restricted resource of power as described in the power-as-entity approach is available to all as determined by their relationships. The approach also connects power and knowledge. In this approach, power is not simply a raw resource to accomplish mechanistic ends, but is a venue for constituting truth, knowledge, and reality through strategic, relational struggles. Even though the power-as-strategy approach captures the shifting nature of power that is a normal part of social discourse, it is problematic to think of influence solely in relational terms. What about positional power described in the power-as-entity approach? Combining the power-as-entity and power-as-strategy approaches provides a more complex understanding of power.

Gordon and Grant’s (2004) power-as-strategy approach assumes that people construct truth through community-wide discourse. Meynell (1999) maintains that this type of communal, sense-making discourse is a necessary way of constituting truth in the emerging postmodern context. It is obvious that authentic community-wide discourse will usually include diversity. This inclusion of diversity goes against traditional approaches to sense-
making that prize consensus. For example, Beukema (1997), in his seven-step process for helping settled congregations move ahead, lists “crafting a consensus” as an important third step. The assumption is that you have the “right” idea for the whole group if you get enough people to agree on something. Novel thinking sometimes does not register within group discussions because discussion leaders view it as extraneous. Admittedly, consensus carries considerable weight in a democratic society that values numerical support in the form of “votes” for particular ways of thinking or doing. However, the power-as-strategy approach, when viewed through a postmodern lens, reminds us that direction-setting must include diversity as an important part of the knowledge formation process.

In order to understand how the power-as-strategy theory intersects with direction-setting practice, it is helpful to look at participatory approaches to leadership. Based on the work of McLagan and Nel (1995), Kezar (2001), and Cladis (1999), four common characteristics of participatory leadership emerge: team orientation, collaboration, empowerment, and learning orientation (Wollf, 2003). Team orientation is an organization-wide awareness that everyone is on the same team. It is a sense of togetherness. Collaboration is an interactive approach to decision-making, whereby organizational members can contribute meaningfully to the present and future states of the organization. Empowerment is the process by which people provide a way for others to have access to the necessary power to express their ideas in ways that others hear and consider. The final characteristic of participatory leadership, organizational learning, occurs when the other three characteristics are operative. When organizational members collaborate in equitable ways as a team, the resultant conversations produce learning and knowledge that can powerfully guide the organization in productive ways. Kezar maintains that participatory leadership is
currently going through a major transition. Traditional participatory approaches have often featured a consensus-building component. The emerging approaches are more pluralistic in nature and seek to maximize diversity as opposed to minimizing contrary viewpoints to form an artificial consensus. This emphasis on community-wide participation in all of its diversity aligns with Gordon and Grant’s (2004) power-as-strategy approach.

The power-as-strategy approach sheds light on the relational nature of power and the meaning-building function of social discourse. Combining the power-as-entity approach with the power-as-strategy approach is helpful as the joint approach views the loci of power as position and relationships. The combined approach, even though it includes an understanding of how people constitute truth, fails to adequately explain the relationship between power and truth. Gordon and Grant (2004) address this relationship in their third approach.

**Power-is-knowledge Approach**

In the power-is-knowledge approach, Gordon and Grant (2004) describe the work of neo-Foucaultian thinkers who attempted to link power with knowledge. This approach is a logical extension of the power-as-strategy approach. According to Gordon and Grant, if power is the struggles that occur in relationships and if these struggles construct and reconstruct knowledge, then power is knowledge. According to Foucault (Rabinow, 1984), these discursive practices function as the means through which the knowledge-power construct operate. For Foucault (Rabinow, p. 74), “‘Truth’ is linked in a circular relation with systems of power which produce and sustain it, and to effects of power which it induces and which extends it.” Foucault calls this circular relation a regime of truth. Foucault believed that the constitution of knowledge was more like a war emphasizing power than a language-
based discourse. Reyna and Schiller (1998, p. 337) maintain that “the ‘truth’ in regimes of truth is knowledge deemed to be so legitimate that it is privileged to guide cognition and action.” The regimes in Foucault’s “regimes of truth” represent the structures that govern the expression and evaluation of discursive practices. The rules of a particular regime often forbid discussion about certain topics, dictate who can fully express themselves, and stipulate the types of forms that “legitimate” ideas can take. Those who have superior power establish the rules of the regime, which in turn guide (or even control) the discursive practices that constitute “truth.”

The literature on participatory leadership shows some of the implications of the power-is-knowledge theory of power for organizational direction-setting. The organizational learning characteristic of participatory leadership, in particular, points to the importance of organization-wide learning and knowledge formation. Senge (1990, p. 3) defines learning organizations as “organizations where people continually expand their capacity to create results they truly desire, where new and expansive patterns of thinking are nurtured, where collective aspiration is set free, and where people are continually learning how to learn together.” Senge maintains that in order to create results that members truly desire, members must direct and own the learning process. The implication, which aligns with the power-is-knowledge approach, is that if people construct knowledge and truth through community-wide discourse, then ideas presented apart from this constitutive process are inadequate representations of reality and therefore do not exert much power. A top-down direction plan or a plan contrived in a restrictive regime of truth simply lacks the power to move postmodern thinkers in extraordinary ways. The opposite is true of direction plans crafted through meaningful, community-wide participation. These kinds of plans may come up with
a shared sense of direction and yet do so without diminishing individual direction. If the postmodern emphasis on communal sense-making continues to grow, robust participation in direction-setting processes that accommodate both personal and shared values will become even more pivotal in the future.

The power-is-knowledge approach highlights another source of power: knowledge. Gordon and Grant’s (2004) power-as-strategy approach views knowledge as power, whereas their power-is-knowledge approach gives prominence to power in the knowledge-power relationship. Admittedly, there is considerable overlap between the two perspectives. By itself, the third approach fails to adequately address other sources of power. Dennis and Martin (2005) maintain that a focus on face-to-face interactions to the exclusion of macro-level social processes is problematic as it results in a myopic view of social phenomena. The power-is-knowledge approach has fallen prey to this narrow view. Yet, combining Gordon and Grant’s (2004) three constructs of power results in a complex framework for understanding how power can influence direction-setting processes. I have shown how the approaches intersect with forms of leadership. The power-as-entity approach lends itself to hierarchical forms of leadership. The power-as-strategy and power-is-knowledge approaches facilitate more participatory forms of leadership. Yet, the framework is still incomplete.

During LEFC’s refocusing process, I observed that people tended to group together according to their cultural perspective on how the church should express itself. These perspective groupings had the potential to exert considerable power on the refocusing process. I will now look at some of the literature on church perspectives to see how perspective groupings might intersect with issues of power to influence direction-setting processes.
Church Perspectives

A perspective is a mental view or outlook on something. By “church perspective,” I mean the way people prefer to view church – the ways they believe the church should function or express itself. Obviously, our values guide the way we perceive things. These values are rooted in our sense of culture. In order to understand church perspectives, it is important to explore the connections between church perspectives and culture. I will look at three different ways of viewing organizational culture based on the work of Meyerson and Martin (1987). Building upon this cultural foundation, I will describe three perspectives, or ways of viewing the church that dominate North American evangelical Christianity. How does culture influence the shaping and sharing of church perspectives? What is the relationship between power and these perspective groupings? How do shared perspectives influence direction-setting processes? What happens when two perspectives collide in a particular church? In this section, I will explore these questions within the context of evangelical Christianity by looking at approaches to viewing organizational culture and change, types of evangelical perspectives, what happens when perspective groupings clash, and the ministry models that churches might employ based on past or present dominant perspectives.

Approaches to Viewing Organizational Culture

Meyerson and Martin (1987) have articulated three perspectives on cultures in organizations: an integrated perspective, a differentiated perspective, and an ambiguous perspective. Meyerson and Martin assert that in order to gain a fuller understanding of organizational dynamics, it is imperative to view organizations through the lenses of all three
perspectives. Their multilayered approach encompasses both structural and post-structural approaches to understanding organizational culture. The integrated and differentiated perspectives tend to reflect more of a structural approach that views organizations and their subgroups as having a common subterranean layer. Schein (1992; 1996) called this layer, “Shared assumptions.” Morgan (1997), in his description of organizational metaphors, uses culture as one organizational image. He uses an iceberg analogy to describe organizational culture. Some aspects of the culture are clearly recognizable. Others hide beneath the surface of organizational taboos and mores that form the basis for both conscious and unconscious cultural conformity. In this view, there is a sense of conformity or integration. Yet, Meyerson and Martin not only accommodate this kind of structural perspective in their multilayered approach, they maintain that it is imperative to also view organizations through a post-structural lens – a lens that picks up on the ambiguous and complex connections between individuals in an organization. This view is in keeping with more of a postmodern perspective on organizational culture – a perspective that views organizational interactions as being complex (Salem, 2002). In complex systems, change is the norm, not the exception. Chaos theory expands this notion further by acknowledging that the world is full of randomness, confusion and rapid change (Hannay, Erb, & Ross, 2001). Organizations reside on the edge of chaos and must often entertain paradox, uncertainty, ambiguity, and change. This view of organizational culture aligns with a postmodern perspective of organizational identity as articulated by Gioia (1998) and Bouchikhi, Fiol, Gioia, Golden-Biddle, Hatch, Rao, Rindova, and Schultz (1998). Meyerson and Martin’s multilayered approach to viewing organizational culture encompasses this postmodern perspective, but it also does not abandon
the more structural perspectives. I have chosen to use their multilayered approach because it encompasses these two major ways of viewing organizational culture.

The defining characteristics of the integrated perspective of culture is consistency, consensus, a focus on organizational leaders as the major shapers of cultural content, and a denial of ambiguity (Meyerson & Martin, 1987). The **consistency** characteristic means that those who view culture through an integrated lens look for expressions of culture that are mutually consistent. They also emphasize **consensus**. The assumption is that a widely shared viewpoint exists throughout the organization. **Organizational leaders** are the primary shapers within this viewpoint. The integrated perspective filters out contrary viewpoints because of its **denial of ambiguity**. The perspective minimizes individual or sub-group deviances from the dominant viewpoint. According to this perspective, organizational culture is “one of many organizational variables to manipulate, another managerial level” (p. 627). In this view, organizational leaders enact change by manipulating the “culture lever.” Cultural change becomes a monolithic process as the entire organization supposedly moves according to the dictates of the “lever pushers.” This is a problematic approach that reflects some of the same inadequacies of Gordon and Grant’s (2004) power-as-entity approach to power. It is overly simplistic to think that everyone within an organization would respond appropriately according to the desires of the “lever pushers.” It does not take into account individual and sub-group differences that exist within an organization and the capacity of these individuals and sub-groups to act outside the supposed dominant viewpoint.

Meyerson and Martin (1987) proposed a second perspective for viewing culture. The differentiated perspective focuses on subunits (individuals and groups) within the organization. With this approach, organizational culture is “a nexus where broader, societal
‘feeder’ cultures come together” (p. 631). The subunits maintain a degree of fixedness in keeping with the integrated perspective, but the relationship between subunits is inconsistent and lacks consensus. In addition, organizational leaders do not exert the same degree of influence as in the integrated view. According to Meyerson and Martin (p. 633), “Each subculture is an island of localized lucidity, so that ambiguity lies only in the interstices among the subcultures.” The differentiation or loose connections between the subcultures show the difficulty of implementing organization-wide change. Even significant changes within a particular subculture may not have much affect on other subcultures. The differentiated perspective adds an important focus on organizational subunits that interact with each other in complex ways. Yet, it is problematic to think of these subunits as internally consistent and stable. This view ignores the complex interactions that occur within subgroups and the possibility that some subgroups may be transitory in nature.

Meyerson and Martin’s (1987) third perspective for viewing culture and change is ambiguity. In a later work (Martin, 1992), Martin labels this view, “fragmentation,” which I think better captures Meyerson and Martin’s intent. I will use the term “fragmentation” to describe their third perspective. With the fragmented perspective, “Irreconcilable interpretations are simultaneously entertained; paradoxes are embraced” (Meyerson & Martin, 1987, p. 637). Meyerson and Martin believe that when organizational leaders try to generate consensus, they are creating illusions of shared understandings for the purpose of control. Meyerson and Martin use the analogy of a spider web to describe a fragmented approach to viewing culture. Individuals exist as nodes in the web. They connect directly with some, but not with others. However, the web is not static. It is constantly changing as individuals change. This means that organizational culture is in a constant state of flux, too. Martin also
uses the analogy of a jungle to describe a fragmented view of culture. A jungle is a wild place and yet there is a sense of fragmented connectedness within the wildness. The fragmentation approach adds complexity and ambiguity at the subunit level. Groups may coalesce around a specific issue for a time and then disband when the issue is resolved or other factors weaken individual attachment to the group. This fragmented connectedness may contribute to a temporary and sometimes even a sustained sense of shared culture at a subgroup level and even within the organization as a whole. At any one time, there may be consensus around some issue or issues and lack of agreement (even conflict) around others. This perspective of culture shows the difficulty of understanding organizational culture because of its complex and ambiguous nature.

Taken together as intersecting perspectives, Meyerson and Martin’s (1987) approaches provide a useful foundation for understanding church perspectives and associated organizational processes. This multi-perspective approach is the one I used in my study to give me a better view of the cultural dynamics at play before and during LEFC’s refocusing process.

**Types of Church Perspectives**

Webber (2002) has articulated a framework for understanding church perspectives amongst evangelical Christians. He believes that evangelical Christians hold to three basic church perspectives: traditional, pragmatic, and younger evangelical. Webber’s classification of subgroups within evangelical Christianity aligns with Meyerson and Martin’s differentiated approach that focuses on organizational subcultures.
The traditional evangelicals in Webber’s description tend to reflect a modern (as opposed to postmodern) perspective. McLaren (2002, p. 53) describes this modern perspective as “a broad, coherent culture in Western civilization, arising (more or less) in the sixteenth century and developing through the twentieth, a culture dominated by science, consumerism, conquest, rationalism, mechanism, analysis, and objectivity.” According to Webber, traditional evangelicals view Christianity as a rational worldview. They tend to prefer pastor-centered, neighbourhood churches with traditional forms of worship. Traditional evangelicals seek to bolster their spirituality by obeying rules laid out in Scripture or those embodied in time-honoured traditions.

Webber (2002) portrays pragmatic evangelicals as products of market-driven economies that constantly seek to increase production and boost profits. The church growth movement is a movement within Christianity that views numerical growth as measured by attendance at worship services and other church activities as a primary indicator of church health and productivity. The emergence of critical ways of thinking made it acceptable for Christians to rethink church approaches and adopt more of a pragmatic perspective. According to Webber, pragmatic evangelicals view Christianity as therapy that answers needs. Because of their emphasis on numerical growth, pragmatic evangelicals prefer large megachurches of over 1,000 people that require pastoral CEO’s to run them. These churches often employ contemporary worship methods to attract new people. Pragmatic evangelicals find their spirituality in success. When they feel that their efforts for God are successful as evidenced in numerical growth, they feel that they are growing spiritually, as well.

The permission to think critically about Christian beliefs and practices has gained even greater momentum in recent years amongst the group that Webber (2002) calls younger
evangelicals. Yaconelli (2003) shares stories about church leaders who are questioning the traditional and pragmatic approaches to Christianity. One pastor articulated what he saw as the values in most churches: efficiency, pretending, and doing. In contrast, the younger evangelicals that Webber describes want meaningful relationships, not efficient programs; authenticity and transparency, not pretending; and being over doing. According to Webber, younger evangelicals view Christianity as a community of faith. They prefer small churches that emphasize team leadership. They tend to want a convergent style of worship that uses traditional and contemporary methods for helping worshippers converge on a particular biblical theme. For younger evangelicals, spirituality is the authentic embodiment of biblical values. The preferred values of younger evangelicals are a reaction to some of the ideals of pragmatic evangelicals, but they also reflect the influence of postmodern thinking. Webber’s categorization of evangelicals in terms of three perspectives provides a helpful framework for understanding subculture perspectives and potential clashes between perspective-based groups in churches.

Webber’s (2002) description of evangelical church perspectives, in keeping with a differentiated view of culture as described by Meyerson and Martin (1987), gives the impression that church perspectives are fairly clearly defined and enduring. This view is problematic. In terms of organizational identity, Gioia (1998, p. 28) states “postmodernists prefer indeterminancy in lieu of determinism, attend to diversity and fragmentation rather than integration, focus on differences rather than similarities or syntheses, and invoke complexity at the expense of simplicity.” From a postmodern perspective, organizational “identity is an accidental collection of forms clustering in moments of time, and that identity takes on a paradoxical form” (Bouchikhi et al, p. 35-36). The postmodern approach goes
beyond a systems approach and embraces the ambiguity, randomness, diversity, and inherent tensions of chaos theory as described by Hannay et al (2001). The postmodern approach tries to capture more of the individualistic dynamics of organizational life. It also assumes that these dynamics are constantly changing. Martin’s (1992) fragmentation approach suggests that organizational cultures contain fragmented connections. Individuals share understandings in fragmented and ambiguous ways that are constantly shifting. Complexity characterizes these fragmented connections. The fragmentation perspective views organizations as a jungle. Yet, even within a jungle ecosystem, there is a sense of ongoing connectedness. There is order within the apparent chaos, but the order is difficult to see. It is this sense of connectedness that facilitates the grouping together of people according to shared perspectives. However, this connectedness along perspective lines may not be as clearly defined and enduring, as Webber would suggest. Bartel (2004), in his study of the worldviews of Lutheran school principals and pastors, suggests that postmodern worldviews are much more susceptible to change than modern worldviews. If this assessment were accurate, then those who are younger evangelicals would experience more ambiguity and fragmentation than those in other perspective categories because of their postmodern orientation. This is an important consideration as it points to the possibility that some perspectives are more enduring.

Based on Webber’s (2002) description of the three major subgroups within North American evangelical Christianity, how might each subgroup view organizational leadership? Webber maintains that both the traditionalists and pragmatics prefer a top-down leadership structure. This preference aligns with an integrated approach to culture, as described by Meyerson and Martin (1987). Church leaders are the primary shapers of church culture.
According to Webber, younger evangelicals emphasize the priesthood of all believers and desire a team approach to church leadership. This is a move away from the leader-focused integrated perspective to more of a focus on individual organizational members.

Webber’s (2002) description of evangelical perspectives shows that people have different, sometimes opposing preferences when it comes to the practice of the Christian life within church settings. Bartel (2004) suggests that those with more of a postmodern orientation experience more flux within their perspectives. Yet, even this vacillating tendency is part of a postmodern worldview that embraces change and rejects rigidity. These perspectival differences and others are bound to lead to cultural clashes as individuals and groups try to impress their perspective on the rest of the church.

**Clash of Church Perspectives**

Becker (1999), in her study of 23 Protestant, Catholic, and Jewish congregations in the United States, attempted to view power struggles in terms of shared understandings. Becker found that local congregations are “crucibles where individual ideas, beliefs, and commitments interact with religious traditions, changing both and forming robust local cultures” (p. 10). Becker’s focus on “local cultures” aligns with a differentiated approach to understanding culture as described by Meyerson and Martin (1987). Yet, she also acknowledges that individual ideas, beliefs, and commitment give rise to local cultures as they interact with religious traditions. Becker discovered that congregations typically engage in two types of conflicts: within-frame and between-frame conflicts. The term “frame” refers to one’s understanding of reality and one’s reality preferences. Becker’s use of “frame” is compatible with the notion of “perspective.” The within-frame conflicts in her study featured
a violation of shared expectations. With this type of conflict, people tended to share the same understanding or perspective. The assumption is that even when people share the same perspective that interpersonal connections within a particular perspective grouping or subculture are sometimes inconsistent and fragmented. Yet, Becker found that those who shared the same general perspective were usually able to work through their differences in expectations and arrive at mutually acceptable solutions. Becker found that between-frame conflict occurred when different understandings (i.e. perspectives) vied for supremacy. When this happened, different subcultures fought over which perspective would dominate. Becker concluded that when between-frame clashes occurred, they often featured increasingly overt deployments of power as each round of conflict raised the stakes for those involved. Why did these clashes become so intense? Becker observed that:

Identity conflicts involve both power and symbols; they can be understood as conflicts over the power to symbolize different understandings of the congregation’s identity and to institutionalize these understandings in very concrete ways, including the liturgy, the programs, the ways of making decisions, and the norms of interaction that, taken together, form the overall tenor of congregational life. (pp. 4-5)

The between-frame conflicts were intense because congregants believed that they were struggling over the future identity of the congregation as enshrined in its various forms. The symbols seemed to function as rallying points for delineating differences in shared understandings and for galvanizing groups to fight for their symbols of choice (and ultimately the identities underlying those symbols). The battle prize was to be able to determine the church’s regime of “truth.” In Becker’s study, groupings based on shared understandings exerted considerable power in either trying to preserve or transform a
congregation’s existing ministry approach. In order to understand the resultant church forms of these clashes, it is helpful to look at what Becker discovered about the different models of congregational life.

Models of Congregational Life

Becker (1999) found that individual churches tended to reflect a historical or current dominant shared understanding within their particular church. This dominant shared understanding manifested itself in the ministry model employed by the church. In her study, Becker discovered that churches utilized one of five ministry models: house of worship, family, community, leader, and mixed-transitional. A house of worship congregation focused on providing religious goods and services. The family congregations followed the house of worship approach, but also saw themselves as providing support to people. The community churches carried out the functions of the first two models, but also sought to articulate shared values and to apply them as a church. Of the five models, the community churches tended to be the most participatory in their approaches to leadership. The leader churches broke from the previous three categories and placed a high value on their parent denomination or tradition. They also tended to be mission-oriented as they sought to make a positive difference in their community. Becker included a fifth model called mixed or transitional churches. These churches exhibited diverse shared understandings, none of which seemed to dominate. These mixed or transitional churches defy an integrated view of culture. They seem to reflect a differentiated view of culture, as described by Meyerson and Martin (1987), where the subcultures are loosely coupled. It is important to note that Becker’s study has a narrow focus on congregations that follow fairly traditional approaches to ministry. This may
explain why most of them seemed to have a dominant shared understanding in keeping with the top-down leadership approach of more traditional perspectives such as those described by Webber (2002) as traditionalists and pragmatics. Barna (2005), based on extensive research on churches in the United States, states that approximately one-third of evangelical Christians have left traditional kinds of churches. Many of these people have joined alternative churches such as house churches, marketplace churches, or cyberchurches. Yet, even with Becker’s focus on traditional churches, her conceptualization of five ministry models is important because it links external ministry approaches with dominant shared understandings. A question that arises from this theoretical linkage is: what are the perspectives that dominate each of Becker’s models? To answer this question, it is helpful to look at the connections between Becker’s models and Webber’s (2002) perspective groupings.

The intersection of Webber’s (2002) perspectives with Becker’s (1999) congregational models provides insights into how certain perspectives manifest themselves in congregational life. The house of worship model tends to be more traditional according to Webber’s description. The leader model leans toward a pragmatic perspective. The family and community models still have a strong emphasis on content (traditional evangelical perspective), but are more pragmatic in their orientation. They utilize programs to meet needs efficiently. The family model and even more so the community model (with its strong relational emphasis) show something of the relational focus of younger evangelicals. However, it would seem that the younger evangelical influence did not surface in Becker’s study to a large degree unless the mixed/transitional model included churches with more of a younger evangelical flavour. The mixed/transitional model was a miscellaneous category
where Becker put churches that did not fit into her other more clearly defined categories. It is possible that postmodern thinking with its accommodation for diversity had influenced some of the churches in this fifth category and they were expressing two or more models simultaneously.

Understanding church perspectives is important for understanding how cultural subgroups can influence direction-setting processes. As people coalesce around a particular perspective, the power of that perspective increases within the “truth-authenticating” regime. As Becker’s (1999) study shows, perspective clashes played an important part in settling which model will characterize a congregation in the future. In keeping with Foucault’s (Rabinow, 1984) view of knowledge and power, the perspective struggles themselves are exertions of power that define what is acceptable and even true. Perspective groupings represent an important source of power. In some instances, the groupings may fall along relational lines in keeping with Gordon and Grant’s (2004) power-as-strategy approach to power. However, the groupings may also organize around ideological principles as described by Webber (2002). A danger of determining organizational direction based on consensus along perspective lines is that the perspective grouping with the most power can unduly impose its values on the direction-setting process. The resultant regime of “truth” does not adequately represent a community-wide perception of truth. The literature on perspectives and shared understandings is helpful in shedding light on how the sharing of beliefs might influence direction-setting processes, but it fails to explain how personal values play into direction-setting processes.
Personal Values

LEFC’s refocusing process included values clarification processes at the personal and organizational levels. The Focused Living Retreats helped individuals clarify their overarching values (life purpose statement), their core values, and how they pictured themselves living out their values (vision). During the organizational refocusing, participants again articulated their main values as a starting point for discussions about LEFC’s preferred values. The goal of bringing peoples’ personal values to bear on the direction-setting process fits with a participatory approach to direction-setting. It acknowledges the importance of individuals as shapers of organizational culture. Based on an integration of Gordon and Grant’s (2004) power-as-strategy and power-is-knowledge approaches, when people contribute their personal values in meaningful ways to directional discussions, the resultant knowledge will exert considerable power to motivate those contributors to act on the knowledge. The articulation of personal values was an important component of the LEFC process but it is unclear how only some values made it into the final direction statement for the church. Understanding the nature of values, their relationship with a sense of calling, and the values synthesis process is an important part of understanding the role of personal values in direction-setting processes.

Definition of Values

Rokeach (1973, p. 5), a major contributor to the study of personal values, defined a personal value as an “enduring belief that a specific mode of conduct or end-state of existence is personally or socially preferable to an opposite or converse mode of conduct or endstate of existence.” Wilson (2004) maintains that Rokeach’s psychological definition of
personal values is the most frequently cited definition of human values. As such, the
definition has informed countless studies on personal values. Rokeach believed that people
have a finite number of values and an infinite number of attitudes that arise out of these
values. McCarty and Shrum (2000) concur with Rokeach and assert that values serve as
prototypes for subsequent behaviours and attitudes. Bourne and Jenkins (2005) found that
they were able to elicit managers’ personal values by exploring surface attitudes and
behaviours that eventually led to discovery of the most superordinate constructs (i.e. defining
characteristics). Schwartz, another important figure in values research, contends that values
are learned beliefs that function as guiding principles regarding preferred ways of acting or
being (Olver & Mooradian, 2003). Olver and Mooradian view personality traits as enduring
characteristics of the individual. In their view, values mediate at the interface between
endogenous basic characteristics (personality traits) and the external environment (external
influences). People express these mediating values in numerous ways depending on the
context. Individuals generally give themselves considerable latitude in the expression of their
values with the result that they appear to have multiple identities. In reality, they are simply
expressing diverse attitudes and behaviours in keeping with their values. This view of values
is in keeping with a fragmented view of culture, as described by Myerson and Martin (1987),
that views people’s location (in terms of connectedness with others) within an organization
as constantly changing. The connections are changing because people express their values in
diverse ways influencing their connectedness with others. Yet, this view is problematic in at
least two major ways. First, it assumes that individuals always align their attitudes and
behaviours with their values. This position is untenable as there are personal factors such as
mood and external factors like the expectations of others that might influence people to act
contrary to their values. A second problem is that the view assumes that external factors influence the expression of values via attitudes and behaviours, but often lack the power to change the values themselves. This approach may allow for values change due to personal crises, but it does not allow for the gradual wearing away of values, or less gradual changes not precipitated by crises. For the purpose of this study, I assume that values are defining characteristics that tend to prevail over time and express themselves in many different ways. However, these expressions, as seen in attitudes and behaviours, may appear contradictory and may even reflect adherence to contradictory values (or values that oppose each other in certain situations) resulting in fragmented interpersonal connections. As people reprioritize their values, the resultant values’ expressions may differ significantly from previous expressions. It is also conceivable that a person’s attitudes and behaviours may have no basis in a person’s values if they choose to act outside of their value system. This possibility could lead to a further fragmentation along interpersonal lines. As people construct knowledge through their interpersonal struggles, in keeping with Gordon and Grant’s (2004) power-as-strategy approach to power, the expression of their values is constantly shifting. This points to the dynamic and ongoing nature of knowledge production within an organization. It is not a one-time event.

How do personal values play out in direction-setting processes? Participatory direction-setting involves bringing peoples’ values to bear on the decision-making process. Participatory leadership, as I have described it, is more than just organization-wide participation. It is meaningful participation where organizational members contribute their values and associated ideas to the process (Cladis, 1999; Kezar, 2002; McLagan & Nel, 1995). It assumes that organizations are characterized by fragmented connections and that a
full understanding of an organization includes an understanding of values at the individual and group levels. Directional knowledge must somehow accommodate an individual dimension of culture. In keeping with the empowerment characteristic of participatory leadership, meaningful participation that maximizes participation at the individual level requires an extension of power by those with more influence so that those with less influence have better access to power. As organizational members contribute their ideas, they look for patterns and paradoxes and seek to build understandings of the organization’s direction while preserving the integrity of personal values as a part of the emerging directional knowledge. According to Senge (1990), shared vision is powerful. A shared understanding does not necessitate shared values, but it does require a community-wide discourse that allows everyone’s contributions to potentially shape the emerging knowledge. Gordon and Grant’s (2004) power-as strategy and power-is-knowledge approaches to power are helpful in understanding the importance of personal values in organizational direction-setting. These constructs of power show that when people contribute their personal values in meaningful ways the resultant knowledge is powerful for them because the knowledge is an expression of their personal values. Yet, many direction-setting processes seek to invalidate the richness of individual expression by synthesizing individual values into a short list of so-called organizational values. This process is problematic. In order to understand why this practice is particularly problematic in church settings, it is important to look at the concept of “calling.”

**Calling**

Weber (1958) believed that the Protestant reformation led to the internalization of a sense of calling amongst Protestants. For Weber, calling is a sense of the work that God
wants an individual to do. Weber contends that during the process of developing a strong
work ethic the idea of rational conduct based on calling was born. For some Christians, the
proof of God’s grace in their lives was seen in the way that they lived out their work callings.
Living out one’s calling was a way of proving that God was active in one’s life. Weber
maintained that believers increasingly felt that God had called them to a particular
occupation and that they must work hard in that occupation for God’s sake and His honour.
Weber believed that several values supported this sense of calling: self-discipline, hard work,
the careful use of time, personal honesty, the reinvestment of one’s aims, creative innovation,
and faith in the rewards of a just God (Jones, 1997). For the purpose of this discussion, I will
simply call this group of values, “calling values.” According to Weber, individuals lived out
these calling values through an ascetic lifestyle of self-discipline and abstinence for the glory
of God. Even though Reformation theology and its theological offshoots did not condone
multiplying wealth for one’s own sake, it did support the multiplication of wealth for God’s
sake. Weber called this kind of lifestyle that denies self but gives everything to God, an
ascetic lifestyle. According to Weber, the diligent application of the value of asceticism
unintentionally contributed to the evolution of a capitalist spirit. As highly motivated
Protestants sought to make more money for God’s glory and as proof of their salvation, they
inadvertently helped to shape a capitalist spirit. Weber (p. 170) states that “the greater the
possessions the heavier, if the ascetic attitude toward life stands the test, the feeling of
responsibility for them, for holding them undiminished for the glory of God and increasing
them by restless effort.” Weber asserted that the value of God-oriented asceticism
contributed to a human-oriented capitalism. People with God-honouring intentions created a
capitalistic by-product that honoured humans over God. To borrow terminology from
Habermas (Saffold, 2005), the Protestant lifeworld (with its calling values) became colonized to some degree by the contrary system that the lifeworld produced. Admittedly, some individuals and subgroups may have preserved their God-oriented asceticism as they lived out their personal callings. Their lifeworlds remained intact. In either case, the motivation for living out one’s personal calling remains strong because it was rooted in a sense of divine direction. God-oriented asceticism is an important factor to consider when thinking about peoples’ personal callings. Protestants want to make gains for God and are willing to do so with “restless effort” when they sense that God is calling them in a certain direction.

The notion of “calling” is a strong part of Protestant Christianity (and other traditions within Christianity). LEFC’s refocusing process tapped into this desire to know one’s calling. Even though Weber’s view of calling focused primarily on occupational calling, his observations provide insights into the formation of personal calling statements during LEFC’s refocusing process. The commonality is a values-based sense of divine calling. The assumption is that God nurtures specific values that point Christians towards specific actions. For Weber, these actions are occupational in nature. In the personal calling statements, these actions are more ministry-oriented. The assumption is that Christians should minister according to their personal calling in all facets of their lives. Weber’s work shows the importance of calling for those within the Protestant tradition. Calling is a sense of God’s direction and often inspires passion and determination in those who believe that God has called them to do something. In addition, as Weber indicated, callings are value-laden. Yet, even the altruistic values that undergirded a God-oriented asceticism gave rise to a human-oriented capitalism. How did these values metamorphize into something that was contrary to the intent of the original values?
Metamorphosis of Values

Weber (1958) observed that values, when bureaucratized, metamorphize into a by-product that may bear little resemblance to the original values. Weber observed that this seemed to be the case with the metamorphosis of God-oriented ascetic values into human-oriented capitalism. According to Kilcullen (1996), Weber viewed bureaucracy as:

…an elaborate hierarchical division of labour directed by explicit rules impersonally applied, staffed by full-time, life-time, professionals, who do not in any sense own the 'means of administration', or their jobs, or the sources of their funds, and live off a salary, not from income derived directly from the performance of their job.

Weber was not opposed to the obvious efficiencies of bureaucratization. Yet, he concluded that the bureaucratized by-product of values functions as an iron cage around organizational members, hindering them from fully living out the intent of the original values. The system colonizes and constrains the lifeworld. Related to capitalism, a human-oriented capitalism hindered the expression of the God-oriented ascetic values, which had given birth to the original God-oriented capitalistic ideals.

How do Weber’s (1958) insights about values metamorphosis shed light on direction-setting processes? At LEFC, individuals articulated their personal values at the Focused Living Retreats. The summit participants used their personal values as the starting point for discussions about LEFC’s preferred values. In what ways, if any, did the personal values metamorphize when organized into a statement of preferred organizational values? Gronow (1988) warns that:

a rational and methodical conduct of life becomes detached from its original embedment in a ethic of calling derived from a religious and metaphysical world
view; and the spheres of life – science, art, morality and law – become differentiated, thereby losing the original quality of values and becoming, in the process, mutually incompatible. (p. 320)

Did this detachment occur during LEFC’s refocusing process? Was LEFC’s statement of preferred values and peoples’ personal values contributions mutually incompatible?

Combining Weber’s view of values metamorphosis with Gronow’s concept of differentiation is helping for understanding this possible shift away from original values. As organizations bureaucratize, the bureaucracy and associated practices become differentiated from the original values that may have inspired the initial bureaucratizing efforts. It is almost as if values lose their potency in the bureaucratizing process. If this is true, then direction-setting processes that seek to establish bureaucratic structures around personal values may in fact create differentiated structures that have morphed into forms unrelated to the original values.

The leaders of LEFC’s refocusing process attempted to root the process in the personal values of summit participants. In this section, I have described values as enduring beliefs that function as guiding principles for the way people think and act. These values contribute to a sense of calling. This sense of God’s calling is an important part of the Christian life. Calling can imbue Christians with a determined passion to live out that calling for God’s honour. Yet, what happens to this determined passion when the contributing values metamorphize into an incompatible organizational by-product? When this happens in direction-setting processes, the resultant knowledge lacks participatory input. According to Gordon and Grant’s (2004) power-is-knowledge approach, this kind of detached knowledge lacks power in inspiring people to act on that knowledge.
In the preceding sections, I have shown from the literature that power is a pivotal issue in understanding direction-setting. In order to constitute knowledge (e.g. a direction plan) that has the power to motivate organizational members, those with more influence in an organization must facilitate widespread and meaningful participation amongst organizational members. Using Foucaultian (Rabinow, 1984) terminology, discursive practices that are more equitable will generate regimes of “truth” that are also more equitable. As regimes become more equitable, they will constitute knowledge that is more powerful for more people within the organization. Yet, the domination of particular perspectives can threaten the development of equitable regimes of “truth.” The literature on church perspectives shows that different understandings exist within evangelical Christianity and people sometimes coalesce around these perspectives. How influential are these perspective-based groups? Becker (1999) suggests that their struggles over the symbols of organizational identity eventually result in the domination of a particular perspective. These perspective-based groups can exert considerable influence on their own regimes of “truth.” In the realm of personal values, I showed the linkage between personal calling and personal values. I have also shown how these connect with constructs of power. Understanding personal calling from a Protestant perspective is an important precursor to understanding the power of personal calling for those who participated in LEFC’s refocusing process. If the values associated with peoples’ personal callings did not appear in the synthesized organizational values statement, it is probable that the statement was bereft of personal meaning and power for those who participated in the summits. The emergent regime of “truth” simply did not reflect the personal values of a broad cross-section of organizational members. Based on my review of
relevant literature, I will now present the research questions related to power, knowledge, shared perspectives, and participatory processes that guided my study.

**Research Questions**

Based on a review of relevant literature, I have suggested that power and knowledge are inextricably linked. Gordon and Grant’s (2004) survey of the knowledge management literature suggests that there are three ways of viewing how power intersects with knowledge formation. An implication for organizational direction-setting is that these types of knowledge formation processes are power-laden. This raises an important research question:

Research Question # 1: How did power intersect with the knowledge formation process during LEFC’s refocusing process?

During refocusing, did people contribute in meaningful ways to the knowledge formation process? If not, what restrained them? How did power play into this restraint? In addressing this question, I generated insights about my research problems. How did individuals abuse their power and contribute to inequitable participation (problem of abuse of power)? To what extent did perspective groupings dominate the process (problem of perspective dominance)? How did individuals and/or groups use power to minimize the potency of personal values within the directional knowledge discussions (problem of values reductionism)? Yet, people can also use power to foster equitable participation in knowledge discussions. How did that happen during the knowledge formation process?

During LEFC’s refocusing process, there appeared to be two groups of people vying for dominance. In keeping with a differentiated view of organizational culture as described by Meyerson and Martin (1987), these two groups apparently possessed a sense of shared identity. Webber’s (2002) assertions regarding evangelical perspectives and Becker’s (1999)
description of between-frame clashes show the potential influence of shared perspectives on direction-setting processes. In fact, the tension between perspective-based groups seems to increase during direction-setting processes when an organization’s future is at stake. My second research question focuses on this tension:

Research Question # 2: In what ways, if any, did shared perspectives intersect with power to influence LEFC’s refocusing process?

My second research question focuses particularly on my second research problem: perspective dominance. Did a particular perspective dominate the refocusing process? Becker’s research reveals that perspective dominance creates tension within an organization when another shared perspective challenges its supremacy. What is the relationship between perspective dominance and knowledge claims? In keeping with Gordon and Grant’s (2004) power-as-strategy and power-is-knowledge approaches to power, it is conceivable that perspective dominance reflects shared knowledge that is (or was) the chosen path of a critical mass of organizational members. Becker’s research would suggest that it is difficult for perspective-based groups that hold opposing views to coexist harmoniously in an enduring fashion. The power-as-strategy approach to power allows for dissimilar and even opposing perspective to coexist in harmonious tension when organizational members have the freedom to contribute meaningfully to community discourse in a context of mutual respect. How does LEFC’s refocusing process shed light on this possibility? Webber’s description of traditional, pragmatic, and younger evangelicals provides a helpful framework for understanding the perspectives of those who participated in the refocusing process and how shared perspectives may have influenced the process.
LEFC’s refocusing process focused on values. The personal refocusing process helped individuals to articulate their values-based personal calling. During the organizational refocusing, the participants in summit three articulated some of their personal values as a way of building consensus around LEFC’s preferred values. I have suggested that one of the dangers of synthesizing values is that the resultant list of so-called organizational values fails to capture the richness of individual values in both breadth and depth. I called this the problem of values reductionism. In keeping with Gordon and Grant’s (2004) power-as-strategy and power-is-knowledge approaches to power, this knowledge does not encompass the fullness of community-wide discourse and therefore lacks power to mobilize participants to act on the knowledge. Weber (1958) suggests that as individual values are bureaucratized, they may in fact morph into a by-product that is very different from the original values. According to Weber, the by-product becomes an iron cage, restricting those who seek to live out the original values. These considerations raise another critical research question:

Research Question # 3: How did power intersect with participatory processes during LEFC’s refocusing process?

Combining Gordon and Grant’s (2004) power-as-strategy approach to power with the literature on participatory leadership (Cladis, 1999; Kezar, 2002; McLagan & Nel, 1995) leads me to the premise that participatory processes involve the widespread, meaningful contribution of personal values.

These research questions address the key issues of power, knowledge formation, shared perspectives, and participation within a power-knowledge framework. The questions are directly related to my research purpose, which is to explore how power intersects with the knowledge formation process, shared perspectives, and participatory processes within
organizational direction setting. They address my three research problems: abuse of power, perspective dominance, and values reductionism. I have suggested that power and knowledge are inextricably linked in a reciprocal relationship. The power dynamics within an organization form a regime that monitors and even controls the acceptance and application of knowledge. This is the first part of the power-knowledge relationship and is the focus of my first research question. Yet, a particular perspective may hinder the articulation and consideration of contrary perspectives. This possibility is the focus of my second research question. For postmoderns, the knowledge generated in a particular regime is often powerful to the extent that they believe that the knowledge is a reflection or at least an extension of their values. This possibility focuses on the second part of the reciprocal relationship between power and knowledge. Postmoderns tend to want to contribute their personal values through equitable discursive practices leading to the generation of equitable regimes of “truth.” I looked at this connection between power and participation in my third research question. In the next chapter, I will describe the research methods I used to pursue answers to these research questions.
CHAPTER 3 RESEARCH METHODS

The purpose of this chapter is to operationalize the theoretical framework described in the previous chapter within the context of LEFC’s refocusing process. The theoretical principles form the basis for an empirical praxis that will help me answer:

Research Question # 1: How did power intersect with the knowledge formation process during LEFC’s refocusing process?

Research Question # 2: In what ways, if any, did shared perspectives intersect with power to influence LEFC’s refocusing process?

Research Question # 3: How did power intersect with participatory processes during LEFC’s refocusing process?

In this chapter, I will provide a rationale for my use of a qualitative ethnographic case study approach to answer my research questions, outline the approaches I took in collecting and analyzing the data, explain how I enhanced the trustworthiness of the data, and describe limitations of my research design.

Qualitative Ethnographic Case Study Approach

In this study, I used a qualitative ethnographic case study approach. In this section, I will discuss why my study is a case study and the reasons for classifying it as an ethnographic case study.

Merriam (1998, p. 27) maintains, “The single most defining characteristic of case study research lies in delimiting the object of study.” This delimiting characteristic of case study research means that a case has boundaries. A case could be a person, a program, a community, or anything else that has boundaries around it. In my study, the case is LEFC’s
refocusing process. The refocusing process occurred at a specific time (February 11 2002 – February 16 2003) and involved a particular group of people as primary participants (the 61 people on the first summit attendance list). My case has clear boundaries, which meets Merriam’s boundedness requirement for case study research.

Beyond boundedness, Yin (2003, p. 13) insists, “A case study is an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident.” In his definition, Yin describes four additional requirements for case study research. First, case study research involves empirical inquiry. Al Rubaie (2002) maintains that both qualitative and quantitative research methods are acceptable approaches within case study research. Yet, Merriam (1998) suggests that qualitative approaches are better suited for case study research that seeks to promote insight, discovery, and interpretation rather than the testing of hypotheses. As I sought to understand the intersections between power, knowledge, shared perspectives, and participatory processes during LEFC’s refocusing process, I did not want to test hypotheses, but rather let the research data tell its own story. My use of interviews and personal observational data fits with Merriam’s preference for qualitative research methods when engaging in discovery-oriented case study research. The second part of Yin’s definition focuses on the investigation of a contemporary phenomenon. Issues of power, knowledge, shared perspectives, and participatory processes all represent contemporary phenomena that lend themselves to an inductive research approach that seeks to explore the complexities within and between them. Yin goes on to assert that case study research occurs in a real-life context. Studying LEFC’s refocusing process, a real-life process within a real-life community, meets this requirement of case study research. Yin’s fourth requirement focuses on the
ambiguity between the phenomenon and context. Based on personal observations and my theoretical framework, I suspected that my research phenomena were active in LEFC’s refocusing process. Yet, the relationship between these phenomena and the surrounding context was unclear. Using a case study approach helped me to explore connections between power, knowledge, shared perspectives, and participatory processes within the refocusing context. As I used interviews and personal observations to generate insights about these contemporary phenomena within a real-life context, I met Yin’s requirements for carrying out case study research. Beyond meeting Yin’s requirements, I have also shown that qualitative case study research lends itself well to answering my research questions.

According to Merriam (1998), case study research is particularistic, descriptive, and heuristic. Merriam’s description shows the appropriateness of case study research for generating insights related to my research questions. The particularistic nature of case studies allows case study researchers to focus on specific programs, situations, events, people, or phenomena. Using a case study approach allowed me to focus on particular phenomena (the intersections of power, knowledge, shared perspectives, and participatory processes) that occurred in a particular situation (LEFC’s refocusing process) with a particular group of people (summit one participants). The descriptive nature of case study research facilitates the collection of descriptions about the research phenomena. Admittedly, this descriptive distinctive is not unique to case study research. However, because of the particularistic nature of case study research, it is possible to provide richer descriptions than some approaches that do not have the same particularistic focus. Applying the descriptive nature of case study research gave me the opportunity to explore deeply the intersections outlined in my research questions. Anderson, Anderson, Crabtree, Steele, and McDaniel (2005) believe that using the
case study approach allows researchers to be sensitive to various dimensions of relationships within the particular system such as mindfulness, looseness or tightness, quantity, heedfulness, and the quality of connections. This dimensional sensitivity is in keeping with Al Rubaie’s (2002) emphasis on the potential of qualitative case study research to produce holistic understandings of research phenomena. This holistic kind of approach is necessary in providing the types of thick descriptions that helped me “interpret social phenomena, to produce a rich understanding of the complex meaning structures that social actors construct in their specific environments” (MacPherson, Brooker & Ainsworth, 2000, p. 50). The heuristic nature of case study research focuses on the potential of case study research to enrich the reader’s understanding. Because case study research is highly particularistic and descriptive, readers tend to view the research narrative as meaningful and relevant. Even though the results of case study research are not generalizable beyond the research context, they can assist readers in building particular understandings about specific research phenomena as they may occur in particular contexts. Qualitative researchers function as bricoleurs as they produce a “bricolage, that is, a pieced-together, close-knit set of practices that provide solutions to a problem in a concrete situation” (Denzin & Lincoln, p. 3). The bricolage changes as new tools and methods are applied to the puzzle. In an earlier work, Merriam (1988) included a fourth item in her list of case study requirements: inductiveness. She maintained that the inductive nature of case study research allows case study research to emerge around the data. As I attempted to elicit and provide deep descriptions related to the intersections of power, knowledge, shared perspectives, and participatory processes, I allowed those data-rich descriptions to steer my research. The resultant conclusions
generated context-specific insights that readers can use to inform their understanding of the same research phenomena in similar contexts.

What made my study an ethnographic case study? My role as a participant-observer, one who was deeply enmeshed in LEFC’s refocusing process, helped to make my study ethnographic in nature (McMillan & Schumacher, 1997). Denzin (2003, p. 259) maintains that we are currently living in the “seventh moment” where “the reflexive ethnographer becomes the guiding presence in the ethnographic text.” I had the opportunity in my study to be a reflexive ethnographer by “showing how, in concrete situations [LEFC’s refocusing process], persons produce history and culture, even as history and culture produce them” (p. 263). I used critical imagination to come to new understandings about the research context and the larger field of which it is a part. As Lincoln (1997) suggests, it is important to understand the nature of the knowledge produced by ethnographic inquiry. In keeping with her discussion of validity in ethnographic research, I have made no claim as to the generalizability of my findings. I have simply said that my findings may be useful in informing the thinking of those in similar and to a lesser degree those in dissimilar contexts.

In terms of data collection, Cain and Seymour (1991) in their study of ethnographic research in church settings suggest that there are four actions of church-based ethnographers. They listen to and honour people’s stories. I did that in my study by listening to the stories of participants in LEFC’s refocusing process. I engaged in 20 interviews where I heard people’s observations of the refocusing process. I assured them that their responses would remain confidential, so that they would have greater freedom to share their stories. I also assured them that I wanted to hear both the pleasant and painful aspects of their stories, if they felt comfortable sharing them. Cain and Seymour also suggest that church-based ethnographers
give participants an opportunity to react to summaries of their stories. In my study, I supplied each participant with a transcript and summary of their interview. This gave them the opportunity to reflect on what they had said and to clarify intended meanings. Of the 20 interviewees, 18 of them either said I had accurately transcribed and summarized their interview story or they gave me additional feedback to make them more accurate. The third action of church-based ethnographers is to claim and inform their convictions. In my study, I provided an opportunity to do this by inviting people to discuss my executive summary of all of the interviews. Admittedly, because I was no longer a pastor at the church, I could not continue this conviction-building process to any great degree. Cain and Seymour also maintain that church-based ethnographers help participants use analytical and theological tools to engage their experiences. Once again, because I was no longer an insider at LEFC, I could only do this to a limited degree by providing an initial forum for discussion. Yet, when I obtained permission from LEFC’s board to conduct the study, I told them that I would give them an executive summary of my findings and be available to discuss them if they thought this would be beneficial. Providing the executive summary to some of LEFC’s leaders and being available to discuss them are two ways that I can potentially help people further engage their refocusing experiences.

In this section, I have shown that a qualitative ethnographic case study approach is well suited for answering my research questions. I have also shown that my study meets the requirements of ethnographic case study research. In the next section, I will describe how I collected and analyzed the data in my study.
Data Collection and Analyses

The two phases of data collection for my research project were interviews with other summit participants and documenting my own observations. Before collecting my data, I obtained approval for my study from the University of British Columbia’s Behavioural Research Ethics Board (see Appendix B). This helped to insure the ethical treatment of all research participants.

Interviews with Other Summit Participants

The target population for this study was the 61 people listed on a summit participation list that I created during the first summit. After securing the necessary approval from LEFC’s church board for conducting my study, I placed a packet in church mailboxes belonging to those in my target population who still attended LEFC. I mailed packets to those who no longer attended the church. In all, I sent out 58 packets. Two of those on the list were deceased. I was also on the list. The packet contained a letter of initial contact (see Appendix C), a consent form (see Appendix D), a list of interview questions (see Appendix E), and an abbreviated description of LEFC’s ministry direction plan (see Appendix F). In the letter, I described my study and invited people to participate in a 120-minute, one-on-one interview related to the study. I also stated that I would select 20 interviewees for the study. Conducting 20 interviews represented a manageable number of interviews that allowed me to process the interview data in an in-depth and integrative fashion. Having 20 interviewees also facilitated adequate representation of those who participated in the summits based on gender and life stage grouping. In retrospect, I realize that the criteria of manageability and representativeness were not adequate. I should have also used the criteria of saturation – that
I would interview until I was no longer hearing new information related to my research questions. However, as I look back over the interviews, I believe that I did achieve saturation to a large degree by interviewee 18. I believe this was the case because I was hearing many of the same themes repeated by that time. To let me know of their intent, those in my target population could return a completed response card to my LEFC mailbox or send me an email by a certain date. By the initial deadline, I had more than enough male candidates, but not enough female candidates. I sent out a reminder to the females who had not yet responded letting them know that they had another week to respond. Due to extensive power outages that week in the area, I send out another note to the same group of women extending the response deadline by another week. Three more women agreed to participate in my study, which brought the total number of women up to a representative level.

After the final deadline, I grouped the names of those who responded affirmatively into five life stage groupings (teenager, single adults, homebuilders, mature outlook, and seniors) according to my assessment of what their life stage was during the refocusing process. I was able to perform this grouping because I personally knew all of the target population. This purposeful sampling approach used categories consistent with the types of categories that LEFC’s church board used to categorize people prior to and during the refocusing process. Based on the demographic profile of the first summit participants (females = 52.5%, males = 47.5%), I randomly selected 10 of the males who volunteered for the study. I did not have to randomly select female candidates because I already had the requisite number of 10. In terms of life stage representation, I had one teenager (5% compared to 5% on the summit attendance list), no single adults (0% compared to 5% on the summit attendance list), fifteen homebuilders (75% compared to 74% on the summit
attendance list), one mature outlook (5% compared to 6.6% on the summit attendance list), and two seniors (10% compared to 9.8% on the summit attendance list). The only group that was not represented was the singles group. However, the rest of the life stage groups and both gender groups were adequately represented. Having a representative sample based on gender and life stage corresponds with Merriam’s (1998) maximum variation type of purposeful sampling. Findings from a diverse sample contributed to a broader understanding of the research phenomena.

I did not set out to have a representative sample of visible minorities because I only had one visible minority in my target population. However, because this visible minority ended up participating in the study, I actually had visible minority representation similar to that within the larger church (approximately 5% of people at LEFC were visible minorities). I also did not try to get a representative sample of progressives and traditionalists. Even though I can recall that there were a few traditionalists that participated in the summits, their names did not appear on the attendance list for the first summit. Not having the traditionalist perspective represented within my sample was a limitation of my study. In order to include their perspective, it may have been useful to widen my target population.

The interviews were semi-structured in nature and took place in locations chosen by the interviewees (twelve took place in the homes of interviewees, four in restaurants, three at LEFC, and one at my home). I had a series of questions that served as a guide for the interviews, which the interviewees had received in their initial packets (see Appendix E). All of the questions sought to generate understanding about my three research questions. However, I also deviated from the structure when interviewee responses opened up other areas of interest related to my research questions. Having the interview script ahead of time
gave them an opportunity to think through their responses before the interview. I also informed them that I might ask other questions. Before the interviews, I asked interviewees to sign the consent form that addressed the issue of anonymity and the use of the interview responses in my study. The first two interviews functioned as a pilot test. After these initial interviews, I met with my committee to assess the suitability of the interview questions. They seemed to be working well, so we did not make any changes to the interview script.

During the interviews, I asked interviewees the questions that they received before the interview and any other questions that naturally arose from their responses. I also took notes during the interview as it related to key statements and important nonverbal communication. After the interview, I transcribed the audio recordings so that I would have an accurate written record of the interview. These written records did not contain the real names of interviewees. I will keep the interview tapes and transcripts in a locked file cabinet in my home for five years at which time I will destroy them.

According to Altrichter, Posch, and Somekh (1993), pattern analysis and dilemma analysis are two complex methods for analyzing qualitative data. Pattern analysis looks for similarities in the data whereas dilemma analysis looks for tensions in the data. For the pattern analyses, I looked for patterns or themes within each interview, across interviews, and between the interviews and my observational data. According to Van Maanen (1990), articulating themes helps to get at the meaning of the experience. The themes became the cornerstones for subsequent theory-building (Corbin & Strauss, 1990). Yet, coming up with themes or categories is reductionistic. In order to explore more of the meaning associated with my research phenomena, I also looked for tensions, or apparent contradictions in the data. I did not want to shy away from these tensions, but rather explored them as a means of
gaining a better understanding of the situation. Differences of opinion provided important
details as to the diversity of perspectives about the research phenomena. Even dilemmas that
could not be readily resolved led to valuable insights about the research phenomena. As I
analyzed the interview transcripts, I categorized comments as a way of identifying patterns
and dilemmas. I looked for interdependencies, dimensions of relationships within
interdependencies, nonlinearities, unexpected events and connections, processes as well as
events, and information about the church’s history along with other patterns and dilemmas
related to my research questions. I also did a comparative analysis of all of the interview
summaries using pattern and dilemma analyses to generate further insights about the research
phenomena across individuals and between the interview summary data and my
observational data. Corbin and Strauss maintain that engaging in this comparative analysis
helps to achieve greater precision and consistency while providing a safeguard against bias.

Once I had summarized the ideas from the interviews, I sent interviewees a copy of
the interview transcript and the interview summary for their consideration. This gave
interviewees a chance to confirm or challenge the accuracy of the transcript and
accompanying summary. I attached a form to the summary that gave the interviewees an
opportunity to say they would not be giving me feedback on the transcript or summary, they
felt that the two documents accurately reflected what they said, or that they would attach
changes that would make the documents accurate. Fourteen interviewees said the documents
accurately reflected what they said, four made adjustments to make the documents accurate (I
revised their documents and sent them back to them for final verification), and two did not
give me a response. After I made the necessary changes to the transcripts and summaries, I
updated sections of my comparative analysis as appropriate. I then sent out an executive
summary of my findings to the interviewees and asked them for feedback. Six interviewees gave me their feedback in writing while two attended a discussion group where we discussed the executive summary. One of those in the discussion group had also sent me written feedback. Their feedback helped to confirm the accuracy of my findings.

As I gathered and analyzed data, I recorded my observations and related insights. Corbin and Strauss (1990, p. 10) stress the importance of writing theoretical memos as a way to “keep track of all the categories, properties, hypotheses, and generative questions that evolve from the analytical process…” Writing these kinds of memos helped me to capture emergent ideas before they were lost in the flurry of new stimuli. The writing process also helped me bring my tacit knowledge to the surface so that I could apply it to the research project. In addition, it served to bring some of my biases to the surface. Bias awareness was a critical component of insuring the trustworthiness of the data. I articulated some of my assumptions in chapter one and in other chapters, too. As I conducted my research, I tried to guard against twisting the data to support my prior conceptions. Having interviewees check their transcripts, interview summaries, and an executive summary helped to minimize the infringement of my biases on the process.

**Documenting My Own Observations**

As a member of the refocusing team, church board, elder’s team, and staff team at LEFC, I was in a unique position to observe the intricacies of the refocusing process. Altrichter et al. (1993) believe that researchers studying phenomena within their area of practice are important sources of data. Van Maanen (1990) maintains that using personal experience as a starting point is a good way to launch phenomenological research. During
refocusing, I kept a detailed personal calendar and journal, which contain many details and insights about the process. During the summits, I took field notes. In addition to these sources of data, I have handouts, PowerPoint presentations, meeting minutes and summaries, and promotional materials from the refocusing process. I was able to bring all of these sources to bear on my description and understanding of the process. This detailed description provided a unique perspective from someone immersed in the process. Analyzing my observational data took the form of a comparative analysis with other data collected in the interviews. I compared my description of the refocusing process (as seen in chapter four) and issues that emerged related to power, knowledge, shared perspectives, and participatory processes with the responses that people gave in the interviews. I also compared how the two data sets answered the research questions similarly or differently.

The issue of reflectivity is important. I reflected on my own role as a leader during the refocusing process in addition to reflecting on other parts of the refocusing process. Van Manen (1990, p. 37) suggests, “Lived experiences gather hermeneutic significance as we (reflectively) gather them by giving memory to them.” Throughout this study, I have engaged in reflective writing in an attempt to gather hermeneutic significance about LEFC’s refocusing process and my place in it. I have exposed some of my assumptions. I have tried to look at my assumptions as being oriented in myself and in the social worlds of which I am a part. I have tried to keep those assumptions at bay as I have interpreted the meaning embodied in my lived experience. How did I do this? In chapter one, I reflected on some of my experiences at LEFC. My interpretation of those experiences led me to articulate three problems (abuse of power, perspective dominance, and values reductionism) that I wanted to address in my research. In chapter four, I reflect on LEFC’s refocusing process and my role
in it. In chapter six, I attempt to build theory as I interpret my refocusing experience, the experiences of others (my 20 interviewees), and the relevant literature. Admittedly, my interpretations are subjective in nature. My positioning in my social world influences my interpretations. Bourdieu (2000) asserts that participant objectivation is not enough. In speaking about anthropology, Bourdieu claims:

What needs to be objectivized, then, is not the anthropologist performing the anthropological analysis of a foreign world but the social world that has made both the anthropologist and the conscious or unconscious anthropology that she (or he) engages in her anthropological practice – not only her social origins, her position and trajectory in social space, her social and religious memberships and beliefs, gender, age, nationality, etc., but also, and most importantly, her particular position within the microcosm of anthropologists. (p. 283)

As I have conducted my research, I have tried to reflect on how my social world and my positioning in it affected my interpretations of lived experience. Argyris (1993, 1990) contends that organizational members create defensive routines within organizations. Defensive routines form as people “craft messages that contain inconsistencies, act as if the messages are not inconsistent…make the ambiguity and inconsistency in the message undiscussable…and make the undiscussability of the undiscussable also undiscussable” (1990, p. 27). I am aware that I can engage in defensive routines. In fact, it has been difficult for me to reflect on how much I influenced the refocusing process. I have also found it hard to talk about dysfunction within LEFC’s board during refocusing – a topic that was “undiscussable” during most of my tenure at the church. It was imperative that I reflect on my role in creating, supporting, and challenging these defensive routines during LEFC’s
refocusing process as a way of understanding how I, as a key leader in the process, exercised power to influence the process. This was a complex undertaking as it meant trying to see “the interrelationships between the sets of assumptions, biases, and perspectives that underpin the different facets of the research…” (Weber, 2003, p. vi).

Weber (2003) maintains that researchers need to experiment with different interpretations of their data in order to broaden their understanding of the research phenomena. I have done that in this study in two major ways. The first way was to interpret my interviewee data in a chronological fashion. I put the relevant interviewee observations from the first part of the process under my first research question, interviewee observations from the middle part under the second research question, and interviewee observations from the last part under the third research question. This was a useful way of interpreting the data. Yet, when I viewed the data in non-chronological ways, I found that I gained a much richer understanding of the intersections I posed in my research questions. Utilizing this approach helped me to see the data in new ways. With my first approach, I was dominating the interpretation of the data (forcing my structure on the data). With the second approach, the data spoke more for itself.

What were some of the biases that I brought into this study? I have seen many abuses of power by those in privileged positions and so I was probably more open to seeing abuses of power from the privileged elite. I am also a big believer in inclusiveness. I view anything that I perceive as unfairly exclusionary in a dim light. When it comes to group decision-making, I am sceptical of the value of consensus-building and relying too heavily on democratic means to make decisions. It seems highly reductionistic to me. I am much more supportive of processes that encourage divergent thinking where people feel free to
contribute and give due consideration to contrary ideas. In terms of perspectives on the church, I hold a post-progressive or younger evangelical perspective as described by Webber (2002). This was not always the case. During LEFC’s refocusing process, I wholeheartedly agreed with most aspects of the process. I saw them through the eyes of a progressive. However, when I look back now, I view certain aspects of the process with scepticism. My perspective has changed. For example, I am now a big believer in transparency. Some of the refocusing incidents that I now perceive as abuses of power revolved around a lack of transparency. I was not thinking that way during the process itself. It is also important to note that I felt hurt by some of the traditionalists during and after the refocusing process. This hurt probably tainted my perception of the traditionalist’s role in the process and subsequent initiatives. I also believe that women and youth/children are typically marginalized in many churches. I probably looked for data that would confirm this. As I conducted my research, I tried to be reflective - to be aware of my assumptions and the interrelationships between these assumptions. My research committee was very helpful in challenging me to probe some of these assumptions in deeper ways.

In this section, I have described my two data collection phases and the processes I employed in the analysis and interpretation of the data. As I collected and analyzed the data, it was imperative that I took steps to enhance the trustworthiness of the research data.

**Trustworthiness of the Data**

Remenyi, Money, Price, and Bannister (2002) maintain that case study researchers should engage in broad research by grounding their particular case studies in relevant and credible research that addresses their research phenomenon. This grounding enhances the trustworthiness of the data because it shows a connection with previously conducted research.
To help me understand the research phenomenon from a novel and meaningful perspective, I have conducted a robust literature review on power, knowledge, shared perspectives, and participatory processes. Admittedly, limited work has been done on each of these in church organizations. Yet, my literature review has given me a broad understanding of the major issues related to my research questions, which acts as a framework for the entire study.

According to Remenyi et al. (2002), the trustworthiness of case study data is largely dependent on whether the researcher obtains the data in context. This involves the immediate research context and the larger conditions within society (Corbin & Strauss, 1990). It is imperative that I make the context explicit in my research study. I do this in chapter one by describing the denominational and local church contexts and in chapter four by providing a detailed description of the refocusing process. I explore some of the connections with broader conditions in society in chapter six. The semi-structured nature of the interviews gave study participants the opportunity to respond openly and spontaneously. This is important because they contributed important contextual factors that helped me to understand the data.

Obviously, my study is an historical study that focuses on events that occurred approximately four years ago. I am relying partially on retrospective accounts of people who participated, including my own. I enhanced the trustworthiness of the data obtained from these accounts by giving interviewees an opportunity to check the accuracy of their interview transcripts, the interview summaries, and the executive summary. I also took extensive field notes during the refocusing process and have numerous refocusing documents that helped to provide a context for the data. Viewing and interpreting the data through this contextual lens was an important way of enhancing the trustworthiness of the data. My detailed description of the research
setting and context will help readers to decide whether and to what extent the findings are applicable to other settings and contexts.

Remenyi et al. (2002) maintain that case study researchers should focus on acquiring an in-depth understanding of central issues in the study and a broad understanding of related issues. This characteristic builds on providing meaning in context. Case study research has the potential to go deep. It can penetrate the research context and seek to explore the intricacies of the research phenomena and its interconnectedness with other elements in the research context. As I conducted my research, I explored the research phenomena deeply by probing beneath superficial responses. The interviewees seemed to respond well to this probing. The in-depth interviews provided a good format for this uncovering process. I also engaged in preliminary analysis of the data during the data collection phase to inform subsequent parts of the data collection (Corbin & Strauss, 1990). For example, the data from my initial interviews helped to inform the direction of subsequent interviews. My interview questions remained the same, but I learned that certain clarifying statements were helpful in stimulating productive responses. Having the interviewees check the accuracy of interview transcripts, interview summaries, and the executive summaries helped to ensure that I heard them correctly. I was then able to conduct an in-depth analysis of accurate interview data.

How did I enhance the trustworthiness of the data at the data analysis stage of the research process? Guion (2002) believes that case study researchers should use at least one of five forms of triangulation that help to establish the validity of qualitative studies. These forms include data triangulation, theory triangulation, investigator triangulation, environmental triangulation, and methodological triangulation. For this study, I engaged in data triangulation as I compared and contrasted data from two sources: my own
observations/documentation from refocusing and the observations of interviewees. Remenyi et al. (2002) concur with Guion and believe that solid case study research uses more than one source of evidence and triangulates the data obtained from these sources. I met Guion’s standard for establishing the validity of qualitative studies because I used data triangulation.

Even as I sought to enhance the trustworthiness of my results, it was imperative that I understood some of the limitations of qualitative case study research. Ignoring these limitations could undermine the actual and/or perceived trustworthiness of my data.

**Limitations**

Remenyi, et al. (2002) believe that case study researchers must not immerse themselves too deeply in the object of their research. I saw the possibility of undue immersion as a potential limitation of my research. How did I maintain an appropriate distance in my research approach, while still engaging in in-depth research that produced rich descriptions about the study phenomena? My position as a former pastor at LEFC gave me considerable knowledge about and entrance into the inner workings of the organization. However, it also jeopardized the trustworthiness of the data by entangling me in the same organizational workings that I was seeking to understand. My research committee helped address this limitation by providing critical feedback on my research as outside observers of the research process. Throughout the research process, I reflected on my role as a key participant in the refocusing process and my role as a researcher of the refocusing process. As I reflected, I articulated how I influenced both the refocusing and researching processes. This reflectivity helped to keep me accountable, so that I did not immerse myself too deeply in the research process.
Another potential limitation of my study relates to the induction-deduction dimension of research. One of the strengths of qualitative research is its ability to evolve throughout the research process. Lloyd-Jones (2003) contends that this inductivity is positive unless researcher subjectivity or political factors within the organization unduly influence the research process. I entered the research context with considerable power as a former, longstanding pastor at LEFC. Did this position of power unduly influence the research process? I tried to ameliorate the effects of the power factor by guaranteeing anonymity of interviewees at the interviewee stage of the process. I also reassured interviewees that I truly want to hear what was on their hearts. This was important because they may have been inclined to try to tell me what they thought I wanted to hear. I also gave people the freedom to opt out of participating in the research process if they wanted. Even for those who participated in the interview, I assured them that they did not have to participate in the subsequent feedback loops. Obviously, I could not completely remove the effects of personal power from the research process. However, I took steps to acknowledge my potential influence and to minimize its effects.

Transferability is an important consideration in case study research. My findings or a portion of them may be transferable to other settings. A key consideration relates to contextual similarities. My detailed description of LEFC’s refocusing process will help others to assess the potential transferability of my findings to other contexts. In my conclusions, I have made conclusions about my particular case and tried not to make claims about the generalizability of the findings beyond my setting. My findings may contribute to theory, but it is not the intent of my study to produce seminal theory. It was important that I recognize the types of conclusions that are appropriate with case study research so that I can
communicate my findings in credible ways. Failing to do so could have jeopardized the perceived trustworthiness of my research data.

In this chapter, I have provided a rationale for using a qualitative case study approach as an acceptable and appropriate way of answering my research questions. I have described the means by which I collected and analyzed data from 20 summit participants and myself. I described how I enhanced the trustworthiness of the data by grounding my research in relevant and credible literature, obtaining my data in context, probing the research phenomena deeply, and engaging in data triangulation. In addition to taking these steps to enhance data trustworthiness, I have acknowledged limitations of the study related to my role as researcher and to the transferability of the study findings. It was imperative that I conduct the study and communicate the findings with these limitations in mind to strengthen the actual and perceived integrity of the study. As I followed the research design, I generated insights into the intersections between power, knowledge, shared perspectives, and participatory processes within organizational direction-setting processes. However, a key part of generating these insights was to understand how the refocusing process unfolded – the focus of chapter four.
CHAPTER 4 REFOCUSING CHRONOLOGY

What were the key events of LEFC’s refocusing process? My intention in this chapter is to document the process in as much detail as I remember it in retrospect and based on documentation collected throughout the process. This documentation includes handouts, PowerPoint presentations, meeting minutes and summaries, promotional material, my field notes, personal calendars, and my journal. This is my own perspective of the process based on this documentation and my recollections. I will not engage in an analysis of the process until the next chapter.

As I describe LEFC’s refocusing from my vantage point, it is important to remember that the process does not take place in a vacuum. Apart from what I described in chapter one about denominational factors and church demographics, other pre-refocusing factors played into the process itself. There were historical struggles over worship style forms. The church had adopted a blended approach to worship that sought to please those who wanted traditional worship music (older style hymns and choruses) and those who preferred contemporary music (newer choruses). Some were happy with this approach while others thought it was too traditional or too contemporary. Yet, this traditional-contemporary clash was not limited to issues surrounding worship style. During the years that I was at the church, there were clashes over appropriate approaches to outreach, building usage, the role of the board and staff, interior design of the building, and overseeing staff (to name a few). It was obvious that there were subgroups in the church that had very different views about how the church should express itself. As younger board members (who in some case were also new to the church) came onto the church board, the board increasingly became more progressive in their orientation. There was tension on the church board between those who had a more
traditional perspective (mainly those who were older) and those who were more progressive in their thinking (mainly those who were younger). Some viewed the senior pastor as being less progressive than they would like. Despite this division at the board level, the board continued to have tremendous influence in the church. Apart from the staff’s handling of day-to-day operations, the board ran the church. Congregational members would rarely mount a coordinated challenge to a board decision. All of these factors help to set the stage for what took place during refocusing.

LEFC’s refocusing process encompassed a series of events leading up to and including the approval of a ministry direction plan (see Table 1). The resignation of the senior pastor in February 2002 gave impetus to hiring a consultant in May 2002 from an organization that I will call TLR. A refocusing team formed that same month. This team organized a time of personal refocusing (May-September 2002) comprised of five Focused Living Retreats. They also set up the organizational refocusing (October-January 2002-2003) made up of three summits, a mini-summit, and post-summit pulse groups. The culmination of the refocusing process was the congregation’s approval of the ministry direction plan in February 2003.
Table 1. Timeline of Events Leading Up to Adoption of LEFC’s Ministry Direction Plan

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>February 2002</td>
<td>Resignation of senior pastor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February-May 2002</td>
<td>Hiring of TLR consultant to help lead the refocusing process</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 2002</td>
<td>Formation of a refocusing team</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May-September 2002</td>
<td>Personal refocusing process</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October-January 2002-2003</td>
<td>Organizational refocusing process</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February 2003</td>
<td>Congregational approval of ministry direction plan</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Resignation of the Senior Pastor**

At LEFC, the senior pastor was responsible for giving overall leadership to the ministries of the church under the auspices of the church board. He also worked with the church board to give visionary leadership to the church as it related to the church’s overall sense of direction and strategic priorities. In December 2001, the church board wrote a letter to the senior pastor expressing some of their concerns about his leadership. I did not see the letter and so I am not aware of the nature of their specific concerns. However, as time went on, I became aware that there was a perception that the senior pastor lacked vision. Within a few weeks of receiving the letter, the senior pastor submitted his letter of resignation. It was my perception that most of the church knew he was upset about what had transpired. He had served in the lead pastoral role at LEFC for almost 14 years.

In the days immediately following the senior pastor’s resignation, members of the board realized that this difficult juncture in the church’s history represented an opportunity to re-examine the church’s overall direction and strategic priorities. The board realized that before hiring a new senior pastor, it would be important to gain a consensus as to the future direction of the church. LEFC had recently gone through a church health assessment called
Natural Church Development, which had shown the congregation that they had a lot of work to do to improve the church’s ministry effectiveness. The church board knew that the church was in a state of decline in terms of the number of people listed in the church directory. During my years at LEFC, people tended to assume that numerical growth was a very important indicator of church health. We were looking for a new vision of how we could address our weaknesses and build our strengths. We wanted to be more effective in helping people become Christians and to grow in their relationship with God. As it turned out, we were also looking for a new senior pastor who could help us achieve this new vision.

**Hiring of a Consultant**

The church board recognized that the church had two major problems. The first one was a lack of vision, which they had recognized before the informal evaluation of the senior pastor. The other problem was that the church no longer had a senior pastor. The board asked me to take on the role of an interim senior pastor, but they carefully communicated to the church that this was a temporary position. We still needed a senior pastor. With both of these problems at the forefront of the board’s thinking, one board member heard about TLR, an organization that helped churches set direction for the future (including finding a new senior pastor). This board member made the rest of the board aware of TLR’s ministry. We found out that TLR specialized in helping churches refocus (articulate God’s direction for the church) during the transition time between not having a senior pastor and hiring a new one. They called their process a “refocusing process.” TLR’s focus fit with two of our pressing needs. We also learned that TLR was at that time helping a church in Langley through a refocusing process. A former LEFC board member was part of the refocusing team at this
church. We received good reviews from a number of people at this church about what TLR was doing with them. The reviews piqued our interest.

**Exploratory Meeting**

The chair of the LEFC board, two non-elder board members, myself as a member of the pastoral staff and board member, and three non-board members met with a consultant from TLR whom I will call Ray. The board member who brought TLR to our awareness arranged the meeting. The board member talked to the board chair who approved the exploratory meeting. The board accepted this practice where the board chair would sometimes make decisions on behalf of the board if it seemed prudent to do so. Often the board chair would consult with the senior pastor and together they would make these kinds of decisions. In this case, I believe that the board chair consulted with me, as I was now the main pastor in the church. We met with Ray on February 11 2002 at the other Langley church that was going through a TLR-fashioned refocusing process.

At the exploratory meeting, Ray gave an overview of TLR’s refocusing process. He explained to us that TLR could lead LEFC through a four-fold process of preparation, assessment, discovery, and implementation. The underlying assumption was that individuals within the church and the church itself needed to be refocused – that their current state lacked focus and that there was a better state representing a clearer focus. The preparation phase would feature a time of personal “refocusing” where individuals would articulate their personal spiritual callings. The assessment phase would look at where we have been as a church and where we are now. The discovery stage would feature the development of an organizational “preferred values and vision” statement as we answered the question: where
are we going? The implementation stage would involve having us develop a plan for taking us where we want to go.

**Congregational Information Meetings**

The board members (including myself) who attended the meeting with Ray brought a report to the rest of the church board. In addition to refocusing the church’s direction, the TLR-led process would give us a pastoral profile in keeping with the ministry direction plan that we could use to find the right senior pastor to lead us. At this point, TLR’s refocusing process looked very good as it promised to address two of our biggest needs: a lack of vision and the absence of a senior pastor. In the end, the board decided to proceed with holding two direction-setting information nights. The first one on March 26 2002 was for the church board, church staff, the elder’s advisory team, and key ministry leaders. The second information meeting on April 14 2002 was for anyone in the congregation. Approximately 40 people attended this second information meeting. Ray went through the same material that he had gone through with the LEFC group that had met with him previously. Only a small proportion of people offered feedback at the meetings, as was often the case at congregational-type meetings at LEFC. One person at the second meeting mentioned that someone in another church that had gone through a TLR-led refocusing process had expressed concerns about the outcomes of the process. The board did hear at least two reports from people who had heard negative reports about the outcomes of the TLR refocusing process. The comments tended to reflect dissatisfaction with the changes that occurred because of the refocusing recommendations. Apart from these comments, the board felt that the responses pertaining to a TLR-facilitated refocusing process were good. On April 16
2002, they decided to recommend to the congregation that the church hire Ray to lead the church through a refocusing process that would take approximately one year.

**Congregational Endorsement**

The congregation met to discuss the board’s recommendation at a special congregational meeting on April 21 2002. I do not know the exact number of people who gathered for the meeting, but the number would have been at least 20% of the church’s membership as per the quorum requirement in the church bylaws. At that time, the church membership was 139, so 28 members were required for a quorum. Approximately 40-80 people usually attended congregational meetings. I recall that the meeting occurred in the church’s Upper Fellowship Room, which could accommodate a maximum of 80 people.

During the meeting, some congregational members expressed support for having Ray lead the church through a refocusing process. However, some individuals raised concern over the cost of hiring Ray, as he would receive the same salary as the senior pastor had received. At least one member articulated his belief that the church could work things out on its own and did not need outside help. According to the official minutes of the meeting, 92% of the members of the congregation in attendance (who voted) voted in favour of the board’s recommendation. The church members at congregational meetings usually endorsed board recommendations. As was the case with most congregational decisions (apart from voting for elected positions and hiring staff), people voted by a show of hands. Everyone in attendance could see how others had voted. Only those who had gone through a membership application process and been previously accepted by the board and congregation as members could vote. The congregational endorsement represented the official start of the refocusing process.
The choice to engage in a TLR refocusing process meant that people in the church would encounter and possibly be influenced by the embedded values and assumptions within the refocusing process itself. By taking a lead role in the process, Ray determined to a large degree the language that we would use to define its components and how they fit together.

**Formation of Refocusing Team**

Before agreeing to help guide LEFC through a refocusing process, Ray stipulated that he would need an eight-member (including himself) refocusing team that would give leadership to the process with his guidance. He wanted me on the team as a pastoral liaison. The assumption was that I would be able to connect the refocusing team with the staff and the ministry teams that were increasingly coming under staff oversight. I was in charge of coordinating the Sunday morning services, which was the main way of communicating to the congregation. It would be important that I knew the heart beat of the refocusing process so that I could align the Sunday morning services to this rhythm. I believe that Ray also recognized that I had garnered the respect of large sections of the congregation and would be able to help propel the church through the refocusing process. In many ways, I felt that Ray and I worked in tandem during the refocusing process. I had a vocal role outside the official refocusing venues (e.g. Sunday morning services), but I also functioned as a silent partner within the refocusing process itself. Ray would often consult with me about decisions he needed to make. I was pleased to be a part of the refocusing team and did not detect any opposition from board members as to this appointment. In fact, I thought that being on the refocusing team was a wonderful opportunity to help the church. Ray also stipulated that an elder should serve on the refocusing team as a liaison with the elder’s team and board. Ray wanted the refocusing team to function independently from the elders and church board, so
that it could guide the process without interference. Yet, it was important to have communication links between these two groups and the refocusing team. I believe that Ray recognized that the power to make changes at LEFC rested with the board and the staff and so having strong links to these groups was critical for the success of the refocusing plan. Ray also wanted five lay people from the congregation on the refocusing team. He specified that the members of the refocusing team must have a good reputation at LEFC and must not have a stated preset agenda as to the church’s future direction. Having a good reputation boiled down to being a person of integrity who had contributed positively to the life of the church. Not having a stated preset agenda meant that potential candidates must not have been dogmatic about their preferences for the church. They did not have to be neutral, but they did have to be open-minded about the possibility of change and even the nature of change. The board looked for people who had some longevity in the church and had been involved in some kind of leadership. The board tried to gain adequate representation based on gender and age, although there was no consideration given to ethnicity or socioeconomic status. As a member of the church board during refocusing, I remember our discussions about the possible composition of the refocusing team. I could tell that some board members had considerably more influence than others did because of the way they seemed to sway the conversations. After the senior pastor’s resignation, fractures were beginning to surface on the church board because of the perceived mishandling of the issues related to the senior pastor’s painful departure. I recall that there were power struggles based on different church perspectives. Some of the older board members wanted people on the refocusing team with a more traditional perspective who would likely take a conservative approach to change. In the end, the church board came up with a list of possible candidates from the congregation and
then voted on the list in order to rank the candidates. Because the more progressive board members outnumbered the more traditional ones and because Ray had stipulated that the refocusing candidates had to be open to change, I recall that progressive candidates tended to dominate the short list of possible candidates for the refocusing team. The board members approached the people who had received the most votes. Some declined to participate. None of the mature outlook, seniors, or single adults whom the board approached agreed to serve on the refocusing team and so the team was comprised of married people between the ages of 34 and 50. It was also hard to get females to commit to serving on the team. In the end, the eight-member refocusing team was comprised of two females and six males.

**Personal Refocusing Process**

The first priority of the refocusing team was to organize the personal refocusing process. In order to understand the personal refocusing process, I will describe its purpose, those who participated in it, and the components of the Focused Living Retreats, which were the group venue for personal refocusing.

**Purpose**

The refocusing team set up five Focused Living Retreats that they described in promotional material as a personal discovery process designed to bring perspective and focus to one’s life. The stated assumption underlying the retreats was that, as people understand how God loves, leads and guides them, they would have greater clarity about how God leads and guides LEFC.
Participants

The refocusing team invited adults and teenagers in the church to participate in the personal refocusing retreats, although four of the five retreats were reserved for a group of about 136 adults that the board had chosen to target as leaders within the church. The general criterion for inclusion on the leadership invitation list was involvement in helping to lead a ministry program at the church. The list included board members, church staff, children’s ministry workers, youth workers, small group leaders, worship team members, library personnel, women’s ministry leaders, men’s ministry leaders, members of the missions committee, and those who gave leadership to other church programs. There were also people on the list who were not currently active in a church ministry. However, they had been active in the past and still wielded considerable influence in the church. Obviously, compiling the invitation list was a subjective process. Whom should we personally invite to take part in the refocusing process? Whom should we exclude from the personal invitation process? I compiled the initial draft. The church board and staff reviewed the list and made changes, as they deemed appropriate.

Church staff members were the only ones who participated in the first Focused Living Retreat at the beginning of June. The refocusing team scheduled the next three retreats on June 9-12 2002 (6:30-9:30 pm each night), July 5-6 2002 (6:30-9:30 pm on Friday and 9:00-5:00 pm on Saturday), and August 25-28 2002 (6:30-9:30 pm each night). Only those on the leadership invitation list could attend these retreats. The final Focused Living Retreat occurred on September 8-11 2002 (6:30-9:30 pm each night). Anybody in the church could participate in this final retreat. Even though the original invitation list contained 136 names, I recall that the staff added others to the list as they expressed interest in the refocusing process.
The associate pastor of youth and young adults made a concerted effort to invite some High School students, as they were not included on the original list. I do not have an attendance list for the final retreat, but six High School students did participate in the other retreats. As we approached the final retreat, I instructed the church secretary to call 65 people not on the leadership list to invite them to the final summit. I felt that this group needed to be a part of a Focused Living Retreat as they represented potential leaders in the church. Without exception, all of those on this additional list were part of the Mature Outlook group, or younger. They were people who were not heavily involved in church ministry at the time, but seemed to have the capacity and competencies to become more involved in the future. I do not have a record of how many of these 65 additional invitees attended the fifth Focused Living Retreat, but I know that only two of them attended the first summit. By the end of the fifth Focused Living Retreat, 102 people had gone through the personal refocusing process. Of the 93 people who participated in the first four retreats, 82 of them had been on the original invitation list.

**Focused Living Retreats**

The first part of the personal refocusing process featured thinking about our personal life story. Retreat participants developed personal timelines that helped them to see formative milestones in their past. The assumption was that we usually find clarity for the future through perspective on God’s work in our lives in the past. During the next step in the personal refocusing process, participants articulated six key Scriptures that they believed God had used to give focus, purpose, and direction to their lives. They also looked at nine other Scriptural passages listed in their workbooks and were asked to summarize the insights they
generated about life purpose. Based on these catalyzing Scriptures and the participants’ understanding of God’s leading in their past, they wrote a biblical purpose statement for their lives. They then identified personal core values that the Focused Living manual (Walling & Mayes, 2001) defined as the unique convictions and core assumptions, which shape our behaviour. The manual listed 14 examples of values. Once participants had articulated their biblical purpose and core values, they crafted a personal vision. The personal vision addressed what God was calling people to accomplish. The Focused Living manual (p. 25) stated that “Personal vision answers the question: If you knew that you would not fail, what would you do in your lifetime for the glory of God?” There were five vision statement examples in the manual that participants could use as guides. After writing down their personal vision, retreat participants combined their Biblical purpose, core values, and vision into a personal calling statement. Retreat participants then clarified what might get in the way of living out their personal calling. This is where Ray, who facilitated each Focused Living Retreat, emphasized the importance of absolute surrender to God’s purposes irrespective of other factors. The assumption was that a Christian’s personal calling is God’s calling on their lives. An implication of this assumption is that in order for retreat participants to live out their callings, they must acknowledge that these callings are from God and submit themselves completely to His purposes as expressed in their callings. What this process of acknowledgement and submission accomplished was that people sensed the incredible importance of living out their personal callings. The personal callings became God’s guide for peoples’ lives. The personal calling statements invoked the power of God for many of the participants because they believed that their callings were from God and that God would help them to live them.
After articulating their personal callings, Ray asked retreat participants to answer the question: “What one thing could keep me from living out God’s vision and calling for my life?” In a retreat I attended, we then broke off with a partner and shared a potential obstacle that might prevent us from living out God’s calling in our lives. As a final part of the personal refocusing process, participants set one month and one-year goals in keeping with the roles necessary to live out their personal callings. The TLR workbooks for the Focused Living Retreats included a surrendering emphasis, which suggests that those who designed the workbooks believed that most Christians struggle with surrendering to God. The assumption here is that Christians will understand and implement God’s calling when they minimize personal values, attitudes, and behaviours that might hinder living out that calling.

Ray designed the personal refocusing process to help participants articulate their sense of which values God wanted them to emphasize and how God wanted them to apply them. Participants articulated their sense of God’s calling in their personal calling statements. Ray repeatedly asserted that he wanted those who were part of the refocusing process to get their fingerprints all over the ministry direction plan. According to the TLR paradigm, the personally refocused people were now in a position to contribute personal values - their fingerprints - to the refocusing plan.

**Organizational Refocusing Process**

The TLR paradigm assumed that a church’s calling should be a compilation of the personal callings of a critical mass of an organization’s members who have surrendered themselves to God and His purposes for them and His church. In October 2002, LEFC’s organizational refocusing began and featured two leadership summits in October, one summit in November, a mini-summit in January, and post-summit pulse groups. The invitation list
for the summits contained the names of those who had participated in the Focused Living Retreats. The assumption was that those who had participated in a Focused Living Retreat were in the best position to help the church refocus during the organizational part of the process. Participation in personal refocusing was a requirement for participating in the organizational refocusing. Even with this requirement in place, the refocusing team did adopt a flexible approach of allowing people who had not participated in personal refocusing to attend the organizational refocusing summits. Those in this category had to self-initiate participation in the summits. Of the 61 people who attended the first summit, six were not on the original invitation list. Three of these were youth whom the staff invited after the board approved the original list. A new staff person, along with her husband, was automatically invited. They both attended the first summit. The sixth person was a member of the refocusing team who also received an automatic invite because of her refocusing team role. All six of those not on the original list were invited to participate after the list was compiled. Apparently, those not personally invited to participate in personal refocusing did not attend the first summit. The process of intentionally inviting people to participate and only having a small door of opportunity for non-invitees to gain entrance to the summits (attending the fifth Focused Living Retreat) seems to have set the course for who would participate in the summits.

**First Summit**

The first summit on October 4-5 2002 focused on articulating the church’s history and current values. We also took time to surrender the church and ourselves to God. As with all of the summits, Ray summarized the summit discussions and brought them to the
refocusing team for their consideration. The refocusing team usually would not make any substantive changes to the summaries. After making the discussed changes, the refocusing team would send out the revised summary to those with church mailboxes. Included with the summaries was an invitation to attend a post-summit pulse group.

**Church’s History**

We created a huge journey timeline on the wall of the church gymnasium that contained significant events in the church since it started in 1948. Ray broke the large group into smaller groups that brainstormed both pleasant and painful events to include on the journey wall. As was the case with all small group discussions at the summits, refocusing team members attempted to spread themselves out amongst the groups to gain a better understanding of what the various groups were saying. Once all the groups had put up their ideas, we discussed themes that we saw on the journey wall. For example, we noted recurring tensions related to worship ministry in the church. We also saw in our history that we do not handle personnel issues very well. In fact, when the going gets tough, we tackle the leaders. The recent episode with the senior pastor was part of a long string of staff-related tensions. We noted that the difficult things on the timeline tended to relate to people, relationships, and leadership issues. We acknowledged that most of our programs appeal to those in the church and we wondered if we really want to deal with the mess of societal problems beyond those of church people. We noticed that at times we were trying to be all things to all people and have missed what God wants. When it comes to conflict, we often stuff our feelings inside instead of dealing with them. We tend to gossip rather than turning to God and to people with whom we have problems. We articulated our belief that we struggle to respect, trust, and follow our leaders. We also said that we believed that “most conflicts involving leadership
seem to happen when leadership is from the top-down rather than in a consensus-building manner that involves the congregation” (Refocusing Digest: LEFC Leadership Summit #1, 2002, p. 4). Another observation in the summit #1 digest was that “hurt takes place and trust breaks down when people feel they have not been informed” (p. 4). In addition, we observed that when we have a common vision, good things happen. This kind of consensual vision equals results.

Current Values

Based on what we saw in LEFC’s timeline and the behaviour represented within the events listed, we expressed the following prioritized values that defined us at that time: God’s Word, caring relationships, children/youth (up to age 18), personal comfort/safety, global missions, avoiding conflicts, servanthood, and personal agendas. I do not recall any sustained debate over the selection of these values although others surfaced including financial security, empowering leadership, discipleship, image, facilities, local outreach, organizational structures, and generosity.

Surrender

At the conclusion of the summit, we had a time of prayer and personal surrender. We acknowledged that we wanted God to guide LEFC. Even as we surrendered ourselves to God during the personal refocusing process, we surrendered the church to Him during this first phase of the organizational refocusing.
Pulse Groups

After the summit, Ray compiled a summary of the discussions. The refocusing team assessed Ray’s summary as a group and made revisions where necessary. The refocusing team sent the revised summary to everyone in the congregation with a mailbox. Those with a mailbox included those who had approached the church secretary at some point to be in the church directory. Most people, after attending the church for a while, would obtain a church mailbox. The adults who did not have a mailbox and who would not have received a summit summary were likely newcomers to the church. In addition to a summit summary, those with a church mailbox also received an invitation to attend pulse groups on October 20 and 24 2002. One of the refocusing promotional brochures stated that the pulse groups were for “interaction and feedback…where everyone is invited to interact with and sharpen the work done during the Summits” (Focused Ministry, 2002). The pulse groups provided a venue for anyone in the church to give feedback on the refocusing process. At each of the pulse groups, a secretary took notes to try to capture the emergent ideas. The refocusing team took the recorded summaries from the pulse groups and worked them into a revised summary of the topics addressed at the summit. This pattern of pulsing with the larger congregation and sharpening summit summaries continued throughout the organizational refocusing process.

Second Summit

The second summit did not proceed as originally planned. Between the first summit on October 4-5 2002 and the second summit on November 1-2 2002, the church went through a very difficult time. We were going through two staff crises related to our director of children’s ministry and minister of worship arts. The church board and other leaders were
actively involved in both situations. The tension with the minister of worship arts related to misunderstandings that had arisen between the worship arts minister and the church board. It also seemed to involve longstanding issues related to shared perspectives about worship style in the main church services. Some in the church preferred a more traditional worship style. Some preferred a contemporary style while others wanted a service that featured a blending of the traditional and contemporary styles. The tension with the director of children’s ministry related to performance issues and so there was not the same attachment to historical issues in the church as there was with the minister of worship arts (and the connection to the historical tension over worship style). There was no apparent connection between the two tensions. The tension escalated in October and by November, both of the staff members had resigned. During this time, I recall hearing some people talk about a conspiracy theory. The assumption was that the board or key members of the board were conspiring to get rid of non-progressive staff members (e.g. senior pastor and minister of worship arts), so that the church could become more progressive in areas such as worship music. It comes back to the fundamental perspective clash that was occurring in the church during refocusing involving the progressives and the traditionalists. For some, these two staff departures polarized the two sides in the debate even more because some perceived the exiting of these staff members as a move toward becoming more progressive. Most of the summit participants were LEFC leaders and would have been at least moderately close to the staff situations. Beyond the simmering staff issues, the first summit had opened up issues from the past. As I mentioned in my description of the first summit, we had articulated numerous lessons that God had taught us or was trying to teach us through the pleasant and painful circumstances in our timeline as a church. A number of the painful events revolved around different worship style
preferences and hurtful staff departures. Perhaps, the most painful part of acknowledging that we had historically struggled with staffing and worship issues was the realization that history was repeating itself. We were struggling with the same issues. The second summit featured a change in plans, dealing with unresolved issues, creation of a board commitment, a time of congregational repentance, and post-summit pulse groups.

**Change in Plans**

The stated purpose of the second summit was to develop a ministry focus (who do we want to reach), determine our preferred values, and create a vision statement. Once again, those who had attended a Focused Living Retreat received invitations to the summit. Participation in the first summit was not a requirement for attendance at the second summit. On the morning of the day that the second summit was to start, Ray called me to say that he did not think the church was ready to work through the topics for the second summit. He wanted to know if I was sensing the same thing. I told him I concurred with what he was feeling based on the tension I had experienced in the church, so we, in consultation with the board chair, unilaterally decided to change the focus for the second summit.

**Unresolved Issues**

When the summit started, Ray announced that he did not think we were ready to talk about the future because we still had unresolved sin issues from the past. The use of the word “sin” implied that we were disobeying God. Ray told us an illustration to show us how we were ignoring a huge problem in our midst. He told us that he saw a room that represented LEFC. There were people in the room who represented the people at LEFC. However, there was also an elephant in the room. It was smashing everything in its path. Ray went on to say
that the people in the room were ignoring the elephant as if it was not there. His point was that he felt that we were ignoring some very destructive patterns within our church (sounds like LEFC’s “avoiding conflict” value in full flight). It was time that we acknowledged the elephant and started getting rid of it. Ray talked about what he saw as an outsider who had not become used to the rampaging elephant. He saw a church stalled in self-centeredness, pride, and pain. He went on to say that the major issues in the church were not worship style preferences, or trusting the board’s leadership. The main issue was pride. Ray dwelt on this pride problem and described it in more detail. He implied that we do not have any concern for the people outside or even inside the church. He said we were self-possessed. We wanted to have our own way. We were like the church in Corinth, filled with factions. He suggested that perhaps we were like the church of Laodicea where the people had a lukewarm faith and were content with their acquired wealth. Ray could have used other words to describe our condition, but “pride” captured our preoccupation with personal agendas, personal safety, and avoiding conflict (three of our negative actual values). Ray captured what was at the root of these negative values: pride. Pride made us want to make sure we forced our agenda to the top of the pile. Pride made us want to play it safe so that there was no risk of personal hurt. Pride made us want to avoid conflict because then we did not have to risk exposing dysfunctional attitudes concerning healthy conflict management. What Ray was saying was difficult to accept. We had become adept at ignoring the elephant of pride in our congregation. Perhaps, we even took comfort from the elephant’s presence. We did not want to accept the obvious and have to exert considerable time and energy to deal with it. Using the phrase “elephant of pride” to describe our condition was powerful because it spoke to the magnitude and destructiveness of our self-centredness. It made us want to somehow deal
with this problem that was apparently destroying us. Ray went on to say that we needed to confess our personal contributions of self-centeredness and turn from them.

At this point, Ray instructed us to go off by ourselves to read Romans 12-15 and to return after about 45 minutes to share what God had said. Some major themes in this passage of Scripture are humility, unity, and love. Each of these emphases spoke against the elephant of pride that Ray believed was marching around the church. When we came back as a larger group, we had a public time of confession and reconciliation. Some people confessed personal sins unrelated to past or present tensions in the church. Others confessed sins directly related to the situation with the former senior pastor. I can recall at least one instance when an individual went to another person and tearfully hugged him as a sign of reconciliation. We learned that we were imperfect. We learned that we valued avoiding conflict and that this value was very destructive. We learned how good it felt to acknowledge destructive patterns and to begin to deal with them. We realized that the factions in the church had arisen because of self-centeredness and that many of us had contributed to this divisiveness. In essence, Ray was calling us to absolute surrender to God’s purposes even as he had done during the personal refocusing. How soon we had forgotten. We all realized that we had weaknesses. Confessing those weaknesses publicly was humbling. It went against our pride. As people engaged in confession and extended forgiveness, it seemed to draw some people, even those with opposing values, closer together.

**Board Commitment**

Instead of continuing the second summit the next day with the whole group, Ray decided to meet only with the church board. The intense six-hour meeting the next day led to the creation of a board commitment that addressed some of the dysfunction that was apparent
at the board level. Board members acknowledged that they had not worked as an effective team, they had not been transparent, and they had not fully dealt with issues related to the departure of the minister of worship arts, corporate worship style during the worship services, and acceptance of some elements of Charismatic Christianity. Charismatic Christianity is an expression of Christianity that, among other things, tends to feature group worship that is more expressive and contemporary. Some at LEFC believed that acceptance of more expressive and contemporary worship would lead to acceptance of other elements of Charismatic Christianity such as individuals speaking in languages previously unknown to them that might be contrary to the church’s tradition. The board acknowledged that they had not exercised good leadership in trying to deal with the tension between those who shared different perspectives about worship style and Charismatic Christianity. The board sent a written copy of their commitments to people in the church. Over the next several months, the board would repeatedly come back to these commitments and orient themselves accordingly.

**Congregational Repentance**

During the worship service the following day, I changed my planned sermon topic and led the attendees through a condensed version of what some of the church leaders experienced on the Friday night. This was my attempt to include the rest of the church in what had happened in the lives of the leadership. The result was a public time of repentance, similar to what the summit participants experienced at the previous summit.

**Pulse Groups**

As with the first summit, the refocusing team sent out a summary of the second
summit deliberations to everyone with a church mailbox. The team organized several pulse groups that people could attend and give their feedback on the summary. Each pulse group had a facilitator and a secretary to take notes. The refocusing team received copies of the pulse group minutes and met to discuss whether they needed to make any changes to the summary.

Third Summit

On November 29-30 2002, Ray led us through the third summit. Approximately 50-70 adults participated in this summit, representing 13-18% of LEFC’s adult and teenaged population. In this summit, Ray combined what he had originally planned to do in summit two with what he wanted to do in summit three. This meant that we tried to cover the material for two summits in one summit. It was a packed weekend and became known as the “Super Summit” because of the amount of ground we covered. In the third summit, we articulated our mission focus, our preferred core values, vision, ministry model, and strategic initiatives. Another round of pulse groups followed the summit.

Mission Focus

At the start of the summit, we looked at demographic information on our community as a way of beginning to understand the groups of people around us that we wanted to reach. The assumption was that healthy churches care about reaching out to those in the surrounding community. Based on the demographic profile, we determined three dimensions of our mission focus, which answered the question: whom do we want to reach as a church? Mission focus one focused on Christians with a church background, which is the group we were reaching at that time. Mission focus two focused on those who are not Christians, but
who have a church background. We could reach these people if we became intentional.
Mission focus three represented the people we will not find it easy to reach without a great deal of effort and prayer. These people are not Christians and tend to have little or no church background. The conclusion was that LEFC must extend its focus beyond mission focus one to include mission foci two and three. This extension of focus would require a change in our practices as a church that focused on people in mission focus one. It would also require a broader and deeper sharing of values such as love and outreach that we would need to fuel this extension of our personal and organizational ministry endeavours.

**Preferred Core Values**

In the first summit, we articulated our main existing values based on our interpretation of events on the church’s timeline. In the third summit, we talked about the values that we would like to characterize the church. We strove to answer the question: what values would we need to have as a church if we were to reach the people in our mission field (mission foci one to three)? Before the summit, Ray had asked us to complete a Values Worksheet (see Appendix G for my completed worksheet), which I assumed was part of the TLR curriculum for their refocusing processes. The worksheet differentiated between foundational values (describing who we desire to be) and ministry values (describing how we want to minister). We could choose from a list of 39 values for both foundational and ministry values. There were no definitions for these pre-selected values on the worksheet. There were also four additional spaces for other values. The worksheet instructed us to circle the values we most preferred. Here is where personal values potentially entered the organizational refocusing process. We had gone through personal refocusing and had a fresh sense of our own preferred values. We now had the opportunity to project these onto the
organizational refocusing process, at least as much as the Values Worksheet allowed. The worksheet asked us to rank five foundational values and five ministry values.

When it came time to discuss preferred organizational values, summit participants spontaneously broke off into small groups. Ray instructed the groups to agree upon five foundational values and five ministry values based upon our values selections on the Values Worksheet. At the end of the values discussion, each group recorded their ten values on separate sheets of paper. Representatives from each group brought up their ten sheets of paper with their group values. As the representatives taped the sheets of paper onto the wall, Ray grouped the same or similar ones into categories. After all the sheets were on the wall, Ray instructed us to vote for our favourite values (I believe that we could vote for one foundational value and four ministry values) based on Ray’s groupings. We went up to the sheets of paper and marked the values we valued the most. Based on the summit summary compiled by Ray, the following emerged as our top foundational values (I have put the number of votes for each value in parenthesis): dependent on God/Christ-centered (12), caring/loving/compassionate (12), integrity (8), relational (6), biblical (4), unity (4), and joyful (3). Our top ministry values were people focused (55 votes), equipping (45), creative (21), culturally relevant (48), teamwork (31), and harvest-focused (39). Most of these are self-explanatory. Equipping referred to helping people acquire the knowledge and skills to live fulfilling and productive lives as Christians. The “harvest” in harvest-focused referred to the “harvest of souls.” The Bible uses the analogy of the harvest, as a way of describing the time when people become Christians. Therefore, choosing harvest-focused as a preferred value meant that those who chose it wanted to focus on helping others become Christians.
The seven preferred values that emerged from this part of the summit three discussion
as described in the finalized copy of LEFC’s Ministry Direction Plan (2003) were
dependency on God, biblical faithfulness/cultural relevance, authentic relationships,
engaging people who do not know how much God loves them, teamwork, equipping, and
integrity. The Ministry Direction Plan (MDP) described dependency on God as a desire to be
dependent on God for all that we are and do. For the MDP, the refocusing team combined
biblical faithfulness and cultural relevance into one value. The MDP defined these joint
values as the “unchanging truth of God expressed in a relevant way because God’s word is
relevant to all.” The underlying assumption in bringing these two values together is that it is
possible for the Bible, written more than 1900 years ago, to be relevant to contemporary
culture. Another strongly stated value in the summit was authentic relationships. The
refocusing team described this value in these terms: “life transformation takes place through
respectful, compassionate, accepting relationships, not just the imparting of information”
(MDP). Engaging people who do not know how much God loves them was a culturally
relevant way of saying “harvest-focused.” Teamwork was another value that surfaced as one
of the top ten preferred values at the summit. Concerning teamwork, the refocusing team said
in the MDP, “We value working together in harmony and order with accountability because
it is our deep conviction that by functioning interdependently we can have more of an impact
for the Kingdom of God than if each of us functions independently.” The sixth value of
equipping also made a strong showing at the summit. The MDP describes it as the
“empowering and equipping of believers to serve to their full potential as God calls them by
His Spirit.” The MDP describes the seventh value, integrity, as “honesty, authenticity and
humility because without it we cannot be people of integrity who are salt and light in our
world.” In an attempt to have a shorter and more manageable list of values, the refocusing team decided to drop the values of joyful and creativity from the short list as they had received less votes than the rest during the summit.

**Vision**

After discussing preferred values, the summit participants went on to discuss a possible vision for LEFC by answering the question: if God were to have His way, what would our church look like in the next three to five years? In small groups, we drew on large sheets of paper what we thought LEFC would look like. Once again, we had to present our personal values even as we had done in the small groups when we discussed possible preferred core values for LEFC. After the groups completed their vision pictures, Ray asked group representatives to post them on the wall and explain them to the entire group. Ray instructed us to look for four things in the pictures:

1. The uniqueness of each picture
2. The similarities of the various group pictures
3. The consistent threads or themes seen in all of the pictures
4. The “one picture” that seems to best depict the themes

Even though we initially reflected on the uniqueness of each picture, the remaining three steps forced us to come to a consensus about similar themes across the pictures. Ray also instructed us to ask whether the pictures reflected what is on God’s heart for the church and the harvest. Even as the small groups had transferred the personal values of group members into a vision picture, we now engaged in a process of transferring the various group pictures into common themes.
At this point in the summit, Ray gave the summit participants a break while he and I went off by ourselves to develop a vision statement based on the vision pictures and emergent themes. Ray used a vision template from another church and changed parts of it to fit what we had discussed during the summit. Several key themes in his proposed vision statement for LEFC were the same as those in the other church’s vision statement. When Ray presented the vision statement (see last part of Appendix F) to the summit participants, no one expressed publicly any major objections.

**Ministry Model**

After our discussion of vision, we talked about ministry models. Ray defined ministry models as depictions of how people flow through the life of the church and how the ministries of the church integrate into a holistic system. We individually sketched out how the ministries of the church flowed together. We then discussed in small groups the strengths and weaknesses of each model. We talked about the model that could serve as a starting point for developing a model of ministry for LEFC. Ray encouraged the groups to create a model that intentionally honoured our values (who we are) and positioned us to reach the people in our mission foci. Ray also gave us a handout with six different types of ministry models as a starting point for developing our own models. As the small groups designed their ministry models, Ray walked around interjecting his thoughts into the various group discussions. Once again, the small groups featured negotiations around which personal values the group would emphasize in the ministry model. In the end, Ray selected a model by including it in his summit summary, which went to the refocusing team for their consideration. Ray’s choice eventually made it into the finalized ministry direction plan.
Strategic Initiatives

The final discussion topic in summit three was strategic initiatives. The goal was to articulate initiatives that would help us accomplish our vision over the next three to five years. To be honest, I was very fatigued as we approached the end of some very intense deliberations. I do not recall much about the process of articulating the strategic initiatives and my field notes are sketchy. What I do know is that at the end of the summit we prioritized seven strategic initiatives by voting on them. I took note of how many votes each received (out of 36) and have included this information in the parentheses. The initiatives included community outreach (9), assimilation (helping people feel at home in the church) (8), caring for people (6), clarifying worship vision (4), strengthening of small groups ministry (3), prayer (3), and equipping (3). The total number of votes (36) seems rather low based on the usual summit attendance, which was around 60. It is possible that we had gone overtime and some people had already left. It is also possible that some did not participate due to mental fatigue. It would seem that Ray used a different voting system for the initiatives than he used for ministry values (where the top seven values received between 21 and 55 votes). If I recall correctly, we had multiple votes for voting on the ministry values, but only one vote when voting on foundational values and the strategic initiatives.

Pulse Groups

As with the previous two summits, the refocusing team sent out summaries of the third summit and organized pulse groups to get people’s feedback.
Mini-summit

In January 2003, there was a mini-summit to develop a pastoral profile. This profile would serve as a guide for the selection of the church’s next senior pastor. The refocusing team included this profile in the final ministry direction plan. I did not attend this mini-summit and so I do not have any personal observations as to how the summit went.

Congregational Approval of Ministry Direction Plan

After the mini-summit, the refocusing team met together to compile a finalized ministry direction plan. The refocusing team met after each summit to debrief and review the summit summaries that Ray prepared. Condensed versions of each of the summit summaries went into the ministry direction plan. The church board approved this plan and recommended it to the congregation at a special congregational meeting on February 16 2003. The congregational members in attendance voted overwhelmingly in favour of the ministry direction plan. As at the special congregational meeting the year before, the majority of those at this congregational meeting were part of LEFC’s leadership community and had participated in the refocusing process.

Summary

In this chronology of LEFC’s refocusing process, I have presented a timeline that shows the major events of the process. Yet, much more was happening beneath the surface. My first research question focuses on the intersection of power with knowledge during the refocusing process. To what extent did Ray influence the process and its eventual outcomes? Did the use of language push people in certain directions? How did people respond to terms like refocusing, personal calling, surrender, sin, and elephant of pride? How did the choice of
Scriptures influence people? The refocusing curriculum provided examples for participants to use as guides. How did these examples influence people’s thinking? Did other parts of the program, such as the articulation of ministry foci, give the process a decidedly outreach bent? The process often led people toward an apparent consensus. Was the process of consensus-building an act of power? Ray and I used a template from another church to help craft LEFC’s vision statement. Was this an act of power that influenced the final vision product? Ray appointed me to the refocusing team. He crafted the summit summaries. He led the way in changing the focus of the second summit. He selected a ministry model, which eventually made it into the finalized ministry direction plan. How did these actions influence the writing of the refocusing story? Yet, Ray was not alone in exercising power during LEFC’s refocusing process. The board was primarily responsible for selecting six of the refocusing team members and approving a leadership invitation list. How did these actions influence the course of refocusing? From my vantage point as an insider in the refocusing process, I saw many intersections of power with the formulation of directional knowledge.

My second research question focuses on the intersections between shared perspectives and power during LEFC’s refocusing process. How did the opposing perspective-based groups (traditionalists and progressives) exercise power during refocusing? What were the cultural values unique to each perspective-based group that gave rise to the perspectival clash? Worship style seemed to surface as a flashpoint for the collision of values. How did the opposing groups exercise power in the worship style debate during refocusing? The second summit featured an attempt to bridge the perspective divide. How did this exercise of power influence the perspective-based groupings and their relationship with each other? How did what happened during the second summit contribute to the exercise of power
by perspective-based groupings after the summit? From my vantage point, the perspective groupings exercised considerable influence on the refocusing process.

My third research question looks at how power intersected with participatory processes during refocusing. How did personally inviting a select group of people, as an act of power, influence participation in the refocusing process? Attending a Focused Living Retreat was a requirement for participating in the corporate refocusing summits. Only one of the Focused Living Retreats was open to those not on the leadership invitation list. How did this arrangement influence participation in refocusing? Some of the groups where discussions about refocusing took place (e.g. pre-refocusing information meetings, congregational meetings) were numerically large. How did group size affect the degree to which people contributed to the discussions? How did the practice of publicly voting at the congregational meetings and the third summit influence the integrity of people’s participation? Did some people abandon their personal values to go along with the majority? Did this naturally happen during times of consensus-building? How might this have effected peoples’ commitment to the directional knowledge – knowledge that did not reflect their personal values? The church members at congregational meetings usually endorsed board recommendations. Did the culture of congregational meetings mitigate against the expression of viewpoints contrary to that of the board’s, thus minimizing authentic participation? Was there a force at these gatherings that influenced participation? If some felt intimidated to speak out during congregational meetings, were there others who felt intimidated during other parts of the refocusing process? The stated intention of the pulse groups was to sharpen the summit summaries. Was this intention and associated initiatives acts of power that
relegated pulse group participation to the realm of fine-tuning? My perception is that power intersected in numerous ways with participation during LEFC’s refocusing process.

In this chapter, I have shared my observations about LEFC’s refocusing process based on personal notes, recollections, and documents from the process. I have posed numerous queries related to my research questions that come out of my observations of the process. My perspective is only one perspective. Yet, my chronicling of the process raises larger issues related to society. To what extent should privilege play a part in organizational decisions? When privilege does play an important role, why do non-privileged individuals and groups sometimes legitimize the decisions of the privileged without fully agreeing with them? Do some groups that tend to experience marginalization in society receive the same treatment in the church? Why do people feel intimidated? How might one’s view of organizational culture (or just culture in general) contribute to this marginalization? What views of culture might help to break hegemonic thinking to better address issues of privilege and marginalization? How can the privileged and marginalized come together? Even though my study does not address these issues at the societal level, it does provide some insight into these issues as they surfaced in one church during a one-year period. In the next chapter, I will begin to explore these and other issues as I combine my perspective with that of 20 other refocusing participants to generate insights about the intersections of power with knowledge, shared perspectives, and participatory processes during LEFC’s direction-setting process.
CHAPTER 5 FINDINGS

How does LEFC’s refocusing process look through the eyes of some of its participants (including myself)? This chapter seeks to answer that question, particularly as it relates to my three research questions.

- Research Question # 1: How did power intersect with the knowledge formation process during LEFC’s refocusing process?
- Research Question # 2: In what ways, if any, did shared perspectives intersect with power to influence LEFC’s refocusing process?
- Research Question # 3: How did power intersect with participatory processes during LEFC’s refocusing process?

The intersection of power with the knowledge formation process featured the emergence of five key influencers who exercised power that influenced the church’s directional knowledge. The intersection of shared perspectives with power saw the rallying of two opposing perspective groupings – groupings that became more distinct because of two powerful issues in the church: worship music style and church staff positions. The perspective groupings in turn exerted power on the direction-setting process. The intersection of power with participatory processes saw power factors influence attendance and involvement levels at the official refocusing events. In order to explore these intersections, I will be drawing from 20 interviews I conducted with people who participated in the refocusing process and my own observations. The numbers in parentheses correspond to particular interviewees.
Intersection of Power with Knowledge Formation (Research Question #1)

How did power intersect with the knowledge formation process during LEFC’s refocusing process? Who influenced the construction of the directional knowledge that later became the church’s ministry direction plan? Even though most of the interviewees could think of key influencers (16 of the interviewees mentioned at least one influencer with 35 influencers mentioned in total), there was little apparent discomfort about the possibility that these influencers affected the process more than others did. Based on the observations of my interviewees, refocusing documents, and my own reflections on the process, I noted that the church board, younger board members, the refocusing facilitator, vocal participants, and those who instilled confidence stood out as those who exercised power that influenced the construction of directional knowledge.

Church Board

Ten interviewees mentioned that the church board was a key influencer during refocusing. The church board recommended the refocusing process, selected the refocusing team members, and formulated the refocusing invitation list. All three of these actions were acts of power that influenced the formation of directional knowledge.

Recommending the Refocusing Process

The board initially recommended the refocusing process. There was little apparent opposition from the congregation when members approved the refocusing process at a congregational meeting. As one interviewee suggested, those who attend congregational meetings at LEFC tend to agree with whatever the board brings forward (18). The board’s
choice of a particular refocusing process with its inherent biases set the direction that
refocusing would take. Their recommendation was an act of power. It set the parameters for
what was “appropriate” directional knowledge and what were “acceptable” ways of
discussing directional knowledge. I will explore the nature of these parameters in my section
on the refocusing facilitator.

Selection of the Refocusing Team

The board’s selection of the refocusing team was another important act of power. Yet,
the selection process featured tension between some of the board members. Interviewee 14
characterized some of the older board members as “sort of intransigent in their position; they
were just not going to change regardless.” Some of the younger board members wanted
progressive thinkers who would embrace and advocate substantive change, if necessary.
Several interviewees saw this perspectival tension in the larger congregation (5, 6, 9, 12, 16).
The final composition of the refocusing team reflected a more progressive orientation as
team members were 35-50 years old. Did the younger board members use their power to
influence the configuration of the refocusing team? They certainly had more votes. One
younger board member at the time recalled “butting heads” with some of the senior members
of the board (6). Yet, he recalled that “most of the things that we butted heads over went my
way and not their way as a result of board direction.” It would seem that the younger board
members tilted the makeup of the refocusing team in a younger, more progressive direction.
The selection of the refocusing team, as an exercise of power, intersected with knowledge
because the team, under Ray’s leadership, helped guide the knowledge formation process by
making process decisions and deciding on the directional knowledge that emerged from each
summit. They were an influential group during refocusing and so their selection was of critical importance to the knowledge building that would take place.

**Formulation of the Refocusing Invitation List**

The process for developing the invitation list started with Ray. He recommended that invitees should be leaders in the church. This recommendation was an exercise of power that guided the selection process. It was problematic. Why did the invitation list not contain all of the official members (only 89 of 139 members were on the list), as they would ultimately vote on the ministry direction plan and related initiatives such as hiring a lead pastor to lead the church according to the refocusing vision? Were there other less noticeable ways of contributing to the church such as giving financially or serving behind the scenes that may have been important to consider as criteria for inclusion on the invitation list? However, at the time, I did not have a problem with Ray’s recommendation and proceeded with using it as a guide for developing the initial invitation list. This, too, was an exercise of power. The church board modified and then approved a list that had 136 names on it. This act of power set in motion a process whereby some people received personal invitations to participate in refocusing and others did not. The refocusing team invited those on the list to the first four Focused Living Retreats with the hope that they would then participate in the summits that followed. As mentioned in chapter four, the Focused Living Retreats occurred during the personal refocusing phase of the process. The goal of the retreats was to help participants articulate their personal calling statement. The summits occurred during the second phase of refocusing. During the summits, participants contributed ideas that informed the initial drafts of the ministry direction plan. Based on the refocusing records, no one who was not personally invited to participate in refocusing ended up participating in the first summit.
Admittedly, the invitation list may have been a good predictor of who would want to participate. However, two interviewees mentioned specific cases of people feeling hurt because they were not invited to participate. Interviewee 10 had some friends in the “homebuilders group at that time that would have taken part if they would have been asked, but they weren’t involved, per se, so much.” According to the interviewee, not being invited made their friends upset and “it made them feel disconnected.” One person remembered an individual who did not receive an invitation who was “one of the key people in our leadership up to that point” (20). This person “took it as a message meaning that he wasn't a part of us anymore and it was shortly after that that they left to find another church.” The use of the invitation list was an act of power. It intersected with knowledge because it influenced who would be the major players in constituting that knowledge. I will discuss further aspects of how power intersected with participation when I look at this intersection under my third research question.

The church board obviously exercised power in the recommending of the refocusing process, selection of refocusing team members, and formulation of the refocusing invitation list. Did the church board have a preset agenda during refocusing? Most interviewees did not mention that the board had an agenda. Yet, according to one interviewee, some in the church did perceive that the board had an agenda, which fostered a lack of trust in the leadership (2). Another interviewee wondered if board members had “already decided what they wanted and tried to push what they wanted within those smaller groups [at the summits]” (5). Even if this did not happen, another interviewee suggested that whenever a board member was present at a table group that “people just hesitated and stepped back a little to see, ‘What does the leader say?’” She did not think “that it was so much that they [the official leaders] tried to
dominate conversations so much as the people very much respected their opinions and for good reason.” Interviewee 11 felt that perhaps some of the elders had their own agenda, but even if they did, she did not think they pushed the process a certain way. Interviewee 18 took the position that she did not have a problem with sitting back and letting the elders make decisions because she trusted them. However, the fact that 10 interviewees mentioned the board’s influence and that interviewees spoke of individual board members as key influencers 24 times (compared to 53 times for non-board members – not counting Ray) suggests that the board members exercised considerable influence during the refocusing discussions. Their acts of power as a body and individually (interviewees mentioned 10 of the 12 board members at least once as being key influencers) effected the formation of directional knowledge.

**Younger Board Members**

I have pulled out the subgroup of younger board members from the larger church board group because they seemed to exercise considerable influence on both board discussions and discussions at the refocusing events. Interviewee 14 mentioned that he thought that the younger board members were key influencers in refocusing. The number of older board members versus younger board members mentioned as key influencers in the process supports this observation. Interviewees mentioned the five older board members 50 years of age and older 7 times, whereas interviewees mentioned the seven younger board members under 50 years-old 17 times. It is interesting to note that within the younger board members, three men accounted for 14 of the 17 mentions. All other board members had two mentions or less. It would seem that these three younger board members had even more
influence than their peers did on the board. As I have already mentioned, the increasingly progressive perspective of the board as seen in its dominant number of younger members seems to have contributed to the makeup of the refocusing team. The younger orientation of the board may have also influenced who was on the refocusing invitation list and who later attended the summits. It is also likely that the individual preferences of the younger board members carried more weight during the summit discussions as seen in the number of interviewees who recalled these younger board members as key influencers. The younger board members, as a subgroup within the larger church board, stand out as exercising considerable power in the construction of the emerging directional knowledge.

**Refocusing Facilitator**

Ray stood out as being a key influencer in LEFC’s refocusing process. Twelve interviewees noted how Ray influenced the process as he guided and facilitated it. He played a pivotal role in directing participants in the construction of directional knowledge. Yet, most of the interviewees held Ray in high esteem and accepted his directive leadership role.

**Directiveness of Ray’s Leadership**

One interviewee felt that Ray pushed things toward a final outcome (5). According to the interviewee, “This might have been when we were not really sure how to proceed...we kind of stalemated at certain points...and we really didn't have an answer.” The interviewee surmised that Ray would make recommendations “and because of our lack of understanding or lack of experience or call it whatever you want, [we would say], ‘Oh yeah. That’s a good idea. Let's do that.’” Based on this interviewee’s perception, it would appear that Ray used
his power at times to insert key pieces of knowledge into the process. Another interviewee remembered a “time when the facilitator said, ‘Who cares?’” when she made a comment (1). Reflecting on this instance, the interviewee said, “He was ready to move on and I wasn't. I felt hurt about that.” In this instance, the interviewee’s contribution of knowledge did not seem to match with what Ray considered “appropriate” knowledge and he used his power to dismiss it. Within Ray’s general directive leadership style, he seemed to be particularly directive in 10 areas of the process: selection of refocusing team members, choice of language used during refocusing, the use of particular Scriptures, the use of examples and lists to guide thinking, crafting the summit summaries, promoting an outreach orientation, changing the focus for the second summit, producing a draft vision statement, selection of a ministry model, and the push to create consensus.

The selection of the refocusing team members was a joint effort between Ray, myself, and the church board. Ray provided the criteria for the selection process, as mentioned earlier. Setting out the criteria was an act of power because it limited who could serve on the team. He also appointed me as the pastoral link on the team, another act of power that brought my influence to bear on the refocusing team discussions. Throughout the refocusing process, I felt that most of the people at LEFC respected me. At times, I wondered if people viewed me as something of a rescuer who had jumped into the role of an interim senior pastor and was helping to save the church. This widespread respect gave me entrance into most of the official discussions about the church and I felt that my ideas carried considerable weight. I tried not to abuse this trust, but I know that my ideas swayed some decisions. Ray’s appointing me to the refocusing team was an act of power that placed me in a position where I, in turn, could exercise influence on the knowledge formation process.
The choice of language used during refocusing represented important acts of power that influenced the ways people processed and formed knowledge. Five terms seemed to be particularly influential in the process: “refocusing,” “surrender,” “personal calling,” “sin,” and “elephant of pride.”

The term “refocusing” is one that Ray brought to the process. It was a recurring term used throughout the TLR literature. When the board recommended the TLR process to the congregation, they were aware that it would be a “refocusing” process. Interviewee one said that the term “refocusing” had a negative connotation for her. She would prefer to see the refocusing process as “continuing on the journey…rather than thinking that I have been wrong and now I need to refocus.” The term “refocusing” is problematic. Before acquiring a digital camera, I had a camera that required a manual focusing of the lens on the object of interest. First, I had to decide what I wanted to focus on and then I had to set up the camera to focus on that desired object. In this example, focusing requires someone to control the focusing process. In the same way, the term “refocusing” used by TLR assumes that someone would do the focusing. Who would do the focusing? It also assumes that there was a need for refocusing, as interviewee one suggested. Does this mean that the existing focus was inappropriate? Who decided if the focus was acceptable or not? If the majority of board members felt that the existing focus was unacceptable, did their views reflect the views of the larger congregation? Ray made it clear that ultimately God would need to redirect the personal and organizational refocusing. Yet, this assumed that each person who participated in the refocusing process could hear clearly from God. Ray also talked about the articulation of preferred values and vision. Whose preferences would prevail, particularly in the organizational refocusing? The underlying assumption from the start was that those involved
in some kind of leadership at LEFC were in the best position to participate in personal and organizational refocusing. Was this because Ray viewed the leaders as being closer to God and able to hear Him better? Were the leaders the ones who possessed enough influence to take the refocusing through to the final phase of implementation? How did Ray as the facilitator for the refocusing process help those who participated to understand their preferred values? Did he impinge his values on the personal values of others? Was he the one turning, or at least helping to turn the lens for individuals and for the church? The term “refocusing” points out a direct connection between power and knowledge. Someone exercised power (it could be the individual, God, Ray, the board, the community of leaders, others) that caused or helped individuals (during personal refocusing) and the church (during corporate refocusing) to focus on personal and organizational directional knowledge that was deemed “appropriate.”

“Surrender” was another word that came up during both personal and corporate refocusing. Based on the refocusing documentation, I noted that Ray asked those who participated in the Focused Living Retreats to surrender to God’s call on their lives. The assumption was that what the individuals had produced in terms of their personal calling statement represented God’s call on their lives. Yet, were people really surrendering to God’s purposes for their lives when they surrendered to their personal calling statement? Perhaps, they were surrendering to their interpretation of God’s purposes or perhaps to Ray’s interpretation of God’s purposes. Ray brought up surrender again during the summits. At the end of the third summit, the summit handout said, “Obedience to what God has shown us will require courage and continual surrender.” The assumption was the same as with the knowledge created during personal refocusing. We now have God’s directional knowledge
and we need to surrender to His purposes. Yet, the notion of surrendering is problematic. In terms of personal directional knowledge, does surrendering mean putting aside ideas that are contrary to what people have articulated in their personal calling statements? With the corporate directional knowledge, does surrender mean that people cannot express ideas that diverge from the supposed group consensus? Is it appropriate for people to surrender to the church’s values if they do not reflect their personal values? Was Ray’s encouragement to surrender an act of power that solidified people’s commitment to the current knowledge (both at an individual and corporate level) for at least a while? If so, this solidification of commitment may have made the knowledge more resistant to the inclusion of divergent ideas.

“Personal calling” is a powerful term. According to the Focused Living manual (2001, p. 30), a personal calling statement is “a holistic statement that integrates what a leader understands God has called them to be and to do for his glory.” It is a supposed divine calling that carries a lot of weight for those who desire to obey God. For interviewee two, personal refocusing was a sacred process. She found that personal refocusing was a time of finding out God’s call on her life. She said that it was good to “see the threads of God's hand and to see it all laid out for me. And then out of that, what came out for me, was to pursue a career.” A personal calling is powerful because it can provide direction. It is directional knowledge. Interviewee three observed that someone’s personal purpose ultimately comes from God. He thought that when we discover and live out this purpose, we are excited and happy. He felt that it also “probably allows you to make sacrifices more easily to accomplish it, more readily.” Interviewee one also talked about the importance of our God-given calling. She said that our lives must orient around our calling with Christ at the centre. It is this sense of God-given calling that compels us to act with passion and in sacrificial ways. Based on what
interviewees one and three said, personal calling is powerful because it can make people excited and motivate them to live out their calling. The directional knowledge intersects with power when the calling becomes influential in people’s lives. Yet, this is not the only intersection of power and knowledge related to personal calling. Ray’s use of the term suggested that what people articulated during personal refocusing was in fact a calling from God. He used a powerful term that endorsed, even blessed, the resultant knowledge. Yet, did every participant receive a calling from God? Interviewee eight could not seem to articulate her sense of God’s calling on her life during refocusing, which made her feel guilty. It is problematic to assume that everyone who went through personal refocusing received a clear sense of God’s call. The refocusing process itself may have pushed people toward the inclusion of “appropriate” elements in their calling statements. However, it would appear that many participants left the personal refocusing with a heightened understanding of and commitment to what they believed was God’s calling for their lives. This directional knowledge was powerful as seen in interviewee eight’s description of someone in her personal refocusing group:

She was just going crazy. You could just see the fireworks going off in her brain. If you would have sent her out on the road, she would have changed the world at that moment. She was just so inspired.

When the second summit started, Ray announced that he did not think we were ready to talk about the future because we still had unresolved sin issues from the past. It would have been one thing if he had simply used the “morally neutral” term “issues.” The use of the word “sin” implied that we were engaging in something wrong based on his judgment. He was exercising considerable power as a judge over our moral affairs. He compared us to the
factious church of Corinth (1 Corinthians 1-4). He wondered if we were maybe like the church of Laodicea that was lukewarm in its commitment to God (Revelation 3:14-20).

Interviewee 11 recalled that the second summit was when she became aware that there was sin in the camp. Ray used a powerful term to humble us. How did this intervention of power affect the knowledge formation process? Eight interviewees remembered the second summit as a time of healing and reconciliation (2, 3, 5, 8, 10, 11, 18, 20). It brought some summit participants closer together. This stronger sense of unity at the summit level seemed to expedite and focus the knowledge formation process that took place in the summits. I will look at this bringing together of perspectives and its intersection with power in more detail under research question two.

During the second summit, Ray also used the phrase “elephant of pride” to describe our sinful condition. Two interviewees spoke about Ray’s use of the term “elephant” (2, 9). Interviewee nine recalled that “He [Ray] had told us ahead of time that we have an elephant in our midst and that he would be revealing what that problem was in our church…The bottom line is we are proud.” I specifically recall that Ray talked about how this elephant was walking around the room. It was destroying things. Yet, he said that we had chosen to ignore it and try to carry on as best we could amidst the wreckage. Ray’s illustration communicated that he perceived that we had a huge pride problem and that it was having disastrous effects on the church because we were ignoring it. I invoked the power of the same illustration in my sermon two days later as I tried to help the rest of the congregation experience what some went through at the summit. What did this powerful image communicate in terms of the knowledge formation process? As with the term “sin,” it chastised us for pursuing our own personal agendas. It called us to unity. The assumption was that this kind of humility-based
unity would position us to hear from God. Yet, this assumption is problematic in that it may also lead to indiscriminate conformity. People may not express their ideas, especially if they are contrary to those of others, because they do not want to be guilty of keeping alive the “elephant of pride.” People may not even question Ray’s leadership or the emphases of the refocusing process for the same reason. Appealing to an elephant of pride may have stymied dissent. However, it may also have hindered divergent participation in the knowledge construction process. Based on the observations of several refocusing participants, there is no doubt that some experienced a greater sense of unity after the second summit, but at what cost?

The use of particular Scriptures influenced the refocusing process. The majority of Scriptures used to determine biblical purpose within each person’s personal calling were laid out as part of the refocusing process. Why did the writer(s) of the Focused Living manual give certain Scriptures more prominence in the formation of personal directional knowledge? In addition, Ray chose Romans 12-15 as the guiding Scripture for the confession and reconciliation time during the second summit. The three major themes of humility, love, and unity in the Romans passage spoke against the elephant of pride that Ray thought we were ignoring. Yet, using one passage to the exclusion of all others may have placed undue weight on these particular themes. What happens to the knowledge formation process when people overemphasize humility, love, and unity and underemphasize other biblical values such as honesty, forthrightness, and shrewdness? Interviewee 19 wondered if perhaps a type of groupthink set in during the summit discussions. She said:

What went through my mind was George Orwell groupthink. Whoa! Isn't it great how we get those masses together and they come up with this idea that none of us would
individually do...It worried me that the drive was such a group drive that there wasn't
going to be enough individual initiative to get balls rolling.

The emphasis on love, humility, and unity may have created an artificial sense of unity where
people did not openly question ideas or suggest ones that might be contrarian in nature.

**Using examples and lists to guide thinking** was a common practice throughout the
refocusing project. As I mentioned in chapter four, the personal refocusing manual gave 14
examples of values to consider during the writing of personal calling statements. The same
manual highlighted five sample vision statements, which participants could use as a guide. It
gave participants an idea of what was desirable and acceptable. Two others examples related
to the ministry model and the Values Worksheet are worth exploring in a more in-depth
fashion to show how their use (as acts of power) influenced the knowledge formation process.

When Ray asked participants in the third summit to develop a ministry model for the
church, he provided a handout of six ministry models that we could use as guides. All six of
the sample models featured four main components: worship, evangelism, equipping, and
pastoral care. The assumption was that these are core elements of church life – an assumption
based on a certain interpretation and prioritization of Scripture. Interviewee 15 said, “The
outcome [of refocusing] was kind of predestined to be what it was.” He felt that what came
out of refocusing was a biblical blueprint for any church. He said, “You look at the church in
the Bible and that's all you could come up with.” The interviewee was thinking specifically
of LEFC’s biblical purpose statement, which is to love God, love others, and share Jesus.
During refocusing, the interviewee had a friend whose church was going through the same
refocusing process. He thought they were coming up with the same thing, although they
expressed it differently. If the outcome of refocusing was “kind of predestined to be what it
was” (15), participants may not have felt the freedom to articulate or duly consider ideas contrary to the so-called “acceptable” expressions of church life. Assuming that some expressions of church life are more appropriate became an act of power that may have constrained the knowledge formation process.

During the third summit, participants worked on a Values Worksheet. The Values Worksheet came from TLR. The worksheet asked each participant to rank five foundational values and five ministry values out of 39 values for each category. I do not recall anyone questioning the appropriateness of the Values Worksheet. Yet, using the worksheet was problematic in that some of the personal values people articulated during the personal refocusing may not have fit with those on the selection list. Five of the interviewees (1, 5, 10, 13, 18) articulated the specific values they had listed in their personal calling statement. How did these values compare to the options on the Values Worksheet? For interviewee one, three of her eight personal values were listed on the worksheet. Interviewee five had five of his nine values listed on the worksheet. Interviewee 10 had three out of five of her values. Interviewee 13 had none of her 6 values on the list while interviewee 18 had 3 of his 7 values on the worksheet. Of the 35 personal values expressed by these interviewees, only 16 (46%) had identical matches on the Values Worksheet. Unless participants used the two available “Other” spaces on the Values Worksheet and even added additional spaces, it is unlikely that they were able to transfer their list of personal calling values to the Values Worksheet. Admittedly, they may have been able to choose similar values on the values list.

What was the relationship between the values on the Values Worksheet and the list of official values that made it into the finalized ministry direction plan? Six of the seven stated values were on the Values Worksheet. The unlisted value is very close to one on the list.
Even though some people may have used the “Other” option on the Values Worksheet, it does not appear that those contributions made it onto the final top-seven list. With both the examples and lists, there is a projection of what is “acceptable” knowledge. Their use was an act of power that pointed or even pushed people toward articulating (or regurgitating) “acceptable” forms of directional knowledge.

The crafting of the summit summaries occurred after each summit. Ray would bring a summit summary to the post-summit refocusing team meetings for the team’s consideration. Interviewee five (a refocusing team member) could not remember a time when the refocusing team sat down and said, “Okay, we've got these [summit] notes. We've got the draft document. Let's compare it to the notes.” Interviewee five believed that Ray accurately summarized the summit notes in the summaries. However, he acknowledged that:

At that point, there's always the potential and I'm not saying that it happened, there's the potential, that [Ray] may have taken something else, taken something out that we all missed or added something that we all missed or weren't aware of. He had the potential to doctor the document in any way he wanted to without it really being crosschecked.

The summit summaries were a key part of the knowledge formation process. They went to the rest of the congregation for feedback via the pulse groups. They also set the trajectory for subsequent summits and the finalized ministry direction plan that came out at the end of the process. Ray’s independent development of summit summaries that remained largely unchallenged by refocusing team members was an act of power that made sure that the knowledge formation process proceeded according to Ray’s interpretation and selective inclusion of summit ideas.
The promotion of an outreach orientation occurred throughout the refocusing process. One interviewee felt that Ray “seemed to give it [refocusing] direction and I wouldn't say that it's not where we wanted to go, but I'm not sure that we could have seen it as clearly as he could at the time” (3). The interviewee used outreach as an example to illustrate his point. After the first summit, the theme of outreach seemed to come out quite strongly. Yet, the interviewee could not “remember a time when we had done that as a church in the past. Maybe individual groups had done it, but not as a church.” According to the interviewee, the facilitator “seemed to be able to draw the bits and pieces and sort of say, ‘You guys seem to have a history of this individually, but maybe you should be looking at it corporately.’” This act of power forced us to consider outreach as a possible value within our directional knowledge. During that same summit, Ray also had us articulate three mission foci representing groups that we thought we should reach in our community. Pushing us to state these mission foci was another act of power that led to outreach being a major part of the emerging directional plan. One interviewee wondered if the facilitator’s passion for local outreach guided the process (19). She wondered if he had “a mandate either officially or unofficially or consciously or subconsciously ahead of time to get the church more missional.” During the third summit, participants received two community profiles corresponding to two geographical areas close to the church building. Each profile contained demographic facts and a fictitious story meant to add flesh to the facts. According to interviewee 19, the community profile was an attempt to “spark some zeal in people… to get people to grow a heart for the people they walk by every day in the street.” In fact, she felt that the profile tilted the whole refocusing process in a decidedly “local outreach” direction. Ray’s insertion of the mission foci and community profile components were acts of power
that insured that outreach would be an essential part of the finalized directional knowledge.

The change of focus for the second summit was an act of power that radically altered the knowledge formation process. Ray called me before the summit because he felt that we needed to change the summit focus. Tensions surrounding the minister of worship arts and director of children’s ministry had escalated. I noted in my journal that we had a seven-hour board meeting on October 22 where “we spent most of the time talking about staff issues.” Ray felt that we needed to address these and other unresolved issues during the summit. I felt okay about the proposed change. Ray ended up deviating from the planned process to give people a chance to express their concerns and work toward reconciliation (10). During this detour, he reprimanded people for their pride (5). Even though this reprimand was difficult to take, many of the interviewees viewed the repentance time as an important time of healing and reconciliation. I have already discussed how Ray’s emphasis on sin and the elephant of pride may have influenced the knowledge formation process. However, deviating from the planned schedule also meant that we would need to cram two summits into one to finish on schedule.

The creation of a draft vision statement occurred during the third summit. Ray and I met together toward the end of the summit to create the vision statement based on vision pictures from the table groups. Ray used a template from another church where he had facilitated a refocusing process. I believe Ray used the template because of time constraints and because he felt there was enough similarity between LEFC and the other church to warrant its usage. The introduction and conclusion to both statements (in their final form) are strikingly similar. The other church’s vision had six sub-points between the introduction and conclusion. LEFC’s vision statement had seven sub-points. Four of the other church’s sub-
points made it into LEFC’s list (statements about multiple worship services, creative caring for people in the community, small groups, equipping or training). Ray changed some of the words in LEFC’s vision statement, but there was still considerable overlap between the two sets of four sub-points. Yet, LEFC’s three other sub-points do not have any direct relationship with the other church’s vision statement. I think this example of how Ray and I formulated LEFC’s draft vision statement shows how other parts of the process worked. Ray and I exercised power to propel the process toward inclusion of certain non-negotiable values within the directional knowledge, but we also gave some freedom for the addition of others and the use of contextually sensitive descriptions for all of them. The assumption was that some knowledge was foundational and non-negotiable as to its inclusion in the direction plan.

The choosing of a ministry model also occurred during the third summit. According to interviewee two, the refocusing facilitator put a ministry model diagram in the ministry direction plan that did not “resonate with people.” She thought that people just laughed at it. Interviewee five also reflected on the facilitator’s selection of the ministry model and said that he did not think “that particular model was one that was accepted by the majority of the people…but yet it was the one that got pushed through.” This may have been a time when I influenced the process. I had been part of the table group that originally drafted the model and continued to support it throughout subsequent discussions. My support may have strengthened Ray’s attempts to include the model even though others thought it was hard to understand. The ministry model gave a visual representation of how the church would express its core elements. Of course, the model did not stray from the core elements that dominated all six of the examples that Ray gave us as guides. Yet, it was an important part of the emerging directional knowledge because it gave a sense of what the church should
prioritize in its ministry approach. Ray exercised power in supporting my model of choice (my support of the model was also an exercise of power), which influenced the makeup of the resultant knowledge plan.

**The push to create consensus** was an inherent part of the corporate refocusing process. In summit one, we sought consensus on the main events that had shaped the church historically and the values that had emerged from those events. In summit three, we tried to find consensus on our preferred values and vision (among other things). The push to find consensus was an act of power. Ray drove us to constitute common knowledge that reflected joint values and the will of God. Yet, this consensus-building approach is problematic. It tends to minimize diversity. The consensus-building that occurred around the church’s preferred values serves to illustrate this point.

After participants in summit three had completed their Values Worksheet, Ray instructed them to work in small groups to come up with a top-ten list of values. This required group negotiation. In our group, I recall how a longstanding member of the church gave considerable input into the values we eventually selected. As I recall, it was easy to articulate values that all or most of the group had listed on their worksheets. The negotiations became more intense with some of the values that were not widely shared in the group. We also felt a severe time pressure and so we probably did not negotiate as sensitively as we could have. In our group, those with a forceful personality were able to push along agreement on some of the values based on the time constraints. Those with more power generally saw their values rise to the top, although I can also recall times when people with influence would use it to bring the interests of others to the fore of the discussion. By the time my small group had come up with our supposedly top ten group values, six of the ten values I had articulated
on the Values Worksheet made it onto the group list. Admittedly, I probably had more influence than other group members did because of my position as a pastor and so it is conceivable that others in the group had even less of their values on the group list. After each group had compiled their top-ten list, Ray took the lists and put them up on the wall. He combined values that he thought were similar. Even this categorizing was an act of power. Did some values get lost in the shuffle? Did Ray consciously or unconsciously filter out certain values? After Ray had finished categorizing the values, we voted on them by going up and marking our favourites. The process of public voting may also have been problematic. Did people lean toward values that had growing support as seen in the number of votes beside them? The refocusing team took the results of the vote and articulated seven core values for the church, which church members later approved along with the rest of the ministry direction plan.

How well did the official list of values reflect the values of those who contributed to it? Five interviewees were able to recall the values they listed as part of their personal calling statement (1, 5, 10, 13, 18). Comparing their lists of values with the church’s list of core values will help shed light on the degree to which the church’s official values captured the diversity of those who contributed to it. One interviewee had two values (out of five values) that were identical to the church’s official values, two interviewees had one value (out of eight and nine values) that was identical to the church’s official values, and two interviewees had no values (out of six and seven values) that were identical to the church’s official values. LEFC’s official list of values had only 4 (11%) of the 35 personal values articulated by these five interviewees. Obviously, some of the interviewee’s other personal values may have overlapped partially and yet the comparison suggests that the church’s official values were
substantially different from the ones that the participants listed in their personal calling statements. The transference of personal values into LEFC’s stated values was only minimally successful at best. The Values Worksheet delimited people’s responses and seemed to foster a disconnection between what people had articulated in personal refocusing and what they were now contributing to the values’ discussions. The small group discussions reduced the richness of personal values (or at least those that people picked from the Values Worksheet) into a set of group values that only captured some of the shared values and missed many unshared or minimally shared values. The voting process and subsequent refining further distanced the emerging official values from the personal values of the summit participants. The final product bore little resemblance to the personal values that were supposed to give it life. The knowledge produced through consensus-building was largely detached from people’s personal experience. This is problematic. Interviewee 17 maintained that the church’s calling should take shape around people’s individual callings. She suggested that even as individual cells in the body group together to form an organ, combining individual callings determines the collective functions of the church. However, the process starts with the individual callings. Interviewee five used a different analogy to express this belief. He said, “We come from different perspectives, different values, different whatever, but putting them altogether, it can work as a well-oiled machine in that sense.” The goal was to put all the different perspectives and values together to form this well-oiled machine with each undiminished part contributing fully to the collective function. This did not happen. Instead, the resultant corporate directional knowledge was detached from the directional knowledge of its contributors. Pushing toward a consensus was an act of power that detached the corporate directional knowledge (in terms of values) from the personal
directional knowledge of those who contributed to the so-called consensus.

Did the detached directional knowledge have any value? One interviewee suggested that the ministry direction plan provided a general direction for the church (8). According to her, the plan was like, “Okay. This is the direction that we’re now going in. We’re going to Germany. We don't know where in Germany we’re going, but that is [where] we’re going.” Interviewee 16 had the same perspective. Interviewee 15 took it a step further. He felt that all he needed was the church’s biblical purpose statement: love God, love others, and share Jesus. For him, that statement defined the “playing field” while his personal calling showed him what he would do on the playing field. Perhaps, even defining this playing field was unnecessary. According to interviewee two, “If individuals follow their calling and know what their calling is and know what God is calling them to (that word ‘calling,’ I think it's big), then it's like the church will automatically function fine.” The process of building consensus around shared values was an act of power that may have produced general knowledge useful for setting parameters for expressions of church life. Yet, this general knowledge did not elicit the same power and passion as personal directional knowledge did for some of its contributors. As interviewee 19 suggested, it may have been beneficial to add an additional refocusing phase where people would come back to their personal calling statements and discuss in small groups how to live them out.

Acceptance of Ray’s Leadership

Ray repeatedly exercised power that influenced LEFC’s refocusing process. I have looked at ten major instances where his use of power intersected with the knowledge formation process. Yet, many of the interviewees accepted and appreciated his guiding role. They trusted Ray and this trust seemed to grow during the course of refocusing. As
interviewee 14 recalled, “Even though he [Ray] was an outsider, he became intimately involved with us…” How did Ray gain this level of intimacy and associated trust? The interviewees provided some answers to that question. He had experience in guiding churches through a direction-setting process (12, 17). He was a good speaker (1). Ray was from outside the church and some perceived him as being impartial (20). This impartiality was precious currency in a divided church. He appeared to be genuinely interested in LEFC (1, 10) and did his homework to understand the church’s history and current dynamics (17). At times, Ray would ask very direct questions (12, 14). He seemed sincere in his desire to hear people’s perspectives (17). Ray was personable and “respected everybody’s opinion” (12). He asked questions that not only made people think, but helped people to participate (13). Ray also came across as a person of integrity (20). He was transparent and even admitted some of his own weaknesses (12, 14). This transparency seemed to endear him to some people. Ray was perceptive (11, 16, 17). Interviewee 16 remembered how Ray noticed something in his notes during personal refocusing and clued into something that was there. Even though some of Ray’s values may have come across more strongly at times, interviewee 12 felt Ray’s vision for the church was rooted in Scripture. He said of Ray and several others that they “have a good understanding of the whole context of the Bible…they know how to express them [spiritual laws based on the Bible] and they do it in a way that's consistent with the source document.” This biblical orientation further strengthened Ray’s influence. Based on these responses, Ray did not gain people’s respect simply because he was the refocusing facilitator. He gained people’s respect primarily because of his perceived and observed competence, his genuine concern for the church and its people, his desire to hear people’s perspectives in an impartial way, his transparency, and his integrity. As the
refocusing process unfolded, Ray had the potential to use increasing amounts of power without repercussion to guide the shaping of the emerging directional knowledge because of people’s growing trust of him.

Vocal Participants

Seven people mentioned that those who were more vocal were key influencers. As one interviewee said, “The most vocal people are the most influential people” (19). Interviewee 18 said, “The most passionate people will certainly bring things up and steer a conversation in that direction.” She felt that happened with the topic of music.

Those kinds of things can gain momentum and that may be somebody’s main issue and it can take so much time to get through it that it can make other people just go, “Okay. I don't need to bother saying this at this time. There are much other bigger issues and we won't discuss it.”

Another person remembered, too, how one of the summit participants spoke passionately about music (17). It is interesting to note that five interviewees mentioned this person as a key influencer in the refocusing process (3, 11, 12, 17, 18). Another interviewee felt that there are more “aggressive personalities, more outspoken that tend to take charge of the group” (10). She did not think this happened at every summit table discussion, but she could remember one where it happened. Even though interviewee 10 felt that everyone had a chance to speak, she wondered if perhaps the outspoken ones got their way. Interviewee three recalled a summit table discussion where one person with a stronger personality dominated the discussion. He observed that the one or two teenagers at that table discussion seemed “uneasy, uncomfortable, or just in awe of being allowed to sit with these leaders within our
church.” Even though there was a general feeling amongst interviewees that everyone had an equal opportunity to contribute, some participants exerted more influence because they could “articulate or sell their point” (15). Another interviewee expressed how she appreciated these eloquent people (8). She said, “The rest of us little quiet people…we love those people to speak up because they’re talking and I don't have to.” The small group discussions made it easier for those who were quieter to speak up, but the more vocal ones still had the opportunity to dominate even in that setting. They exercised power through persuasive communication to make sure that their ideas at least made in onto the table for possible inclusion in the directional knowledge plan.

**Those who Instilled Confidence**

Interviewee 20 remembered some key people “who helped to stabilize things and give a sense of confidence.” These people had “relationships with lots of people in the congregation.” They had “shown their contribution over the years, their dedication, and their hearts so they could instil this confidence.” Longevity in the church was an important factor in determining a person’s influence for two other interviewees (4, 10). According to interviewee 20, others trusted these key stabilizers. Because of this trust, these people’s words carried more weight than what others said. The interviewee described the influence of these key people in this way:

…people had trust in them. They had history with a lot of those folks and people had seen their selfless contribution over the years. When they would speak, then people would have to acknowledge, “They don't have a hidden agenda, that they really are trying to help us, help this.”
One couple seemed to personify this description. The wife was mentioned five times by interviewees as being a key influencer while the husband was mentioned eight times (eight was the highest number of mentions for any refocusing participant, apart from Ray). They belonged to the Mature Outlook group. Neither of them were board members during refocusing. Yet, their reputation instilled confidence in those around them so that they emerged as key influencers in the process. They and others who instilled confidence were in a position to help construct knowledge, at least within the parameters set by Ray and the refocusing process itself.

In this section, I have shown numerous instances where power intersected with knowledge formation during LEFC’s refocusing process. The church board exercised power in its recommendation of the TLR refocusing process and selection of its major players. By making their recommendation, they set the parameters for the knowledge discussions. They also chose the major players (Ray, refocusing team members, those on the leadership invitation list) who could become primary authors of the knowledge script. Individual board members, especially the younger ones, surfaced as key influencers during the refocusing discussions. Ray exercised power throughout the refocusing process. He made sure I was part of the refocusing team. He used language that steered the knowledge conversations in certain directions. His choice of Scriptures also influenced the knowledge discourse. Ray’s use of examples and lists gave people a sense of what was “acceptable” knowledge. He took a lead role in summing up what he considered the most important knowledge from the summits. He took the initiative to change the focus of the second summit. Ray incorporated elements into the process that clearly gave the emerging directional knowledge an outreach bent. He proposed a vision statement that was similar in some of its main points to another church’s
vision statement. Ray pushed through a ministry model that many people did not understand or endorse. He also used consensus-building to construct “common” knowledge that supposedly reflected people’s shared values. Ray influenced the knowledge-building process. Yet, others also rose to the surface as key influencers. The vocal participants sometimes drove the directional discussions. Those who instilled confidence also exerted considerable influence on the knowledge formation process. Yet, power’s intersection with knowledge was not its only juncture during LEFC’s refocusing process. It also intersected with shared perspectives.

**Intersection of Power with Shared Perspectives (Research Question #2)**

How did power intersect with shared perspectives during LEFC’s refocusing process? Based on the participant’s stories, I noted that the power-perspective intersection was a two-way intersection. The perspective groupings exerted power and the exercise of power by others influenced the perspective groupings.

**Perspective Groupings’ Exertion of Power**

In order to understand how perspective groupings exerted power during the refocusing process, it is important to understand some characteristics of the perspective groupings. Each group functioned as a values-based subculture within the church. According to interviewee 16, the two basic camps during refocusing were “the camp of those who wanted to move forward and those who didn’t want to.” Interviewee 12 defined these two groups based on a traditional or contemporary view of where the church should go. One interviewee observed that, “Some wanted to hang onto what they were familiar and comfortable with. Some were very happy to move on to the new model, the new values, the
new direction” (5). He noticed this tension particularly within the board, a tension I discussed under the first research question. Interviewee six felt there was a tension between the older people (50 years-old and older) and the younger people (under 50 years-old), which pre-dated refocusing. Interviewee 16 felt there were “grasping” subgroups within the younger and older groups. He observed a “grasping mentality” on the part of some participants – some seniors grasped what was familiar while some non-seniors grasped change. He felt there was a subgroup of people from the younger and middle-aged generations that “wanted to point their finger in bitterness ultimately, in judgment basically, at the group that was bitter from the older generation.” How did these and others within the two perspective groupings exert power to embrace and push others to embrace what was important to them?

**Progressive Perspective Grouping**

As mentioned previously, the progressive group dominated the board and the refocusing team. They had the capacity to exert the most power within those influential decision-making groups. The use of the board-approved leadership invitation list, as another act of power, set a trajectory for those who would participate in the Focused Living Retreats and subsequent summits. The homebuilders, who tended to be more progressive, were overrepresented on the list while all other life stage groups were underrepresented (I will explore this intersection of power with participation under my third research question).

Attendance at the first summit reflected this inequitable representation of the larger church. The first summit participants were teenagers (4.9% compared to 11.9% in the congregation), single adults (4.9% compared to 10.4% in the congregation), homebuilders (73.8% compared to 47.8% in the congregation), mature outlook (6.6% compared to 19.4% in the congregation), and seniors (9.8% compared to 10.4% in the congregation). Interviewee eight
observed that summit participants were “all going in the same direction.” She designated these people as the “us” group and those who were opposed to the process as the “they” group. She went on to say that, “…if there was a ‘they’ out there, they weren't sitting at the table I was at or they weren't allowed in the big discussion group, as a whole, because I didn't hear a lot of conflict.” Interviewee nine observed a little negative cloister in the church that she categorized as “benchwarmers” who sat back and watched the refocusing process with scepticism. However, she only recalled seeing one “benchwarmer” at refocusing and he did not seem to add anything negative to the process. The summit discussions and subsequent summit summaries seemed to reflect the progressive orientation of the “us” group – those who were not watching the process with scepticism. The use of the progressive-oriented refocusing summaries to produce directional knowledge was an act of power. Yet, perhaps traditionalists could add their perspective during the post-summit pulse group discussions.

Those who could not or chose not to participate in the summits could offer feedback at the post-summit pulse groups. Setting up the pulse groups was an act of power meant to bring together a wide spectrum of people to sharpen the summit summaries. Pulse group attendance statistics show that 86 people participated in the December 15 2002 set of pulse groups that followed the third summit. Why did only 22% of the church’s adults and teens participate in this set of pulse groups? Interviewee one speculated that “even though there were pulse groups, those who were not invited to the summits may have felt intimidated coming to those.” She thought that because summit participants had already had their discussions, there might have been a perception on the part of pulse group participants that they were simply there to hear what summit participants had discussed. She also wondered if non-summit participants may have “felt a little bit second-class” in the pulse groups.
Interviewee five recalled that the majority of those who attended pulse groups had already participated in the summits. Even if those from the traditional perspective grouping attended the pulse groups, would they have been able to challenge the collective wishes of the summit participants? Two interviewees mentioned two different pulse group experiences where there appeared to be openness to share divergent ideas (2, 17). Interviewee 16 felt that people could express their hearts in the pulse groups. He “felt there was a fair bit of safety and freedom to express what people were feeling or thinking” compared to the summits where “people were much more reserved about sharing.” Yet, even though some of the pulse groups fostered open participation for some attendees, one interviewee did not think that people’s contributions in the pulse groups “made much difference at all,” except as a way of giving “them a chance to voice their concerns, or endorse it” (15). Interviewee 11 did not think that pulse group participants could change any of the major things that came out of the summits. People could voice their opinions at the pulse groups, but by that time “most decisions about how to move ahead had been made” (13). One interviewee remembered a pulse group discussion where one person was concerned about something in the document (5). The pulse group facilitator responded by saying, “This is already part of what has already taken place. It has already been agreed upon. It has already been approved. We've moved beyond that.”

Even though there was openness to share one’s opinions in at least some pulse groups, some participants may have perceived that their comments would not make much difference anyway. This perception is in keeping with the stated purpose of the pulse groups, which was to “interact with and sharpen the work done during the Summits” (Focused Ministry, 2002). Orienting the pulse groups in this way was an act of power that limited divergent participant. It is also possible that the progressive perspective grouping dominated the pulse groups, just
as they did the summits. They would have naturally supported their previously expressed ideas (or at least what they thought they had communicated based on the summaries). The intended purpose of the pulse groups was that they would provide a feedback loop for the larger church family. The assumption was that pulse group endorsement (or at least the absence of expressed concerns about the summit summaries) equalled widespread support within the church. The supposed church-wide endorsement became an act of power that further legitimized the progressive views contained in the summit summaries and the final ministry direction plan.

**Traditional Perspective Grouping**

Interviewee 15 thought there was a shift in the powerbase in the church during refocusing. According to the interviewee, “The old guard was trying to hold on and the next generation of leaders was really trying to be empowered and there was a struggle that way.” He thought this struggle surfaced in two different ways. For one, there was “resistance by some of the older people not to get involved in some of the refocusing process.” The interviewee thought they might have opted out of refocusing because they felt overmatched or overpowered. Maybe they felt that “even if they did get involved, it wouldn't make a difference.” Secondly, he noticed a lot of dissatisfaction on their faces and the shaking of heads. Interviewee six remembered two or three older, former board members who attended the summits, but who “sat tightly together and didn't participate at all with the group but they would whisper back and forth…they appeared to be quite suspicious.” Interviewee 15 felt that the dissatisfaction of some of the traditionalists resulted from not being able to move on and to accept how their relationship with the church was changing. The interviewee also observed a bit of a power struggle on the church board during this time, which I have already
mentioned. It would seem that at least some in the traditional group checked out of the refocusing process physically (by not attending) and/or emotionally (by not contributing during the official refocusing venues). Yet, they still exerted some influence. Interviewee eight was amazed that this group had their “shoulder up against the door that was quite powerful.” Interviewee 12 felt that some people tried to fool and abuse the system during refocusing. He did not think that this small group, which was a “very small percentage” of the whole, influenced the official refocusing process, although he felt that they “were quite vocal in other settings, small-group settings, private settings.” Yet, even though this group was too small to outvote the progressives on most occasions, interviewee six felt that they banded together with enough force to defeat a board-recommended lead pastor candidate after refocusing (the candidate needed an 85% affirmative vote and received 83.6%). Perhaps, this was a last gasp effort of some traditionalists to undermine the refocusing process.

**Influence of Power on Perspective Groupings**

Based on the observations of interviewees, the issues of staff departures and worship service music served as rallying points for those in the progressive and traditionalist perspective groupings. Deployments of power precipitated and at times perpetuated these issues, which in turn strengthened and polarized the perspective groupings. Ray’s change of focus for the second summit was an act of power that seemed to address some of the tensions surrounding these issues.

**Staff Departures**

Staff departures and their surrounding circumstances were a major source of tension
during the refocusing process. During 2002, LEFC experienced the resignation of its senior pastor and minister of worship arts. Both left with the perception that the board or at least certain members of the board had treated them unfairly and had maybe even wanted them to leave. The board’s actions in handling these staff members represented acts of power that contributed to the staff departures. Particularly with the senior pastor’s resignation, the perception that the board might have abused its power added to people’s sadness, confusion, and even anger. Interviewee 20 felt there were three groups that formed after the senior pastor’s departure. He described the three groups in this way:

> Probably, there was an element that was in support of the board and then there was probably another element that was very supportive of the [senior pastor’s family] and very questioning of the board or maybe accusing of the board that it pushed [the senior pastor] out or whatever. And, of course, there would be another element that was very hurt, kind of in the middle, thinking, “How could this be happening?” That they trusted all these people. “What's going on here?” And they're hurt, too, because they had a faith in their leadership.

Yet, based on historical patterns in the church, the refocusing process did not form these groups. They existed before refocusing. However, the refocusing process seemed to make the perspective-based groupings more noticeable. Interviewee 10 thought that the older people in the church were struggling to accept what had happened to the senior pastor. She said, “There was an awful lot of resistance” from this group of seniors because the senior pastor had been “able to connect with them so well.” Interviewee three also saw it as primarily a tension between the younger and older ones in the church. Those who were more supportive of the former senior pastor tended to be older and more traditional in their thinking while
those who were less supportive tended to be younger and more progressive in their viewpoints. The lead pastor’s departure seemed to draw the lines between these two groups more clearly and force at least some in the church to align with either the traditionalist or progressive camp.

The senior pastor’s departure was undoubtedly the main source of tension at LEFC during refocusing. However, as one interviewee said, the resignation of the minister of worship arts added fuel to the fire (10). Because of the worship minister’s close alignment with the senior pastor and his less progressive perspective, there was a perception amongst some traditionalists that the church board was trying to get rid of the minister of worship arts. There were misunderstandings between the church board and the minister of worship arts.

Interviewee 10 recalled that an outside person came into the situation to mediate and so she concluded that it must be serious. The board’s handling of the minister of worship arts represented a series of acts of power that contributed to her resignation at the beginning of November and to some people’s negative perception of the board’s role. Interviewee 20 felt that some people perceived a connection between the senior pastor’s departure, the minister of worship arts’ departure, and the debate over worship style (20). The assumption underlying people’s connecting of these events was that the board was trying to move the church in a more contemporary direction.

**Worship Service Music**

Worship service music was another battlefield during refocusing. At the start of LEFC’s refocusing process, the worship service had a blend of traditional and contemporary music. The delivery of that music was quite reserved in nature (lower volume, lower energy level, and limited movement on the part of worship leaders). During the refocusing process,
this began to change. The music started to tilt in a more contemporary direction with increased volume, more energy, and greater freedom of expression. Some of the worship leaders, the church board, and myself exercised power to encourage this tilt toward more contemporary and freer worship. This move began while the minister of worship arts was still in her position. The move seemed to exacerbate the tension between those who wanted more contemporary worship and those who wanted the traditional blended approach. Several interviewees described the two sides in the worship war as being those who wanted traditional or conservative music and those who wanted contemporary music (2, 5, 8, 11, 18, 20). Interviewee two described the groups in this clash as the “older, conservative people who'd grown up in LEFC versus the newer ones who have had other experiences that they're bringing into it.” When interviewee two spoke about a more progressive approach to music, she was not just thinking about music style. She thought there were people who wanted freer worship where people had freedom to express themselves beyond simply singing the words of the songs (e.g. raising of hands). Interviewee six expressed this kind of freedom in worship when he said:

People want to clap. People want to express joy. They want to be led in joy. Some want to be able to raise their hands. They want to hear loud music sometimes. They want to hear loud drums. They don't mind hearing a guitar rip or an acoustic guitar.

Interviewee two felt that some connected freer worship with charismatic Christianity and its perceived excesses. She recalls one gathering where “it was things about the Holy Spirit and how people were worried about these fanatical charismatics.” One interviewee thought that those who wanted a more traditional approach were grasping onto a past reality that the church had already left behind (7). Interviewee 8 classified the music tension as a clash
between the “us” (those 30-50 years old) and the “they” (those over 50 years old). Yet, she did not feel that the older ones were totally resistant to change. She felt “they didn't want it changed so much that it would look so different and be out of their comfort zone.”

The tension over music was more than just a matter of musical preference. It went to the heart of people’s perspective about the church – their sense of culture. Interviewee 20 felt that taking away the traditional music from those who wanted it (an act of power) was a “really important thing [because] they see a big part of their life being taken away.” Interviewee 16 expressed the importance of the music issue in this way:

When you walk into a worship sanctuary, you don't want your whole sense of worship culture to be challenged - the way you experience the world and in particular, the way you talk to and listen to God. You want sanctuary - a safe haven to place your heart. Different ways of worship can be perceived as an affront, as a block, to connecting with God. I have seen that happen with our seniors. It must be uncomfortable, even assaulting at times, to sit through our loud music. The language of expression is so different, so foreign. It must be quite a conundrum to try to find a safe haven to hear and express one's heart to God in the midst of this cultural clash.

Interviewee 18 noticed “the camp that wanted change had a lot to say” about music style during refocusing. This is not surprising because of the disproportionate number of those under 50 who participated in the summits. She wondered if the summit group was pushing the contemporary music side too hard. Was the perspective of those who had a more traditional approach adequately considered? Many of the summit participants seemed to prefer a more contemporary approach and for some this included freer worship.

The staff departures contributed to the refocusing process in two major ways. They
contributed to a sense of sadness, confusion, anger, and bitterness. As interviewees 7 and 14 suggested, this led to an unwillingness or incapacity on the part of some, particularly those who were older and less progressive, to participate in refocusing. The staff departures also added to the polarization of some within the perspective groupings because of their perception that the board pushed out the staff members to make room for more progressive leaders. The discussions around worship service style seemed to separate these groups even more because of the strong support for more contemporary and freer music that emerged from the summits. Interviewee 14 felt that these tensions were hindering the refocusing process. Something needed to happen to begin to bridge the divide between these two embattled subcultures.

**Healing and Reconciliation**

Between the first summit and the second summit, the board’s relationship with the minister of worship arts deteriorated significantly. This growing tension seemed to compound the tensions related to the senior pastor’s resignation and differences in worship style preference. The church board was not functioning as a unified body and had trouble communicating openly with the rest of the church. Even though refocusing occurred during this time of tension, many interviewees mentioned how the process fostered healing and reconciliation in the church. At least for some people, the process helped to reduce the tension between those who had a more progressive perspective and those with a more traditional perspective. How did the refocusing process ameliorate this tension? Two major types of power deployments seemed to bring some in the perspective groupings closer together: the board’s transparency in sharing information about the staff departures and the transparency on the part of some summit participants as they shared their perspective on
contentious issues.

**Board transparency** represented an ongoing deployment of power (holding back information was also an act of power as I mentioned earlier). At the start of refocusing, some interviewees felt that people were uninformed about the issues surrounding the senior pastor’s departure (10, 13, 20). Interviewee 10 said that refocusing promoted transparency; “not so much secrecy among the leadership.” Some of the individual board members shared their cultural perspective during the summits. These were acts of power. The day following the second summit, the board met with Ray to develop a board commitment, which featured a commitment to work as a team, to lead with vulnerability and transparency, and to deal with contentious issues in the church. The three issues mentioned in the board commitment were the departure of the minister of worship arts, charismatic issues, and worship styles. From that point on, the board made a point to try to be more transparent with the congregation. This transparency, especially around the staff departures, seemed to clear up some of the misunderstandings and hurt that kept people from fully engaging the refocusing process. Ray used his power to direct the board members in crafting the board commitment. As the board implemented the commitment, they exerted power that helped to bring some in the perspective groupings closer together.

**Summit participants’ transparency** was another important expression of power. Of those involved in the refocusing summits, interviewee 16 felt that “the vast majority, probably 90%, maybe even more, maybe 95%, were interested in dealing with the hurts and…moving forward, growing together.” This desire erupted during the second summit or “un-summit.” Interviewee 20 recalled that there were people that “shared their pain and…there was a bunch of tears and there was a whole bunch of people really sharing from
their heart as far as what some of the hurt and some of the issues were.” He thought that dealing with the tensions helped to cleanse people’s clouded perspectives. Even the elders said, “You know what? We messed up in a decision we made and we apologize to the church for that” (5). Interviewee three seemed to capture what happened at the second summit when he said:

…once somebody becomes vulnerable with you, if there is a compassion within your heart, it's going to mend whatever the rift was. It may mend it to the point that you still agree to disagree but you'll become more understanding of the person that you are having the rift with, or the tension with. I believe then that that tension will defuse itself and leave. And I think that's what happened within the un-summit. I think that some people were vulnerable. Some people had compassion in their heart for them and that defused the tension.

Another interviewee who witnessed this open sharing said, “Even if you didn’t necessarily agree with what they had to say, you were maybe able for the first time to see and understand why they were having the problem they were having because they were able to be so honest” (18). This openness was critical because as one interviewee said, if the tension was “left unspoken or undeveloped… we wouldn't have been able to hear from God…” (11). The stakes were huge! Ray used his power to facilitate a context for healing. For many at the summit, perspective-based parameters became less important and less clearly defined because of a major type of power deployment that occurred during and after the second summit: transparent communication. Yet, did the healing and reconciliation that occurred during the second summit transfer to the rest of the congregation? Interviewee 14 reflected:

Everyone who did open themselves up to the opportunity, probably was a lot more
successful in putting these hurts behind them whereas the ones that refused to do it, still held on to them and maybe do to this day.

Even at the second summit, one interviewee remembered “some people just not being in a place where they were very forgiving and choosing to be angry” (19). In reflecting on what happened after the second summit, interviewee five said, “I believe that that [what happened during the second summit] was very sincere and people really meant it and it was genuine, but I think it was very short lived.”

Two perspective-based groupings that existed prior to refocusing rallied during the refocusing process. Some wanted the church to be more progressive while others wanted to go back to the old days, maintain the status quo, or at least engage in change slowly. Those over 50 tended to be less progressive while those under 50 tended to be more progressive. Within these larger groups, sub-groups formed that had a grasping mentality. Some of the older ones were grasping onto what was or had been in the church. Some of the younger ones were grasping onto progressive change. These grasping attempts were acts of power. The progressives dominated the summits and pulse groups and clearly made sure that their perspective dominated the emerging directional knowledge. Some traditionalists tried to influence the process by not attending the main refocusing events or not contributing within those events. Some tried to influence the process in private conversations outside the official refocusing venues. The painful departures of the senior pastor and minister of worship arts along with the worship style debates served to strengthen and polarize the perspective groupings even more. Various deployments of power gave rise to and kept alive these perspective-shaping issues. The refocusing process helped to reduce the perspectival tension for at least some people. Transparent sharing by the board and refocusing participants
occurred throughout the process, but found its fullest expression during the second summit. This transparent and heart-felt communication was powerful and went a long way to relieving the inter-cultural tensions amongst some of the summit participants. It seemed to blur, even remove, the lines between the two camps; at least for some people and at least for a while.

**Intersection of Power with Participatory Processes (Research Question #3)**

How did power intersect with participatory processes during LEFC’s refocusing process? Participation, as I will use it in this section, involves both attendance at the official refocusing events and involvement (contributing ideas to the discussions) at those events.

**Power Factors Affecting Attendance at Refocusing Events**

Based on the observations of interviewees and refocusing documents, two major power factors seemed to influence people’s attendance at the refocusing events: the senior pastor’s departure (and lingering “presence”) and the leadership invitation list.

**Senior Pastor’s Departure and Lingering “Presence”**

Eleven interviewees mentioned that there was tension surrounding the senior pastor’s departure. Interviewee 18 said that the tension arose because some supported the senior pastor’s departure and others did not support it. This interviewee recalled a congregational meeting where the former board chair was lambasted over the way the senior pastor situation was handled. Some people thought that those who made the tough decisions “were unfairly judged and others felt that they had made poor decisions” (13). Another interviewee remembered a congregational meeting where “somebody mentioned that they could never
forgive somebody for what they did” to the senior pastor (15). As I mentioned earlier in the chapter, some people chose not to attend the refocusing events because of their hurt, bitterness, and/or anger over the senior pastor’s departure and the events surrounding his departure. Some people were simply confused about what had happened. Five interviewees mentioned that they felt that there was inadequate communication about the circumstances surrounding the senior pastor’s departure (4, 10, 12, 15, 19). This act of power (restricted communication) heightened and prolonged the tension for some. Interviewee 19 felt that because the former senior pastor “wasn't wishing us well” that “there were still a lot of people who were still stuck on, ‘What are you going to do about’” the pastor? Even though the senior pastor was absent in body, he was very much present in the minds of some. Interviewee 19 recalled that even during the refocusing process, some participants “were informing him [the former senior pastor] of what was happening” (19). This added to the tension. The senior pastor continued to exercise power on the refocusing process because at least some people were aware of his discontent with what had happened to him. Interviewee 10 felt that some people checked out emotionally from the refocusing process and did not even attend the pulse groups because of the bitterness they felt over the senior pastor’s departure. They simply could not get past the perceived ill treatment of the senior pastor. The board’s actions surrounding the senior pastor’s departure and the senior pastor’s response served as expressions of power that hindered some people from attending refocusing events.

**Leadership Invitation List**

How did the leadership invitation list influence participation in the refocusing process? The list was a poor representation of the church that set a trajectory for those who would attend the official refocusing events.
Of the 136 on the initial invitation list, 52.2% were females and 47.8% were males. This gender ratio was close to the gender composition of the church two years prior to the start of refocusing (55.8% females and 44.2% males - Wollf, 2000). According to a demographic study of LEFC conducted in 1998 (Wollf), equitable adult and teenager representation on the invitation list would mean having the following composition: teenagers (11.9% compared to 0% invited), single adults (10.4% compared to 8.1% invited), homebuilders (47.8% compared to 73.5% invited), mature outlook (19.4% compared to 11% invited), and seniors (10.4% compared to 7.4% invited). The teenagers were not represented at all on the invitation list. The mature outlook group was underrepresented by 43%. The single adults and seniors were underrepresented by approximately 22% and 29% respectively. The only group that was overrepresented was the homebuilders. They were overrepresented by 54% and had approximately 35 more people on the list than what would reflect fair representation of the church’s adult and teen population. The refocusing invitation list was not representative of the church, although it may have been representative of those serving in LEFC’s ministries. It is also interesting to note that the leadership list included 89 of the 139 active members listed in the annual report presented at the February 2002 congregational meeting. This means that the invitation list specifically targeted 64% of the church’s official membership as potential participants in the refocusing process. Once again, this likely reflects the makeup of those who were actively involved in the church’s programs at that time.

The refocusing invitation list seemed to set a certain trajectory for the refocusing process. Even though the board based the list on what most interviewees perceived as a legitimate criterion of active involvement in church programs, that criterion tended to include
those in the 30-50 age range and exclude others. Did this invitation bias carry through into
the first summit? At the first summit, teenagers were underrepresented by 41% (compared to
100% underrepresentation on the invitation list), single adults were underrepresented by 47% 
(compared to 22% underrepresentation on the invitation list), homebuilders were
overrepresented by 54% (compared to 54% overrepresentation on the invitation list), mature
outlook were underrepresented by 66% (compared to 43% underrepresentation on the
invitation list), and seniors were underrepresented by 6% (compared to 29% 
underrepresentation on the invitation list). The statistics reveal that the invitation bias of
homebuilder overrepresentation and the underrepresentation of other groups seems to have
carried over to the summits. It is possible that the youth and seniors had better representation
at the summits than on the invitation list because of additional efforts to invite people from
these groups. The mature outlook group had even poorer representation at the summits than
on the invitation list. This was the group closest in age to the former senior pastor, the group
that possibly grieved the most over his departure. Interviewee 17 observed that it was those
between 35 and 50 who were “really, really there [at the summits] and wanted to make a
difference.” Three interviewees noted the absence of seniors in the process (10, 11, 19).
Interviewee 14 noted, “It was probably the young families [who] made up the bulk of the
people who were really involved in the refocusing.” The leadership invitation list seemed to
set a trajectory for who would participate in the process. Yet, several of the interviewees did
not have a problem with this trajectory (2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 11, 14). However, two interviewees
remembered specific individuals who felt hurt because they did not get an invitation to
participate (10, 20). Not only did using the invitation list hinder some people from
participating in the personal refocusing (and subsequent corporate refocusing), it may have
discouraged some from contributing to the directional discussions at all.

**Power Factors Affecting Involvement at Refocusing Events**

There was a general sense amongst the interviewees that people could participate in at
least one of three official refocusing forums if they so chose. Obviously, some chose not to
attend the events. Yet, for those who did attend, what power factors affected their
involvement - the extent to which they were they able to contribute in meaningful ways? The
first five factors relate specifically to the summits (small group discussions, fear,
youthfulness, gender, and lack of encouragement) while the sixth (perceptions regarding
extent of pulse group power) and seventh (culture of acceptance of board recommendations)
factors relate to pulse groups and congregational meetings respectively.

**Small Group Discussions**

One interviewee felt that everyone at the summits had an opportunity to contribute in
these table group discussions (15). Even those who did not feel comfortable about speaking
in a large group could contribute in the small group discussions (12, 13, 17). In talking about
her preference for small groups, interviewee two said, “The smaller the better because I think
people feel safer in small groups.” Interviewee 18 remembered two small groups during
refocusing in which she felt free to participate. The one was during personal refocusing
where she was with three other women. The interviewee felt she did well in this setting
because she does “much better with women.” She felt that when men are a part of a group,
“They’re just too loud.” Yet, she also mentioned another positive small group experience in a
summit where the group had men and women. In that situation, she respected the person who led the discussion and appreciated his humorous, question-based approach. Interviewee 18 concluded, “It's obviously who I am comfortable with is what makes me get something out of a thing.” For some, breaking people off into small discussion groups was an act of power that encouraged meaningful involvement in the discussions.

**Fear**

Interviewee 12 observed that the refocusing process provided an open forum for people to discuss concerns, but people tended to be intimidated in raising those concerns. Interviewee 18 thought it was “really, really hard in a church” to get people to “share and say exactly what they're thinking.” They “want to be nice and do the right thing.” She was not sure that this is always honest. Some were afraid to express ideas contrary to the emerging majority position (12). Of course, as one interviewee suggested, there are some, like herself, who like going against the tide of current opinion (19). Some were afraid of conflict (13). Interviewee 18 felt that some might not have fully participated because of a fear of change. Two people said they were shy (10, 18). Even though people may feel safer in smaller groups (2), two interviewees took it a step further and said that meeting with the same small group members across summits might have helped to make the times more meaningful (1, 4).

Interviewee one explained her feelings this way:

> The church family to some people is not always a safe place. In a group that you are just fit in with for an evening, for whatever reason, does not become a safe place in 45 minutes for you to share yourself.

As some interviewees have suggested, fear kept some participants from fully contributing in the summits.
Youthfulness

Youthfulness came up as another power factor that some interviewees believed influenced involvement in the summits. According to interviewee 10, people heard youth less than they heard other people. One of the youth who attended the summits felt that the youth “generation was put aside or not critically evaluated or taken seriously” during the refocusing process (7). This interviewee thought that inviting younger participants was a “show” to make the refocusing process look like it was “widely participatory from many generations.” None of the interviewees mentioned the teenagers at the summits as being key influencers. Another interviewee observed that the youth at one of his table discussions seemed in awe of being able to meet with the leaders of the church (3). Interviewee 15 thought that initially the youth wondered if they had anything valuable to contribute or if anyone would listen, but they eventually realized that people were willing to listen. For at least the first part of the corporate refocusing process, youthfulness was a disempowering characteristic that minimized involvement for some youth.

Gender

Four out of the ten women interviewees said they had difficulty expressing themselves in the summits or did not feel that people duly considered their ideas (1, 2, 10, 18). This was true even in the small group settings. None of the men expressed discomfort about sharing in the small group discussions. With 40% of the women interviewees feeling like they held back during refocusing, it is probable that a similar percentage of the women in the summits limited their participation. As I mentioned previously, interviewee 18 said that she does “much better with women” because “the men get in there and they’re just too loud.”
The fact that interviewees mentioned men as key influencers almost twice as many times as they mentioned women (51 mentions for men and 26 for women) supports the possibility that women contributed less or were “heard” less than men. Some women apparently felt disempowered, which minimized their contributions during refocusing. Yet, this appeared to be an historic pattern at the church. Interviewee nine commented on how some people were amazed that there was a woman on the church board. This underrepresentation of women in upper leadership in the church was also apparent during the formation of the refocusing team. It was hard to get women to serve on the team resulting in a refocusing team dominated by men (six men and two women). Yet, I can only recall one instance during my years at the church when someone said she had a problem with men dominating the church’s upper leadership (this occurred in the months following refocusing). Interestingly enough, the board followed up this comment with a proposal to strike a taskforce to explore the issue of women in leadership in the church. However, this proposal was defeated (unanimously, if memory serves me correct) by the men and women who gathered for a subsequent congregational meeting. Those who spoke up at the meeting seemed to indicate that they thought it would be a waste of time in light of more pressing matters in the church. There appeared to be a culture of acceptance of men dominating the church’s upper leadership or at least a culture of restraint in expressing dissatisfaction with this dominance.

I found it was much more difficult to get women to volunteer for my study than men. After sending out the first invitation to participate in the study, I had 13 men and 7 women who said they would be willing to participate. In order to have equitable representation, I wanted 10 men and 10 women. I sent out a second invitation letter to the women who had not responded to my first invitation. Three more women volunteered to participate. During this
time another two men also offered to participate. Fifty percent more men volunteered for my study (even though I had approached more women than men – 31 to 27). Some of the women who said no to participating in the study said that they did not think they would be able to offer much. It is apparent that some women felt disempowered because of elements within the church culture and possibly within the larger society of which the church was a part.

**Lack of Encouragement**

Most interviewees indicated that they felt that summit participants had ample opportunity to participate. Yet, as one interviewee said, “I think people had ample opportunity for sure, but whether there was ample encouragement, that's debatable, because it takes so much to bring people out and get them to actually get the nerve up to say something” (18). It is one thing to give people a platform on which to speak and quite another to actually help them use that platform. It was almost as if some people needed extra help, maybe even trained help, to contribute their ideas. Interviewee seven felt that it would have been beneficial to have outside people, perhaps a team that Ray would have brought in, to facilitate the table group discussions. They would have had more freedom to disassociate themselves from LEFC-based biases within the discussions and focus on encouraging people to use their voices. It is evident that Ray used his power to help people feel safer to some extent in the summits, but some still did not feel safe enough to contribute in a substantive way.

**Perceptions Regarding Extent of Pulse Group Power**

I have already discussed how people’s perceptions of the limited extent of pulse group power may have limited pulse group attendance/involvement and further strengthened
the progressive ideas from the summits. Some people obviously perceived that the pulse groups were simply venues for sharing information from the summits and gathering feedback that would sharpen the summit summaries. One interviewee talked about refocusing as an opportunity to help shape or construct LEFC’s future “story” and that “those who get invited to author the story are the ones that are involved the most” (3). He went on to describe those who attended all the summits as primary authors, those who attended some of the summits as secondary authors, and those who participated in pulse groups as members of the editorial board. If pulse group participants perceived that they were editors of the refocusing script, it is unlikely that they would attempt to change the story line to any great degree.

**Culture of Acceptance of Board Recommendations**

The congregational meetings were an important part of the refocusing process because they were the forum where church members initially approved the process and later endorsed the ministry direction plan. To what extent did these meetings provide a forum for openly communicating ideas? Not many interviewees commented on the participatory nature of the congregational meetings. One interviewee who was new to the church did not feel like she had the right to speak out at congregational meetings (19). The reason for her reluctance to speak out at the congregational meetings prior to refocusing was that she felt that she and her husband “were adherents with a whole bunch of other people” and that they did not “do anything of any great significance around” the church. Interviewee one expressed that people may have felt intimidated at the congregational meetings. She said, “Not everyone is going to stand up at a big meeting and say what you think. That can be pretty intimidating when the invited people have already done their thing, the pulse groups have already done their thing.”
Interviewee 18 said that, for the most part, those at the congregational meetings usually rubber-stamped board recommendations without a lot of widespread discussion. She said:

    When things are decided…I feel that they get done at a board level for the most part. The decisions are made. They are sent out to the church to see what you think of it, but then we just kind of agree for the most part as a rule. I mean, congregational meetings in this church are just kind of like I mean, one or two say, “No,” and everybody else just goes, “Okay.”

It was almost like there was a culture of acceptance at these congregational meetings concerning board recommendations. This culture of acceptance was powerful because it not only supported the board’s acts of power, it also reduced the power of attendees in suggesting alternative ways of thinking.

In summary, power intersected with participatory processes in two major ways. The first way was that power affected attendance at refocusing events. The senior pastor’s departure and lingering “presence” intensified feelings of sadness, bitterness, and/or anger on the part of some at the church. Some of these opted out of the refocusing events. The leadership invitation list also impacted attendance. Even though there was a small door (the fifth Focused Living Retreat) for non-invitees to gain access to the summits, it does not appear that any took that opportunity. The second major way that power intersected with participation related to the level of involvement at refocusing events. How did deployments of power encourage or hinder this kind of participation? Interviewees talked about seven power factors that influenced involvement. Within the summits, the small group discussions, fear, youthfulness, gender, and lack of encouragement functioned as power factors that influenced the degree to which people contributed to the process. Perceptions about the
extent of pulse group power limited participation for some people during the pulse groups. A culture of acceptance regarding board recommendations seemed to influence participation at congregational meetings. All of these power factors affected involvement at the refocusing events where the construction of directional knowledge was taking place.

**Summary**

In this chapter, I have used the observations of my interviewees, refocusing documents, and my own observations to gain insight into my three research questions. My first question was: how did power intersect with the knowledge formation process? Five key influencers emerged during the process: the church board, younger board members, the refocusing facilitator, vocal participants, and those who instilled confidence. These people exerted power that influenced the construction of the emerging directional knowledge. The power of privilege was evident. Those on the church board, refocusing team (including Ray), and the summit participants exerted considerable influence from a place of privilege. Yet, the use of language, Scriptures, lists, examples, and consensus-building processes also seemed to guide refocusing in certain directions. Within this somewhat scripted direction, those who were more outspoken and who instilled confidence in others had considerable influence. An underlying assumption that undergirded the whole process was that articulating a direction plan (built on consensus) was the apex of the refocusing process. Yet, what happened to the personal calling statements that participants had articulated at the start of the process? Why had their apparent importance lessened during the articulation of the corporate calling? This points to the possibility that how one views organizational culture and change has a profound impact on the way one uses and negotiates the use of power. Besides intersecting with the knowledge formation process, power also intersected with shared perspectives. In pursuing
answers to my second research question, how did shared perspectives intersect with power, the interviewees revealed that most of the summit participants adhered to a progressive perspective. They shaped the directional knowledge from the inside as primary authors of the refocusing script. Those with a more traditional perspective may have exerted some influence on the “hallway discussions,” but their viewpoints did not seem to register in the official refocusing discussions. Debates over important organizational symbols seemed to strengthen and polarize the two perspective-based camps. Transparent communication during and after the second summit seemed to bring some people together in terms of understanding and even accepting the differing perspectives of others. Yet, the power of transparency did not seem to have long-term staying power. Not addressing the deep-seated frustrations of some traditionalists contributed to their eventual regrouping and defeat of the motion to hire the first lead pastor candidate. My third research question, how did power intersect with participatory processes, sought to generate insights about how power factors influenced attendance at and involvement in the refocusing events. The senior pastor’s departure and lingering “presence” along with the leadership invitation list seemed to influence participation in terms of attendance at official refocusing events. Power factors that influenced the degree to which people contributed ideas at those events were the small group discussions, fear, youthfulness, gender, lack of encouragement, perceptions regarding the extent of pulse group power, and a culture of acceptance of board recommendations at congregational meetings. Intimidation was a key factor that hindered some individuals and subgroups from fully participating in the process. It is obvious that power permeated LEFC’s refocusing process. It intersected with knowledge, shared perspectives, and participatory processes to influence the church’s direction-setting process.
CHAPTER 6 DISCUSSION

LEFC’s refocusing process featured intersections of power, knowledge, shared perspectives, and participatory processes. In this chapter, I will discuss how the interviewee’s stories, my story as an inside observer, and the literature story inform each other and generate understanding about my three research questions. In so doing, I will look at the types of power that appeared at those intersections. Those intersections occurred throughout LEFC’s refocusing process and represented key dimensions of the knowledge formation process.

Situating the Refocusing Process within a Regime of Truth

Foucault (Rabinow, 1984) maintained that regimes of truth guide interpersonal discourse. LEFC’s direction setting process featured extensive discursive practices as people strove to articulate directional knowledge. Foucault believed that truth regimes govern these discursive practices by forbidding discussion of certain topics, stipulating who can fully express themselves, and determining “allowable” forms for “acceptable” ideas. Reyna and Schiller (1998) add that within regimes of truth, certain knowledge becomes legitimate and functions in a privileged position to guide thinking and action. LEFC’s refocusing process took place within a regime of truth. The concept of an all-inclusive regime of truth is in keeping with an integrated perspective of culture, as described by Meyerson and Martin (1987), that views culture as an integrated whole. LEFC’s pre-refocusing regime of truth had a mixture of traditional and progressive values. Refocusing provided a context for the articulation of more progressive values. Foucault also proposed that those with the most power tend to dictate the rules within a regime of truth. The focus in this assertion is on individuals and their fragmented (in keeping with Meyerson and Martin’s third view of
culture) connections or struggles (using Foucaultian terminology) with others. In addition to individuals as sources of power, Webber (2002) and Becker (1999) suggest that people coalesce around shared perspectives. These groups are differentiated (Meyerson and Martin’s second approach to culture) to some degree and exercise power in the development of their own sub-regime truths. In LEFC’s case, the progressives were challenging some of the traditional values within the church’s truth regime. What or who were the sources of power that guided the directional discussions? In order to answer that question, I will look at the major types of power that intersected with the knowledge formation process, shared perspectives, and participatory processes. As I do so, I will generate understanding about my three research questions.

**Intersection of Power with Knowledge Formation (Research Question #1)**

The knowledge formation process at LEFC involved the construction of directional knowledge. The final product of this knowledge construction process was the church’s ministry direction plan. Four major types of power seemed to exert influence on the knowledge formation process: privilege, discursive practices, outspokenness, and trust.

**Power of Privilege**

Gordon and Grant (2004), in their discussion of the power-as-entity approach to power, suggest that people can exert power based on their official position. Three groups enjoyed a privileged position during LEFC’s refocusing process: the church board (including myself), the refocusing team (including Ray), and summit participants.
Church Board

The church board represented a positional entity – a place of privilege. The congregational members rarely challenged board recommendations with enough cohesion to overturn them. As interviewee 18 said, “When things are decided…I feel that they get done at a board level for the most part…congregational meetings in this church are just…one or two say, ‘No,’ and everybody else just goes, ‘Okay.’” When it came to deciding about whether to procure the services of TLR, it was really a board decision that the majority of members at a congregational meeting rubber-stamped. Yet, it is interesting to note that the rubber-stamping gave the appearance of church-wide support. The board’s selection of TLR as the refocusing vehicle of choice also mandated the acceptance of Ray as the driver for the vehicle. Beyond selecting TLR to lead the refocusing process, the church board also chose the refocusing team members and approved the refocusing invitation list. Beyond board decisions, individual board members also influenced the refocusing discussions. Of all the key influencers that interviewees mentioned (excluding Ray), 31% were board members (they made up only 16% of the participants at the first summit). Interviewee 19 observed that whenever a board member was at a summit table discussion, “People just hesitated and stepped back a little to see, ‘What does the leader say?’” The younger board members (three in particular) seemed to exert more influence than the other board members (interviewees mentioned younger board members as key influencers 17 times while mentioning the older members 7 times). They were powerbrokers - major shapers of the church’s regime of truth. Those privileged enough to be board members exerted considerable influence on the knowledge formation process by determining its parameters (going with TLR), selecting its major players (refocusing team, summit participants), and even weighing in on specific
directional discussions. Three interviewees wondered, or had heard others questioning if the church board had an agenda during refocusing (2, 5, 10). Whether they did or not, it is evident from my findings that they set the direction for the process and determined its major spokespeople. They also seemed to contribute regularly to the refocusing discussions with noticeable effect. The progressive-dominated church board exercised considerable power to make sure that the truth regime increasingly reflected their preferences. Because LEFC was constructing directional knowledge during refocusing, they were setting in motion plans for the church’s future truth regime. By setting the parameters for refocusing, choosing its major contributors, and contributing extensively themselves, the church board positioned themselves as supervisors for the construction of the church’s future truth regime.

In keeping with an integrated view of culture, as described by Meyerson and Martin (1987), the board and some of its individual members were determining to a large degree the values that people could embrace throughout the organization. Yet, as a subgroup within the larger church, did they really have the power to mandate acceptance of certain values? How did individual agency play into the acceptance or rejection of the values that the board and TLR deemed appropriate? In later sections, I will explore some possible answers to these questions.

I was a significant player on the church board and throughout the church at that time. Five interviewees mentioned that they thought I was a key influencer in the process. I was not hesitant to state my views during board meetings and to do so vigorously at times. I also spoke up during the refocusing team meetings and other refocusing discussions. I also functioned as a type of silent partner with Ray in leading the refocusing process. Ray often conferred with me about refocusing decisions. The change of focus for the second summit
and the selection of the vision template are examples of how we made decisions together. As
the senior member of the pastoral staff, I also did most of the preaching and oversaw the
daily operations of the church. I was involved in almost every facet of church life.

**Refocusing Team**

The eight-member refocusing team was responsible for facilitating the refocusing process. Based on minutes of the team meetings, it is obvious that the team made key decisions about refocusing events and the emerging directional knowledge. The team certainly served to legitimize the summit summaries through their endorsement of them. Yet, interviewee five (a refocusing team member) could not recall a time when the team said, “Okay, we've got these [summit] notes. We've got the draft document. Let's compare it to the notes.” Ray would take the lead in setting the agendas for the refocusing team meetings, although he would sometimes confer with me as to what I thought we should include. He chaired the meetings. He obviously took a lead role on the team. Yet, the team endorsed the summaries and gave them legitimacy. They were a privileged team because some in the congregation perceived them as facilitating the refocusing process. They did facilitate the process, but with extensive guidance from Ray. I will discuss more about how Ray influenced the process in the “discursive practices” section.

**Summit Participants**

Those on the initial refocusing invitation list (and those added later) represented a privileged group. The church board considered them leaders in the church. By virtue of their perceived position, they gained entrance into the primary knowledge formation discussions. It is important to note that the process of inviting leaders to be primary authors of the
refocusing process reflects an integrated approach to culture, as described by Meyerson and Martin (1987), with its focus on leaders as the major shapers of a shared sense of culture. Ray, with the support of the church board and refocusing team, assumed that these leaders were and would be the primary contributors to the culture-shaping discussions. As interviewee three suggested, those who attended the majority of the summits became primary authors of the refocusing story. The summit participants were in a place of privilege. The refocusing team had personally invited the church’s “key players” to participate. At least seven interviewees (2, 6, 8, 10, 14, 17, 20) spoke of how those who were noticeably active in the church should have the right to determine the church’s direction. This once again speaks to an integrated view of culture. Yet, not everyone viewed the inviting of a privileged group of people in a favourable light (1, 10, 16, 20). Interviewee 20 observed that some felt excluded from the process and even left the church. Others felt disconnected (10). The refocusing invitation list and those who attended the first summit did not adequately represent the larger church in terms of life stages. The homebuilders group made up of married people between the ages of 19 and 41 was heavily overrepresented (54%) while all other groups were underrepresented (teenagers – 41%, single adults – 47%, mature outlook 66%, seniors – 6%). Some interviewees challenged the power of privilege in terms of those chosen to be primary authors of the refocusing script. They would have preferred an open invitation where anyone in the church could attend the primary knowledge formation sessions. This open invitation preference suggests that some in the church viewed organizational change as originating with individual organizational members and not the leadership per se. For them, every individual’s perspective was important in bringing about change. However, it was the homebuilders who dominated this privileged group of summit participants.
The power of privilege was very much a part of LEFC’s refocusing process as seen in the influence of the church board, refocusing team, and summit participants. The people in these positions of power had the opportunity to determine the parameters for “acceptable” truth within the church’s emerging truth regime, or at least within the sub-regime of which they were a part.

**Power of Discursive Practices**

Throughout the refocusing process, Ray employed various discursive practices that influenced the evolution of LEFC’s truth regime and the directional knowledge constructed within that regime. In his description of the discursive voice within archaeology, Foucault (1972, pp. 193-194) says:

> Archaeological analysis would…try to discover whether space, distance, depth, colour, light, proportions, volumes, and contours were not, at the period in question, considered, named, enunciated, and conceptualized in a discursive practice; and whether the knowledge that this discursive practice gives rise to was not embodied perhaps in theories and speculations, in forms of teaching and codes of practice, but also in processes, techniques, and even in the very gesture of the painter.

Discursive practices are the expressions people use to communicate knowledge. These discursive practices are value-laden. Ray and others used discourses such as oral communication and texts to convey knowledge. However, they also delivered those discourses in certain ways and in specific contexts that took them beyond simply being discourses. The term “discursive practices” as Foucault describes it includes discourses, but it also encompasses the techniques used to deliver those discourses. Gordon and Grant (2004), in their power-as-strategy approach to power, maintain that this approach to power features
relational struggles as the source of power. It is in these relational struggles that the strugglers construct knowledge. Combining Gordon and Grant’s power-as-strategy approach with Foucault’s view of discursive practices suggests the possibility that discursive practices set parameters for the knowledge struggles that took place during the refocusing process. As I look at the discursive practices, I will view them in terms of their impact on individuals, church subgroups, and the organizational membership as a whole. Viewing the discursive practices through these three lenses will help to shed light on how they influenced the various dimensions of the knowledge formation process. In doing so, I am assuming that robust directional knowledge must embody the values from all three of these levels. The discursive practices I will look at are the use of language, the use of specific Scriptures, the use of lists and examples, the inclusion of outreach-oriented components, the creation of a draft vision statement, the adoption of a particular ministry model, and the move to create consensus.

Use of Language

I have already described five terms used during refocusing: “refocusing,” “surrender,” “personal calling,” “sin,” and “elephant of pride.” Ray and I were probably the ones who used these terms the most in public forums. Ray used them publicly during the Focused Living Retreats and summits. I used them publicly in the sermons I preached on Sunday mornings. We used a similar discourse, but the difference in audience, timing, and location added different meanings to the discourse. As Foucault (1972) suggest, even the gesture of the painter (in this case, the speakers) can communicate knowledge. We used different gestures and speaking techniques, so the knowledge Ray communicated was likely somewhat different from the knowledge I communicated. How did the use of language as a discursive practice contribute to the knowledge formation process?

The term “refocusing” suggests that the church’s pre-refocusing directional
knowledge was in some way deficient. Interviewee one picked up on this assumption as I mentioned in chapter five. She said she would prefer to focus on “continuing on the journey…rather than thinking that I have been wrong and now I need to refocus.” The term “refocusing” also suggests that participants (in the refocusing process) can obtain better directional knowledge when TLR’s designated facilitator and his refocusing team guides the knowledge formation process. The TLR literature is very clear that God needs to lead the refocusing process. Yet, it is obvious that the refocusing facilitator played a lead role in hearing from God as to the foci of the directional discussions. Interviewee one felt that Ray pushed things along. She felt that the process was very structured and that Ray had an end in mind. In keeping with Foucault (1972), Ray’s facilitating techniques and the processes he employed communicated knowledge. For interviewee one, it was almost like you had to finish the workbooks to get to where you needed to be. Interviewee five felt that same push toward a final outcome and that Ray would make recommendations when the participants were uncertain about something. Even though God may have been the divine focuser (speaking with my spiritual voice), it is evident that Ray was the main human focuser. Yet, as a silent partner, I believe that I also had a hand on the refocusing lens. This leader instrumentality aligns with an integrated view of culture as described by Meyerson and Martin (1987). Ray and I (and the refocusing team to a lesser degree) were responsible for guiding the cultural “improvement” process by making sure that the directional discussions fit within the acceptable truth parameters.

The terms “surrender” and “calling” seem to go hand-in-hand. The refocusing process was all about determining personal and corporate calling and then surrendering to those callings. The term “calling” gave the personal and corporate directional knowledge divine status. Weber (1958) believed that a Protestant work ethic emerged from a sense of God-
given calling. People with this calling worked with restless effort to achieve it. This same kind of commitment and passion surfaced during refocusing for some who were able to articulate or affirm their sense of God-given calling. Interviewee two viewed personal refocusing as a “sacred process” that led her to “pursue a career.” Interviewee three felt that living out our calling makes us happy and helps us to make sacrifices to accomplish it. As Weber asserted, a sense of divine calling is a powerful motivator. Even though the personal calling statements were ministry oriented as opposed to work oriented (in Weber), the fact that both are values-based shows the importance of values as foundational elements within a calling. Values are foundational because they inform our attitudes and behaviours (McCarty & Shrum, 2000; Olver & Mooradian, 2003; Rokeach, 1973). As personal refocusing participants articulated their sense of the values God wanted them to emphasize, they were able to craft a personal vision – a desired set of behaviours – that would guide their lives in a compelling way. For some, the personal calling knowledge was powerful. Part of the reason that it was powerful was because Ray designated it a “calling.” I also reinforced the importance of “calling” by preaching on it for six Sundays between October 27 and December 15 2002. Having a divine calling is very motivating for those who want to obey and please God. Of course, obedience requires surrender. Without surrendering to the calling (and abandoning some other pursuits), it is unlikely that people will live out their personal and corporate callings with restless effort. Another reason that the personal callings were powerful for some was because they were expressions of people’s individual identity. They celebrated uniqueness and diversity. Yet, it only did so with a select group of people – those who had responded affirmatively to the refocusing team’s invitation. The fact that the refocusing team targeted leaders reflects an integrated understanding of culture, as described by Meyerson and Martin (1987), with its focus on leaders as the creators of organizational
culture. Yet, what happened during personal refocusing prized individuality – to a point.

Ray used the terms “sin” and “elephant of pride” in a major way during the second summit. I used the terms liberally during my sermon two days after the second summit. If the term “refocusing” suggested that our focus was deficient, the terms “sin” and “elephant of pride” confirmed it. We had a self-focus. The assumption was that our directional knowledge was and would be self-oriented if we stayed the course. This discursive practice placed Ray and I over the church as moral judges. We projected ourselves as having a better approach than others had in the church. These power-laden terms helped provoke some people to respond with a transparent sharing of perspectives. As interviewee three observed, the vulnerability and compassion demonstrated at the second summit defused the tension between some individuals within the warring factions. At least four other interviewees noted the healing and reconciliation that occurred during the second summit (8, 10, 11, 18). Some of this seemed to happen during the Sunday morning rendition of the second summit, too. The resultant unity was an important factor in future directional knowledge discussions.

Use of Scriptures

Scripture is a powerful source of knowledge for many Christians. It represents God’s words to them. Foucault (1972) describes these kinds of central texts as:

…those forms of discourse that lie at the origins of a certain number of new verbal acts, which are reiterated, transformed or discussed; in short, discourse which is spoken and remains spoken, indefinitely, beyond its formulation, and which remains to be spoken. (p. 220)

Ray’s choice to emphasize specific Scriptures during refocusing (assorted passages to help articulate personal biblical purpose and the Romans 12-15 passage during the second summit) seemed to indicate that these were the most important ones to consider. He
prioritized portions of the central text for use in refocusing. Yet, I did the same thing during my sermons on Sunday mornings. I chose biblical texts that I thought people in the church needed to hear. The use of specific Scriptures was a discursive practice that emphasized certain biblical values over others. Foucault (1972, p. 194) talks about the importance of “codes of practice” that convey knowledge. Invoking the power of Christianity’s central text to support certain values helped to insure that those values and associated codes of practice would occupy a dominant place in the directional discussions.

The assorted Scriptures used during personal refocusing seemed to guide the content of the personal directional knowledge. Even though personal refocusing seemed to honour individual values, the use of guiding Scriptures seemed to push people toward articulating calling statements that contained some common “non-negotiable” elements. The push toward a shared foundational understanding of calling once again reflects something of an integrated approach to cultural change as described by Meyerson and Martin (1987).

The Romans 12-15 passage used in the second summit seemed to set forth the preferred modus operandi for knowledge discussions: loving unity. The characteristics of this loving unity are a complete surrendering to God (12:1-2), humility (12:3), a wholehearted use of the gifts God has given (12:4-8), sincerity and longsuffering (12:9-21), a submission to civil authorities (13:1-7), urgency (13:8-14), and an acceptance of those whose faith is weak (14:1-15:13). The theme of submission to civil authorities does not seem to have any direct application to the refocusing process. The themes of surrendering and the wholehearted use of God-given gifts may have served to reinforce the surrender/calling themes mentioned earlier. Emphasizing humility, longsuffering, and acceptance of those whose faith is weak may have pushed people to minimize their own preferences and defer to the desires of others in a longsuffering sort of way. The Romans passage also encourages its readers to love
quickly. “…The hour has come for you to wake up from your slumber…” (Romans 13:11).
This sense of urgency may have prompted second summit participants to make quick
decisions to put aside their preferences and engage in what they thought was loving unity. As
I mentioned in chapter four, one of LEFC’s actual values was avoiding conflict. I wonder if
perhaps the unity that characterized future refocusing discussions was at least partially an
attempt to avoid conflict – to stay clear of being associated with the divisive elephant of pride
and to live out the loving unity described in Romans 12-15. The second summit was an
attempt to integrate people into a shared understanding of loving unity. The Romans text
provided a common language and goals related to loving unity. The use of the Romans
passage also aligns with Gordon and Grant’s (2004) power-as-entity approach to power. Ray
used his positional power as refocusing facilitator to try to bring about an integrated or
unified viewpoint about what it meant to love each other. This discursive practice helped to
set parameters for what was appropriate knowledge and what were appropriate methods for
constructing that knowledge.

I preached five times between the first summit (October 4-5) and the third summit
(November 29-30). I invoked the power of a “central text” during this critical knowledge
formation phase. Which passages did I prioritize as being key passages for the church at this
time? I tried to replicate what happened at the second summit by reading through Romans
12-15 on one of the Sundays. For the other Sundays, I preached a series on “Living Out Our
Calling.” The first sermon was on living by faith based on Mark 10:13-52 and Mark 11:22-
24. I encouraged people to live by a faith that is characterized by simplicity (10:13-16),
abandonment (10:17-31), courage (10:32-34), humility (10:35-45), devotion (10:46-52), and
confidence (11:22-24). The themes of abandonment (same idea as surrender), humility, and
devotion are in keeping with some of the themes that Ray emphasized. The second and third
sermons in the series were on standing firm from Mark 12:41-44 and Ephesians 6:10-18. The sermons were about staying close to God even when temptation comes. I preached this sermon close to the time that the minister of worship arts and the director of children’s ministry officially resigned. The fourth sermon was on pursuing your personal calling. I used Mark 1:12-13 and Luke 4 to show how Jesus lived out his personal calling. He was prayerful and lived out the Scriptures. I did not want people to lose sight of their personal callings even as we talked about our calling as a church. Perhaps, this was my attempt to make sure that individual values were not lost even as we discussed more widely shared values. The fact that I was preaching a series on “Living Out Our Calling” reflected my desire to help the majority of those at LEFC (who were not part of refocusing) to at least experience something of the process. I also wanted to reinforce and extend what refocusing participants were learning through the process.

**Use of Lists and Examples**

The use of lists and examples were discursive practice that influenced the formation of personal and corporate directional knowledge. They were discursive practices because they were techniques (as Foucault, 1972 describes them) for conveying knowledge. The biblical purpose and vision examples during personal refocusing served to indicate what was desirable. The ministry model examples used during the third summit clearly delineated which expressions of church life were appropriate (worship, evangelism, equipping, and pastoral care). The ministry model that eventually became part of the ministry direction plan contained these four elements, although it had different words for evangelism (need oriented events and programs) and pastoral care (growth groups). The Values Worksheet, which served as the starting point for discussions about corporate values, was also directive in nature. It forced participants to select their personal values from a list of 78 sample values.
(there were also four spots for additional values). Having the list of sample values once again suggested that these were acceptable values to include in directional knowledge. With the five interviewees who gave me their list of personal values from personal refocusing, only 46% of their values had identical matches on the Values Worksheet. Even if people did include personal values in the additional values spaces, these values did not make it into the church’s official list of seven values. Six of the seven official values had identical matches on the Values Worksheet. One of the official values was very similar to one of the sample values listed on the Values Worksheet. The use of lists and examples as techniques helped to set parameters for the knowledge-power relationship. The refocusing participants may have started the refocusing process in a particular regime of truth based on historical influences at the church. Yet, the discursive practices helped to change this truth regime, at least for the summit participants. I wonder if the discursive practices helped to create an alternative regime (made up primarily of summit participants) that was increasingly antithetical toward those who were part of the church’s historical regime. Those outside the refocusing discussions may have also experienced a growing animosity toward the refocusing participants who were proposing significant changes to the church’s truth regime.

Most of the summit participants were likely part of a pre-refocusing subculture of progressives. Yet, the summits seemed to strengthen the bonds within this subculture. This dominant subculture (at the summits) experienced even greater differentiation from other subcultures in the church because of the process. In keeping with a differentiated view of culture, as described by Meyerson and Martin (1987), the dominant summit subculture became more isolated from other subcultures in the church. As interviewee nine affirmed, it was almost like there was a church within a church. Ray directed the differentiation process. He exercised power because of his position. This reflects Gordon and Grant’s (2004) power-
as-entity approach to power. Yet, Ray also built relationships with people. Many of these people grew to trust him. He was able to be even more directive because of his ability to engage in interpersonal struggles well. In so doing, he exercised power-as-strategy (Gordon & Grant) in a very effective manner.

**Inclusion of Outreach-oriented Components**

The discursive practice of including two outreach-oriented components (ministry foci and community profiles) within the refocusing process seemed to insure that the directional knowledge was decidedly outreach-oriented in nature. It was a discursive technique that constrained the direction-setting process in a certain way. Interviewee 19 wondered if Ray had a mandate to make the church more missional. Even if Ray did not have that mandate, I certainly did. I was convinced that being missional was a non-negotiable value. As Ray’s silent partner, I was very supportive of the inclusion of the ministry foci component and community profiles. Interviewee 19 thought that the community profiles, in particular, tilted the entire process toward outreach. This was contrary to the church’s historical regime of truth. The summit participants were reconstructing their own subculture regime of truth with Ray and others in positions of privilege leading the discussions. Interviewee three could not “remember a time when we had done that [outreach] as a church in the past.” In thinking about the inclusion of evangelism in the church’s list of values, interviewee two reflected:

I guess the area where I am always a little bit at odds with this [the church’s list of core values] is the area of evangelism. I've never had a calling for evangelism. It's always been a guilt thing. I don't think that that was one of our top values. It was more middle down.

Yet, evangelism or outreach became a dominant theme in the refocusing script.
Creation of a Draft Vision Statement

Ray and I were the only ones who knew that he used a vision template from another church to help create LEFC’s draft vision statement. At the time, I was supportive of Ray’s use of the template because it seemed like an efficient way of articulating a draft vision. However, as I look back I can see that using the template was a discursive technique that forced some of the summit knowledge into a preset knowledge mould. The degree of overlap between the two vision statements is striking, as over half of LEFC’s statement is similar to the other church’s statement. The four overlapping statements focus on multiple worship services, creative caring for people in the community (outreach), small groups, and equipping or training. It is instructive that these four elements directly correspond with the four dimensions (worship, evangelism, equipping, and pastoral care) on the sample ministry models used as guides to develop the church’s ministry model. It would appear that Ray believed that these were non-negotiable aspects of church life and must be included in the emerging directional knowledge. I agreed with him. In the case of the vision statement, Ray and I used a discursive technique (the use of a vision template) to help make it so. Even though the process of articulating proposed vision pictures during the third summit was quite individualistic (at least at the subgroup level), the resultant vision tried to capture common elements, particularly those that fit with a vision template.

The movement from individual, to subgroup, to large group was a recurring pattern throughout the refocusing process. On a large scale, personal focusing focused on individual values (individual level). The summit participants, as a subgroup of leaders within the church, sought to determine shared values within their subgroup (subgroup level). The pulse groups gave others in the church a chance to sharpen the discoveries of the summit subgroup resulting in a supposed church-wide list of shared values (large group). Even within the
summits, there was often this movement from individual to subgroup (table group) to large group (summit participants as a whole). For example, with the values discussion we recorded our personal values on the Values Worksheet, came up with subgroup values as table groups, and then determined shared values as a larger summit group. The movement from individual to subgroup to large group within the summits aligns with Gordon and Grant’s (2004) approaches to power. Power-as-knowledge (Gordon & Grant) was most noticeable at the individual level as people articulated personalized knowledge that was highly meaningful to them. This was evident in some of the participants during personal refocusing. The table group discussions featured relational struggles. Those struggles were powerful in keeping with Gordon and Grant’s power-as-strategy approach to power. The struggles produced important communal knowledge. Ray, during the large group discussions, sought to bring about a shared understanding across the various table subgroups (in keeping with an integrated view of culture, as described by Meyerson and Martin, 1987). He used power-as-entity (Gordon & Grant) at times to do so. In this study, the expression of individual values during personal refocusing tends to align with a power-is-knowledge approach to power, the table group discussions during the summits tend to align with a power-as-strategy approach to power, and the large group summit discussions tend to align with a power-as-entity approach to power.

**Pushing Through of a Particular Ministry Model**

Why did Ray and I push through a particular ministry model (5) even though it did not resonate with people (2)? It definitely aligned with the ministry model samples in terms of the four major emphases. I was in the table group that designed it, which seemed to carry some weight with Ray. Regardless of why Ray chose the model he did, he seemed to push the model through even though some people did not understand or accept it. This was another
instance when Ray and I used a discursive technique (pushing through a particular ministry model) to include “acceptable” knowledge (that the church should focus on worship, evangelism, equipping, and pastoral care ministries) in the direction plan. As a key part of the directional knowledge that emerged from the refocusing process, the ministry model continued to function as an important discourse in the hands of those who used it to communicate knowledge.

**Move to Create Consensus**

The consensus-building that took place during LEFC’s refocusing process was reductionistic. As I have already shown in my discussion of the process of articulating the church’s official values, consensus-building produced general knowledge that was detached from the personal knowledge of the participants. I observed what Weber (1958) described as a metamorphosis of values. The by-product of LEFC’s refocusing process (the ministry direction plan) bore little resemblance to the original values articulated during the personal part of refocusing. Even as Weber observed how a God-oriented asceticism morphed into a human-oriented capitalism, I observed that the values of summit participants morphed into something different from the original values. Gronow (1988) used the term “differentiation” to describe this process of values detachment where the spheres of life (science, art, morality, and law) lose the original quality of the values that inspired them. Using Habermasian terminology, the system becomes very different from the lifeworld that originally gave rise to the system (Saffold, 2005). The resultant system or structures (in LEFC’s case, the ministry direction plan) become differentiated from or lose the original quality of the values that inspired and guided their creation. Samier (2002, p. 36) interprets a Weberian perspective on education and its administration by stating:

> Once a detached organizational form has been institutionalized, that is, the university
has become bureaucratized (and one may add commercialized), the prospects for reconstituting the valuational and interpersonal social behavior typical of the traditional and charismatic character of the premodernized university is remote.

Samier is assuming that universities lose something of their original intent as they develop hierarchical structures and codified procedures. Samier (p. 41) goes on to say that, “the objective of educational leadership in a rationalized world is to preserve and reassert ultimate values organizationally.” Even though LEFC’s official values were detached from people’s personal values, they may have been useful as ultimate values that defined the church’s playing field. Interviewee 16 thought that the corporate part of refocusing helped people to articulate commonly held values while personal refocusing helped individuals know how to “express those core values within the context of this community.” Yet, if the process of consensus-building led to the metamorphosis of people’s personal values, it is problematic to think of LEFC’s official values as widely shared values. Using data from five interviewees who provided their list of core values from their personal calling statements (1, 5, 10, 13, 18), I noted that only 11% of their values had identical matches on the church’s list of core values. The personal knowledge had changed through the consensus-building process. Foucault (1972) includes processes as types of discursive practices. Consensus-building is a discursive process that has a profound impact on knowledge formation.

Consensus-building is one of the defining characteristics of an integrated view of culture, as described by Meyerson and Martin (1987). This view of culture assumes that widely shared viewpoints exist within an organization. My study supported this view to a degree. In a general sense, most of the people at LEFC would have agreed on values embedded in the EFCC doctrinal statement such as Christ-centered and Bible-centered. At the summit level, participants were apparently able to articulate mutually acceptable values.
Yet, because these so-called shared values were at least partially detached from the personal values of their originators, they lacked power. The general knowledge did not exert as much power as the personal knowledge did for most participants. This is in keeping with Gordon and Grant’s (2004) power-as-knowledge approach to power. The refocusing participants may have approved and presented the general knowledge as “truth” within the church’s regime (Reyna & Schiller, 1998) and yet it lacked connection with individual realities. To attempt to move from a focus on individual values to a focus on shared values that largely abandons individual values is problematic. The process may yield general values that provide a sense of overarching direction for organizational members. Yet, it fails to operationalize their personal values and ignite their passions. In order for consensus-building to be more effective, it needs to be followed up with (or accompanied by) an intentional and sustained focus on personal values (and calling in the Christian context). As individuals “play their game” on the expansive organizational playing field, they will achieve much for themselves and their organization.

**Power of Outspokenness**

One couple seemed to stand out as key influencers because of their outspokenness. They helped to steer some of the music-related discussions (18). Interviewees mentioned them both five times as key influencers in the process. Interviewee 19 expressed a sentiment held by at least three other interviewees (10, 17, 18): “The most vocal people are the most influential people.” Obviously, Ray, as the refocusing facilitator was the one who spoke the most during the refocusing process (12 interviewees mentioned him as a key influencer). Yet, other outspoken people jumped into the knowledge formation fray. Their forcefulness helped others to consider their ideas. Most of the 11 people mentioned at least three times by
interviewees as key influencers tended to be more outspoken (based on my personal observations over the years). Their outspokenness seemed to reflect a type of authority. They appeared knowledgeable and competent. Gordon and Grant’s (2004) second approach to power views power-as-strategy. In this view, power is the struggles that take place between people as they construct and reconstruct knowledge. The struggles are strategic because the type of struggle (in terms of who engages in the struggle and what they are struggling about) helps to determine the content of the knowledge produced and the power of that knowledge for certain people. The assumption is that those who actually engage in the struggle will become primary shapers of the emerging knowledge. The resultant knowledge exerts considerable influence on those who helped to construct it. It would seem that the outspoken participants during LEFC’s refocusing process had an edge in this knowledge formation struggle. They could potentially push their ideas to the forefront of the knowledge discussions (table groups, large group summit discussions, pulse groups) and keep them there. If the discursive practices were primarily responsible for insuring that certain pieces of non-negotiable knowledge made it into the direction plan, then the outspoken participants helped to interpret that knowledge and add other negotiable knowledge pieces. In a less directive direction-setting process, it is likely that outspoken participants would have exercised even more influence because they would not have been constrained as much by the directive discursive practices.

**Power of Trust**

Some people instilled confidence during LEFC’s refocusing process. People trusted them. Longevity at LEFC was a contributing factor to this instilling of confidence (4, 10, 20). As interviewee 20 said, people trusted them because “they had history with a lot of those
folks and people had seen their selfless contribution over the years.” People would listen when they spoke. One couple personified trustworthiness. Interviewees mentioned the husband and wife eight and five times respectively as key influencers during refocusing. Many of the refocusing participants also seemed to trust Ray. In fact, some people’s respect for him grew throughout the process. Ray came as an outsider, but “became intimately involved with us” (14). He had positional authority in keeping with Gordon and Grant’s (2004) power-as-entity approach to power. He dictated (with refocusing team input and support) what would happen during the refocusing events, to a large degree. Yet, he also endeared himself to some of the people at LEFC. As people struggled to construct knowledge (Gordon & Grant’s power-as-strategy approach to power), Ray demonstrated competence (1, 12, 17), genuine interest in the church (1, 10, 17), a concern for people’s perspectives (12, 13, 17), integrity (20), transparency (12, 14), perceptiveness (11, 16, 17), biblical understanding (12), and impartiality (12, 14, 20). These qualities, along with his outspokenness and positional authority, gave him standing with some people. The qualities helped to instil confidence, even though he did not have longevity in the church. Ray played a key role in constructing an integrated understanding of LEFC’s direction. An integrated approach to cultural change, as described by Meyerson and Martin (1987), requires key leaders to lead the charge. Ray was certainly one of those leaders during LEFC’s refocusing process. Ray and others (I would include myself as one of the “others”) who instilled confidence had an advantage in the power struggles to construct knowledge. Because at least some people trusted us more, our ideas carried more weight with those people.

To summarize, how did power intersect with knowledge formation during LEFC’s refocusing process? It is evident that power surfaced in the knowledge formation process in the form of privilege, discursive practices, outspokenness, and trust. The board, refocusing
team, and summit participants operated from a place of privilege. They had the potential to exercise power-as-entity (Gordon & Grant, 2004) by virtue of their position. Ray also had a privileged position as refocusing facilitator. In keeping with an integrated view of culture, as described by Meyerson and Martin (1987), it is apparent that those in privileged positions exercised considerable power in the integrating process leading to an articulation of apparent shared values at both the subgroup (summit table groups) and large group levels. Ray and others used numerous discursive practices to direct discussions in “appropriate” directions. Gordon and Grant’s (2004) power-as-strategy approach to power is helpful for understanding those discussions or struggles to construct knowledge. The discursive practices seemed to frame and even constrain those knowledge struggles. Viewing these discursive practices in terms of their apparent influence on individuals, subgroups, and the organizational membership as a whole shows their pervasive influence. They influenced individual thinking through the use of language, Scriptures, and examples that pushed individuals to prioritize certain pieces of knowledge. The discursive practices also strengthened subgroup solidarity. This certainly happened to many in the summit group that was a subgroup of the larger church. The discursive practices also served an integrative function (integrated approach to culture). The drive to create consensus was a key part of this integrating process that led to the articulation of a shared sense of directional knowledge. Beyond the influence of discursive practices, those who were outspoken and who instilled confidence in others seemed to have more power in the knowledge discussions. They helped to shape knowledge at the subgroup and large group levels. However, they were also somewhat subservient to the discursive practices of those in privileged positions. Yet, my findings show that power did not intersect with knowledge formation alone. It also intersected with shared perspectives to influence LEFC’s direction-setting process.
Intersection of Power with Shared Perspectives (Research Question #2)

Power intersected with shared perspectives in three major ways during LEFC’s refocusing process. I describe these intersections as the power of shared perspectives, the power of symbols, and the power of transparency.

Power of Shared Perspectives

The perspective-based groupings that rallied in a more noticeable way during LEFC’s refocusing process aligned with two of Webber’s (2002) evangelical perspectives. The rallying together of people around these two perspectives featured joint expressions of power. The progressives dominated the refocusing discussions, although the traditionalists did push back. Their most successful pushback manoeuvre occurred after the refocusing process was over.

Evangelical Perspectives

The simple adage, “There is strength in numbers,” rang true in my findings. There is power when people rally together around a shared perspective. At least six interviewees (5, 6, 8, 9, 12, 16) observed that there were two distinct groups during the refocusing process: a progressive group that wanted change in the church and a traditional group that resisted change. The traditionalists wanted to maintain the current regime of truth while the progressives wanted to change it. It is important to note that the clash between the traditionalists and the progressives was really a clash between cultural values. They were not debating the appropriateness of the denominational doctrinal statement. Instead, the two
groups were fighting over how the church should express these core truths. For some, these cultural expressions were just as important as and maybe even more important than the core truths themselves.

How do these two perspective-based groups fit within the larger scope of evangelical Christianity in North America? The evangelical Christian perspectives expressed at LEFC reflected patterns consistent with Webber’s (2002) analysis of evangelical perspectives. Webber maintains that the origins of the traditional perspective, pragmatic perspective, and the younger evangelical perspective were 1950, 1975, and 2000 respectively. Even though the perspectives are not age-restricted, it is likely that those who are older would hold to a traditional perspective. According to Webber’s description of preferred worship styles, it is evident that the perspective-based clash during refocusing pitted older, traditional evangelicals with their preference for traditional worship (among other things) against younger, progressive (this descriptor overlaps with Webber’s “pragmatic” designation) evangelicals with their penchant for contemporary worship (among other things). The younger evangelical perspective of a more convergent approach to worship that seeks to use a variety of theme-based worship forms did not seem to register in the refocusing discussions. This may have been because the youth perspective was underrepresented in the summit discussions. It may have also been due to the possibility that non-youth summit participants “put aside” the youth perspective, as interviewee seven suggested.

Becker’s (1999) description of church models, based on her study of 23 congregations, is helpful in understanding the clash between shared perspectives and eventual domination of the more progressive perspective within refocusing. Before refocusing, LEFC fit into Becker’s (1999) description of a family model of congregational
life. The church delivered goods and services through its programs, but also strove to foster a supportive environment amongst its constituents. As I have already shown, the refocusing process brought outreach to the forefront and pushed the church toward becoming more of a leader church with an emphasis on mission (minus a stronger attachment to the denomination). In terms of worship style, the assumption was that for the church to be more missional (at least, in terms of reaching those not currently attending the church), it needed to be more contemporary in its worship service music to attract people to the church. Interviewee six described a freer, more contemporary approach to worship that he thought would work better in attracting people to the church. This kind of a seeker-friendly, contemporary approach is in keeping with Webber’s (2002) description of the preferred worship style of pragmatic evangelicals. Even though the objective of the struggle was to determine which model or regime would dominate church life, it was at the level of major church symbols, such as worship, that the fight often became the most intense.

Meyerson and Martin’s (1987) approaches to culture provide another important perspective on what was happening at LEFC. According to their differentiated approach, it would appear that the traditionalists and progressives functioned as stable subgroups with only minimal inter-subgroup connectedness and minimal intra-subgroup divergence. Yet, this view is rather simplistic. Using Meyerson and Martin’s integrated lens brings into focus the reality that members of both groups belonged to an Evangelical Free Church with a prescribed doctrinal statement and set of distinctives. This suggests that they did have some things in common. Switching cultural lenses again to Meyerson and Martin’s fragmented lens, it is apparent that subgroup solidarity was not as strong as the differentiated lens would suggest. The connections within the subgroups were fragmented and ambiguous. Yet, even
though there was some inter-subgroup connectedness and intra-group divergence, it is apparent that each perspective grouping rallied together during LEFC’s refocusing. This is not to say that these groups did not exist prior to refocusing, but that certain conditions caused them to rally more vigorously during refocusing.

**Domination of Progressives**

One former board member recalled that it was the younger board members who led the way in board discussions (6). For my part, I know that I spoke a lot at board meetings, which seemed to direct the discussions at times. I would generally abandon positions when I was standing by myself (unless I felt strongly about it), but felt emboldened when others expressed the same perspective. The progressives on the board outnumbered the traditionalists and dominated this privileged group (in terms of age, seven of the board members were homebuilders while five were seniors – not all of the seniors were traditionalists in my estimation). The progressive-leaning board selected a refocusing team made up of 35-50 year-olds. The progressives dominated this privileged group, as well. The board also approved an invitation list that featured a 54% overrepresentation of homebuilders and an underrepresentation of all other life stage groups. Based on the first summit attendance record, this pattern of representation carried through to the first summit. Interviewee eight designated the progressives as the “us” group while the traditionalists were the “they” group. She did not notice any of the “theys” at the summits. Interviewee nine recalled seeing one of the “benchwarmers” at the summits, but she did not think that he was a negative influence on the process. Some traditionalists may not have participated because they were not invited. Others may have opted out of the process because of the hurt, anger, and/or bitterness they were feeling after the senior pastor left (7, 14, 16). For whatever reasons, the progressives
dominated the summit participants group – the third major privileged group within the church. Even the practice of voting on key pieces of directional knowledge during the summits gave the progressives a clear advantage because of their majority numbers. Interviewee eight felt that everyone at the summits was moving in the same direction. It helped that most of them shared the same progressive orientation.

Becker’s (1999) assessment of the types of conflicts that congregations go through is helpful for understanding what was happening at the summits. Most of the summit participants had a shared understanding. They tended to be progressive in their thinking. This meant that the summit discussions were largely within-frame discussions. People generally had a similar perception of reality. As Becker noted in her study, those in within-frame situations can usually work out mutually acceptable solutions. This apparently happened during the summit discussions.

The shared perspective of the progressives took centre stage where the stage represented what those in privileged positions had laid out as “acceptable” parameters for the knowledge discussions. It would seem that the traditionalists did not take advantage of the pulse groups and congregational meetings to express their views. Interviewee five thought that most of the pulse group participants had participated in the summits. Even if the traditionalists attended the pulse groups, they may not have felt free to express contrary ideas to those discussed at the summits because the pulse group’s mandate was to sharpen (not substantively change) the summit summaries. Four interviewees (5, 11, 13, 15) thought that the summit summaries represented knowledge pretty well set in stone by the time it hit the pulse groups. If this was the case, then the primary authors of the emerging knowledge script (with script outline provided by those in positions of privilege) were the progressives. The
board recommended their direction plan to congregational members at the end of the refocusing process. As interviewee 18 suggested, those who attended congregational meetings at LEFC tended to vote in favour of any board recommendation. Did this happen? True to form, most of the members who voted endorsed the board’s recommendation and the directional knowledge became enshrined as the church’s guide for ministry.

**Pushback of Traditionalists**

For interviewee eight, the group of “theys” who did not exert themselves at the summits, still had their “shoulder up against the door that was quite powerful.” As interviewee 12 observed, those who were going against the system were probably a very small percentage of the whole and yet they could still exert considerable influence on the process. They may not have been able to stand against the shared perspective of the progressives during the refocusing process. Yet, using Becker’s (1999) terminology, a between-frame conflict was brewing. It almost seems that subculture values had become sacred truths in some people’s minds. The interpretation and application of the central text at LEFC (the Bible), had the same kind of power as the central text itself. According to interviewee six, the traditionalists were able to rally together enough of the traditionalist remnant to defeat a motion to hire a board-recommended lead pastor candidate after the refocusing process. Because the discontentment of the traditionalists was not addressed, it came back to haunt those who had pushed for a progressive direction and a lead pastor to lead the church in that way. The between-frame conflict went underground only to resurface at an opportune moment (for the traditionalists, at least).

The notion that some within the traditionalist group did not seem to accept the progressive direction that came out of refocusing supports a differentiated view of culture as
described by Meyerson and Martin (1987). In this view, subgroups are loosely coupled to each other. An organizational subgroup “enacts and responds to a small portion of an organization’s overall environment” (p. 635). During the official refocusing venues, one subculture (the progressives) developed a stronger sense of identity and direction as they rallied around important organizational symbols. Even though the progressives and traditionalists shared some commonalities, some within the traditionalist group apparently remained isolated from the cultural changes occurring within the increasingly dominant progressive group. Perhaps, they were developing a stronger sense of identity and direction, too. They obviously had enough solidarity to rally against the acceptance of the first lead pastor candidate.

Perspective domination occurred during LEFC’s refocusing process as the progressive (or pragmatic in Webber’s terminology) perspective grouping tended to command the process. The clash between perspectives was a clash between two sub-regimes vying for supremacy in the church. They were fighting over which cultural values would become truth for the organization. The traditional regime was once the dominant perspective in the church. Yet, as interviewee 15 observed, there was a shift in the powerbase at the church during refocusing. He said, “The old guard was trying to hold on and the next generation of leaders was really trying to be empowered and there was a struggle that way.” I have already described how the board, refocusing team, and summit participants enjoyed a privileged position during refocusing. The progressives dominated all three of these groups. In keeping with Reyna and Schiller’s (1998) perspective on regimes of truth, those in these privileged positions legitimized progressive directional knowledge as the church’s guide for thought and practice. Beyond the privileged groups, the progressives apparently dominated
the pulse groups, as well. Because of the culture of acceptance of board recommendations at congregational meetings, it was unlikely that members would mount a significant challenge to the progressive directional knowledge plan that emerged. They did not (during refocusing) and the finalized ministry direction plan gained approval as the church’s official directional knowledge. Yet, it is important to realize that a differentiated view of culture assumes that if one subgroup articulates direction, other subgroups will not necessarily follow that direction because of the loose coupling between subcultures. In LEFC’s case, one might assume that the traditionalists had given up. Yet, within the year, they had mustered enough support to defeat the board’s first choice of a lead pastor candidate to help the church implement its directional knowledge. The power of perspective-sharing saw the progressives develop and approve a progressive direction plan for the church. It also saw the traditionalists veto the hiring of the first lead pastor candidate. The attempt to integrate everyone’s viewpoints into a shared perspective had obviously not happened. In keeping with Gordon and Grant’s (2004) power-is-knowledge approach to power, power was knowledge in that the church’s directional knowledge gave the progressives a platform for constructing the church’s regime of truth. Yet, for some of the traditionalists (and likely others, too), the knowledge was not power. Because they did not engage in the struggle to construct the knowledge, the knowledge had very little influence on them at a personal level.

**Power of Symbols**

Becker (1999) found that with between-frame clashes that feature differences in shared understandings, the groups often fight over the symbols that characterize the congregation. The symbols serve as a rallying point for combatants and sometimes energize
and embolden them in their struggles. Symbols are powerful because they can rally people. In keeping with Gordon and Grant’s (2004) power-as-strategy approach to power, the struggles involved the construction or reconstruction of knowledge. The struggle around symbols during LEFC’s refocusing process was an important part of the knowledge formation process. For some, the symbols were not just expressions of core truths; they seemed to be truth itself. During refocusing, two symbol-based issues seemed to strengthen and polarize the progressive and traditional perspective groupings that already existed in the church: worship style and church staff.

**Worship Style**

Worship style was a deep symbolic issue for some because it connected with their own sense of culture at a heart level. Worship style connected with their sense of identity. Interviewee 16 recognized the importance of the worship symbol when he said, “When you walk into a worship sanctuary, you don't want your whole sense of worship culture to be challenged - the way you experience the world and in particular, the way you talk to and listen to God.” This interviewee’s use of the word “culture” is instructive. Worship and other organizational symbols are important indicators of culture (Becker, 1999). LEFC’s blended approach to worship had sent a signal that both traditional and moderately progressive cultures were acceptable. Discussing a more contemporary approach to worship was an ill omen to the traditionalists. It seemed to minimize the importance of their culture. It went against their view of how a church should express itself. Once again, the differentiated view of culture as described by Meyerson and Martin (1987) reminds us that subculture identity is often strong and resistant to “forced” change. The traditionalists pushed back. Six interviewees (2, 5, 8, 11, 18, 20) observed that there was tension between those who wanted
more contemporary worship and those who wanted to maintain the status quo or go back to
more traditional forms of worship. The worship symbol typified the larger battle over
perspectives taking place within the church. It had become a battle for truth. The blended
worship approach had created an uneasy peace between the two sides. Now, that peace was
threatened.

Church Staff

Even the church staff seemed to function as symbols. Interviewee 10 remembered the
former senior pastor as the guardian at the door to keep out charismatic influences. Another
interviewee remembered the old style of leadership “where the pastor was like God. He did
everything and ran everything and dictated everything” (11). As old symbols disappeared,
people wondered, debated, and fought over which symbols would replace them. The mini-
summit was devoted to discussions about a lead pastor profile. According to interviewee five,
some people attended the mini-summit to discuss the pastoral profile who had not attended
any of the previous summits “because that's all [the hiring of a new lead pastor] they really
wanted to see accomplished.” The lead pastor symbol was most important to them. He would
be the guardian of the “truth” that would guide the church in the future. Interviewee one
remembered a public conflict between two of the participants at the mini-summit. She did not
remember the details of the conflict but said that one person was holding on to the status quo
while the other person was trying to get people to think in different ways. Interviewee six
recalled that when it came time to vote for the first lead pastor candidate after the refocusing
process, “There was some phone calls made to people who rarely attend but who have the
vote and they showed up.” They showed up with enough force to defeat the motion to hire
the first lead pastor candidate – an action which interviewee six described as a “travesty” and
“the worst of congregational government.” Even after refocusing, the lead pastor symbol continued to exert power and energize people to take extraordinary action.

The fight over worship style and staff symbols was a significant part of the struggle to determine which regime of truth would govern the church. Of course, is this integrated view of organizational culture even appropriate? Might it not be possible for the church’s subcultures to maintain their own localized culture while interacting, even cooperating, in fragmented ways across subcultures? Some in the contesting regimes were more militant in advocating their position (16) while others in the church parleyed in less intense ways or tried to stay clear of the fight. Becker (1999) found that between-frame (or between-perspective) clashes often feature increasing deployments of power. This seemed to occur at LEFC as the church spiralled through the departure of the senior pastor, worship style debates, and the resignation of the minister of worship arts. As interviewee 20 observed, there seemed to be a connection between the senior pastor’s departure, the minister of worship arts’ departure, and the debate over worship style. I remember some articulating their view that the board or certain board members had formed a conspiracy to make the church more contemporary, even charismatic. The more some traditionalists felt that they were being integrated or assimilated into a progressive view for the church, the more they resisted the riptide that was dragging them under. The perspective struggle intensified until the second summit.

Power of Transparency

Something powerful happened during the second summit. At least six interviewees commented on the healing and reconciliation that occurred at that time (3, 5, 8, 10, 18, 20).
On the Friday evening, Ray led summit participants through a time of introspection around the Romans 12-15 passage. He used the powerful descriptors of “sin” and “elephant of pride” to get our attention. According to interviewee 20, people tearfully shared their pain and experienced a cleansing of their clouded perspectives. People’s honesty helped others to understand their perspective (18). People were vulnerable and because of this transparency, people extended compassion to each other (3). According to interviewee three, this defused the tension between people. Auxier (2007) maintains that it is impossible to forgive someone unless you have empathy in your heart for that person. This happened for some at the second summit. Finding a place of humility, forgiveness, and repentance broke down barriers between people (8). About this phenomenon, Worthington (1998) says:

> When an offender confesses and apologizes for hurting us, that interaction allows us to develop a new picture of our offender…Instead of seeing him or her through lenses of anger and bitterness, the person’s humility and apology cause us to see him or her as fallible and prone to evil acts, not as the devil; we see him or her as in need of mercy, not revenge. The offender appears broken and contrite. Our offender is more human – more like us. We are moved. (p. 133)

Some people were moved during the second summit.

The following day, the church board went through their own time of transparent sharing. I was part of that meeting and remember it as a very open time of perspective-sharing. The result of that meeting was a board commitment where the board dedicated themselves to being more transparent, among other things. Interviewee 10 felt that her concentration needed to be healed after the senior pastor’s departure and the board’s transparency about the events surrounding his resignation helped her to carry on. The power of transparency brought some summit participants closer together, at least for a while.
Even though some participants saw people moving closer together during and after the second summit weekend, it is apparent that the biggest beneficiaries of the process were those who attended the second summit. I attempted to replicate the dynamics of the second summit during the Sunday morning worship service. Some people did publicly confess wrongdoing during the service. Was the transparency and forgiveness of the second summit weekend enough to build stronger bridges between people and subcultures? McCullough, Sandage, and Worthington (1997) maintain that extending empathy is an important part of the forgiveness process. However, they contend that forgiveness and reconciliation are not the same. “Forgiveness is a motivation empowered by basic emotion; reconciliation is relational” (p. 129). Some people may have extended the gift of forgiveness to others during the second summit weekend. Yet McCullough et al. maintain that “reconciliation, which is a restoration of violated trust, is earned through mutually trustworthy behavior” (p. 129). Demonstrating mutually trustworthy behaviour requires interactions. With the traditionalists largely absent from the official venues of the refocusing process, it was unlikely that those interactions occurred between progressives and traditionalists during refocusing. The second summit weekend provided a good start toward reconciliation (at least amongst the predominantly progressive group at the second summit), but because there was not ongoing opportunities for bridge-building between subcultures, it would appear that the power of transparency lost its healing effects over time.

In summary, the intersection of power with shared perspectives featured three major expressions of power: the power of shared perspectives, the power of symbols, and the power of transparency. The progressives dominated the three privileged groups (church board, refocusing team, and summit participants), which dictated the configuration of the directional knowledge that shaped the church’s emerging regime of truth. The shared perspective of the
progressives was powerful. Even though the traditionalists did not have adequate representation within the privileged groups and chose not to go against the progressive flow at the pulse groups and congregational meetings (during refocusing), they did have enough power to derail the hiring of the first lead pastor candidate after refocusing. The integrating refocusing forces were not sufficient to bring them onside. They maintained their own subculture identity. During refocusing, certain symbols exerted influence on the strengthening and polarization of the perspective groupings. Worship music and staff were symbols that seemed to galvanize perspectives – to draw the lines more clearly between the progressive and traditional groups. The power of transparency, which saw its fullest expression during the second summit weekend, seemed to blur and even erase the dividing lines for some people for a while. These intersections of power with shared perspectives were important factors in the building of directional knowledge at LEFC.

**Intersection of Power with Participatory Processes (Research Question #3)**

How did power intersect with participatory processes during LEFC’s refocusing process? Pain and intimidation emerged as two powerful influences that minimized the participation of some people. As in the previous chapter, by participation I mean both attendance at refocusing events and contributing meaningfully at those events.

**The Power of Pain**

Eight interviewees spoke specifically of the pain that people were experiencing at LEFC during refocusing (1, 2, 6, 13, 14, 16, 18, 20). One interviewee observed that some were bitter because of multiple issues in the church that had caused them angst (16). According to this interviewee, this bitterness paralyzed these people. Another interviewee
felt that some opted out of refocusing because they were nursing a hurt (14). This group was “principally, people who had a relationship with the pastor that left.” According to the interviewee, these people “just couldn't overcome it to open themselves up because it would have required…some humility and some asking of forgiveness and for rubbing shoulders with people on the other side of the question.” They were not prepared to be “moved” as Worthington (1998) suggests happens when someone confesses and apologizes. They were sceptical of the process. Interviewee one also thought that some opted out of refocusing because of personal hurts and tensions with others (7). Another interviewee suggested that those who were invited to refocusing and did not participate may have been unwilling to “dare to be vulnerable” (13). The interviewee reflected on how the former senior pastor had just resigned prior to refocusing and “there was a lot of hurts.” Because of those hurts, some people may have preferred “to not step out and expose themselves to that vulnerability” by participating in refocusing. The fact that some people maintained contact with the senior pastor seemed to perpetuate the pain for at least those people. Interviewee 19 noticed the influence of the senior pastor’s lingering “presence”:

He [the former senior pastor] had people who were informing him of what was happening, what was going on. And I think that if [he] had at the time said, “I want LEFC to be healthy. I want LEFC to move forward,” and okay, that it would have been more constructive. But because he was still so dysfunctional about it and still so hurt and resentful. There were still so many people who were in really close contact with them. And he wasn't wishing us well. So, I think that that came back…There was a fairly good-sized group of people there who [said], “This is all great, but what are you going to do about [the senior pastor]?“ Some people had never really felt like
the church had adequately dealt with that.

Current knowledge of the senior pastor’s pain seemed to help perpetuate the pain for some people in the church. The power of pain was evident as people experienced sadness, anger, and bitterness. Some people chose not to participate in refocusing because of their pain. Those closest to the senior pastor would have likely experienced more pain. They would have also likely shared his more traditional perspective. If their pain kept them from participating, this may partially explain why the progressives dominated the refocusing discussions. If this was the case, then the pain served to alienate the traditionalists and further strengthen the progressives’ position as designers of and caretakers within the emerging truth regime.

Becker’s (1999) research on the importance of congregational symbols is helpful for shedding light on the lingering influence of the former senior pastor. In some people’s minds, he was still their senior pastor. Ongoing contact reinforced this attachment. As a lingering symbol of LEFC’s culture, he still exerted considerable influence. His discontent served as a major contributor to the perpetuation of pain within the church. The refocusing process with its promise of a changed focus for the church sent the message that the new pastor would have a different perspective than the old did. Not only did the traditionalists (and others) loose their beloved pastor, it looked like they would lose a more traditional perspective associated with the lead pastor symbol. They were grieving over the loss of their pastor and over the probable loss of a dominant traditional perspective. Their pain and accompanying sense of hopelessness wreaked havoc on their ability and willingness to participate in the church’s refocusing process.
Power of Intimidation

Some people felt intimidated during the refocusing process, which hindered their participation (including attendance at the refocusing events and contributing meaningfully at those events). The power of intimidation influenced the participation of some women, youth, and traditionalists.

Women

Four of the ten women interviewees spoke about not feeling comfortable or safe enough to fully contribute their ideas, even in small group settings (1, 2, 10, 18). None of the men I interviewed indicated they found it difficult to share ideas in this way. Interviewee 18 suggested that she does much better in women’s groups. For at least this interviewee, the presence of men in a discussion group was sometimes intimidating. During refocusing, only one of the twelve board members was a woman. Concerning having a woman board member, interviewee nine thought this was “quite an astonishment to some people.” She reflected that LEFC was “a man leadership-oriented church for quite a long time.” It was difficult to get women to join the refocusing team. In the end, only two of the eight-member team were women. One of these women recalled how she and the other woman on the team would often have a debriefing session after the refocusing team meetings where they could more openly share their thoughts. The fact that interviewees mentioned women as key influencers only 26 times versus 51 mentions for men, even though women outnumbered men at the first summit (32 to 29), suggests that some women may have been intimidated to speak out. It is also possible that their ideas simply did not register to the same degree as those of some of the men. However, at least some of the women who participated in refocusing felt intimidated and my findings seem to suggest that one factor in this intimidation was the presence of men.
in the discussion groups. I wonder if perhaps a culture of dominance by men in upper leadership at LEFC as suggested by the low ratio of women on its board may have contributed to the intimidation factor.

LEFC is not the only organization where women feel intimidated. It is a problem within North American society (and many other societies, as well). Feminists and others have tried to alter this pattern of men-dominated organizations. Liberal feminism focuses on the loosening up of legal, economic, and social constraints on women through rational reform efforts (Enns, 1997). Beasley (1999) maintains that radical feminism is not content with this type of slow-moving reform. This type of feminism maintains that patriarchy permeates most institutions. Radical feminists believe that egalitarian or even women-dominated structures must replace these men-serving institutions. In churches like LEFC, it is important that people struggle with the issue of the role of women in the church. Are biblical accounts of men as the dominant leaders prescriptive for today or are they simply descriptive of what happened in the culture of the day? It is unlikely that the approach of radical feminism would work in churches like LEFC, but a thoughtful discussion on social constraints on women within the church (in keeping with the concern of liberal feminists) may lead to more equitable (and maybe even more biblical) leadership structures for the betterment of the church and society. Yet, it is interesting that when LEFC’s board attempted to initiate such a discussion, the congregational members overwhelmingly rejected the idea. It would seem that LEFC and perhaps other churches need to understand (and acknowledge) the problems associated with inequitable gender participation before they will be willing to discuss possible remedies.

**Youth**

The youth participants in refocusing also seemed intimidated. Interviewee three
wondered if the youth in one of his discussion groups were “uneasy, uncomfortable, or just in awe of being allowed to sit with these leaders within our church.” Perhaps, the youth felt like non-leaders in the presence of leaders. The putting aside of the youth perspective during refocusing, as observed by interviewee seven, may have helped to fuel this uneasiness. None of my interviewees mentioned youth participants as key influencers. One of the youth participants felt that others heard his ideas, but did not necessarily receive them (7). It would seem that at least some of the youth felt intimidated by the older leaders and the perception that those leaders would not seriously consider their viewpoints. The missing youth factor is important because the youth probably reflected Webber’s (2002) younger evangelical perspective. They could not or did not add this perspective to the discussions in any discernible degree.

**Traditionalists**

I have already described how the traditionalists tried to push back during and after refocusing. Their shared perspective exerted some influence. What kept them from exerting more influence? Intimidation was a key factor. Interviewee 15 felt that the traditionalists may have pulled back because they felt “overmatched.” Interviewee 12 expressed it this way:

I think that in a setting like that [the summits], the committed people…will speak voluntarily and in a way that gels with the direction setting. There is another force there when you get a group together. I think it intimidates people that aren't on that same track…it is intimidating to come up with a comment that is off-the-wall…

Interviewee 12 was suggesting that when a group of committed people build a consensus around organizational goals in a group process, it is intimidating for those with contrary ideas to contribute them. It is obvious that the progressives dominated the summit discussions. The
homebuilders, who were most likely to be progressive in their orientation, were overrepresented at the first summit by 54% while all other life stage groups were underrepresented. Perhaps, the traditionalists chose to abandon the refocusing discussions because they knew which direction the discussions would likely take. As interviewee 15 suggested, the traditionalists may have opted out of refocusing because they felt overmatched or overpowered. Maybe they felt that “even if they did get involved, it wouldn't make a difference” (15).

Intimidation is powerful. In the case of LEFC’s refocusing process, it stymied meaningful participation for at least some people. It contributed to the domination of the progressives as some traditionalists felt too intimidated to contribute their perspective to the discussions. Intimidation also minimized contributions from two significant demographic groupings: women and youth. Intimidation served to narrow the field of major players who dictated the rules of the emerging knowledge regime. It is almost as if intimidation increased the influence of the dominant subculture over the less dominant subcultures. The subcultures or those within those subcultures that felt intimated found it more difficult to influence the dominant subculture. This adds an important dimension to our understanding of culture. Even though subcultures may remain somewhat differentiated, the push is to integrate with or at least acquiesce to the dominant subculture over time. Yet, some of the subculture and individual identities remain intact while other aspects integrate with the dominant subculture.

The intersection of power with participatory processes featured two major types of power: pain and intimidation. Both of them kept some people from attending refocusing events. They also hindered some people from contributing meaningfully at those events.
Summary

LEFC’s refocusing process was not just about determining directional knowledge for the church; it was about defining the church’s new regime of truth. What would be the boundaries of the playing field for the church? What were the rules for the game called “ministry?” What organizational culture would dominate? Power intersected with knowledge formation, shared perspectives, and participatory processes to help define the organizational playing field and its rules of engagement. The major types of power that intersected with knowledge formation were privilege, discursive practices, outspokenness, and trust. The privileged groups were the church board, refocusing team, and the summit participants. Members of those groups exercised power from a positional place of privilege. Ray, the refocusing facilitator, also exercised power from a place of privilege. He and others used the power of discursive practices to direct the redefining of the church’s truth regime. These discursive practices were instrumental in the construction of an integrated view of the church’s desired culture. The power of outspokenness allowed some people to dominate the directional discussions at times. Trust was another type of power. People who engendered trust in others had more influence with those who considered them trustworthy. These four types of power influenced the relational struggles where knowledge was constructed.

Power also intersected with shared perspectives during LEFC’s refocusing process. The progressives dominated the privileged groups and likely dominated the pulse groups and the congregational meetings during refocusing. By their sheer numbers in those groups, they were able to create, present, and approve a progressive direction plan. They became the dominant subculture in the church that pushed other subcultures to embrace their preferred values for the church. Yet, even with this push from the progressives, it was clear that there
were rumblings from the traditionalist group in the church who had a very different perspective. The symbols of worship music and church staff seemed to push both the progressives and the traditionalists to define and defend their positions. These symbols served as rallying points for the defence of subculture identity. Yet, the power of transparency, as seen at the second summit and periodically throughout the process, broke down some of the barriers between people. Yet, forgiveness does not equal reconciliation. What took place during the second summit was not enough to quell the rumblings of some traditionalists, which erupted with enough force after refocusing to defeat a motion to hire a lead pastor candidate to lead the church according to the progressive refocusing vision.

Pain and intimidation were two types of power that intersected with participatory processes during refocusing. Some people chose not to participate in refocusing because of their pain. Some felt intimidated and chose not to attend the refocusing events or to contribute their ideas to the discussions. Some females, youth, and traditionalists fell prey to the power of intimidation.

The power intersections I have described played an important role in the process of strengthening a progressive regime of truth at LEFC. For the most part, the progressives won the between-frame clash with the traditionalists, at least in the official refocusing venues. The traditional and younger evangelical perspectives did not have enough power to sway the progressive perspective that dominated the refocusing discussions. The progressives became the dominant subculture that had a major say in what would become the organization’s stated values. Yet, even though some aspects of individual and subculture identity may have merged with the dominant subculture, it is apparent that individuals and subgroups retained their own sense of local culture, too. In fact, calling at an individual level had greater
potential than organizational calling to catalyze people to engage in restless effort for themselves and the organization. In terms of subculture identity, the defeat of the first lead pastor candidate showed that the traditional subculture retained some of their cultural identity several months after the refocusing process concluded. A careful consideration of individual and subgroup dynamics must be a part of direction-setting processes. Robust directional knowledge must have an integrated element (includes widely shared values), but it cannot stop there. It must also accommodate subculture and individual values. Constructing this type of directional knowledge requires the appropriate use of power that keeps all three dimensions of knowledge in a state of dynamic equilibrium. LEFC’s refocusing process tended to move from the individual to the subgroup to the large group and then stay there. The final product, an integrated direction plan for the church, was detached from individual and subgroup values (except the values of the progressive subgroup). In the next chapter, I will revisit the three problems of abuse of power, perspective dominance, and values reductionism and show how organizational leaders can minimize these problems by using and mediating the use of power in ways that maintain a dynamic equilibrium between individual values, subgroup values, and the shared values of the organizational membership as a whole.
CHAPTER 7 CONCLUSION

In this concluding chapter, I will summarize why I conducted this study, how I carried out my research, what I have learned, and the potential implications of my study findings on the practice of organizational leadership particularly as it relates to organizational direction-setting.

**Why Did I Do it?**

I opened my discussion in chapter one with a look at three major problems I observed at LEFC during my 16 years as a member of the church’s pastoral team. I witnessed abuse of power, perspective dominance, and values reductionism. I suggested that if these problems are a typical part of organizational direction-setting for churches and other organizations, it is imperative that organizational leaders understand how these problems influence direction-setting processes. This is what I set out to do in my study.

I embarked on my study with the assumption that organizational direction plans often fall short of capturing the values and passions of organizational members because of the problems of abuse of power, perspective dominance, and values reductionism. From this starting point, I articulated the purpose for my study. My purpose was to explore how power intersects with the knowledge formation process, shared perspectives, and participatory processes within organizational direction setting.

After reviewing the relevant literature, I articulated three research questions that focus on how power intersects with knowledge formation, shared perspectives, and participatory processes within organizational direction-setting.

Research Question # 1: How did power intersect with the knowledge formation process during LEFC’s refocusing process?
Research Question # 2: In what ways, if any, did shared perspectives intersect with power to influence LEFC’s refocusing process?

Research Question # 3: How did power intersect with participatory processes during LEFC’s refocusing process?

I contended that generating understanding about these questions would address a knowledge gap in the literature – a gap that hindered me and may have hindered other organizational leaders from understanding the incredible influence of power on direction-setting processes. The insights from my study have definitely helped me to gain a better understanding of the complex nether world of power and how it intersects with knowledge formation, shared perspectives, and participatory processes. The insights from this study will be useful to other organizational leaders, particularly those who serve in contexts similar to LEFC. The insights will also contribute to the theoretical body of knowledge about the influence of power on organizational direction-setting.

**How Did I Do It?**

After developing a theoretical framework based on relevant literature, I reconstructed a chronology of the refocusing process based on my personal notes and other refocusing documentation. This gave me a contextual framework in which I could position the comments of my interviewees. After interviewing a representative sample of 20 refocusing participants, I transcribed the interviews and sent a transcript and interview summary to each interviewee for verification. Eighteen of the interviewees verified the accuracy of both documents or submitted changes that would make the documents accurate. The other two interviewees did not get back to me with feedback. I then analyzed both the interviewee data and my personal observational data by looking for patterns and inconsistencies related to my
three research questions. After finishing this stage of the data analysis, I sent out an executive summary to the interviewees to get their feedback. Interviewees could send me written feedback and/or attend a discussion group to talk about the summary. Eight interviewees participated in this feedback loop and affirmed what I had discovered. In addition, my research committee provided useful feedback throughout this process that helped me to sharpen my analysis. Even with these safeguards in place, I felt that I sometimes overlaid the interviewee’s voices with my own. It was a tough balancing act: to use the interviewee data to inform my observations and to use my observations to inform the interviewee data. I am sure that I overpowered the interpretation of data at times. Yet, I am hopeful that giving interviewees an opportunity to verify their interview transcript, a summary of the interview, and an executive summary of all of the interviews minimized this bias.

**What Have I Learned and What Others Might Learn?**

I have learned a great deal from this research study. How many times do leaders have the opportunity to spend a few years probing a leadership experience of which they were a part? I feel like I have gone through the ultimate leadership reflection exercise. Here are my overall observations of LEFC’s refocusing process based on my findings in this study and connections with relevant literature. I have listed them in sections corresponding to my research problems and my research questions. I have also described possible implications for other organizational leaders (both formal and non-formal leaders) and described how my study contributes to theory.
Abuse of Power

All three of my research questions sought to address the problem of abuse of power. My first research question looked at the problem as it occurred at the intersection of power with the knowledge formation process. My second research question addressed the abuse of power problem as it occurred at the intersection of power with shared perspectives. My third research question looked at the problem as seen at the intersection of power with participatory processes. What did I discover?

Multi-layered Approach to Directional Knowledge

Even though my research questions did not guide me specifically to consider the nature of robust directional knowledge in this case, my findings paint a picture (or at least a rough sketch) of what robust knowledge would have looked like. There was general agreement that a widely shared sense of direction, in keeping with an integrated approach to culture as described by Meyerson and Martin (1987), was useful. It helped to provide a general sense of direction for the church. Yet, what surfaced as the potential engines for the organization were individual values and a personal sense of calling. As Weber (1958) suggests, it is a sense of calling that can propel people to live out their calling with “restless effort.” In this particular case at LEFC, having directional knowledge that accommodated both individual values and widely shared values would have made the knowledge more robust in nature. Yet, I discovered that there was yet another layer of knowledge that would have strengthened the directional knowledge even more. Because the progressives dominated the official refocusing forums, the traditionalist perspective was shunted off to the side. The emerging directional knowledge was progressive in nature because the marginalized perspective of the traditionalists was not expressed and/or duly considered. The knowledge
only represented part of the church. As I described in my findings, the traditionalists eventually pushed back and were successful in defeating the first lead pastor candidate. Ideally, the directional knowledge would have included their perspective, at least to some degree. Yet, the traditionalists were not the only group that felt intimidated. Some youth and women did not feel like they could fully contribute or felt that their ideas were not given due consideration. Accommodating the values of marginalized perspective groupings would have made the directional knowledge more robust in its ability to elicit sacrificial action at the subgroup level. In this case, directional knowledge that accommodated (and held together in a state of dynamic equilibrium) individual, subgroup, and widely shared values would have been robust in nature. Abuses of power occurred when the development of this dynamic equilibrium was disrupted or hindered. Organizational leaders would do well to consider whether this kind of multi-layered approach to understanding directional knowledge (and other forms of organizational knowledge) might be useful in their context.

How do my findings about multi-layered directional knowledge contribute to leadership theory? As I mentioned previously, Gordon and Grant’s (2004) three approaches to power (power-as-entity, power-as-strategy, and knowledge-is-power) line up to some degree with the widely shared values, subgroup, and individual values layers within multi-layered directional knowledge. Yet, Gordon and Grant do not adequately show how these three approaches to power might intersect in the knowledge formation process. My findings have taken Gordon and Grant’s conceptions of power one step further by providing some insights about how different types of power might interact in the formation of knowledge. In particular, my study has generated insights about how a power-as-entity approach to power (an approach often used by organizational leaders to develop widely shared organizational knowledge) may still be useful in constructing knowledge that provides a general sense of
direction for the organization. However, it must be coupled with other uses of power that foster equitable discussion (power-as-strategy) which produces influential knowledge (power-is-knowledge). Gordon and Grant tend to focus on power-as-strategy and power-is-knowledge approaches as being preferable to the power-as-entity approach. Yet, my study shows that there may still be an important role for power-as-entity approaches to play in the construction of robust directional knowledge. In a similar way, Meyerson and Martin’s (1987) description of three approaches to understanding organizational culture falls short on showing how we might integrate these understandings about culture. My study has provided some preliminary thoughts about how the integrated, differentiated, and ambiguous views of organizational culture might intersect to inform an understanding about the construction of robust directional knowledge that accommodates integration, differentiation, and ambiguity. In particular, my findings suggested that an integrated view of organizational culture as it relates to a sense of shared direction is an important layer within directional knowledge.

Some of the interviewees talked about the importance of knowing the general parameters of the church’s direction. Yet, there was also a desire on the part of some to focus on living out their personal callings. When individuals do this, it would naturally contribute to complex and ambiguous connections between organizational members (as opposed to a sense of conformity when individuals are encouraged to subscribe to the organization’s values as their personal guiding values). LEFC’s refocusing process showed how organizational leaders might be able to accommodate both general directional knowledge (at the organization-wide level) and specific directional knowledge (at the personal level). It was a linear integration (from personal refocusing to organizational refocusing), which was perhaps weaker than a cyclical or continuously integrative approach. Yet, it gave me a glimpse of how one might integrate Meyerson and Martin’s perspectives in a direction-setting process. Having a
multilayered approach to viewing organizational culture would be an important prerequisite to understanding the importance of multilayered directional knowledge and designing processes to facilitate its development. In the following sections, I will explore some of the other ways that my study extended the work of Gordon and Grant, Meyerson and Martin, and some other theorists.

One of the challenges associated with the multi-layered view of directional knowledge, as I have described it, revolves around the epistemological assumption of relativism related to the weighting of values. Are all values equal? How does people’s motivation align with issues of moral defensibility? It is possible that people will articulate personal values that are morally inappropriate. Yet, even when this happens, one of the safeguards built into a multi-layered approach to directional knowledge is that the widely shared values (and even subgroup values to some extent) determine the parameters in which people can live out their personal values. At LEFC, these widely shared values were rooted in a historically acceptable interpretation of core church doctrines and practices. Many of those who attended LEFC subscribed to the EFCC doctrinal statement. Related to core church practices such as outreach, discipleship, worship, and fellowship, it seemed like LEFC fit within an evangelical tradition that exalted these practices. During the refocusing process, some at LEFC determined what was morally defensible (or desirable) in terms of core church practices by articulating ultimate ministry values. Admittedly, these ministry values and the church’s doctrinal values as expressed in the EFCC doctrinal statement may have been too general to stop the expression of every morally indefensible personal value. It is also possible that some of the ultimate values (or possible applications of those values) may be morally indefensible in and of themselves. In order to minimize these potential weaknesses of the multi-layered approach to directional knowledge, it may be important for
organizational leaders to consider how they can promote a healthy spirit of argumentation within the organization. Are people free to challenge each other and to question established values (both doctrinal and ministry values) and interpretations of those values within the organization? This openness to engage in debate (both with those within and those outside the organization) is an important way of strengthening the moral fibre of personal, subgroup, and widely shared values. Yet, as Foucualt (1972) suggests, most groups have a central text that serves as a blueprint for the construction of truth. For LEFC, the central text is the Bible. All debate about doctrinal and ministry values should use the Bible as a reference point. Obviously, people will have different interpretations of biblical truths. This is why it is important that people have the freedom to engage in healthy debate that leads to shared understandings about appropriate interpretations of Scripture. Yet, it is possible that people may remain ensnared in narrow ways of thinking constrained by defensive routines within the organization and pre-existent rules for knowledge discussion embedded within the organization’s and larger denomination’s truth regimes. If certain groups such as women and youth are marginalized because of ingrained ways of interpreting Scripture, it will be very difficult to overcome these entrenched patterns. In terms of core church practices, it would seem that LEFC had a traditional perspective on what was most appropriate. Once again, this kind of shared assumption seems highly resistant to change. Schein’s (1992) belief that shared assumptions are the deepest level within organizational culture is helpful in understanding the influence of these underlying assumptions. It is important for church leaders to foster an open atmosphere where people can critique existing values without being labelled as “trouble-makers” and pushed to the fringes of church life.
Power Realities

Power was a huge factor in LEFC’s direction-setting process. I detected that some interviewees felt uncomfortable talking about power. Even the term “influence” seemed to have negative connotations for some. It is important that leaders recognize that power in and of itself is neutral. It is how we use and mediate the use of power that is good or bad (or neutral). It is also important to acknowledge the existence of power dynamics and seek to understand the types of power that influence their organizations. Based on my findings, I noted eight major types of power that influenced the formation of LEFC’s directional knowledge: privilege, discursive practices, outspokenness, trust, shared perspectives, symbols, transparency, pain, and intimidation. Organizational leaders may want to consider how some of these types of power might influence their direction-setting processes.

Organizational leaders would also do well to recognize the different layers of values (organizational membership as a whole, subgroups, and individuals) represented within their organization. Many organizational leaders employ a directive approach to direction-setting which assumes that integrated or shared values are the best (and maybe even the only) foundation for organizational change. Yet, this directive approach and its liberal use of positional power does not adequately take into account individual and subgroup values. Organizational leaders could adopt additional uses of power that are more inclusive to maintain a dynamic equilibrium in terms of the values of individuals, subgroups, and the organizational membership as a whole. This possibility points again to an extension of Gordon and Grant’s (2004) work in terms of integrating their approaches to power within organizational direction-setting. LEFC’s refocusing process did include elements that allowed for individual, subgroup, and large group participation. Yet, moving through the different layers of values was a progression toward a shared vision for the church. The
process, in the end, minimized the expression of subgroup and individual identities instead of keeping them in a state of dynamic equilibrium alongside an integrated view of the church.

**Reshaping of Truth Regimes**

LEFC was determining directional knowledge that would serve as a guide for the reshaping of its regime of truth. Direction-setting processes have the potential to reconstruct a shared conception of what is appropriate knowledge and what are appropriate ways of engaging that knowledge. Yet, current regimes of truth are often resistant to change. Caretakers of the current regime may not want it to change. At LEFC, the traditionalists were the guardians of the current regime. Some were even trying to reclaim a past regime. They were a formerly strong subculture in the church whose influence was waning. As my findings indicated, they felt overpowered and intimidated by the progressives in the church. The implications for leadership are that organizational leaders would do well to recognize the current regime caretakers along with those who want to reshape the regime and seek to build bridges of understanding between the two groups. This did not happen at LEFC and the resultant directional knowledge failed to fully accommodate the values of at least three groups in the church: traditionalists, women, and youth. It may be prudent for leaders to acknowledge that it is okay and even beneficial for the organization when organizational subgroups maintain a healthy sense of local identity. Preserving this sense of local identity does not have to go against recognizing a shared sense of identity, but can complement it and even strengthen it. Of course, this assumes that the shared sense of identity is flexible and general enough to encompass a wide range of local identities (both subgroup and individual). A primary consideration for building these bridges between local cultures is open and empathic communication. Having a shared understanding of ultimate organizational values can also help to build these bridges as long as the ultimate values do not compromise local
identities. This is an important contribution to Foucault’s (1972) notion of truth regimes. Foucault maintained that a shared sense of “truth” by the organizational elite dictated the rules for discussing and appropriating truth within a particular system. Yet, my study would suggest that it may be possible to accommodate individual and subgroup differences within a multi-layered understanding of directional knowledge or “truth” that applies to the broader system. Of course, this would likely require openness on the part of those with greater influence in an organization to support this kind of approach by actively promoting equitable participation in knowledge formation processes.

**Privilege amidst Participation**

Privilege was alive and well at LEFC. As a participant in refocusing, I felt at the time that refocusing was highly participatory and that it was a church-wide process. Yet, looking back at the process four years later, I can see that three privileged groups (church board, refocusing team, and summit participants) dominated the knowledge formation process. My findings showed that the church board chose the type of knowledge formation process (TLR), selected the facilitators of the knowledge discussions (refocusing team), and invited a select group of people (summit participants) who became the major authors of the knowledge script. Gordon and Grant (2004), in their discussion of the power-as-entity approach to power, seem to suggest that this type of power has a waning influence in modern society. My study showed that power-as-entity is alive and well (at least in this one particular church). Individuals and groups in privileged positions still have the potential to exert incredible influence on knowledge formation processes. This finding is an important contribution to theory, particularly theory related to postmodern views of power that sometimes minimizes the prevalence of the power-as-entity approach. The implications for leadership focus on being careful not to underestimate the power of privileged groups, even in a process that is
highly participatory. It is the privileged groups that tend to have the most influence in articulating a shared sense of culture. In LEFC’s case, it was supposedly unwieldy to involve everyone in the summit discussions, so the refocusing team invited key leaders to participate. The summit participants became a privileged group in which members had the chance to become primary authors of the emerging directional knowledge that described a shared sense of desired culture. Once again, accommodating subgroup and individual values (alongside shared organizational values) within the directional knowledge will likely help to minimize the dominance of those in privileged positions. In LEFC’s case, pulse groups could have preceded the weekend summits. The leadership would have heard from the people first before they made any decisions. An even more radical approach would have been to allow pulse group participants to make the decisions (and not even do the summits). Of course, the progressives may have still dominated the pulse groups. To address this possibility, the refocusing team could have organized pulse groups along subculture lines (e.g. age, gender) so as to identify some of the shared values within LEFC’s subcultures. This may have also served to reduce the intimidation factor for some participants. The summits would then have focused on taking the ideas from the pulse groups and developing a shared sense of identity while preserving local subgroup identities. They would have also been the place where individual identities, as articulated during personal refocusing, found their way into the discussions. The goal would not have been simply to come up with a shared sense of identity (which supposedly is what happened), but to hold in dynamic tension three levels of identities: organizational, subgroup, and individual. Part of maintaining this dynamic equilibrium may have been to revisit personal calling after articulating a shared sense of identity. This would have helped to bring personal calling back to the forefront of people’s awareness. It would have also been helpful to meet again with various subgroups in the
church to assess whether they felt like they could still express their local identities within the
desired organizational culture. The process of maintaining equilibrium between a sense of
organizational identity, the identities of subgroups, and the identities of individual
organizational members is an ongoing process requiring sensitivity, strong communication,
and timely negotiations.

**Invitation Bias**

The board-approved refocusing invitation list set a trajectory for who would
participate in the refocusing summits. My findings showed that the representativeness in the
invitation list was strikingly similar to the representativeness of those who attended the first
summit. The patterns of overrepresentation and underrepresentation carried through from list
to attendance. The implication for leadership relates to the importance of recognizing the
power of a personal invitation – it makes some invitees feel important and it makes some
non-invitees feel excluded. In LEFC’s case, many of those classified as important
contributors showed up at the refocusing events while many of the “less important”
contributors opted out of the process (I wonder what else they might have opted out of
because of their classification as “less important” contributors). When a direction-setting
process places people in privileged positions and/or prioritizes input from privileged people,
it is difficult to develop a direction plan that contains anything but the values of the
privileged. Obviously, others in the organization may share some of these same values.
However, privileging sends a strong signal that some voices are more important than other
voices. It acts as a roadblock to developing holistic directional knowledge that encompasses a
truly shared sense of organizational values, subculture values (including but not dominated
by the values of the privileged), and individual values. Overcoming this barrier is a huge
challenge because many organizations build their direction on the values of the privileged
elite. Yet, this type of elitism is problematic. Many people want to be a vital part of sense-making processes. They want to live out their values and subgroup values within the larger organization. Organizational leaders would do well to hear the call for meaningful communal knowledge building if they want their organizations to have an advantage.

The use of an invitation list is an act of power that aligns with the power-as-entity approach described by Gordon and Grant (2004). The board used their power to determine who would be the major authors of the church’s directional knowledge. In terms of Foucault’s (1980) regime of truth concept, the board, as supervisors of LEFC’s knowledge construction process, chose those who would work out that process. Those who were not invited or who chose not to participate had little influence on the construction process. Yet, my study showed that it is possible for marginalized groups to mount a successful attack on knowledge-related initiatives. This finding contributes an important understanding to the theory on truth regimes – it is possible for marginalized groups to exert enough power to disrupt what has become “acceptable” knowledge discourse and to hinder related actions.

**Legitimization of Knowledge**

Some groups at LEFC seemed to function as legitimizers of the emerging directional knowledge. The church members at congregational meetings are a prime example of a legitimizing group. My findings showed that there seemed to be a culture of acceptance at congregational meetings regarding what the board recommended. The power of the board was deeply entrenched in the history of the church, the denomination, and even Scripture itself (or at least traditional interpretations of Scripture). The business model used to meet governmental requirements for charitable organizations reinforced this power. In keeping with Gordon and Grant’s (2004) power-as-entity approach to power, the church board possessed considerable power and used it to safeguard “appropriate” knowledge within the
church. It would seem that the congregational members engaged in defensive routines as described by Argyris (1993, 1990). Certain topics were “undiscussable.” Even going against the board in a public way appeared to be a defensive routine that kept board detractors at bay. The church board was a privileged group and most people did not stand against it. The pulse groups, as well, seemed to play a legitimizing role to some degree by presenting a façade of organization-wide acceptance of the emerging directional knowledge. Once again, the “minor players” did not seem to want to challenge the knowledge produced by the privileged summit participants. The refocusing team and even the summit participants may also have served to legitimize some of the prescribed knowledge that was a part of the process. Ray was very directive at times with the refocusing team and the summit participants. Yet, in the end, his specific contributions melded into a “group” decision. For organizational leaders, it is important to realize that just because a group legitimizes knowledge that does not mean that they accept the knowledge or will act on it as if it was their own. Power factors may have pushed them to legitimize something that they do not actually support, or support only partially. This is one of the challenges with an integrated view of organizational culture as described by Meyerson and Martin (1987). People may agree with shared values, but they may not own them at a heart level. In fact, it may be impossible for them to accept shared values at that deep level because of their detachment from their individual values. As Weber (1958) suggested, the original values may have morphed into a by-product that is different from the original values. This metamorphosis creates a sense of detachment or differentiation from the original values (Gronow, 1988; Samier, 2002). Organizational leaders could consider acknowledging this possibility of detachment and realize the inadequacy of directional knowledge that focuses solely on a shared sense of organizational values. The directional knowledge may also need to accommodate subgroup and individual values. The
possibility that even highly participatory direction-setting processes may facilitate the construction of knowledge that is detached from individual values is an important contribution to theory related to participatory forms of leadership. Participation does not necessarily equal ownership. Being able to live out one’s values contributes to a sense of ownership. My findings about a multi-layered approach to understanding directional knowledge contribute important insights to leadership theory about the type of participation that is likely to produce robust directional knowledge.

**Discursive Shapers**

My findings revealed that the way Ray and others used discursive practices had a powerful effect on the knowledge formation processes. I discovered that discursive practices were a major vehicle for safeguarding and reshaping LEFC’s truth regime. It became apparent during refocusing that certain words and phrases like “calling” and “elephant of pride” exerted considerable influence on people. With the use of “calling,” Ray and I pushed some people to place extra value on the emerging directional knowledge. With the use of “elephant of pride,” Ray and I drove some to change the way they contributed to (or hindered) the refocusing process. As Foucault (Rabinow, 1984) observed, discursive practices (such as the use of language) exert considerable power on the knowledge formation process. They are a potentially powerful shaper of individual values, subgroup values, and the values of the organizational membership as a whole. Organizational leaders would do well to assess the impact of their words and other discursive practices, so that they do not unduly influence direction-setting (or other organizational) processes. Less directive direction-setting processes may better facilitate the construction of a fuller directional knowledge that keeps the three levels of values in a state of dynamic equilibrium.
Authority According to Volume

The squeaky wheel sometimes got the grease. My findings showed that some outspoken people did direct the directional discussions. It was almost like outspokenness was a power entity that people could use to influence the knowledge formation process. This is an important contribution to theories related to power-as-entity, Gordon and Grant’s (2004) first major approach to understanding power. The perception of authority, reinforced at times by outspokenness, can be a powerful entity. Organizational leaders would do well to recognize that some dominant personalities can hijack a direction-setting process. It is important to identify these people and help them to encourage others less dominant to participate (and perhaps become less dominating as they do so). This kind of help could take the form of encouragement (encouraging vocal participants to provide a context for others to speak), training (helping vocal participants acquire specific techniques for encouraging others to participate), and role-designation (giving vocal participants facilitating roles where they help provide a context for more equitable participation). When individuals dominate, some people in both small and large group settings tend to withdraw. This can hinder the recognition and expression of individual values, a necessary part of the knowledge formation process.

Trustworthiness as a Complement to Other Types of Power

My findings revealed that trustworthy people had power to influence those who trusted them. Once again, it is important for organizational leaders to identify those within their organization who instil confidence in others and to help them use their power to bring about participation that is more equitable (through encouragement, training, and role-designation as mentioned above). This will help to insure that individual values become an integral part of the organization’s directional knowledge. My findings contribute to theories
about power in that they show that trust can add or subtract from (if absent) the three types of power that Gordon and Grant (2004) describe. For example, those who have power by virtue of their position (power-as-entity approach to power) can see that power increase with those who trust them. In the power struggles to construct knowledge (power-as-strategy approach to power), those who are perceived as trustworthy have a stronger voice. My findings indicated that it may be possible for a trust of a person to transfer to a trust of the knowledge that the person forms or helps to form (knowledge-is-power approach to power). However, it is unclear how much power the resultant knowledge can exert on those who accept it on the basis of trusting the one who constructed that knowledge.

**Summary**

In summary, my findings show that abuses of power occurred during LEFC’s refocusing process as some people’s actions (or non-actions) hindered the coming together of individual values, subgroup values, and shared organizational values in a dynamic relationship. The refocusing process itself accommodated the partial identification and expression of values in each cultural dimension. Yet, the process seemed to push participants toward the articulation of a shared sense of culture (i.e. the ministry direction plan). Individual values, as identified during personal refocusing, were almost like a stepping-stone to get to the organizational values. Determining a desired organizational culture became the primary focus - the regime of truth that would guide the church. Because individual and subgroup values became less prominent as refocusing progressed, those in privileged positions became the primary shapers of the emerging directional knowledge. The use of discursive practices by Ray and others played an important role in guiding those directional discussions. Various groups functioned as legitimizers of the emerging knowledge. Even though the plan likely reflected the values of the dominant subgroup (and the dominant ones
within that subgroup based on their privileged position, outspokenness and/or ability to instil confidence in others), it had apparent widespread support throughout the church because of these legitimizing groups. The refocusing process operated under a flawed assumption that cultural change occurs primarily at an organizational level. This basic assumption led to numerous abuses of power that undermined the development of directional knowledge that could accommodate individual values, subgroup values, and organizational values.

**Perspective Dominance**

Perspective dominance was another problem that surfaced during LEFC’s refocusing process. I sought to explore this problem by answering my second research question: in what ways, if any, did shared perspectives intersect with power to influence LEFC’s refocusing process? The domination of a shared perspective became a problem when it hindered movement toward (or took away from) directional knowledge that accommodated individual, subgroup, and organizational values.

**Developing Holistic Directional Knowledge**

My findings showed that the progressives dominated all three privileged groups (church board, refocusing team, and summit participants) during LEFC’s refocusing process. I discovered that there was also a fairly powerful group of traditionalists that either opted out of refocusing altogether, or chose not to add their perspective to the discussion mix. The progressive and traditionalist groupings aligned with Webber’s (2002) description of pragmatic and traditional evangelicals within North American Christianity. The conflict between the two perspective groupings was a between-frame conflict as described by Becker (1999). The conflict featured deployments of power around the symbols that would express
and perpetuate the church’s identity. I discovered that because the progressives dominated the privileged groups, they designed, presented, and approved a progressive direction plan with little opposition. This occurred even with mechanisms in place for organization-wide input into the emerging directional knowledge. The implication for organizational leaders is that they may need to monitor the influence of their privileged groups and to make sure that the input given during feedback loops carry as much weight (or at least enough weight to make a difference) as the voices of those in the privileged groups. If this does not happen, the resultant direction plan becomes a plan of the organizational elite and not the rest of the organizational members. I have already described why I believe this is problematic in terms of forming robust directional knowledge. As mentioned earlier, having the pulse groups first as the centerpiece of the refocusing process may have helped more people feel like their input was valuable. Then, the summits would have been for anyone who wanted to be part of developing statements about a shared sense of existing and desired culture. During the summit phase, it may have been worthwhile to resume the pulse groups to continue to hear from individuals and subgroups. My findings showed that one of the most powerful parts of LEFC’s refocusing process was the development of personal calling statements. This finding is an important contribution to theories about organizational direction-setting. It points to the possibility that power to achieve extraordinary results (individually and for the organization) resides within individual’s themselves and their sense of calling (or purpose). This sense of calling can intersect with subgroup and organizational values to form a more holistic and robust directional knowledge. Instead of direction-setting moving from the individual to the subgroup to the organization, it could continuously accommodate values from all three levels in a dynamic sort of way. Admittedly, more research needs to be done on how to achieve this dynamic equilibrium in different contexts.
Going Beyond Participatory Leadership

According to my findings, some traditionalists felt too intimidated to participate in refocusing. They either opted out of the process completely, or tended to remain quiet during the official refocusing discussions. The pain associated with losing the senior pastor and the fact that the progressives dominated all three privileged groups in the process seemed to contribute to this sense of intimidation. This finding is an important contribution to participatory leadership theory. It is simply not enough to promote widespread participation in organizational direction-setting. Factors that contribute to intimidation should be addressed. Organizational leaders would do well to recognize the politics of intimidation and to take steps to minimize this intimidation by welcoming divergent contributions to the knowledge formation discussions. This may mean organizing specific pulse groups that focus on marginalized individuals and subgroups. The multi-dimensional directional knowledge I have described in this study as being the type of knowledge that will give organizations an advantage, mandates organizational leaders to persevere in trying to include individual and subgroup perspectives. Pursuing this kind of directional knowledge is hard work, but will likely pay rich dividends in terms of member satisfaction and productivity.

Building a Community of Difference

It is important to make sure that all perspectives are heard and given due consideration during a direction-setting process even when the majority of participants seem to embody a particular perspective. My study showed the negative consequences of not including divergent perspectives. Some women and youth felt excluded from the refocusing process. Some traditionalists banded together to defeat a motion to hire the first lead pastor candidate after refocusing. Encouraging people to speak and listening to them requires the
acceptance and consideration of divergent thinking as an integral part of constructing directional knowledge. Furman (1998, p. 312) calls this kind of postmodern community a “community of difference.” About this community of difference within public school settings, she says:

It is based on the ethics of acceptance of otherness with respect, justice, and appreciation and on peaceful cooperation within difference. It is inspired by the metaphor of an interconnected, interdependent web of persons engaged in global community. It is fostered by processes that promote among its members the feelings of belonging, trust of others, and safety.

Even though my study supported the value of fostering a community of difference, it also revealed that there may be shared perspective groupings within a community of difference. The values of these subgroups form a key part of robust directional knowledge for the organization. In her discussion of the implications for schools, Furman suggests that school leaders could promote these kinds of perspective groupings, constitute schools themselves as values-based communities, or foster a postmodern community of difference. My findings suggest that, at least for my case, it is not an either/or proposition. It is desirable to integrate all three of Furman’s implications. Yet, related to Furman’s third implication, accommodating diversity is a huge challenge for many organizational leaders. We often think in terms of an integrated view of organizational culture and change. We pursue shared understandings in keeping with our democratic ideals and tend to minimize the values of isolated “voters” or fringe groups. Yet, even those who contribute substantively to articulating a shared sense of culture may find that it fails to ignite their passions. It is detached from their personal sense of identity. This brings into question whether traditional forms of direction-setting even reflect our democratic ideals. However, even when privileged
individuals are the primary writers of a direction-setting script, it is imperative that the directional knowledge embodies individual, subgroup, and organizational values.

**Accommodating Subgroup Cultures**

The angst of some traditionalists did not go away by the end of refocusing. My findings showed that their final assault, several months after refocusing, took out the board-recommended candidate for the lead pastor position. It is apparent that healing took place during the second summit. This supports Worthington’s (1998) observation that people are moved when someone appears broken and contrite. Yet, the healing that took place did not take root in participant’s lives (or if it did, it did not last long). My findings support McCullough et al. (1997) in their contention that forgiveness and reconciliation are not the same. People may have been moved to forgive others during the second summit, but that movement was apparently not sufficient in bringing the progressives and traditionalists together in an enduring fashion. The implication for organizational leaders is that those with divergent perspectives do not necessarily capitulate to the stronger subgroup position over time. Their unease and resentment can continue to resurface as they attempt to make sure that organizational leaders hear their perspective (especially when it is not represented in earlier directional discussions). This points to the importance of accommodating the values of subgroup cultures in directional knowledge. Obviously, this may not always be possible. Some groups may be unreachable. Yet, organizational leaders would do well to exercise due diligence in making every attempt to build bridges with and between local subcultures. Having pulse groups (even prior to refocusing) with those most hurt by the senior pastor’s departure may have helped to strengthen ties with this group. They may have felt less disenfranchised and more willing to add their perspective to the process.
Symbols Say a Lot

My findings revealed that worship style and staff were important symbols that reflected the church’s truth regime. Worship style was especially powerful because it connected with people’s culture, the way they preferred to communicate with God. Changes to either symbol meant that the church (its truth regime or shared sense of culture) was also changing. These findings are in keeping with what Becker (1999, pp. 4-5) discovered about how identity conflicts in congregations are “conflicts over the power to symbolize different understandings of the congregation’s identity and to institutionalize these understandings in very concrete ways.” My study showed that symbols can play an important unifying role in keeping with an integrated view of organizational culture as described by Meyerson and Martin (1987). The fact that three symbols (worship style, lead pastor, minister of worship arts) were in transition at the same time heightened some people’s anxiety over which perspective would guide the selection of future symbols. Organizational leaders might want to exercise caution when attempting to change organizational symbols and recognize their importance as beacons that communicate present and future organizational direction. Important symbols may also serve to rivet people’s attention and rally them to action. They can serve as flashpoints for conflict. Choosing new symbols can become the victor’s prize for whoever wins the battle. Symbols are noticeable and often distract from actual shared values and the values of subgroups and individuals. In keeping with a multi-perspective view of knowledge, leaders would do well to negotiate the selection of symbols carefully to reflect the actual shared values of the organization without diminishing the values of individuals and subgroups.
Identifying “Graspers”

Some people grasped onto change while others grasped onto what was familiar to them during refocusing. My findings showed that the greatest tensions in refocusing seemed to be between the “graspers” on both sides of the perspective line. They tended to exhibit an extreme commitment to and intransigence within their position. These findings are compatible with what Becker (1999) discovered about between-frame conflicts. Yet, they also contribute to theory by showing that within a particular “frame” or perspective grouping there may be a radical “grasping” element that engages in the conflict more vigorously (and perhaps influences moderates to adopt a more extreme position). For organizational leaders, it is helpful to identify the “graspers” and to make sure that they have adequate opportunity to express their viewpoints in healthy ways. The “graspers” have the greatest potential for supporting or sabotaging future initiatives tied to the initial direction plan.

Connecting Subgroups via Transparency

My study revealed that transparency went a long way in minimizing tensions at LEFC (at least, among some of the second summit participants). People extended empathy and compassion, which brought some participants closer together. This movement is in keeping with what McCullough et al. (1997) observed regarding the empathy people feel toward those who appear broken and contrite. Many of those within the official refocusing circles appreciated the increased transparency that the refocusing process mandated. It helped to promote respect and trust. This finding is an important contribution to theory. It challenges Meyerson and Martin’s (1987) contention that organizational subgroups are only loosely coupled to each other. Perhaps, it is possible for subgroups to experience greater connectedness via bridges of transparency. My findings also suggest that transparency may
be a vehicle for accommodating subgroup values within a multi-layered understanding of
directional knowledge. The implication for organizational leaders is that leadership
transparency is a good organizational practice because it communicates that leaders value
and trust others within the organization. This kind of trust helps to pave the way for
individuals and subgroups to live out their values without feeling intimidated. My findings
suggest that organizational connectedness is important for organizational success.
Organizational leaders would do well to recognize that a healthy connectedness (at
interpersonal and inter-subgroup levels) within an organization requires intentional measures
that foster ongoing and respectful perspective sharing.

Summary

In summary, perspective dominance can easily occur during a direction-setting
process. The dominating perspective is often the one that dominated or was rising to
dominance prior to the process. Perspective dominance points to a systemic problem within
many organizations. Seeking to address the problem at the time of direction-setting will
likely fail. Organizational leaders can better address the problem by dealing with historical
patterns of perspective dominance within the organization. It is a huge issue. Addressing the
issue requires a commitment to a multi-perspective view of culture and cultural change as I
have described it in this study. The assumption is that adopting a fuller view of
organizational change (and the directional knowledge to enact that change) is good for
organizational leaders, their organizations, and their organizational members. It is good
business. It is good education. It is good ministry. Without this commitment in place, the
privileged perspective will continue to dominate a “shared” sense of organizational culture
while individuals and subgroups remain undervalued and underutilized to the detriment of
everyone in the organization.
Values Reductionism

The problem of values reductionism surfaced during LEFC’s refocusing process. My findings revealed that some types of power kept people from contributing their values at all—an extreme form of values reductionism. I also discovered that the process of consensus-building was another form of values reductionism. Many organizational leaders hold to an integrated view of organizational culture as they seek to help articulate a shared sense of values within the directional knowledge. Developing a shared sense of values sometimes requires taking personal values and condensing them into a short list of supposed shared values. This process reduces the richness and diversity of personal values into a set of generic values that are often bereft of the power to inspire exceptional effort. Values reductionism results in a detachment between personal values and corporate values. This is okay if the general values are not the only values represented in the organization’s directional knowledge. A multi-perspective view of knowledge, as I have described it in this study, requires that directional knowledge also accommodates subgroup and individual values. Obviously, I am not talking about directional knowledge in terms of a directional document. Directional knowledge that accommodates individual, subgroup, and organizational values is more of a mindset than a strategic plan. It is an organizational philosophy that recognizes that unleashing individuals, subgroups, and the organizational membership as a whole to live out their values is an important pursuit in an increasingly postmodern society. Yet, an excessive emphasis on building a shared plan and its associated practice of values reductionism stands in the way of engaging in this pursuit. My third research question sought to generate insights about the problem of values reductionism: how did power intersect with participatory processes during LEFC’s refocusing process?
Paralyzed by Pain

Pain paralyzed some people. Many people at LEFC went through a major crisis as their longstanding and beloved senior pastor resigned in a cloud of controversy. It was a painful time. It was painful to think that power had been abused resulting in hurtful feelings for a large number of people. My findings showed that this pain contributed to some people’s unwillingness to engage in the refocusing process. This type of values reductionism pushes people and their values outside the values discussions. In some cases, people’s pain seemed to add to their feelings of intimidation. It is important that organizational leaders recognize the paralyzing power of pain and seek to promote healing for the good of hurting individuals and the good of the organization. This ongoing process requires sensitive intervention, as appropriate. People paralyzed by their pain are not going to contribute as they could to a direction-setting process. Obviously, some people may not be able to contribute through their pain. This is one reason why organizational leaders might want to consider direction-setting as an ongoing process. With a multi-perspective view of culture and change, the directional knowledge changes as individuals transition in and out of the organization. Subgroups also change because of this membership flux, which also influences the directional knowledge. Suffice to say, directional knowledge is extremely dynamic. It embodies three types of parallel and intersecting levels (individual, subgroup, and organizational). Articulating a shared sense of culture may happen periodically, but the individual and subgroup dimensions of the directional knowledge are constantly changing. Organizational leaders would do well to make sure that any statement of direction accommodates this dynamic quality in the individual and subgroup dimensions. For faith-based organizations, this does not mean compromising core doctrinal beliefs, but rather promoting a generous spirit in the interpretation and application of those beliefs.
The Intimidation of Women and Youth

My study revealed that two demographic groups that felt more intimidated than others during refocusing were women and youth. As a result, some in those groups did not think that they contributed much to the refocusing process, or did not think their ideas carried much weight in the discussions. Values reductionism occurred as they held back on contributing their values or had their values undervalued by others. The implication for leaders is to uncover why people feel intimidated and take the necessary steps to address this intimidation. As with some of the other leadership implications, the equitable distribution of power may help to reduce these feelings of intimidation for some people. Leaders may also want to consider offering education that helps those who feel intimidated to become more assertive so that they can claim the power that they have and that others may extend to them. This is not a “blame the victim” approach, but rather an acknowledgement that some people may require additional skills to claim the power that is rightfully theirs.

Detached Knowledge

Consensus-building led to the articulation of knowledge that was detached from the personal knowledge of its contributors. For example, LEFC’s official values bore little resemblance to the personal values that supposedly gave them life. As Weber (1958) suggested, bureaucratization morphs the original values into a by-product that is often very different from the catalyzing values. The by-product is differentiated or detached from the original values (Gronow, 1988). This is not to say that the official values and other parts of LEFC’s ministry direction plan could not provide general direction for organizational members. Samier (2002) asserts that universities may lose something of their original intent through the bureaucratizing process. Yet, he believes that it is still possible for educational
leaders to persevere ultimate organizational values. However, it is unlikely that these ultimate values would elicit the same kind of passion and commitment as personal values. There are three major implications for organizational leaders. First, it is important to recognize that personal purpose (or “calling” in this study) potentially has more power to inspire organizational members to restless effort than the corporate mission. Corporate direction statements are often detached from the personal values of organizational members, even those who had primary input into their creation. Values reductionism occurs as personal values are reduced to a generic set of “common” values that do little to excite the passions of organizational members. This is important because organizational leaders often focus on developing the corporate direction and fail to capitalize on the incredible potential of personal direction for achieving both personal and corporate goals. This is why it may be important that leaders have a multi-perspective view of organizational change that encompasses both the personal and corporate dimensions of directional knowledge (and the subgroup dimension as mentioned previously). Second, a corporate direction plan is useful in terms of a general guide for the organization and its members. Just because an integrated direction plan is limited does not mean that it does not have some value. It has the potential to provide useful parameters for the organizational playing field. It shows people where they can live out their personal and subculture values. This not only gives organizational members focus, it may help them avoid actions that are morally indefensible. Viewing widely shared values as boundary stakes for the organization is an important contribution to the theoretical work on values reductionism. The reduction of values to a “common” set of values may serve an important purpose of clarifying ultimate values within an organization. Third, consensus-building tends to favour the dominant subculture(s) and to marginalize other subcultures. Melding diversity-building with consensus-building may help to insure that more local
identities (both subgroup and individual) are included in the discussions about a shared sense of culture.

**Summary**

In summary, the problem of values reductionism kept some people from participating because of pain and/or intimidation. This problem was also active in the metamorphosis that took place when people took their personal values and tried to use them as a basis for creating a “common” list of widely shared values. These apparently widely held values had the potential to provide a general sense of direction. However, they did not have the attachment to personal values that could elicit extraordinary action. A multi-layered approach to directional knowledge holds out the possibility that organizational leaders can encourage individual initiative at the personal values level within the broader scope of more widely held organizational values. The result is a win-win situation for both organizational members and their organizations.

**Summary**

The insights I have gleaned from this study on the intersection of power, knowledge, shared perspectives, and participatory processes within organizational direction-setting have deeply impacted me. I have become much more aware of how organizational processes such as direction-setting continuously intersect with exercises of power. These acts of power have a profound influence on the route that these processes will go. Because of my study, I am much more sensitive to organizational power dynamics. Yet, I have also become keenly aware that the way organizational leaders view knowledge and organizational culture influences the way they use and try to mediate the use of power in determining organizational direction. Based on my study findings, I have suggested that constructing
robust directional knowledge in a postmodern context requires the accommodation of individual values, subgroup values, and the values of the organizational membership as a whole. This particular study is over. Yet, for me, the application of the insights has only just begun. May these insights inspire and guide organizational leaders as we seek to use and help others use power in ways that facilitate the construction of knowledge that is of maximum benefit to organizational members and the organizations in which they serve.
References


Appendix A - Evangelical Free Church of Canada Doctrinal Statement

1. SCRIPTURES - We believe the Scriptures, both Old and New Testaments, to be the inspired Word of God, without error in the original writings, the complete revelation of His will for the salvation of men, and the Divine and final authority for all Christian faith and life.

2. GOD - We believe in one God, Creator of all things, infinitely perfect and eternally existing in three persons, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

3. JESUS CHRIST - We believe that Jesus Christ is the true God and true man, having been conceived of the Holy Ghost and born of the Virgin Mary. He died on the cross a sacrifice for our sins according to the Scriptures. Further, He arose bodily from the dead, ascended into heaven, where at the right hand of the Majesty on High, He is now our High Priest and Advocate.

4. HOLY SPIRIT - We believe that the ministry of the Holy Spirit is to glorify the Lord Jesus Christ, and during this age to convict men, regenerate the believing sinner, indwell, guide, instruct and empower the believer for godly living and service.

5. SIN - We believe that man was created in the image of God but fell into sin and is therefore lost and only through regeneration by the Holy Spirit can salvation and spiritual life be obtained.

6. SALVATION - We believe that the shed blood of Jesus Christ and His resurrection provide the only ground for justification and salvation for all who believe, and only such as receive Jesus Christ are born of the Holy Spirit, and thus become children of God.

7. BAPTISM AND LORD'S SUPPER - We believe that water baptism and the Lord's Supper are ordinances to be observed by the Church during the present age. They are, however, not to be regarded as means of salvation.

8. CHURCH - We believe that the true Church is composed of all such persons who through saving faith in Jesus Christ have been regenerated by the Holy Spirit and are united together in the body of Christ of which He is the Head.

9. MEMBERSHIP - We believe that only those who are thus members of the true Church shall be eligible for membership in the local church.

10. HEAD OF THE CHURCH - We believe that Jesus Christ is the Lord and Head of the Church, and that every local church has the right under Christ to decide and govern its own affairs.

11. RETURN OF CHRIST - We believe in the personal, pre-millennial and imminent coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and that this Blessed Hope has a vital bearing on the personal life and service of the believer.

12. RESURRECTION OF THE DEAD - We believe in the bodily resurrection of the dead; of the believer to everlasting blessedness and joy with the Lord; of the unbeliever to judgment and everlasting conscious punishment.
Appendix B: UBC Behavioural Research Ethics Board Certificate of Approval

Certificate of Approval

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<td>Educational Studies</td>
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INSTITUTION(S) WHERE RESEARCH WILL BE CARRIED OUT

UBC Campus

CO-INVESTIGATORS:

Wolff, Randy, Educational Studies

SPONSORING AGENCIES

Unfunded Research

TITLE:

Intersection of Power, Knowledge, Shared Worldview, and Participation in Organizational Direction-setting: A Church Case Study

APPROVAL DATE

OCT 20 2006

TERM (YEARS)

1

DOCUMENTS INCLUDED IN THIS APPROVAL

Aug. 28, 2006, Contact letter / Consent form / Questionnaires

CERTIFICATION

The application for ethical review of the above-named project has been reviewed and the procedures were found to be acceptable on ethical grounds for research involving human subjects.

Approved on behalf of the Behavioural Research Ethics Board by one of the following:

Dr. Peter Suedfeld, Chair,
Dr. Jim Rupert, Associate Chair
Dr. Armine Kazanjian, Associate Chair
Dr. M. Judith Lynam, Associate Chair

This Certificate of Approval is valid for the above term provided there is no change in the experimental procedures.
# Certificate of Approval

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**INSTITUTION(S) WHERE RESEARCH WILL BE CARRIED OUT**

UBC Campus

**CO-INVESTIGATORS:**

Wolff, Randy, Educational Studies

**SPONSORING AGENCIES**

Unfunded Research

**TITLE:**

Intersection of Power, Knowledge, Shared Worldview, and Participation in Organizational Direction-setting: A Church Case Study

**APPROVAL DATE**

06-10-20 (yrmnday)

**TERM (YEARS)**

1

**AMENDMENT:**


**AMENDMENT APPROVED:**

\[\text{Nov 17, 2006}\]

**CERTIFICATION:**

The request for continuing review of an amendment to the above-named project has been reviewed and the procedures were found to be acceptable on ethical grounds for research involving human subjects.

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Approved on behalf of the Behavioural Research Ethics Board by one of the following:

- Dr. Peter Suedfeld, Chair,
- Dr. Jim Rupert, Associate Chair
- Dr. Arminee Kazanjian, Associate Chair
- Dr. M. Judith Lynam, Associate Chair

This Certificate of Approval is valid for the above term provided there is no change in the experimental procedures.
Appendix C: Letter of Initial Contact

November 13, 2006

Dear [name of summit participant],

It’s hard to believe it, but I have finally arrived at the point where I can proceed with collecting data for my doctoral thesis through the University of British Columbia. I wasn’t sure if I would ever get to this point.

I was wondering if you would be interested in providing some information that will help me in my thesis research. With the support of Langley Evangelical Free Church’s (LEFC) Elder’s Board, I am doing my thesis research on LEFC’s refocusing process, which occurred from February 2002 to February 2003. The reason that I am asking you to participate in my study is because you were part of a group of 61 people who participated in at least the first refocusing summit in the fall of 2002. Your participation in the summit(s) placed you in an important position to not only contribute to the refocusing process, but to observe it. It is your observations about the refocusing process that are of particular interest to me in my research.

The overarching purpose of my study is to generate understanding about some of the factors that influence direction-setting processes. I will attempt to achieve this purpose by studying LEFC’s refocusing process. I believe that I will generate insights that will be very useful to LEFC and to other churches and organizations as they attempt to set direction that is meaningful and motivating for organizational members.

I would like to invite you to participate in a 90-120 minute interview with me where I would ask you questions about the refocusing process. I have included the questions for your perusal. In addition to these questions, I may ask others as a way of exploring the ideas that you present. The interviews will be audio-taped, with your permission. After the interview, you will receive a copy of your interview transcript, which you can check for accuracy. At a later date, you will receive a summary of the research findings and have an opportunity to give feedback in written format or in a 90-minute discussion group format. You are not obligated to give any feedback on the summary if you participate in an interview. Related to the interviews, your identity will be kept strictly confidential. You will not be identified by name in any reports of the completed study. However, I cannot guarantee confidentiality as it relates to the discussion group. With that said, I will ask those who participate in the discussion group to keep the information discussed confidential. Before participating in the interview, you would need to sign a consent form. I have included the consent form with this
letter for your perusal. The consent form gives more details about the study, which may be helpful as you make your decision about volunteering for the study.

Could you please take a moment to fill out the response form below by November 19 2006 to let me know of your intent related to participating in the study (I would not need the consent form signed until a later date). I will be selecting a representative sample of 20 people from those who volunteer to participate. I will use a purposeful sampling approach where I select willing volunteers based on gender and life stage grouping. For life stage groupings, I will use groups previously designated at the church: single adults (19-64 years), homebuilders (married people 19-45 years old), mature outlook (married people 46-64 years), and seniors (people 65 years old and older). If I have more people than I need for any one of the groups, I will randomly select the desired number from those who volunteered. If you choose to volunteer to participate in the study, I will let you know after November 19 whether you will be part of the group of 20 interviewees.

Thanks so much!

Warmly,

Randy Wollf

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Response Form for Randy’s Research Study

Name: ___________________________________________

Telephone: _________________________      Email: _________________________

_____ No. I do not wish to volunteer to participate in the study.

_____ Yes. I will volunteer to participate in the study.

Please return this form in the enclosed envelope and return to me by November 12 (I have a mailbox at LEFC which you can use if this is most convenient for you). You can also email your response to me at wollf@telus.net. Thanks!
Appendix D: Consent Form

Consent Form
The Intersection of Power, Knowledge, Shared Worldview, and Participation in Organizational Direction-setting:
A Church Case Study

Principal Investigator: The principal investigator is Wendy Poole, an associate professor in the Educational Studies department at the University of British Columbia (UBC). Her contact phone number is (604) 822-5462.

Co-Investigator: The co-investigator is Randy Wollf, a UBC student pursuing a Ph.D. degree in Educational Studies. The research is for a Ph.D. thesis (public document), which is part of the Ph.D. program. Randy was a member of the pastoral staff at Langley Evangelical Free Church (LEFC) from 1989-2005. In May, 2005, the church leadership at LEFC publicly commissioned Randy to start additional churches in the Langley area as a church planting missionary. As an LEFC missionary, Randy receives financial support from LEFC’s mission’s budget. However, Randy is not an employee of LEFC, but an employee of the Lower Pacific District of the Evangelical Free Church of Canada, which oversees church planting initiatives in Langley and the surrounding area. Randy’s contact phone number is (604) 530-9220.

Purpose:
The overarching purpose of the study is to generate understanding about some of the factors that influence direction-setting processes by studying LEFC’s refocusing process that occurred from February 2002 to February 2003. The first purpose is to generate insights about the relationship between knowledge and power as evidenced in the refocusing process. During the refocusing or knowledge formation process, did people contribute their ideas in meaningful ways? If not, what restrained them? How did power play into this restraint? If they did contribute in meaningful ways, how did power connect with this openness to share personal ideas? Related to peoples’ perceptions of the direction plan, how did people’s varying degrees of participation in the refocusing process affect the motivating power of the direction plan? The second purpose is to explore how shared worldviews might have influenced LEFC’s refocusing process. Did a particular worldview dominate the refocusing process? If so, how did this shared worldview exert power on the process? The third research purpose is to explore possible linkages between power, knowledge, and the contribution of personal values through meaningful, organization-wide participation. How did peoples’ participation in the refocusing process influence the perceived power of the knowledge (i.e. the ministry direction plan) that was produced? You have been asked to participate in this study because you took part in at least the first refocusing summit in the fall of 2002 and are therefore in a position to provide helpful insights into the refocusing process.
Study Procedures:
If you participate in this study, you will take part in a 90-120 minute interview with Randy Wolff where you will answer questions related to the purposes of the study. You will receive a copy of these questions ahead of time, although other questions may be added during the interview to further explore the initial answers that you provide. The interviews will be audio-taped. After the interview, you will receive a copy of your interview transcript, which you can check for accuracy. At a later date, you will receive an executive summary of the research findings and have an opportunity to give feedback in written format or in a 90-minute discussion group format. Volunteering to do an interview does not mean that you are also volunteering to give feedback on the executive summary by giving written feedback or participating in the discussion group. However, if you choose to participate in the discussion group, you are looking at a total time commitment for participating in this study of three to three and a half hours. In this study, there are no known risks to participants. Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions about the study procedures.

Confidentiality:
If you choose to participate in the discussion group, I cannot guarantee confidentiality related to what is said in the discussion group. However, I will ask those who participate in the discussion group to keep the information discussed confidential. Apart from the discussion group, your identity will be kept strictly confidential. All documents and audio-tapes will be identified only by code number and kept in a locked filing cabinet in my home office. You will not be identified by name in any reports of the completed study. Data records stored on a computer will be password-protected. Myself, and the principal investigator, Wendy Poole, who is my research supervisor at UBC, are the only people who will have access to the data. After five years, I will demagnetize the audio-tapes, shred paper copies of data documents, and permanently delete computer data files.

Contact for information about the study:
If you have any questions or desire further information with respect to this study, you may contact Wendy Poole at (604) 822-5462.

Contact for concerns about the rights of research subjects:
If you have any concerns about your treatment or rights as a research subject, you may contact the Research Subject Information Line in the UBC Office of Research Services at 604-822-8598.

Consent:
Your participation in this study is entirely voluntary and you may refuse to participate or withdraw from the study at any time.

Your signature below indicates that you have received a copy of this consent form for your own records including all attachments (letter from Randy, response form, and interview questions).
Your signature indicates that you consent to participate in this study.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject Signature</th>
<th>Printed Name</th>
<th>Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
Appendix E: Interview Questions

Note: In preparation for the interview, please read an abbreviated version of LEFC’s Ministry Direction Plan (see Appendix A) as a way of refreshing your memory about the Biblical purpose, preferred core values, and vision articulated in the plan.

LEFC’s refocusing process started with a personal refocusing time in the form of Focused Living Retreats and moved on to organizational refocusing with three weekend summits. Here is the timeline of these major events:

- Focused Living Retreats (May to September, 2002)
- First Summit where participants focused on LEFC’s past (big timeline on the gym wall) and the church’s current values (October 4-5, 2002)
- Second Summit also known as the “Un-Summit” where the summit leader postponed the original summit plans and spent time addressing tensions in the church (November 1, 2002)
- Third Summit where participants discussed preferred values and vision for the church among other things (November 29-30)

1. Which parts of the refocusing process did you participate in?

I am interested in your experience as a participant in LEFC’s refocusing process, both the personal refocusing at the Focused Living Retreats and the organizational refocusing that took place in summits and the congregational meetings. Please think about the individual parts of the process as well as the process as a whole. I want to hear your story.

   a. As you think about the process, what stands out in your mind?
   b. What was the experience like for you?
   c. What were some of the positive experiences you had?
   d. What were some of the negative experiences?

2. You were invited to participate in the refocusing process. Why do you think that you were asked to be part of the process?

   a. Why do you think that some in the church were invited to participate in the organizational refocusing and others were not?
   b. Why did you choose to participate?

3. What individuals and groups were influential in the refocusing process?

   a. How did individuals and groups exercise their influence? Can you remember
an example that shows this influence?

b. Did you feel that some persons or groups had more influence on the refocusing process than others did? If so, could you describe what you observed?

c. To what extent do you feel that you had power to influence the process and its eventual outcome? Can you give an example of when you felt that you successfully influenced the process? Can you tell me of a time when you felt unable to influence the process? Why do you think that you were unable to influence the process in this situation?

4. From your perspective, what was the refocusing process all about?

a. How did you envision the refocusing process before it started?

b. Has your perception of the process changed as a result of your experience? If so, in what ways?

5. If you were going to introduce yourself in a small group setting in the church, what would you say about yourself that would get at the core of who you are?

6. How would you describe your relationship with LEFC during the refocusing process? Has that relationship changed since then? If so, in what ways? Why?

7. What were the core values that you articulated in your personal calling statement during one of the Focused Living Retreats?

a. To what extent do you feel that the official core values listed at the end of the process (equipping, dependency on God, biblical faithfulness/cultural relevance, teamwork, integrity, engaging people who do not know how much God loves them, and authentic relationships) in LEFC’s ministry direction plan reflected your core values?

b. How much did you negotiate your values into the discussions?

i. To what extent did you advocate for inclusion of your values in the final outcome?

ii. Were there some values you lobbied for more strongly than others? If so, which ones?

iii. What, if any, values were you willing to negotiate or compromise on? Why were these more negotiable from your perspective?”

c. What would you have liked to see differently in the final document?
d. Did you make any specific observations about how the process worked; that is, the process of bringing personal values together to shape the collective set of church values? How did you feel about that process?

e. Who were the individuals and/or groups who influenced the construction of the Ministry Direction Plan the most? Who influenced the construction of the Ministry Direction Plan the least? Why do you think this was the case?

8. Did the outcome of the process - the ministry direction plan - inspire you? Why or why not?

9. As you think about the ways in which people (including yourself) participated in the refocusing process, do you think that all individuals and groups had ample opportunity and encouragement to participate?

a. How was discussion facilitated?

b. During the refocusing process, there were three main forums for people to give feedback: the weekend summits, pulse groups, and congregational meetings. How would you generally describe the level and quality of participation in each of these three forums? How would you describe your own level of participation in each forum?

c. As you think about your contribution to the refocusing process, describe your personal level of satisfaction with the amount you contributed and the influence you had on the process. What helped and/or hindered your level of contribution?

10. In what ways could the refocusing process have been more meaningful for you?

11. How did you envision what the church should be at the outset of the refocusing process? In what ways, if any, did this perception change during the refocusing process?

a. Did you notice individuals or groups at LEFC that envisioned what the church should be in similar ways as you? If so, what individuals or groups? In what ways were their views similar to yours?

b. Did you notice individuals or groups that envisioned what the church should be in different ways than you? If so, what individuals or groups? In what ways were their views differ from yours?

i. How were the various groups advocating their position? Can you think of an example that shows a group advocating their position?
ii. Did you feel that you were part of one or more of these groups that was advocating their way of envisioning the church? If so, can you give an example?

12. Did you notice any tension between groups in the church during the refocusing process?
   a. If so, what did you observe?
   b. When did the tension arise?
   c. What do you think caused the tension?
   d. What were the results of the tension that you observed?
   e. How do you think the tension influenced the refocusing process?

13. Is there anything else that you would like to tell me that you think would help me to understand your experience during the refocusing process?
Appendix F - Abbreviated Version of LEFC’s Ministry Direction Plan

Our Biblical Purpose

Why do we exist as a church?

Last August our key leaders revisited the question, “According to the Bible, why do we as a church exist?” After studying various passages of scripture and brainstorming in small groups, they proposed the following statement as foundational to the process. Pulse groups confirmed this.

“We exist to love God, love others and share Jesus Christ.”

Our Preferred Values:

Who has God shaped us to be?

We asked, “What values would we need to have as a church if we were to reach the people in our Mission Focus?” We concluded the following:

Dependency on God – We value God as our Creator and Sustainer. We are wholeheartedly dependent on Him for all that we are and do. Our dependency affirms that Jesus is at work in our world and we are committed to pray and to live out His purposes in surrender and obedience.

Biblical Faithfulness – Culturally Relevant – We value the unchanging truth of God expressed in a relevant way because God’s word is relevant to all. We understand that God has called us to a specific time, place and culture. We communicate the timelessness of God’s word in such a way that there are no barriers to personal faith while allowing believers to grow in their relationship with the Lord.

Authentic Relationships - We value individuals because we are all created in God’s image. Life transformation takes place through respectful, compassionate, accepting relationships, not just the imparting of information. Therefore everything we do in ministry is done from a relational grace-filled core, not just as a program.

We value ministry based on a vision of engaging people who do not know how much God loves them, introducing them to Him, and watching Him bring wholeness to their lives.

Teamwork – We value working together in harmony and order with accountability because it is our deep conviction that by functioning interdependently we can have more of an impact for the
Kingdom of God than if each of us functions independently.

**Equipping** – We value the empowering and equipping of believers to serve to their full potential as God calls them by His Spirit. This means we recognize gift based ministry and leadership styles that facilitate and empower.

**Integrity** – We value honesty, authenticity and humility because without it we cannot be people of integrity who are salt and light in our world.

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**Our Vision**

**Where is God leading us in the future?**

**In five years we envision a growing church community of vibrant, caring, transparent people who are growing in their dependence on God, and teaming together with a passion to reach our friends, neighbours and world for Him.**

We see dependence on God underlying everything we do especially expressed through *prayer* and *obedience* to His word.

We see multiple *worship services* (some that are not on Sundays) that are joyful, accepting and relevant to life and sensitive to people seeking to connect with God.

We see *creative caring* for the felt and spiritual needs of families/individuals in our church and in our community. We see people resolving their disagreements rather than avoiding situations and leaving. Our care will be lived out through the week as we personally engage with others.

We see events and *need oriented programs* creatively and relevantly delivered as doorways to connect relationally with the people of our community and ultimately bring them to Christ.

We see *small groups* of various kinds for care and ministry. We see many of these groups bridging to the community and serving God in their unique settings.

We see *leaders, teams and individuals being equipped*, mentored and empowered as we live out God’s calling here and around the world.

We see an environment where *partnering and participating with other churches, organizations and mission agencies* are encouraged in order to reach people together.

**Ultimately people in this city will see us as a caring community, a spiritual home where Jesus is central, and a safe place of hope for the journey of life.**
Appendix G: My Completed Values Worksheet for Summit Three

**Discovering**

**Values Worksheet**

Step 1: From the following list of values, circle the values you most prefer.
Step 2: List the values that emerged at the Journey Wall Exercise.
Step 3: Put a "1–5" prioritized ranking next to FIVE values that you circled in each list.
Step 4: Record the responses in the tally box below and bring it to the values summit.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Foundational Values</th>
<th>Ministry Values</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Describing Who We Desire to Be</td>
<td>Describing How We Want to Minister</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Balanced</td>
<td>Accepting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Biblical</td>
<td>1. Harvest-focused</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caring</td>
<td>Ambitious</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christ-centered</td>
<td>Attractive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Committed</td>
<td>Bold</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Compassionate</td>
<td>Confident</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Competent</td>
<td>Contemporary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consistent</td>
<td>Creative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contented</td>
<td>Cutting Edge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peaceful</td>
<td>Decisive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reconciling</td>
<td>Diligence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relational</td>
<td>Disciplined</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Respectful</td>
<td>Effective</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Righteous</td>
<td>Efficient</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sound in doctrine</td>
<td>Enthusiastically</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Traditional (heritage)</td>
<td>Entrepreneurial</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Truthful</td>
<td>Empowering</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unified</td>
<td>Equipping</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wisdom</td>
<td>Evangelistic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other:</td>
<td>Excellence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other:</td>
<td>Faith-driven</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other:</td>
<td>Growth-oriented</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Journey Wall Results**

Our Actual Values
1. God’s word
2. Caring relationships
3. Children’s needs
4. Personal contact
5. Living
6. Knowing equality
7. Second hand
8. Personal insight
9. 

**My Values Selections**

Bring your completed values worksheet with you to the Summit meeting.