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Inspiring Innovation:
**An exploration of leadership and creativity in New Zealand
businesses and churches.**

A thesis
submitted in fulfilment
of the requirements for the degree
of
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at
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by
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Abstract

This study set out from the following three observations: that there is little research about innovation leadership in New Zealand; that existing writings rely heavily on research and theory from other places (especially Europe and the US); and that churches remain virtually unexplored in the literature on the topic of innovation leadership. In responding to this situation, the thesis addressed all three by a grounded theory inquiry to discover New Zealand church and business members' narratives of leadership and innovation. The researcher utilised a grounded theory methodology in conducting interviews with individuals from five different New Zealand organisations, representing a small sample of church and business members. The thesis codified its findings into four leadership of innovation models, which were explored to reveal how they are embodied in the organisation and their impact on the innovative output of each church or business. Further, the researcher also uncovered innovation leadership actions that are present at each organisation, to develop the understanding of the regular practices and focuses of each leadership model. Finally, the thesis suggest ways forward for leadership and innovation in this country. The researcher's aim and hope is that these new innovation models will contribute to the understanding of innovation leadership from a unique New Zealand perspective to give a benchmark for future research.

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S.D.G.

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CHAPTER I. INTRODUCTION

The Researcher's Journey

The Biblical narrative of Israel's journey from Egypt to Canaan highlights a dramatic encounter between Joshua, their leader, and a divine being.

Joshua, with sword drawn, asks this heavenly warrior to state his allegiance and define whether he is for or against Israel. With a word, this being affirms an ontological tenet that shapes modern sociological research. He says, "Neither", confirming that true objectivity is other-worldly, whereas to be human is to be subjective (Theyer-Bacon, 2003).

This Biblical theme resonates with the social constructivist perspective, with Suddaby (in Fendt & Sachs, 2008, p. 432) urging researchers to constantly remind themselves that we "are only human and that what [we] observe is a function of both who [we] are and what [we] hope to see". Our very act of seeing is formed by our experience, upbringing and our desire about the future (Cunliffe, 2003; Smith, 2009). As such, this research is "a cultural poetic" (Clifford, 1986, p.12) constructed from the interaction of many different voices, including my own. The majority of this research will focus on the foregrounded voices of the interview participants, with my voice in danger of taking on an assumed neutrality in the background. It is with this concern in mind that I open with my narrative and highlight the experiences and culture that shaped and motivated this research.

My journey to this research was - like me - birthed in middle-class New Zealand and raised in the evangelical church. As a fifth generation

Christian, I grew up with the stories of David and Goliath, the Creator God, Daniel in the Lions' Den and the life of Jesus. After moving up through Sunday School and Youth Group, I began to teach Sunday School, was baptised and became a leader of the teenagers at our church. It was during this phase that I discovered I had a knack for communication, and was regularly involved preaching and teaching at my home church, and other faith communities throughout the Waikato. These experiences motivated me to study communication at an undergraduate level, leading to a three year bachelor's degree focusing on public relations and media studies.

Suddenly, I was in a world which encouraged critical thinking, challenge and debate, careful articulation and diversity of opinions. I was exposed to entrepreneurial thought, thematic analysis, meta-narratives and Marxist theory. And although many young New Zealand Christians - myself included - are warned of the dangers of secular study, I found myself in an environment that resonated with my being and drove me deeper into my faith. Upon reflection, it was tertiary study that finally taught me to participate in the ancient Jewish tradition of the *shema* and to love the Lord with all my mind (Luke 10:27, citing Deut. 6:5). I enjoyed questioning the history, beliefs and practices of the Christian faith, and became more involved in creating new actions and opportunities within my home church.

Upon graduation, I was employed by my church as a Youth Pastor, and by my local high school as a part-time Youth Worker. Over these five years, I

encountered a wide range of people, ranging from drug-dealing high school drop-outs through to high achieving top scholars, and discovered the rich diversity in their perspectives, stories and hopes. Yet, at the same time, I became more involved in churches throughout the North Island, and was puzzled by their homogeneity. Despite the diverse people that attended each faith community, each church appeared as a carbon copy of the others, borrowing the same patterns of practice and running the same programs as the other churches. I was perplexed by this disconnect - how could all these organisations, filled with people with such variegated skill sets and passions, be so similar to each other? Why was there not more difference and distinction?

At the same time, I became fascinated with the growing research in the fields of innovation and creativity. After serendipitously stumbling upon de Bono's (1992) *Serious Creativity* at a second hand bookstore, I was awakened to the realms of neuroscience and organisational psychology. I was intrigued by the marriage of science to the area of creativity (a domain I had assumed belonged in the arts), and loved the ideas and stories of people's creativity flourishing through intentional change. As I read these theories, I began to imagine how the New Zealand church could be transformed if it (re)discovered its creative potential. Also, the seeds of a question began to germinate - what is it that leaders could do that would allow this creativity to flourish in our faith communities?

The motivation for this question was further catalysed and expanded by the passing of Sir Paul Callaghan, a New Zealand physicist who was passionate about the need for innovative growth in the New Zealand business sector. In a web-broadcast keynote given at StrategyNZ in April 2011, Callaghan stressed the need for New Zealand businesses to pursue innovative export-driven niche entrepreneurialism, rather than settle for just our traditional primary industries focus. This lecture, along with subsequent communication with the Callaghan Institute and Innovation Waikato, opened my eyes to the felt need for the transformation required for New Zealand businesses to reach their creative potential. Encouraged and challenged by these conversations, my interest in creativity began to expand beyond the faith community. In particular, I began to wonder about how business leaders could act to inspire innovation in their organisations.

Motivations for Thesis

Eventually, this desire to see transformation leading to innovation among the leaders of New Zealand churches and businesses led me to this Masters of Management Studies research thesis. At the outset of this research journey, my hopes for the time ahead were three-fold. Firstly, I wanted to discover leadership styles and actions that can increase innovation in a church or business. Although there is a wide range of variable inputs that are theorised to have an effect on an organisation's innovation (e.g., personality traits (Batey, Chamorro-Premuzic, &

Furnham, 2009, 2010), creative products (Sternberg, Kaufman, & Pretz, 2002), reward schemes (Dewett & Denisi, 2004) and the environment (Dodds, Smith, & Ward, 2002)), my interest was focused on how the leader can interact with these inputs to foster positive change. This narrowing of the gaze, apart from being essential in limiting the scope of the research, was driven by my experience as a leader in both the church and business sector, and by the recognition of the impact my own actions have had in both these domains.

Secondly, I wanted to compare these discoveries of leadership styles and actions across a range of different organisations. As the limited length of this research period restricted the possibility of any meaningful longitudinal study across one organisation, I compared the findings latitudinally across both churches and businesses and looked for consistencies and differences in the leadership approaches. As well as helping justify the external validity of this research and discovering over-arching consistencies, I hoped that each domain might be able to learn from the other. I assumed that the church can learn from the business practices governing organisational innovation, and that the business sector can learn from the relational practices of the church. However, this was just based on my casual observations and experiences in each sector. The thesis set out to engage in focused research to explore these assumptions and, hopefully, to discover new possibilities that I would not have previously considered.

Finally, I wanted this knowledge to be actionable knowledge (Aspinwall, Brook, & Smith, 2014; Argyris, 2003). For research to meet this definition, it must produce knowledge that is capable of both helping and empowering others. Although my exposure to the research in the social sciences is not as expansive as a professional academic, my frustration with much of the published material is well expressed by Van de Ven's (2007) critique that current research efforts are resulting in "trivial advancements to science, and contribut(ing) to the widening gap between theory and practice" (p.5). Having spent time involved in entrepreneurial work, and seeking to apply innovation research during my employment as a Youth Pastor, I know firsthand the disconnect between much academic research and the business sector concerns. Often, researchers appear to be finding answers to questions that most organisations are not interested in asking. I hoped that this research can conclude with actionable suggestions for each organisation in each sector to consider, resulting in change and improvement in their leadership of innovation across both.

In short, these three hopes can be summarised into three research aims:

1. To discover what innovative leadership practices are in New Zealand churches and businesses.
2. To compare and develop this learning through comparative analysis and engagement with pertinent literature.
3. To create leadership models to help improve innovation in New Zealand churches and businesses.

I saw this research as important for New Zealand organisations because innovation is a strong driver of economic growth and community development (Lewis, 2008). Defined as the ability to convert new ideas into actions, innovation has a wide societal focus, ranging from the development of new products through to new ways of social engagement (Clark, 2010). As is common with much research, academic inquiry into innovation practices is primarily based on the US and European context, with relatively few research explorations into the realities of New Zealand innovation. The research that has been done in the New Zealand context has either focused on governmental innovation policy (e.g., Buerkler, 2013; Thomas, 2006, McKinlay, 2014), large-scale primary industry (e.g., Johnston, Barclay, & Honoré, 2010; Hartwich & Negro, 2010) or quantitative analysis on innovation perceptions in New Zealand businesses (e.g., Clark, 2010). Also, the majority of research into innovative leadership practices are based on testing pre-developed theory (e.g., Zacher & Rosing, 2015; Rosing, Frese, & Bausch, 2011; Waite, 2013).

Research Gap

The majority of these theories find their origins in two main theories concerning the factors that contribute to creative idea generation. The interactionist model of creativity stresses the creative person as the key factor in the creative activity, and the one who should be highlighted in any research. This results in creativity researchers exploring the formative power of pre-existing social conditions in their environment, and the impact of their own cognitive style and ability, personality, motivational factor and their knowledge of the process (Woodman, Sawyer, & Griffin, 1993). This can be contrasted with the componential model of creativity which focuses on the environment as the key factor in the creative process. This approach focuses its analysis on the environment of an organisation and assumes that the organisational setting plays the formative role in allowing creativity to flourish. Research within this domain tends to highlight how an organisation encourages of creativity, allows autonomy, makes resources available to the subject and which pressures that are placed upon the subject to create (Amabile, Conti, Coon, Herron, & Lazenby, 1996). Within these models, the focus on the leader is their ability to either enable the creative person to actualise their ability, or to shape the environment to allow creativity to flourish. As the leadership focus of this research is present in both models, this exploration remained open-minded to both theories from the outset.

The lack of qualitative research on the New Zealand business experience of innovation is paralleled by the rare inquiries into the leadership of innovation in the Christian church. The limited existing research focus predominantly on the accidental impact of church innovation on indigenous populations (e.g., Barker, 2014; Morrison, 2009), the links between tradition and innovation (e.g., Mikoski, 2011; Scanzoni, 1965) or innovations in church education (e.g. Koehler, 1973). Researchers are beginning to explore innovation in the more recent “emergent church” phenomenon, but their focus is on the church as a cultural and social artefact, rather than on the practices allowing innovation in this movement (Taylor & Guest, 2006). As such, there is a gap in the body of literature regarding church leader practices and their relation to communities of innovation.

Grounded Theory Rationale

This research gap motivated me to develop theory from my participating organisations and the data they provided, rather than test previously created theories for their relevance to this situation. Since these theories are constructed in a socio-cultural context far removed from the New Zealand reality, it is likely that any application of them would be an “opportunistic use of theories that have dubious fit and working capacity” (Glaser & Strauss, 1967, p.4). Following in Glaser and Strauss’s (1967) grounded theory tradition, I recognise the important value of

verification of theory, yet see this as one of many options available to the social science researcher. Instead, this research aimed to generate theory, in conversation and comparison with pre-existing theories by recognising that these previous theses serve as inspiration and ways of seeing patterns within my own data set (Alvesson & Sköldbberg, 2008). The primacy source of theory generation for this study, however, came from the participant responses as they described their own organisations.

These participating organisations can be understood in three different orientations, which are important to clarify at the outset of this research (Fairhurst & Putnam, 2004). Firstly, the organisation may be understood as an object, independent of the individuals who participate within (Smith, 1993). This container view tends to focus on how the organisation shapes the organisation members, who are viewed as passive receivers of the organisation's message (Berger & Luckmann, 1966). The second orientation perceives the organisation as grounded in action, with the organisation structure and members' discourse mediating the construct of the organisation (Fairhurst & Putnam, 2004). The members' agency is a component of the organisation's structure, yet does not subsume the organisation's reality (Giddens, 1984). Participants and the organisation co-create the organisation's structure together, albeit with varying degrees of awareness and knowledge. The third orientation sees the organisation in a continual state of becoming, shaped by the discourse of the members (Hawes, 1974). The primary focus in this third perspective is the agency of the members, who generate the organisation through their social

conversations about and within the becoming organisation (Fairhurst & Putnam, 2004).

These three orientations are not reified positions to be held by the researcher, but differing viewpoints that can be adopted and argued throughout a research project (Craig, 1999). As such, this research adopted the third orientation (organisation as becoming), due to the resonance with my social constructionist position. This perspective allows a realist ontology, while recognising that the primary worlds that are lived in are the result of broad social agreement, often tacitly confirmed (Gergen, 1982). From this perspective, any alterations in conceptual practices hold potential for transforming the worlds that are inhabited (Cooperrider & Srivastva, 1999). These conceptual practices are manifested as organisational discourse, including the stories, ideas, beliefs and meanings that are shared through all aspects of the organisation (Cooperrider, Whitney & Stavros, 2008). Central to this view, however, is that “social knowledge resides in the stories of the collectivity” (Cooperrider et al., 2008, p.15). To understand an organisation, therefore, the researcher must engage with the shared stories of the organisational members, to discover how the organisation has arrived to its present form, where these narratives are shaping it, and how alternative stories could transform its future reality.

The thesis interprets the specific language as more than just a functionalist conduit of a message. Instead I see the discourse

constructing the organisational realities in which an individual resides (Heracleous, 2012). The communication constitutes the organisation, and discourse is the sense-making act in which processes, habits and normalising occurs (Taylor & Robichaud, 2004). This perspective was adopted by Charmaz (2000, 2006, 2008) in her development of constructivist grounded theory. Classic grounded theory posits the researcher in an investigative role, seeking to discover the data and theories that are already present in an organisation (Thornberg, 2011). This position, advocated by Glaser and Strauss's (1967) original work and Glaser's (1978, 1998) ongoing development of the theory, instruct the researcher to delay engagement with the literature till after the stage of data collection. Proponents of this approach contend that external theories will contaminate the data collection and generation of theory, as the researcher must seek out the data that exists in the empirical world (Glaser, 1998).

Charmaz (2000), however, assumes that any data collected, or theory generated, are co-constructed by the researcher as they interact with an organisation and its members. Responding to Cunliffe's (2003) call for reflexive research, the constructivist grounded theory approach recognises that all data is interpreted by the researcher's perspectives, values, interactions - and similarly is created by the participants' unique narratives (Charmaz, 2009; Mills, Bonner & Francis, 2006). In these traditions, the researcher is compared to "the fictional detective Sherlock Holmes, a researcher who uses abductive reasoning and continually moves back and

forward between data and pre-existing knowledge or theories, and makes comparisons and interpretations in the searching for patterns and best possible explanations.” (Thornberg, 2011, p. 247).

This method allows the researcher to hear interviews and stories, examine the organisation and then relate them back to pre-existing theory. The literature serves not as a starting point of the inquiry, but as a source of ideas, inspiration and critical reflection throughout the research process (Kelle, 1995).

Organisational Framing

From an ontological perspective, constructivist grounded theory shares a similar territory with social constructivism, occupying a middle ground between the concrete realist and the totally fluid postmodern position (Bryant & Charmaz, 2007). Although pulled in two directions, this constructivist theory assumes both multiple realities constructed by the social actors, as well as a stubborn, persistent reality that remains constant throughout an investigation (Blumer, 1969; Chamaz, 2009). Accordingly, the organisation can be studied with both empirical and interpretivist research methods, to uncover a rich multi-layered series of realities, existing between actors and the organisation. One of the key focuses of this approach is the use of participant framing of their language about the obdurate reality, as this reveals how they interpret the fixed

world and communicatively construct it into their lived, subjective world (Mills et al., 2006; Thornberg, 2011).

This act of framing is one of the most important communication skills for a leader to enact (Fairhurst, 2011). As organisational leaders have a powerful role in creating the realities in which organisational members must respond (Weick, 1995), their choice and use of language is a central meaning-making act for the organisation. Although these realities are co-constructed by all organisational participants, the leader's role is fundamental to defining the original terms of reality that the organisational members then interact with (Fairhurst, 2011). Leadership, therefore, often provides a dominant voice in an organisation and plays a central role in managing the meaning of terms, processes and organisational reality (Blake, 1987). As a result, this thesis focuses on the leader's use of language as they describe the processes of innovation and the creative environment within their organisation. It does so in order to understand how leaders frame and idealise their present organisational reality.

Organisational participants without formal leadership roles were included in this research process to provide scope for clarifying the leadership perspective. This allows for alternative realities to be revealed, and for a richer understanding of the innovative processes at each organisation.

The thesis considered a diverse range of organisational realities discussed by the interview participants, as definitions of innovation and creativity are enigmatic for the academic community, let alone business practitioners

(Runco, 2004; Batey, 2012). As discussed previously, innovation is most commonly defined as the ability to convert ideas into action, whereas creativity's most accepted definition is the ability to produce ideas that are novel and useful (Mumford, 2003; Sternberg & Lubart, 1993; Plucker, Beghetto & Dow, 2004). As "all innovation begins with creative ideas" (Amabile et al., 1996, p. 1154), this research deploys both of these terms to see how participants revealed their understanding of the relationship between them. However, due to the difficulty in defining these terms, I paid particular attention to how the leaders use language to frame innovation and creativity within their organisation, and how they make sense of these ideas. Narratives of innovation and creativity helped reveal different understandings of the nature, process and relative importance of these concepts, and how the organisation had experienced innovative moments in their history.

The academic literature also provided helpful direction in focusing the range of this research thesis. Rhodes' (1961/1987) seminal review on creativity research divided the domain into four areas: person, press (environment), process and product. However, as most researchers have noted, there is strong interplay between each of these sections, with the creative person influencing the pressures and environment, the process and the creative product (Amabile et al., 1996; Mumford, 2003; Batey, 2012). As explained previously, the present dominant models focus on the impact of the person (e.g., Silvia, 2008; Woodman & Schoenfeldt, 1989; Reuter, Panksepp, Schanbel, Kellerhoff, Kempel & Hennig, 2005) or on

the effect of the environment of the organisation (e.g., Nayak, 2008; Dodds, Smith & Ward, 2002; Dul & Ceylan, 2011; Amiable & Gryskiewicz, 1989). An attempt to integrate these two perspectives was beyond the scope of this thesis, however, they did provide a helpful guide for framing my research approach. As the interactionist approach places primacy on the creative person, I questioned participants' experiences with leaders, creativity and innovation. From their responses, I created models of creative leadership, which were then further developed into leadership actions. Included in this was their role in creating an environment conducive to creativity and innovation, developed from the participant responses.

Methodology

I approached seven organisations, composed of four businesses and three churches, and invited them to participate in this research project. Five organisations agreed to partner in this thesis, with three SMEs and two medium sized churches (each organisation's name has been changed for this research, to preserve their anonymity). Each of these organisations was selected due to previous contact and involvement I had with them, which is explained in the introduction to each chapter. The sample size for each organisation ranged from three to eight participants, who were selected by each organisation's leader. This sample represented a cross-section of formal leaders and organisational members.

Each participant was assured of their confidentiality and was explained the research purpose, process and ethical clearance. They were then invited to participate again, signing to show their understanding and informed consent of the research project, and given the opportunity to withdraw from the research if desired. All of the participants were willing to be involved and provided consent for their responses to be recorded and used as data for the research. The interviews were conducted on-site at each organisation, in a private room. Each interview lasted from 35-50 minutes, and was structured around a series of thirteen questions (see Appendix A).

The research process was guided by constructivist grounded theory principles (Charnaz 2000, 2006, 2008), with the interview questions designed to inspire stories of innovation, leadership, creativity and organisational dreams and experiences. These interviews were informed by an appreciative inquiry methodology, which assumes that “organizations, as human constructions, are largely affirmative systems and thus are responsive to positive thought and positive knowledge” (Cooperrider et al., 2008, p.10). Based on this Positive Principle, the interviews were structured around questions eliciting positive narratives of peak innovation and creativity moments, allowing me to discover peak performance realities about the organisation. The interview was composed of eleven questions, with two designed to explore the participant’s history at the organisation, three about leadership highlights,

three about creativity and innovation highlights, and three about the idealised innovation future for the organisation.

All of the interviews were recorded and subsequently transcribed by hand. The key step in theory building from this data is the codification process (Bryman, 2008). Grounded theory is comprised of three levels of coding, which lead to the concepts and themes that are presented in the finished research (Daugherty, 2001). First, I engaged in open coding, where all initial themes and categories are identified from the participant responses. This process was done manually, with constant reference to both my researcher journal and previous interview coding. After this stage, I transitioned to axial coding, for a more detailed analysis of these identified themes - noting frequency, participant weighting of concepts and similarity between the openly coded themes. Finally, the process of selective coding identified the core themes that best represent the data set (Bryman, 2008; Daugherty, 2001). Interaction with the pertinent literature occurred between these stages, to better understand the categories and concepts that were arising, and to see potential points of difference from prior theories (Charnaz, 2008).

Alongside the discussion on the leadership styles, actions and concepts that were discovered, Cunliffe's (2003) model of reflexive research was followed. Each chapter begins with an italicised section where I state my researcher confession - illuminating my assumptions, connections with the organisation and my personal narrative as a researcher. This will help

reveal the researcher lens and “make (my) ideas and values explicit, rather than leaving them implicit and pretending they are not there” (Dey, 1993, p.229). Similarly, each chapter concludes with my reflections on the research process and my findings so far, so the reader will be able to journey along the theory development that occurs. As I recognise myself as a main instrument in this data analysis process, this reflexivity was an essential aspect of the research and helped to maintain the integrity and validity of any theories that are developed (Charmaz, 2006, 2008; Mills et al., 2006; Mruch & Mey, 2007).

Finally, as the organisational language will be defining my research terms and focus, I structure my research language congruently with the organisation’s discourse. Each chapter is shaped by the language and realities that are discussed by the participants, and interspersed with engagement with the pre-existing theory. As my hope is for this research to create actionable knowledge for the participating organisations, I attempt to balance the language and form of this thesis so it is accessible to the organisational members, reflective of their linguistic reality, and still meeting the academic requirements of this document. At times I may sway towards either one of these poles, but I aim to maintain the tension and produce research that is academically rigorous and strikingly relevant.

CHAPTER II. TOWN CHURCH

The Creator's Confessional

Traditionally, the researcher aims to be the objective, impartial observer par excellence. My motivation for an investigative exploration of this church is much more multi-faceted than the historical stimulus of a quest for pure, untainted knowledge. Instead of shying away from this subjectivity, I seek to confess my history with this church to the reader - placing the elephant in the room front-and-centre - and admitting this personal bias and motivation for discovery. However, I also embrace this confession as being both essential for transparency as some subjectivity is inevitable in any research and can be valuable in guiding the researcher to see anew what others have already seen, and to think what others have not thought" (Szent-Gyorgyi, 1962, cited in Good, 1963) as well as alerting readers to potential for bias. Accordingly, my history both enables and illuminates this research, and it is from this storied-existence that I emerge as researcher (Prichard, Jones & Stablein, 2005; Krizek, 2003).

As a fourth-generation member of this church, I have had previous family members involved in a variety of leadership roles over the past century. In many ways, this faith community is a second family to me, as I have learnt to walk, talk and relate within the church walls and networks that are now so familiar to me. I attended Sunday School as a toddler, went through the Youth Group as a teenager, and then became the Youth Pastor for five years.

Although no longer employed at this church, I still attend the weekly services and contribute as an occasional preacher and musician. I enjoy informal discussions about the direction and leadership of our faith community, but do not have any official position within any team or ministry here.

All of the interview participants from this church are known to me - both in an employment capacity and as friends. I have worked with many of them and enjoyed engaging in these interviews with them, as it enabled me to discover more about their dreams, images and words about the future possibilities for leadership and creativity within this church. The interviews had times of tearful reminiscing of leaders no longer living, as well as laughter and excitement about the possibilities ahead.

The potential of these futures served as the impetus for including this church in my research. Discovering more about the leadership models and creativity highlights of this organisation may spark healthy discussions and plans about new futures for this church, aiming to grow it more towards the vision of what it could be (Cooperrider, Whitney & Stavros, 2008). It is this heartbeat that enlivens my research.

Organisation Description

Town Church is a medium-sized evangelical church of 400 regular attendees, located in a rural town in New Zealand. Founded in 1896, the church has changed location several times before settling in its current location in the 1950s. For the majority of this time, the church was led by a volunteer group of leaders (“elders”). In 1998, the first paid pastor was employed and the church now has nine paid ministry leaders, responsible for different areas of the membership (e.g., youth, children).

The elders are the governing leadership of the church, with the senior pastor (who is also an elder) responsible for actualising the vision in the day-to-day realities of church life. Each of the ministry teams works under this strategic vision, while they are allowed autonomy to implement their own methodology in engaging with their sector.

Appreciative inquiry (Cooperrider, Whitney & Stavros, 2008) interviews were held with seven members of Town Church, representing a cross-selection of the organisation (as selected by the senior pastor). The youngest participation was in their early 20s, while the eldest was in their mid 60s. Four of the participants were male, three were female, and each had been attending Town Church for at least 18 months.

Interview Findings

The interviews with Town Church were a fascinating learning experience for both the researcher and the interviewee. Each interview participant was invited to reach back into the history of both themselves and of Town Church to articulate high-points of leadership and creativity in their lived experience. These stories - some reaching back as far as 40 years prior - were a colourful mosaic of diverse events and characters. They provide an insight into the organisation's world (Gergen, 1999; Fairhurst, 2011). As humans construct meaning for their lives through the stories they narrate (Woods, 2007; Merleau-Ponty, 1962), these "origin" stories are essential to understanding the foundational values and perspectives that weave through the lived reality of Town Church.

After this historical reflection, participants were encouraged to gaze forward into the future, projecting their ideal environments and extending the dreams of today into rich narratives of possibilities over a five-year future. This dreaming process reveals the intentions of the participants, as well as motivating the individual towards a potential future (Whitney & Trosten-Bloom, 2003). As these futures call us forward with purpose (Polak, 1973), the relationship between the participant's reflections and imaginations offered insight into the idealised future practices that were desired by this community.

This praxis is holistic and embodied as it transcends any notion of pure, rational strategy. Just as humans are more than rational beings - we are imaginers, lovers and story-tellers (Smith, 2013) - so these potential actions are more than rational ideas. Much of the power of appreciative inquiry comes from the freedom of participants to feel, and talk about their feelings. My reflections on an early interview showed my surprise at this learning:

This participant made me realise the power of AI - he was crying at one point as he remembered a leader. That was a powerful moment, as he remembered the leader's impact, but also mourned that he had passed away. I had worked with this participant for years - but got to glimpse something much more real and passionate about him, his hopes for leadership and drive for change.

At first glance, the rich outflow of stories was a beautiful mess - obviously valuable data but difficult to discern cohesive threads and similarities behind the individual narratives. After a period of careful reflection, thematic analysis and follow-up conversations with Town Church participants, however, three common personas were discerned amongst the church members' response. More than simple character traits, the participants had identified three dominant leadership lifestyles that they had seen as influential in assisting innovation flourishing in the past, and that they imagined would be essential for the future. These lifestyles, each

derived from the diverse data collected, help to make sense of the participant responses, encourage convergence among their dreams and anticipate a shared language to assist the community in future conversations.

The three interpretive lifestyles are:

1. The Transcendent Visionary
2. The Relational Nurturer
3. The Dirty-Handed Rebel

Each leadership lifestyle was clearly identified in both the reflective and forecasting responses of participants. It was also seen in their interpretation of Biblical narratives and faith tenets to support their chosen views. Although these views may appear to be mutually exclusive and in tension with each other at times, this is to be expected given the multitude of tensions that exist within the meta-narrative of Christian theology (Olson, 2002). The diversity of views is a running theme throughout church history and is also a central “mystery to be explored” within a faith-based organisation (Hill, 2007). It is the researcher’s hope that the following definition and clarification of each lifestyle may allow healthy and productive balance between the three leadership approaches.

The Transcendent Visionary

(The leader) was a big picture person himself. He had a real passion to see the gospel being understood and communicated, and ... he was a real leader as he'd have a lot of people surrounding him with various projects.

(Interview Participant A, 2014)

Early Western discussion on leadership was dominated by the model set forward by Plato in *The Republic* and *The Gorgias*, with authority in the hands of the “philosopher king” (Takala, 1998). The main *telos* of the leader in this perspective was twofold; to lead the community towards a higher good and maintain the aspects of life that were already aligning with these universals (Blackburn, 2006). Achieving this goal required a knowledge of these transcendent values and aims, a strategy for aligning the community with this goal and then the necessary skills in communication to articulate this vision to the non-leader. As such, Plato saw this as a function of the philosopher, who was able to remain aloof from day-to-day concerns and engage with the higher ideals (Takala, 1998). Leadership was “on-behalf” of the people and restricted to an elite leading class, who had the requisite education and ingrained habits to fulfil the requirements of the role.

One of these requirements was the creation of new ways of communicating the universal truths to the masses. Under this model of

leadership, artists could not be totally trusted to disperse these messages, as their understanding of truth was not as complete as the Transcendent Visionary (Cocking, 1991). The poet or story-teller might employ emotionality or sentiment to aid their communication, a technique that could allow the rational faculties to be subjugated by the feelings of the audience. This could lead to a nation built on fantasy, rather than logic, a fear that guided Epictetus to pronounce, "It is the chief and first work of a philosopher to examine phantasies, and to distinguish them, and to admit none without examination" (cited in Bundy, 1927, p.94).

The leadership function became, therefore, understanding the transcendent truths and then employing the technique of the artist to help bring order to the masses. The ideas for creativity come from the top leaders, who will then use concrete, certain methods to disseminate the concepts. The Greek leaders, for example, preferred the solid structure of sculptures and architecture to communicate their ideals, rather than the changing rhyme and meter of poetry (Cocking, 1991). The embodiments of these ideas and this mode of leadership help illustrate the Transcendent Visionary leader.

The Transcendent Visionary leader was one of the primary leadership models identified from the interviews with Town Church, and was structured around the discourse of scripture, strategy and growth. Three of the interview participants described their leadership and innovation high points focused around this language, and shared a commonality around

their ideal leadership traits and goals for Town Church. The following paragraphs explore these three discourses in relation to the participants' responses and detail the Transcendent Visionary with greater clarity.

Scripture Focus

As a mainline evangelical church, leadership in Town Church places a high priority on the role of the Christian Bible in their practices and decision making. One of the participants described their ideal church as,

Primarily though, it is going to look like a community of people that hold the Bible front and central to absolutely everything they do.

(Interview Participant B, 2014)

The positional language in this statement is two-fold - the Bible is both leading the direction of the organisation (directional) as well as being core to the organisation's value and identity (constitutional). The Bible is held in evangelical circles as a text intended by God, with the original meaning being the primary interpretation (Callahan, 1997). This gives the Biblical leader a sacred interpretative role, as they participate in a timeless, transcendent tradition. Fundamentally, this leadership role is a sense-making role. It seeks to understand the concrete truths that Christianity proclaims and the Transcendent Visionary then applies these to a post-Christian world.

The interview participants highlighted this interpretative role as they described the secular environment as "messy" and "unclear". As such, the Transcendent Visionary's primary goal was to provide a direction that was

both inspired by the Bible and, also saw the Bible as the goal. Rather than a simple dependency model, this leadership model aims to guide the organisation to Biblical truth, and then trusts in the agency of Scripture to continue the leadership function. For one leader:

There always needs to be a clear path back to a Biblical perspective and a Biblical direction.

(Interview Participant B, 2014)

The role is visionary, as the leader is self-described as the one setting the path and direction towards this Biblical perspective. As they engage in this navigation, the participants who focus on the Transcendent Visionary model see the Bible as providing the catalyst for change in their lives. It, in turn, guides them to help lead others. One participant directly linked their reading of the Bible as having a “big impact” in leading others, as they felt it allowed them to “see what God is wanting to do” . The primacy of this vision is seen as a message to be discovered, rather than, conventional leadership theory descriptions (Ancona, Malone, Orlikowski & Senge, 2007) of a picture to be created.

The Transcendent Visionary, therefore, must be one who has a “biblically soaked imagination” (Ramsey Jr., 2014, p. 46). Through this the leader can discover the unchanging truths and narratives of Scripture and disseminate them among the community. The art of leadership is one powered by the revelation of knowledge. This, in turn, directs the

organisation out of entropic uncertainties and into concrete realities. The Transcendent Visionary's next role is one of translation; turning the revealed vision into practical strategies.

Strategic Approach

After imparting vision, the Transcendent Visionary leader seeks to structure the required change into strategic plans and processes. Just as the messages and truths that are discovered are considered universal and unchanging, so the main strategies are viewed as concrete and timeless. The leaders' discourse around leadership highlights and illustrates this perspective, with most of the language focusing on strategic re-alignments, clarifications of unclear positions or adjustments to fit the teaching of Scripture.

For example, one leader's innovation highlight involved the elders' process of discussion about the future direction of the church and then the implementation of a mission statement. They discussed how the innovation worked in replacing assumptions with more solid beliefs, how these Transcendent Visionaries defined their identity by "putting pegs in the ground" and helped eliminate any conflict of ideas. For this leader, the goal of the church is a unifying faithfulness to what is held to be true and this is primarily achieved through strategic conversations and structural change. This leader phrases their approach as "big picture stuff", which frames strategy and corporate leadership practices as the key function of a church figurehead.

This discourse shows both the values and self-created identity of these leaders (Fairhurst, 2007). The repeated focus on meetings, large-scale

change, programs and alignment with truth reveal the importance they place on making strategic change a fundamental aspect of their role. In positing their narratives are sense-making activities, the thesis foregrounds how the focus in many of their stories was not on the individuals making the change, but on the change itself. Although it is true that individuals were part of the story, the subjective narratives reveal the primary *telos* of their recollections is highlighting the truth of strategic change working (Shaw, 2010). Stories often naturalise subjectivities, but these stories naturalise the importance of strategy.

Most of the stories around strategy involved a small formal leadership group - usually the elders - and the decisions they implemented out of their fortnightly meetings. This places the locus of control in a small, centralised body; yet it is practiced in a collaborative and humanising way. Rather than the highly individualised classical model, with different leaders having different silos of responsibility, Town Church leaders assume collective responsibility of the organisation and seek to be challenged as they strategise (Doz & Kosonen, 2007). This approach is illustrated by one leader's repeated use of the inclusive "We" as they shared leadership highlights (using it five times in four sentences!) and their stated goal of "Having a holy disregard of things that have been" (Interview Participant A, 2014). They view leadership as a collective activity that involves a tight-knit strategic group who seek to actualise change; while viewing this process of change as a sacred activity.

The Transcendent Visionary leaders in Town Church occupy a sacred position in two senses of the phrase. Firstly, the participants self-describe their role as being “under the guidance of God...with a sense of reverence to God” (Interview Participant, 2014). This religious sacrality of leadership is a paradox that must be embraced - and managed - by the leaders as they strive for excellence while recognising God’s guidance and power lies behind their actions (Baumgartner, 2011). The participants who embody the Transcendent Visionary leadership style were quick to “give glory to God” for their successes and recognised that one of the most important strategic activities was prayer. In this sense, these leaders at Town Church embrace a sacred strategy, with a primacy on leadership to God, rather than leadership of an organisation. The leadership can also be considered sacred, however, in not just their strategy but also in their transcendent position of being elevated over the usual Town Church member’s experience of church and leadership.

Transcendent Leadership

Given the restricted view of leadership in the Transcendent Visionary perspective at Town Church, the leaders can be seen to exist in a sphere that is above the normal church participant experience. Three of the six participants identified leadership highlights that were exclusive to the eldership, with the senior leaders making a decision and then communicating it down to the rest of the congregation. Although the current leadership climate favours distributed leadership (Geva and Torpey, 2008; Harris, 2009), some alternative views are highlighting the potential strengths of this exclusive, transcendent leadership ontology.

Grint's (2010) critique of the post-heroic leadership society, with the idealisation of everyone-is-a-leader mentality, highlights the interpretation of restricted leadership (i.e. classical leadership - with a few leaders in control) as a necessarily sacred act. His etymological definition of the sacred leader involves the leader being set-apart, sacrificing for the community and silencing the fears and dissent of the followers. Rather than being a limiting style of leadership, Grint interprets difference in leadership as an essential role for long-lasting change and that "destiny requires the leader to be different from the common population, to separate themselves from their followers and to silence their fears and anxieties through absolute confidence and conviction in the rightness of their cause." (2010, p. 102). One senior leader's story from Town Church

displays these traits of transcendent, sacred leadership that is exclusive and sacrificial.

This leader looked back on their favourite leadership moment as when a senior elder re-explored issues of women in leadership in this traditionally conservative church. This senior leader went away and studied the Scriptures, “but to his surprise, his study turned up something different”. His previously held views on the role of women in church were challenged, and he went and shared this with the other elders - “who after a lot of consideration, discussion and prayer - adopted the new role”. This was described as “strong and brave” leadership, as the elders knew that people would leave the church as a result of a greater openness to women in ministry. They knew there would be dissent, yet “they went ahead with what they believed God would have them do” (Interview Participant C, 2014).

This leader’s story reveals the transcendent and sacred nature of this leadership model. The elders are distanced through their title and the exclusivity of their role as a leadership that is separate and removed from the congregation. Their study and discussion was held apart from the faith community and so reinforces elements of the distance of this position. The leadership then made the decision - in the knowledge that it would be a painful one - on behalf of the community but in doing so, provided a voice with confidence and conviction that defined and marked a boundary to the issue at hand. The leadership transcended the ordinary congregational

experience of Town Church, and provided an over-arching directive that followers could either put their trust in, or disagree with, and leave.

Critical theorists - or proponents of distributive leadership - may critique this leadership style as being restrictive and disempowering. However, for this thesis, the approach does highlight a necessary alienation of leadership (Gemmil & Oakley, 1997). To be a leader who can provide vision and direction requires distinction between the leaders and followers, not as an oppressive tool but as a strong and unique voice that inspires confidence (Grint, 2010). For the Transcendent Visionary leaders at Town Church, this was a necessary function of their job. While they reflected on these times of deliberate separation as difficult, big and bold times, they also selected them as highlights of their leadership experiences.

The Transcendent Visionary leader is a lived reality at Town Church, with most of the senior leaders describing both their own highlights and their idealised leadership futures within this model. Each of them: placed a high priority on Scripture as their dominant focus, viewed strategy and processes as the primary methods of change, and perceived the leadership role as a necessarily transcendent reality. From this perspective, innovation is seen as a process that is also in the realm of strategic conversations.

The Transcendent Visionary Innovator

When asked to define innovation and provide a story of innovation at Town Church, all the participants struggled, as they were not familiar with this language being used in the church context. The Transcendent Visionaries identified being creative as an act of imaging God, because “creativity ... comes from the heart of God” (Interview Participant C, 2014). This spiritual view of creativity aligns with the revelatory view of Eastern creativity, where the goal is to “make traditional truths come alive and become operative in daily affairs” (Hallman, 1970, p. 343). Innovation is not about radical, earth-shattering new products or ways of being, but innovation is about “proclaiming the same message in different, new and exciting ways” (Interview Participant B, 2014).

This view of innovation positioned creativity occurring primarily in formalised meetings and leadership discussions. The Transcendent Visionary participants all dreamed of a future where innovative leaders were present in their elders’ meetings to allow innovation to inspire strategy and processes throughout the church. The absent component for more innovation, therefore, was a lack of leaders who were willing to participate in these discussions. For example, many of the elders identified a need for “young thinkers” to join their conversations. This reflects the componential view of creativity, positing innovation as the outcome if certain environmental conditions are met (Amabile, 1983).

One of these key environmental conditions is intrinsic task motivation and clear goals (Taggar, 2002), which is illustrated well by one leader's reflections. This participant told the story of organising a week-long outreach event in the late 1990s and described in detail the innovative process that occurred. The creative journey happened almost exclusively in meetings and formal settings, yet the language that was used to describe this was informal and fun:

We were able to brainstorm with innovative thinking and different ways of doing things...it was fun to put together. We had a goal to achieve something good - so it was no problem to do it. (Interview Participant A, 2014)

Among this formalised body is the language of "fun", seeing the process of ideating and planning as an enjoyable exercise. This may be due to the sense of alignment the leaders felt between their strategic skill set and pursuing innovation-as-strategy, yet this enjoyment is seen as a key factor to the innovation process. Whether this joy functioned as an intrinsic motivator, or was the result of an intrinsic goal being achieved, is unclear. Certainly, it is supportive of the theory that creativity flourishes in happy environments (Bakke, 2010; Amabile & Kramer, 2011). However, what can also be identified from each story is that the result of each innovative activity was successful (NB - it is unclear if this is influencing the participant's memory of the ideation stage and the question remains:

would they still have considered it fun and “no problem” if the outcome had been poor?).

Regardless of the answer, the innovation of the Transcendent Visionary is located in formalised meetings, between leaders and members who are willing to be involved. The direction of the innovation of this leadership model is towards structural growth and improvement – directed primarily toward the Sunday morning service. When asked to picture a future where innovation is flourishing, each of the Transcendent Visionary leaders identified numerical growth as one of the primary indicators of innovation growth. One dreamed of a large building that occupied much more space, and was “now a church of 2000 people”; another described the place as “packed out ... the auditorium is overflowing”. These initial responses to their dream environment, five years on, show that their innovative efforts are towards structural growth and larger-scale change. The Transcendent Visionary is big picture in their strategy, and thus focused on innovation that allows big-picture change to become a reality.

The second leadership style identified at Town Church, however, is not focused so much on strategy or large scale structure, but focuses on the small and interpersonal connections that develop. The Relational Nurturer is a dynamic leadership approach that - although less obvious than the formalised position of the Transcendent Visionary - is crucial to the well-being of Town Church.

The Relational Nurturer

For six months, she committed herself to me. She taught me about the Bible, about how much Jesus loves me, about his grace and his mercy ... She shepherded me and guided me. The way she led - she did what she said.

(Interview Participant D, 2014)

Facing the cultural shift of the past few decades –, including the challenges of globalisation, technical advancements and a knowledge-intensified society – many organisations have shifted their leadership focus from labour management to employee motivation (Gartzia & van Engen, 2012). Rather than seeing the “human-factor” of an organisation as a simple input to be managed and controlled, organisations are recognising the value of long-serving, participating, and innovative organisational members (Fletcher, 2004; Aviolo, Walumbwa & Weber, 2009). This social leadership involves skills in emotional intelligence, nurturing inter-personal relationships and motivating employees through social connections. All are leadership traits that have often been associated with women (Kark, 2004). In a paradoxically patronising way, some theorists have dubbed this approach “The Iron Butterfly” (Regine, 2009), representing the combination of strength and vulnerability displayed with this leadership style.

Although the dominant leadership style at Town Church was the Transcendent Visionary, the interviews and subsequent analysis also revealed a secondary idealised leadership approach that is described as the Relational Nurturer leader. This model was communicated predominantly by those who were not part of the senior leadership group, but were still actively involved in Town Church. Characterised by a strong focus on Jesus Christ, a desire to develop others through close relationship, and the importance of culture, the Relational Nurturer is a less noticed yet highly important leadership role that appears crucial to organisational development and innovation at Town Church.

Christo Centric

The primary indicator of a Relational Nurturer at Town Church was the centrality of Jesus Christ to their understanding of effective leadership. Rather than identifying the Bible as their guiding principal, or to some higher philosophical model of leadership, these participants based their leadership on emulating the person of Jesus. Although there has been a wealth of popular literature defining how Jesus' teachings can be useful to the CEO of 21st century business (Throop, 2000), these participants were less focused on the teachings of Jesus and more on the interpersonal connections that the gospels record Jesus having. For example, when one participant was asked to identify their ideal leader from history, they chose Jesus, and rationalised it with this description:

He's our ultimate leader and ... he's able to display so many leadership qualities in ways that I wouldn't even be able to comprehend. Like, Jesus and the Samaritan woman at the well - if I was back in that culture and I was a man - I'd just go with my cultural view and I wouldn't even approach a woman, let alone a Samaritan woman.

He just blows all that stuff out of the water, and that's pretty inspirational. (Interview Participant E, 2014)

This participant described Jesus as the ideal leader in unequivocal terms, with his life displaying leadership qualities that transcended her usual categories of leadership - but did so because of the immanence that was expressed in Jesus' life. The striking characteristic here is that Jesus was incredibly near people, and led from a relational place of intimacy that went beyond the usual social barriers. Yet it is not the teaching of Jesus that has inspired this leadership hope for this participant, rather it is the narrative of the life lived that has "blown all that stuff out of the water", and opened up a new possibility of leadership for the follower.

This identification of Jesus as the central person of leadership is a central theme to New Testament Christology, with the anonymous author of the book of Hebrews writing, "Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of faith" (Hebrews 12:1, NIV). , Living in a Neo-Platonic context that valued intangible ideas and emanations as the highest aspiration (McMahon, 2007), the early church found the focus on an embodied human as the idealised leader was problematic. Church participants today, however, face an inverse challenge of struggling to identify what it means to follow a leader who is not present, yet is still defined as relationally close. When asked to elaborate more on how Jesus leads them today, the respondents used language that spoke of feeling and experience, yet still left mystery to the actuality of the relationship.

I felt confirmed by God ... I felt the freedom to really move in an area where I think God has a real calling on my life.

(Interview Participant D, 2014)

You're talking about a change of heart ... I don't know if there's a material answer I can give you.

(Interview Participant E, 2014)

He leads well. He's never let me down - even though I've let him down - he's been faithful and reliable. His desires are only ever good for me ... you're secure.

(Interview Participant C, 2014)

These three responses (from three different participants) highlight a key difference between the Christo-centric and the Bible-focussed leader. The Transcendent Visionary focuses their leadership behaviour and strategy on a book, which is tangible, available and able to be rationally understood, defined and explained. The unchanging medium of a book aligns with the desired message of the Transcendent Visionary, as it reinforces their rational, strategic approach - and they can always study Scripture more to understand their role in a more concrete, timeless definition. The Christo-centric leader, however, has a more fluid leadership approach, that is situational, dynamic and focused on individuals, rather than on over-arching strategy (Briner & Pritchard, 1997).

These participants were reluctant to name their own leadership approach, instead describing it as “natural and go-with-the-flow” (Interview Participant E, 2014). They cited Jesus’ ease at adapting to different situations with different approaches - reminiscent of the Apostle Paul’s description of becoming “all things to all men”. A Relational Nurturer is comfortable with the ambiguity that comes with interpersonal communication and views leadership as an adaptable skill-set and right acts, rather than an overarching strategy. This is exemplified by one participant’s description of Jesus’ leadership, saying:

It was a caring, nurturing way to lead. It wasn’t dominating or over-bearing - it wasn’t super in your face or pushy ... It was action based.

(Interview Participant F, 2014)

Developing Relationships

The second characteristic of the Relational Nurturer is their primary activity of developing relationships. Out of their social interpretation of Jesus Christ's actions, these leaders develop a social conscience that motivates them to follow him by practicing acceptance and nurturing of others (Milson, 1971). Rather than focusing on achieving organisational objectives, the Relational Nurturer's main motive is to help assist others into being who they are capable of becoming (Greenleaf, 1977). True power and leadership legitimacy is created in social relationship - not by organisational position. Indeed, these leaders often do not consider their role as one of leadership, instead seeing it as an organic act of service and care (Vinod & Sudhakar, 2011).

One participant illustrated this when describing their favourite leadership experience. After describing the leader - the head of a non-profit national youth work organisation - as "six-foot something, massive, big guy - and he's got a heart to go with it!", she notes her leadership highpoint as when this leader took time out of his schedule to help her explore the possibility of a new role with the organisation. This conversation - which lasted for about an hour - had a marked effect on this interview participant, who said,

He made time for that {our meeting} to happen and was super-encouraging and supportive ... he's leading a group of 200+ people, and out of three, hectic busy days - that means

a lot to me. I felt valued, encouraged and like, “Yeah, I can do this!” (Interview Participant E, 2014)

The language used by this participant highlights the significance of relational development involving this leader. Feeling encouraged, supported, valued are critical experiences for this participant. What is held primary is not so much the content of the conversation or the specifics that were communicated, but simply the presence and experience of being with this leader. In this instance, leadership was practiced through a nurturing relationship that helped foster the individual's best potential, while aligning it with the overarching dream of the organisation (van der Werff, 2001). This is the fundamental activity of the Relational Nurturer: developing others into active fulfillers of individual and organisational goals.

Daloz (1999) defines these leaders of development as catalysing three key activities, “They support, they challenge, and they provide vision” (p. 212). The first two of these activities occur on an individual interpersonal level, with the Relational Nurturer moving close to the group member and minimising the leader-follower distinction that is more apparent in the Transcendent Visionary model. Relational attachment is encouraged, as these leaders often see the goal of their efforts as a long-lasting, transformative relationship - rather than seeing relationship simply as a means to an end (Greenleaf, 1997). The participants who illustrated this would talk of their ideal leader as a friend or close relationship, with their

leadership traits being a secondary aspect of their friendship. One spoke of her husband as being the most empowering leader she knows, as “he has more faith in me than I have in myself” (Interview Participant G, 2014). He was defined as her biggest supporter and an encouragement to her during life, yet his leadership was immanent, intimate and flowed out of this relationship.

The third element of Daloz’s definition - providing vision - aligns more closely with the role of the Transcendent Visionary. One participant spoke of a leadership highlight as actualising a church vision that the senior leaders had defined. The experience was enjoyable for her as the group tasked with this “sat and talked and prayed” as they engaged together to make the vision a reality. Ironically, this vision was to create more community and face-to-face relationships - which the participant believed Town Church achieved - yet that was not their major focus. Their predominant focus was on the people who were involved in the process and the development of a diverse range of people to realise the vision. Although there were some frustrations with the limitations the Transcendent Visionaries placed on this team, this story illustrates a key moment where the Relational Nurturers were able to develop others towards a vision that had been carefully designed by the senior leaders. In this sense, the Relational Nurturer illustrates collaborative leadership, as they seek to develop followers, engage with Transcendent Visionaries, and also participate in the change themselves (Hart, 2009).

The ideal change that the Relational Nurturers desire to see is dynamic growth in the capabilities of those they are mentoring. One participant described how they had been both the recipient and practitioner of this, as they told of how they started in the role with a mentor saying - "I think you can do this job". They outlined how they got excited and felt confident in themselves, but then explained how they got to share this experience with a person they were mentoring.

I was kinda like, "I think it's time to pass this little baby over to someone else." So I empowered [a mentee] by training her and teaching her all that I had been taught, and kinda just handed it over to her. I said, "Here! It's your turn now! Go put your stamp on it!" ... I don't think that I'm the bee's knees and the only person who can do this thing.

(Interview Participant E, 2014)

The highlight was the handing over and the empowering of the new leader to take-over this role; the participant did not even mention the success or failure of their future efforts. Instead, the success is defined by the development and new future that is made possible for the mentee. The Relational Nurturers make this possible by relationship. They understand the values and experiences of the other, and then give support, opportunities, challenges, power and freedom to help allow these deeply held beliefs to flourish into actualities (Norris, Barnett, Basom & Yerkis, 2002). When this happens in an ongoing, sustainable praxis, a culture of

passion and availability is created that empowers more nurturing on a wider scale.

Culture Creators

The final aspect of the Relational Nurturer is the primacy they place on creating a culture of passion and availability within their organisation.

When asked to define their dreams for Town Church in five years, these participants focused on the emotional environment and relational culture, rather than on size, buildings or programs. One participant saw the future of the church as, "People loving on each other ... and communal meals. When you share food with people - good things happen". They went on to describe their ideal church as "one big family". However, these participants also lamented that this was the current weakness of Town Church, and saw an aspect of their leadership function as motivating a new culture of passion and availability.

Culture is the deeply embedded social practices within an organisational group that is reinforced by the history of decisions, power structures and approaches to dealing with uncertainty (Hofstede, 2001; Trompenaars & Hampden-Tumer, 2004). The Relational Nurturers, when asked to reflect on their ideal leadership culture for the elders in 2020, began (unprompted) by describing what it would not be, describing it as "Not intimidating", "non judgemental" and "more loving". Given their experience with the authority of the elders - who traditionally fill the Transcendent Visionary role - these Relational Nurturers perceived a culture with a strong power imbalance between the leaders and followers. They made it

clear that they did respect and feel empowered by these leaders, but there was a cultural misalignment between the two perspectives.

These participants highlighted key leadership experiences in the past at Town Church that represented a glimpse at a new culture, built on different practices. One participant referred to one of the previous pastors, who was having a conversation with someone who had just walked in off the street. They described this event by saying,

I remember thinking, 'No matter how busy he was (and he was always busy) he would never mind having a conversation with someone, forever. The conversation could go on for hours, and he'd never give you the impression that he needed to go ... he made that person feel like that person was important - and he was 100% present, in the moment.

(Interview Participant G, 2014)

In this seemingly insignificant encounter, this pastor sparked a new possibility for the Relational Nurturer, as they saw a culture that aligned with their inherent leadership values. The interview participant remembered this as a defining and different narrative in the usual culture at Town Church and spoke further about how they attempted to emulate this pastor in their practices. This was symbolically created by simple habits such as leaving their door open and avoiding wearing a watch when involved in mentoring conversations, in the hope that these repeated

events would create a counter-culture of nurturing availability (Smith, 2013).

Similarly, the Relational Nurturers had a strong heartbeat for a passionate culture that embraced emotionality and human embodiment. One of the participants stated that the greatest leadership quality they had observed was “passion. I can see when they’re speaking or doing whatever they are a leader in, they are passionate about it and have belief in it” (Interview Participant E, 2014). Within the Relational Nurturer’s context, this passion is expressed by allowing emotionality in the organisation, resulting in more authentic interactions between organisational members. Ultimately, they see this passion as having a transformative effect on both the individuals and their efforts, transforming them into a movement with a vocational calling (Freiberg & Freiberg, 2001).

This focus on passion - a soft-skill of leadership - appears to be primarily expressed in relationship. Participants talk about the culture of passion being created and maintained through healthy community. One participant defined her dream church of 2020 as having “a culture that’s created so when people walk in, they see we love each other well” (Interview Participant F, 2014). The respondents of the Relational Nurturer model were not ashamed to mention emotions, and described future leadership goals as “warm”, “accepting” and “open”, rather than talking about strategies. From this culture, innovation is sparked as an electric encounter between diverse organisational.

The Relational Nurturer Innovator

The Relational Nurturer has a much more informal and open view on innovation than the Transcendent Visionary, with the participants citing spontaneous conversations and chance encounters as the breeding ground for creativity. Rather than positing innovation in the hands of positional leaders and formal brainstorming meetings, the Relational Nurturer highlighted the social aspect of creativity, with innovation seen as an almost natural outcome of healthy relationships. One participant explained their innovation highlight as a time when a group of individuals went away to a conference, and then had a three hour time of socialising after a plenary session. They said,

We were all there and we weren't all there for the same purpose - a lot of us didn't know why we were going. We didn't know why we were chosen to go. But we were all having that time away, out of our community and having intentional time to throw ideas - crazy ideas - out and just share about them.

(Interview Participant E, 2014)

The key focus of this participant was the ambiguity of their connections and ideas. The members of this group's one uniting bond was their uncertainty; they were unclear as to their purpose and future within Town Church. Yet this uncertainty was retrospectively perceived as a strength of

the group, as it appeared to be a catalyst for “crazy ideas” that may not have been shared in a more formalised setting. Oetinger’s (2005, p. 29) definition of the creative individual supports this concept, saying, “Creative people generally have a tolerance toward uncertainty, ambiguities and contradictions”. This openness to uncertainty allows critical judgment to be reserved and new opportunities to be explored, creating an atmosphere much more conducive to creative ideas and implementation (Amabile & Kramer, 2011). In turn, this leads to the possibility of more dynamic and interesting idea combinations, which Johansson (2004, p.1) terms “intersections” , than could be created in a traditional meeting.

It is unsurprising, therefore, that the Relational Nurturers view food as an essential element of innovative conversations. Two of the participants talked about encounters with others and food, where the creative spark was fired. One stressed the importance of communal meals by describing it as a key aspect of their dream church in 2020, saying,

Food - when you share food with people - good things happen ... I think God made us to connect while eating. That’s when you actually stop, during the day, and sit down and have time to share life with each other.

(Interview Participant G, 2014)

Food serves as a conduit to social connection and bonds, where meaningful interaction can take place (Beardsworth & Keil, 2013). This is

intensified in the church context where food takes on a literal sacred status, with the regular sharing of the sacrament as both an act which aims to create a social unity across traditional demarcations, as well as a spiritual act of worship and faithfulness (Kalantzis, 2008). This elevated view of food is rooted in the narrative of Jesus, where meals and significant encounters appear throughout the gospels, often with the food serving as the foundation to the social event (Bailey, 2008). The Relational Nurturer follows in this pattern, seeing food and hospitality as necessary to create an environment where relationship can flourish and lead to new possibilities for innovation.

With this strong focus on innovation coming from an interaction between two or more people, the Relational Nurturer also highlights the importance of understanding the needs and values of others. Innovation is seen as pulled from the needs of the external community in which Town Church is located. Their focus is on providing help for the physical and relational needs of these individuals. One participant defined innovation as “knowing the community and then thinking through the positive and negatives, or problems, that might show up”. Another described it as “innovation is driven by meeting needs ... a church would be innovative by finding out how it could impact its community”. Perhaps the largest frustration that Relational Nurturers at Town Church experienced was the inward focus of the church, with innovation primarily being directed towards internal programs.

The importance of this outward focus and understanding to leadership provides a more holistic outlook, a necessity in the current leadership environment. Scholars describe this approach as the empathetic leader, with “it is not enough for leaders to understand their own values, but they must understand the values of others” (Norris, Barnett, Basom & Yerkis, 2002, p.33). The Relational Nurturer seeks to know in relationship the experience of the other, and then innovate both *from* this relationship, and *for* this relationship. It is not innovation on behalf of (like the Transcendent Visionary), but it is innovation with the beneficiaries of the development, that the Relational Nurturer aims to actualise.

Both the Relational Nurturer and the Transcendent Visionary, however, discuss innovation predominantly in the ideation phase, seeing the process as coming up with new ideas. A third leadership category was also present in the discourse from the Town Church participants - albeit in a much more minor way. It challenged this perspective and saw innovation as the action of embodying these ideas. The Dirty Handed Rebel revealed how innovation happens through involvement and a focus on challenging action, offering a third perspective on innovation and leadership dynamics at Town Church.

The Dirty-Handed Rebel

It's about listening to what God's Spirit is saying to us -
because He's the great innovator - then having the guts to
do it. (Interview Participant F, 2014)

The past decade has seen a dynamic and exciting new arrangement of leadership theories that challenge the traditional organisational hierarchy (Denning, 2013). Rather than a simple change in praxis, this movement represents a paradigm shift in leadership, focusing on “an ethos of imagination, exploration, experiment, discovery and collaboration” (Denning, 2013, p. 27). Citing the examples of Steve Jobs, Ricardo Semler and Tony Hsieh, this new paradigm explores leadership through the metaphor of “the rebel”, challenging the traditional practices of organisational norms.

Although not as prevalent as the Transcendent Visionary and Relational Nurturer, the leadership metaphor of the Dirty-Handed Rebel was present among some Town Church participants. This subversive leadership style focuses on action over conversation, and places a primacy on risk and experimentation in innovation, rather than comprehensive plans and strategy. As the Dirty-Handed Rebel operates with spontaneity and outside of formal channels, it was difficult to discern the direct characteristics of their model through the appreciative inquiry interviews, yet their focus on action and risk taking was highlighted from the thematic analysis.

Action Focus

Where the Relational Nurturer focused on relationship and development, and the Transcendent Visionary focused on strategy and universal truths, the Dirty-Handed Rebel is focused on action and hands-on involvement. The leader is not seen as a coach or philosopher, standing above the environment, but is an active member who engages with the work at hand and challenges the usual boundaries of the organisation (Iacco, 2007). In their participation with introducing change, the leader is constantly responding and adapting to the environment-in-flux, moving rapidly and intuitively to engage with the temporal opportunities and responses (Middleton, 2002).

One participant's narrative of a highlight leadership story revealed his latent tendency to thrive in this uncertain arena. They had arranged to run a three day training session for over 300 Year 9 students at the local high-school, and decided not to tell their team about it until a few days before. When the team asked what it would look like, he replied with, "Well, I'm not really quite sure - but it'll look something like this. But it's all good". Facing uncertainty and ambiguity, this leader was excited by the challenge and anticipated his group would thrive in a role that required constant adaptation.

Their review of the event highlighted the value they placed in this leadership model. This leader described it by stating, "It was so good ...

my team shone! They were in their element. Spontaneous, games, relationships, creativity - fake it till you make it". It was in this position, where the team did not have time to plan or ask for permission, that the leader believed his team grew and excelled in their calling. As creative individuals excel in an environment that encourages risk-taking and attempting new ideas (Myers, 1988), this leader created a different space which allowed these innovative practices to occur. Although he was aware that this was not applicable to all situations, he was specifically proud of a moment where he and the team were forced to improvise and move outside of the traditional authoritarian paths (permission asking, structured team gatherings and role allocations), fulfilling the role of the rebel. In this situation, the leader created a flat structure, where all of the team members were encouraged to be leaders and decision makers, to help inspire creativity and new action (Bennis, 1991).

In a similar action leadership focus, one participant identified their favourite leader from history as Mother Theresa, describing her as "very sacrificial ... and meeting the needs of people in a very physical way". Interestingly, this physicality of leadership was mentioned by this participant before, as they shared a story of a leader they had observed. This leader - who had previously been this participant's manager - was now involved in a charity organisation that provided free foot care to the elderly. The participant described this leader's current action by saying, "She's currently washing and cleaning old people's feet. To me, that just epitomises who she is and how she leads" (Interview Participant G, 2014).

The focus on this participant was on the embodiment of leadership, with this figure being willing to dirty their hands to achieve their goal. Action in this framework, is not a means to an end, but is the very practice of leadership, in an incarnate, tangible fashion. Rather than perceiving leadership as involving strategy or development, Dirty-Handed Rebel leadership is conceptualised by action and full-embodied engagement, where the leader is being the change they desire to see. At a simple level, this recognition reflects the concept of embodied response, where the leader's behaviour is seen as a formative process of both self-cultivation and follower engagement (Hamill, 2011). However, this physicality of leadership may also serve as a challenge to esoteric leadership, as it highlights the sensory, localised human experience of leadership that intellectual models attempt to ignore.

Classical models of leadership often discuss concepts of 'headship', which suggests a disembodied, intellectual activity (Louw, 2011). Bathurst and Cain (2013), however, critique this model as ignoring the aesthetic reality of embodied leadership, which is fundamental to human experience. Citing Merleau-Ponty's (1962, p.167) phenomenological basis of the body as the "anchor" of experience, they interpret leadership as an embodied activity that creates a space of possibility between leader and other. The leader's actions invite participation by their very nature, allowing followers to emulate and unite themselves with the leader's practices. As such, the participants witness the leader's actions (not their planning or desire for

development), and in their observation, become the object of a possible future, following the leader (Bathurst & Cain, 2013). This embodied practice subverts the mind/body dichotomy that leadership discourse often entails, and instead highlights the experience of a leader in action as the desired outcome.

With this focus on action, the Dirty-Handed Rebel also attends to the necessary element of risk in innovation. Rather than sitting back and seeing innovation come from meetings and conversations, this leadership style views innovation as a fluid, constant process that arises out of necessity. This kind of leader must progress and discover as they act, rather than planning and dreaming beforehand.

Risk and Innovation

Although the Dirty-Handed Rebel was the least developed leadership model among Town Church participants, those who did mention it highlighted the inherent risk that goes with innovation. Instead of focusing on the conversations and relationships that were part of their innovative history, these contributors discussed the action that was required and the courage that was taken to step outside of the usual environmental practices. One participant explained the link between risk and creativity, saying,

They say, 'I've never done it before! I'm scared! What if this or what if that?' - and I encourage them to do it. They do so, and enjoy it! They find a niche there. That's cool.

(Interview Participant F, 2014)

This short narrative reveals the fear involved with trying a new project and other participants talked of requiring “guts” or “bravery” to step into the unknown. This link between risk and creativity is well documented in organisational literature (Tesluk, Farr & Klein, 1997; Zhou & George, 2001), and is seen as a necessary factor of the innovation process. Innovation - by definition - involves change and adaptation to create something new and useful (Amabile, 1983), yet it also involves uncertainty as the innovative individual has no *a priori* knowledge of what will be obtained, and the success or failure of their efforts (Dewett, 2004). The

gap between the present known and the future unknown represents the risk of innovation, as the employee faces failure - and the social stigma that goes along with unsuccessful attempts. Research into this gap has revealed that the most successful corporate R&D units are characterised by an acceptance of risk-taking (Abbey & Dickson, 1983), and organisations wanting to increase their innovative efforts are taught to transform their leader's verbal and practical encouragement of appropriate risk among employees (Couger, 1995).

This results in a necessary risk-factor of innovation that appears to attract some of the Town Church participants who exhibit some aspect of the Dirty-Handed Rebel style - and also frustrates them with the lack of risk exhibited by others. One respondent praised the encouragement of risk within Town Church, but then explained that there was another necessary step to engage in:

Then those leaders and encouraging people need to put their money where their mouth is and go - "How are we going to start? What do you need? How can we help you?" (Interview Participant E, 2014)

This reveals a gap between language and action focused on risk and creativity at Town Church. Pfeffer and Sutton (2000) have discussed the "knowing-doing gap" in organisations, positing that the lack of action - even with adequate knowledge at the employee's hands - was the result of

fear of the potential failure of their actions. These responses, however, suggest a “saying-doing” gap in innovation, with the Transcendent Visionary leaders of Town Church encouraging risk-taking among their community, but not modelling it. The Dirty-Handed Rebels do practice the risky innovation, but lack the organisational visibility and legitimacy (that comes with the formal leadership group) to become models for innovation within Town Church.

These participants who desired more risk-taking in innovation requested more than encouragement of innovation; they wanted motivation to take risks and innovate. One member hoped for a future where they would be held accountable to taking innovation-time - a portion of their weekly employment being dedicated to exploration and risk-taking. Another participant requested ongoing support - not just encouragement to take the first step, but continuous practical support that helped them get every chance of their idea being successful. Innovation was something that required more than verbal encouragement and praise; it needed a genuine acceptance of risk, a modelling of innovative behaviour and an active engagement with critical voices that may arise during the process.

This desire for an encouragement of risk reinforces creativity scholar Mihalyi Csikszentmihalyi's (1996) hypothesis that each of us have two contradictory instruction sets embedded in our behaviour. One tendency is towards conservation of the status quo, for self-protection and energy saving; the other is toward exploration, risk and novelty. When obstacles

are placed in the path of risk - including fear, lack of support and resources - this tendency is extinguished. Within Town Church, this appears to be a real and inadvertent problem, as the senior leaders focus on the Transcendent Visionary model, which interprets change through meeting and high-level conversations, not through risk and experimentation. This is a possible factor as to why the Dirty-Handed Rebel leadership model is not as well developed and actualised within this organisation, despite the stated desire for innovation.

Similarity Across the Models

Despite the obvious differences in values and praxis across the three discovered leadership models, there was one strong similarity that was presented from all participants. Town Church primarily sees the leader as a communicator - and specifically, as a preacher and teacher. Although this fits most naturally with the Transcendent Visionary domain, even a cursory glance across the participants' responses reveal a primacy on the leader-as-preacher - especially for innovation to occur.

I'd like to see teaching that is ... relevant and tied into the story. (Interview Participant A, 2014)

It (innovative change) could only come about through teaching. (Interview Participant B, 2014)

(Dreaming of the future) A dynamic preacher, every week. (Interview Participant D, 2014)

(Dreaming of the future) There will be a preacher preaching a dynamic message, with people responding to that. (Interview Participant, C, 2014)

I would love to see the Word on Sunday preached by people

who are gifted with the gift of preaching. That's important to me.

(Interview Participant G, 2014)

This sample from across the participants reveals the focus on the preacher as a key change-agent within Town Church. Although this may be due to the historical role and power of the preacher (a figure that has dominated Western history for much of the past two millennia), this also could reflect an implicit or explicit understanding by the participants of the constitutive nature of communication (McPhee & Iverson, 2007). The stories that are shared within any organisation help create the reality that this organisation perceives, and in a church, this formalised story-telling time happens as part of a sacred ritual each Sunday morning. Rather than seeing preaching simply as a way to communicate ideas and goals, these participants link the preacher with their dream of the future and with a dominant future, seeing them as helping create a world of new possibility within their organisation.

Each of the leadership models discovered through the interviews has a worldview that highlights certain aspects and values of the church, whether already existing or idealised in the future. The Transcendent Visionary saw a well-structured, Scripture-centric church; the Relational Nurturer saw a warm, Christ-focused community; the Dirty-Handed Rebel saw a world of experimentation, action and activity. Yet each of them saw

the verbal communication of the preacher as a key aspect of this worldview, albeit a preacher with their particular perspective in mind.

It is possible that the Transcendent Visionary model is so dominant in Town Church, that it has captured the imagination of possibilities within the other models. With a primacy on formal leaders acting and speaking on behalf of the others, the Transcendent Visionary - which was the most discernible leadership style at Town Church - has a natural alignment with the preacher-as-leader model. The preacher can act as a figure-head, in a prominent position and communicate a message that is focused on the Bible, on behalf of the other congregational members. Traditionally, this role has been held by the elders of Town Church, a position of power and authority that also gives legitimacy to the role. The sermon is presented as a monologue, with minimal chance for engagement or interpersonal encounter - yet this is the approach that the other two models seek to emulate.

Although as a performative and ritual act, the sermon is of fundamental importance to the ongoing reality of Town Church, this thesis suggests there is space for change. It proposes that the Relational Nurturers and Dirty-Handed Rebels should be encouraged to explore other possibilities for creating a more balanced innovative environment. By engaging with communication models that are more harmonious with their perspective and praxis, these diverse leadership approaches could each flourish and

allow for healthy debate and a more well-rounded praxis in engaging in both leadership and innovation within Town Church.

Concluding Reflections

In Lawrence Thornton's novel "Imagining Argentina", the protagonist - a theatre director named Carlos - discovers the power of being able to put words and stories to things that are not. In naming the nameless and narrating the forgotten journeys of those deemed criminals by the ruling dictatorship, Carlos begins to open new possibilities of the future.

Language is powerful - and although we may know more than what we can communicate - it is the communicable that has the most power.

This research into Town Church has revealed three distinct leadership possibilities, two of which lie below the dominant model of the Transcendent Visionary. It was fascinating to uncover that for most participants at Town Church, this was the first association they had with "leadership" - someone in a formalised role, with structural power and authority. Often, this was a pastor or an elder.

Many of the participants spoke favourably about these Transcendent Visionaries, highlighting their ability to lead the organisation in a conventional, CEO-type approach. They appreciated their focus on truth and quest for a stable community - and valued their sacrifice for leadership - but there was no easy language to describe other styles of leadership that were just as valuable to the faith community. Leadership discourse was dominated by the meaning of the Transcendent Visionary, with limited space for alternative meanings. It was only in the later stages of the

interviews, after questions exploring their favourite experiences of leaders - rather than definitions - that rich, new meanings were discovered.

The Relational Nurturer and Dirty-Handed Rebel model have both played a significant role in Town Church - both corporately and individually - but have not received the same legitimacy and recognition as the conventional model of leadership. My hope is that the co-creation of this new, distinctive language for these alternatives will allow them to gain legitimacy as credible options and realities within the organisation. By being able to give themselves a name - rather than saying, "I'm not a leader" or "I'm not a typical leader" (both negative descriptions) - members who embody these leadership styles will be able to engage in meaningful, influential conversations about futures and possibilities for Town Church.

As someone who naturally gravitates towards the Relational Nurturer approach myself, it was helpful to hear other church member's descriptions of their experiences of this style, and the impact it has made on their experiences of Town Church. Also, many of these interviews felt as though we were approaching sacred ground, with many powerful narratives that should be shared more around our faith community.

Perhaps more than anything else, the appreciative inquiry interviews simply opened up conversations that felt unique and significant - and also sadly rare within my experience of Town Church. As a community of faith, centred around some of life's most burning questions - "What am I doing

here?”, “What’s the meaning of life?” , “How do I live?” - it is surprising how few of our interactions engage at a deeper level. These interviews helped me understand the people I have known for over twenty years, at a much more humanising level.

From my reading of the literature, it is out of these diverse approaches that new innovative possibilities will occur. Each leadership approach plays a significant role in the creation of new ideas and the transformation of these concepts into reality. The Transcendental Visionary acts as a direction setter and gate keeper, helping provide direction, purpose and need behind the innovations, as well as critically engaging with the ideas to improve them. The Relational Nurturer helps create inclusion and diverse networks for ideation, as well as supporting the growth and development of innovators and innovative teams. The Dirty Handed Rebel catalyses action and experiments with possibilities, working outside of the structures to help speed up the innovative process. The thesis suggests that it is in the combination of these approaches, that Town Church will find new innovative realities.

The interviews opened up a new potential of leadership and innovation for Town Church. The next step is for the Transcendent Visionaries - who currently broker the power - to remain open to the possibilities of developing these future leaders in their different styles; not trying to force them into a pre-existing category. Although that may feel like a challenge to the legitimacy of the Transcendent Visionaries, this openness will create

healthy diversity and creative intersections, that will help foster a creative community throughout Town Church. In embracing new language and leaders, they will embrace new futures and possibilities.

CHAPTER III. EnviroCare

Creator's Confessional

After my exploration and discovery of the three leadership of innovation styles at Town Church, I was intrigued to see how they would translate - if at all - to the business sector. Would there be a similar hierarchy of Transcendent Visionaries leading the organisation, with Dirty-Handed Rebels operating beneath the radar? Or would the different focus of the organisation introduce new dynamics and models that were unnoticed at Town Church?

With these questions in mind, I began my interviews with EnviroCare, a small consultancy firm I had done some contract work for in the previous twelve months. I had already been impressed by the Managing Director's (my primary contact) enthusiasm for innovation, and he was eager to be involved. I had already had several meetings with him, but the other members of the organisation were new to me.

The diverse level of relationship between interviewer and participants was fascinating, as it really revealed the hinge on which appreciative inquiry operates - honesty and openness. At Town Church, I already had prior relationship with all the participants, so in many ways, I already had social capital and a trust relationship with them. At EnviroCare, however, three of the participants I had never met - yet I was asking them reflective

questions designed to bring about personal stories and responses. This may reflect on the data that I gathered, as there may be more pressure on the participants to give answers that they perceive will be helpful (to the researcher) or flattering (to the organisation).

In saying this, there was a warmth and welcoming nature to this organisation, and they strived to make me feel like one of them. From the owner bringing in his dog to “hang out” for the interview, to the chit-chat that occurred before and after the interviews - this organisation appeared to be relationally rich. This was encouraging to me as the interviewer and I felt accepted and enjoyed this process much more than I thought I would.

This was my first experience in conducting interviews with participants with whom I was not familiar, which led to some nervous anticipation. Initially, these nerves led me to focus on the questions and the “script”, rather than the participant’s responses, but I quickly learnt to be fully present in the interviews and respond, inquire and explore interesting replies as they happened (Whitney & Trosten-Bloom, 2003) . As such, EnviroCare represents an observation into an organisation that is less familiar to me than Town Church, which will have a lessening effect on the observation bias of the researcher.

Organisation Description

EnviroCare is a small environmental consultancy, with four members and a network of off-site subcontractors. They are located in an urban city in New Zealand, and assist with environmental planning and recovery for government bodies, corporations and community organisations.

EnviroCare began as a single operator consultancy fifteen years ago, with the original founder still involved as a director and business planner.

As of 2014, EnviroCare now has two directors, who share equal equity as controlling partners. The second director joined the organisation three years ago, and works as the managing director, alongside the original founder. Also involved are two part-time onsite consultants who assist with audits, research, analysis and the book-keeping for the organisation, and who have been involved for nine and two years respectively.

Appreciative inquiry interviews were held with all four members of EnviroCare, representing a comprehensive view. The youngest participant was in their 30s, while the eldest was in their 60s. Two of the participants were male, two were female, and each had been working with EnviroCare for at least two years.

Interview Findings

Any organisational culture is a dynamic set of beliefs that is primarily and inextricably linked to the organisational members (Keyton, 2011). Culture and member exist in a tautological relationship, with each both creating and being shaped by the other. This results in an ever-changing cultural reality, undergirded by the inherited culture of the established community (Taylor & Van Every, 2000), but constantly being challenged and adjusted by new interactions from new members (Trice & Beyer, 1993). As such, EnviroCare represents a unique culture that is distinct from Town Church in almost all respects. Although the appreciative inquiry methodology was very similar (with only a few words changed to allow for differences between a faith-based and non-profit organisation), the focus, language and direction of the interviews proceeded in a very different direction.

Whereas Town Church participants talked about leadership primarily as an organisational philosophy, EnviroCare participants focused instead on the significant actions of leaders. The actions were the primary identifiers of leadership behaviour, rather than being secondary to the over-arching leadership philosophy. Although the reasoning behind this difference in focus is unclear (perhaps reflecting the role of reflection and cognitive formation of the church, in comparison to the action focus of the business world (Smith, 2009), it does allow for an added dimension of the innovative leader to be observed, which may be illuminating to both domains.

In EnviroCare I found the following two primary activities of the innovative leader:

1. Leader as the Creator of Artefacts
2. Leader as Crafter of Stories

Both of these activities are described as influencing the organisational culture, creating a space which is conducive to innovation flourishing. I found that the primacy of these actions was supported by one extra leadership observations, which was primarily character based. Its essence can partly captured in the label:

1. Ethical Distributive Leadership.

At this stage, after a discussion on the primary leadership activities, the thesis will make comparisons with the dynamics of Town Church's leadership perspectives. Following Johansson (2004), it is intended that the intersections of difference between these organisations will not only help create rich possibilities that will be beneficial for all the participating organisations, who can learn from the leadership practices and experiences of others.

Leader as Creator of Artefacts

Have you seen the desks? They're lovely, aren't they!

(Interview Participant A, 2014)

On October 4, 2011, Tim Cook made his first product speech as the new CEO of Apple. After the sudden death of Steve Jobs, one of the founding members and cult-like leader of the organisation, Cook faced a roomful of Apple employees and media, all awaiting to see how he would compare to his predecessor. Within the first minute of his speech, Cook said:

I want to welcome you to this room that we call our Town Hall. This room has quite a history here at Apple. Ten years ago, we launched the original iPod here, and it went on to revolutionise the way we listened to music. Just one year ago, we launched the new Macbook Air, which has fundamentally changed the way people think about notebook computers. (Cook, 2011)

Cook's leadership approach to inspire and reassure his audience was to appeal to artefacts that were significant in Apple's history. In this brief section, the environment ("Town Hall") is referred to as a significant space, which is then further enriched by the symbols of innovation; the iPod and the Macbook Air. These powerful communicative images have become more than MP3 players and computers, but are instead enthroned with

revolutionary and global significance. As such, these creations of Apple become symbols of the innovative culture that has been created, and serve to reinforce this perspective into the unknown future.

According to Akaka, Corsaro, Kelleher, Maglio, Seo, Lusch and Vargo (2014), these organisational cultures are co-created by the connection of organisational resources and the interactions between the organisational members. I agree in that symbols and artefacts occupy a unique position because they are ontologically situated as an inanimate resource, yet can be deployed to facilitate and direct possible interactions. Akaka et al. (2014) continue that when members see or experience a symbol, they engage with a meaning-rich entity that provides shared meaning and focus for the organisation. Higgins and McAllister (2002) support this approach in their claim that symbols co-ordinate, inspire and support the communication between organisational members and guide strategic performance and embody organisational values.

When I entered EnviroCare to conduct interviews, I encountered a seemingly innocuous artefact that had a visual impact on me. Upon being welcomed into their offices, I saw all four of the employees working on desks that had been crafted out of old wooden crates. Rather than the usual plain, coated desks, this up-cycled office furniture was well-designed and aesthetically pleasing; eye-catching yet functional. I didn't mention anything about the desks apart from a casual remark on how good they

looked - yet comments about the significance of these desks appeared in three of the four interviews.

We designed these desks, found a guy and it happened. It was important to walk the talk.

(Interview Participant B, 2014)

The best leadership story, oddly enough, is about those desks. (Interview Participant A, 2014)

The end result (of the desks) is it cost us money - a whole lot more than just getting standard office furniture. It cost us a lot of time in trying to organise it all - but the impact of it all has been fascinating.

(Interview Participant C, 2014)

Each of these participants narrated the importance of these desks as being powerful symbols for EnviroCare, and a key example of both innovation and leadership. Just as the iPod represented both what Apple was (a company focused on revolution) and what they were not (a company that simply makes products), so these desks served as an indicator of what EnviroCare was – and, by extension – was not.

EnviroCare originally had medium-density fibreboard (MDF) desks, which are composed of wood chips combined with glue and resin. While cheap

and easily available, they were described by one participant as, “just crap ... [with] all these glues, you can’t use it again, if it gets wet it swells ... you can’t burn it in a fire because of all the toxins in it” (Interview Participant C, 2014). As EnviroCare is involved in environmental consultancy and focusing on changing community’s perspectives and practices on resource recovery, the MDF desks could be seen as a symbol of misalignment that ran counter to their organisational focus. One participant voiced this discordant reality in “there is so much that MDF represents that EnviroCare is against” (Interview Participant C, 2014). The original desks represented a negative artefact that did not commit to their communicated paradigm (Higgins & McAllister, 2002).

The desks that were created to replace the MDF desks were deliberately chosen and designed to symbolise the values of EnviroCare in practice. Although a full semiotic reading of these artefacts is beyond the scope of this inquiry, the desks were created from old material that would otherwise be discarded, yet were designed in an attractive and appealing way. Also, the organisation members were excited to show me how functional they were - how they operated as better desks than the original MDF furniture. Yet, the new desks did not operate as a simple hygiene-factor - removing the negative association and creating equilibrium and alignment between symbol and value. Instead, they had a strong added value to the leadership of innovation at EnviroCare.

In response to a question asking about a leadership highlight at EnviroCare, one of the senior leaders referred to the story of the desks. After telling the narrative, they concluded by saying:

It was such a simple idea ... but making it happen was actually quite challenging. When you are busy doing a lot of work, it is very easy to go – ‘This stupid little job’ (referring to the desks) - but its opened up a whole lot of other possibilities and collaborations. I can see how it’s going to continue doing that.

(Interview Participant C, 2014)

Although not able to articulate it beyond this, this organisational member recognised that the desks had a symbolic power that was significant for EnviroCare. This participant saw the desk as empowering new futures and creating new connections, two factors that are integral to effective innovation (Kelley, 2008; Johannson, 2004). The desk as symbol, therefore, serves as a visual symbol that catalyses the imagination, but then also as a conduit for conversations, invisibly supporting the connection. This is a symbol in relationship with the participants, who always spoke of it inspiring other conversations and collaborations. As such, the desk works to inspire two minds together, rather than being a muse that sparks the solitary creator into ideation (Akaka et al., 2014).

EnviroCare's approach aligns well with a strong focus in the literature on the relationship between symbols and innovation, including studies on dress and expression (Clark, 2011), speech and visual presentations (Anderson, 2005; Baron and Brush, 1999; Baron and Markman, 2003), architecture (Yanow, 2006; Harris and Cullen, 2008) and educational achievements (Eisenhardt and Schoonhoven, 1990; Packalen, 2007). However, within this literature, I have found little research on the impact of everyday artefacts - such as a desk - on the innovation process. Nor is there much research on how these symbols work with the designed space to foster collaboration. In Harris and Cullen's (2008) narrative of their innovative redesign of their campus, for example, their focus is on how space is transformed to allow flexible education, smaller classrooms and better interactions between faculty and students. That is to say, the symbols of room and furnishings function spatially, to communicate new possibilities about how to use the space.

With EnviroCare, however, the focus is on the aesthetic and design meaning of the desk, and on the link to values, rather than on its spatial characteristics. One participant said, "The impact of it all (the desks) has been fascinating. In the last two weeks that we have had it, the conversations it sparks off when people come into the office are amazing" (Interview Participant C, 2014). Yet these conversations were not sparked by the spatial practices of the desk, but rather by the unique aesthetic and the story of the design. These desks contain a story that captures the leadership tenacity of EnviroCare (staying focused despite

the high-cost and hard-work) and the desired outcomes of the organisation (reusing resources that would otherwise be destroyed).

Just as the senior leader told the desk story as an example of leadership excellence at EnviroCare, another participant nuanced the story as a narrative of innovation and community. They described the process of collecting the pellets with their colleagues as “cool and fun”, but also as “innovative - forward thinking and collaborative”. They enjoyed the social co-creation of the desks and saw it as “continual” - the beginning of something bigger for the organisation. These align well with the practices of extraordinary leadership identified by Kouzes and Posner (2003).

Fascinatingly, despite the move from church to organisation, the desks also had an element of sacredness as a symbol to this participant, who described the entire process as one which “had a lot of providence” - acknowledging the hard-work of the team, but also embedding the desks with a higher level of meaning than any they could have purchased.

I conclude that this multi-faceted symbol acts a powerful artefact for EnviroCare - it serves as a physical embodiment of key values/meanings that are essential for ongoing organisational success. One organisational member described the ethics of the desk, saying - “It was important to walk the talk ... quite often people say they are going to make conscious buying decisions and then they don't. It's really cool that we have actually done it” (Interview Participant A, 2014). Another highlighted the distributive

leadership that the desk represented, saying how the desk involved “bringing people along with me and getting them inspired as to why we are doing it”. Yet another talked of the story of the desk, detailing its timeline and treating the desk as a character in the story.

This thesis contends that the plurality of meaning is a strength of this simple symbol, and is already inspiring new possibilities of wider organisational relationships that could generate significant revenue and environmental change for EnviroCare. Regardless of their awareness of the potential value of this artefact, the leaders have used this symbol as a strong leadership prop to inspire collaboration, future innovation and conversation among organisational members. More than a redesigned pellet, these desks are enriched with meaning and grounded in a powerful narrative, and I discovered that powerful stories are another leadership focus of EnviroCare.

Leader as Crafter of Stories

I wanted to create a vehicle that would tell the story and would help others to tell the story.

(Interview Participant A, 2014)

An often overlooked function of any leader is their ability to capture and craft stories for the benefit of their organisation. In the current era of “Love-Mark” marketing, it is critical for the leader to use stories to differentiate their organisation from their competitors and to build emotional connections with their organisational members. Two of the participants from EnviroCare stressed the significance of story-telling as a leadership action in their experience, both as followers and as leaders. The truth of the story that EnviroCare was telling was perceived as a critical element of the organisation, especially as they sought to grow and transform the future.

One leader highlighted this centrality of story to EnviroCare, saying,

People know we're not just going to tell a story to suit them as a client. In Australia, they call them 'hired guns' - consultancies that provide a story for a company to validate itself, rather than change itself. We're not about validating anybody - we are about helping them to change.

(Interview Participant A, 2014)

Inherent in this observation is the association made between “consultancy” and “story”. In effect, this participant sees EnviroCare as in the business of story-crafting and story-telling. Yet these stories are not narratives about self-perpetuation, but are designed to offer a new perspective that challenges long-held views and assumptions. This is a key aspect of the power of stories as an imaginative tool, as they allow the audience to see through new eyes towards a different future (Petrick, 2014). Although EnviroCare may be primarily telling a story through analysis and figures, this senior leader sees the data as a supporting and validating role to the over-arching narrative of inspiring environmental change. Before the act of crafting these stories, however, the leaders from EnviroCare have, perhaps subconsciously, embodied the story themselves, with the desks serving as a prop and their behaviour and decisions both creating and being guided by the authentic story their lives are telling (Shamir & Eilam, 2005).

As mentioned in the quote above, EnviroCare strives to tell painfully honest stories to organisations, that will inspire change. Yet the extent of this honesty goes beyond their client relationship, with the stories they tell being driven by the story they live. Immediately after discussing the centrality of story at EnviroCare, one senior leader was asked to identify the most important quality they brought to the organisation. Without a pause, they replied, “I think I stick to the purpose at almost all costs.” This value is aligned with the main theme of the story that they are sharing,

revealing the depth of belief in this organisational narrative. As an authentic story-teller therefore, the leader's identity is pulled by self-verification and a desire to confirm the concepts that are integral to their worldview, rather than being motivated by self-enhancement and needing an audience that merely admires the leader (Swann, Stein-Seroussi, & Giesler, 1992). As such, the primacy of the narrative is on the illumination and characterisation of the important values and beliefs of the leader, rather than the leader themselves.

Just as a leader attempts to move their team forward into the future, overcoming obstacles as they arise, any story needs a character who can journey through the narrative and confront the crisis that is on their path (Caywood, 2012). This character is the one who audiences can relate to and care about, as well as the one who they can embody and vicariously live out of. In the first instance, this character is the leader and the wise leader must self-examine their own character and narrative that they choose to live from. This self-concept will shape the way that the leader communicates and the way that they respond to other stories that surround them (DeVito, 2008). The best leaders "have stories running in their heads about how the world works and how they want things to turn out" (Bennis & Tichey, 2007, p.50). These internal stories are continually playing in the leader's mind, soaking their imagination and shaping the lens through which they interpret the world and themselves. These narratives are chosen by the leader, and serve to either reinforce or challenge the character of the leader.

Another participant reinforced the power of the authentic story-telling leader, as they reflected on a leadership highlight from a previous role in a social work capacity. They described the leader's (a man named Graham, who had personal experience with mental health crises) leadership style as:

Graham would lead you through the use of story and through his own personal story. It inspired change ... He'd tell you some pretty full on stories of stuff that's happened to him - nasty stuff - but then would tell how it could be. He'd share hope and potential. (Interview Participant C, 2014)

Again, the primacy of the story is the authentic alignment between the leader and the narrative. The story they are sharing is a story that they have lived. But this story also transcends the individual leader's experience, and becomes part of the collective narrative of the organisation (Shamir & Eilam, 2005). When the leader has crafted this authentically, the story begins to "provide an answer not only to the question, "what am I here for?" but also to the questions "what are we here for?" (Shamir & Eilam, 2005, p. 409). By sharing authentically the pain of his experience and the transformative possibility of caring intervention, Graham led with stories from the past that resulted in change in the present.

For this thesis, the credibility of the story-telling leader is grounded in what Pittinsky and Tyson (2004) have labelled as “authenticity markers”; the elements of the narrative that resonate with the group. For the members of EnviroCare, I discovered that these authenticity markers were sub-narratives that reinforced the meta-narrative of honesty and transformation, in various and diverse ways. One employee shared a story that serves as an authenticity marker, referring to a conversation between two senior leaders. They were discussing an opportunity for one of them to do environmental consultancy in Palestine, and she explains:

They (the senior leaders) are semi anarchists ... they were chatting about doing some work in Palestine, and Leader A is going, “Why not?”. I break in and say, “Why not? It’s Palestine! Are you aware of what’s going on?”

(Interview Participant B, 2014)

The sub-story (possible work in Palestine) was a signifier for this employee of the authenticity of the leader’s beliefs in social justice and community change, which undergird EnviroCare. Although this story challenged their ideas of risk and the cost of integrity, it also reinforced the meta-narrative of the organisation and the leaders as characters in this tale. They further explained this by saying that that the leader “would rather drive the ship off the cliff than do something they don’t want to. They want to do what they believe in”. Ultimately, this authenticity and alignment of the narrative and the leader, along with the leader’s self-disclosure

through story, helps inspire trust and a leader-follower relationship among the organisation. As the leader trusts the employees with the story they are telling - and reinforces that trust with the authenticity markers discussed above - the followers are invited to participate in the narrative (Auvinen, Aaltio & Blomqvist, 2012). This use of narrative helps guide an organisation into the future the leader desires.

All humans use story to move our actions towards an idealised future, and this is a skill that is used intuitively by anyone when they plan - whether a holiday, a career change or a date (Bennis & Tichey, 2007). Although this may not be a conscious action, the individual will create visions of the ideal date and the character that they hope to be during this story. The winning vision (from all the potential futures) and idealised goals motivate the individual towards action (calling the girl, getting a haircut, booking a restaurant) and create a new future that was motivated by the story. The role of the storytelling leader is to consciously create a narrative that frames the future in a unique way, and to communicate this story in a way that motivates the organisation to orient themselves in this direction.

This occurs when the communicated story has emotional engagement with the audience and creates connections between people (Caywood, 2012). A story is not a collection of facts and forecasts about a probable future but it is a communicated journey, often informed by this data, which is unique to the organisation and engages with the whole person who is listening, inviting both a response of action and of re-telling the story. This

transformational act is grounded on the character of the leader, as they must often act as one who will "creatively destroy and remake their organisations for success in tomorrow's world" (Bennis & Tichey, 2007, p. 51). Transforming an organisation through story implies a "breaking-away" from the current narrative and ways of understanding the world; an act which may be unsettling for employees and fellow leaders. The leader can limit this emotion by careful choice of language, creative retelling of the new narrative and by "Modelling the Way" and living out the future narrative in the present (Kouzes & Posner, 2003).

EnviroCare is unique in that they have a thorough self-awareness of their own narrative and the power of their story. Most leaders rely on intuition and circumstances to utilise a story for motivation and encouragement (Auvinen, Aaltio & Blomqvist, 2012), yet the participants clearly articulated a clear narrative that was consistent and vital to their organisational identity. This narrative has defined what EnviroCare is not, with one participant said "(The leader) doesn't get a lot of work because he is very opinionated about certain things. It's quite cool, because lots of people are too scared to say things like that" (Interview Participant D, 2014). Because of the strong organisational belief in integrity and honesty, communicated through the narratives of the leaders, this group would not compromise on their story. They would not associate with work or clients that may tarnish their organisational narrative.

Similarly, this story has shaped the identity of EnviroCare. Contemporary communication research posits an organisation as made up of many different and competing stories, with organisational tension arising from conflict among narratives (Boje, 1995; Boyce 1996). Yet EnviroCare had a remarkable clarity in their story, with all participants sharing the same narratives focusing on the key organisational values. Where I found Town Church had a diverse range of stories about their leadership experience, I saw EnviroCare as having a singular focus to the narratives that were shared. This creates a story-full organisation that has a coherent maturity and deliberate action, united across the company through the medium of story.

Perhaps more significantly, EnviroCare told stories about the influence of story. Town Church would tell stories (when prompted by the researcher) that illuminated certain values and experiences, seeing narrative as a medium for communication. When EnviroCare, however, were recalling narratives, they revealed the power of these stories to bring about meaningful change. They were self-aware of the constitutive narratives that were foundational to both their leader and their organisation (indeed, sometimes the two appeared to merge into one, reminiscent of Parry and Hansen's (2007) study into the leader-story dichotomy). Similarly, the organisation members were united in their view of story as both a powerful reality and a transformative change-agent for the organisation to offer to clients.

After this analysis, I could more clearly identify a theatrical perspective in the actions of leadership at EnviroCare. The role of Creator of Artefacts fits as a subset of the activity of Crafting of Story, with the organisational symbols functioning as props to support the ongoing narrative. The desk is not isolated from the story, but serves as a key aspect of the setting. The participants - especially the organisational leaders - weaved into their narratives of honesty and integrity. As such, EnviroCare is “well-storied” - an organisation that knows its own narrative, and invites others to participate in their journey, and so be transformed.

Central to the narrative of EnviroCare is the focus on ethical terms - honesty and integrity - which define both their organisational goals and day-to-day practices. As these phrases were highlighted throughout the interview process, the analysis will now explore the described characteristics of the Ethical Distributive Leader, at EnviroCare.

Ethical Distributive Leadership

Ethical Leadership

I wanted to create a platform that could promote real sustainable pathways to real sustainability ... I wanted it to be a place where people who did work there shared that and believed in it. (Interview Participant A, 2014)

Given the past two decades of wars on terror, environmental disasters, global financial crises and political scandal, ethics has experienced a renewed focus in leadership literature (Bass & Steidlmeier, 1999; Gregory, 2010; Berenbeim, 2006). Within the Western philosophical tradition, ethics finds its origins in the Socratic discussions on custom and character; namely, how significant is the integrity and virtue of the leader (Mihelic, Lipicnik & Tekavcic, 2010)? Although libertarians perceive leadership as ontologically unethical (as it involves leading others, a view which is seen as an imposition of power) and extremist Machiavellian proponents view ethics as irrelevant to leadership discourse, the majority of researchers are discovering a greater impact of leadership ethics than originally thought (Bass & Steidlemeier, 1999). Leaders who are perceived as ethical and just create organisations with higher satisfaction of decisions (Thibaut & Walker, 1975), greater job satisfaction (Sweeney & McFarlin, 1993), a stronger commitment to the organisation (Tyler, Boeckmann, Smith, & Huo, 1997) and experience greater perceived leadership legitimacy from

their followers (Tyler, 1999). van Knippenberg, De Cremer and van Knippenberg's (2007) comprehensive review of organisational leadership, fairness and ethics highlight the significance of character-based leadership, concluding with a call for more research into the relationship between ethics and leadership outcomes. One of the areas that has not yet been explored is the impact of ethical leadership on the organisational innovative environment. Does it inspire creativity among organisational members - and if so, how?

When EnviroCare participants were asked to define "innovation", their responses conveyed a similar theme. They replied with:

Being responsive to the changing landscape...of our economy and environment.

(Interview Participant C, 2014)

We are a kind of social enterprise, so it's about seeing ahead and coming up with strategies that will help us and our clients get there.

(Interview Participant A, 2014)

New approaches to solving the world's problems.

(Interview Participant D, 2014)

EnviroCare's definition and practice of innovation tend to cluster around a focus on an external locus, with a strong emphasis on making a positive social change to the world. From the perspective of this thesis, this approach is primarily problem focused, as each definition refers to identifying present or future challenges, and responding with solutions to overcome these obstacles. Innovation is seen as pulled from these needs, with the successfulness of the innovative effort defined by the uptake and effect of the proposed creative solution (Khilji, Mroczkowski & Bernstein, 2006). Although the "literature regarding the determinants of environmental innovations is sparse" (Rehfeld, Rennings & Ziegler, 2007, p., 93), one consistent thread throughout the research and the data from EnviroCare is a sense of ethical duty to this innovation pull. Rather than being primarily focused on profit maximisation (by meeting a market need), this organisation sees innovation as primarily about solving problems for society. These problems exist on the moral position - rather than inconveniences or frustrations - that is focused on making a "positive difference in the world" (Interview Participant A, 2014). EnviroCare genuinely believe they are a force for good, transforming bad environmental actions, with an informal mission statement of "For the Greater Good".

Any moral action, however, as Bass and Steidlmeier (1999) point out, requires an agent to define what is good or bad for the wider culture. This act of definition is traditionally the role of a chief or village elders, who would provide wisdom in times of moral uncertainty, maintain ethical

norms and attempt to pre-empt situations where ethical dilemmas could occur (Lear, 2006). One of the senior leaders at EnviroCare participated in this tradition of ethical leadership, with their fascinating comment on their praxis of leadership.

I think there are see-ers in the world - people who can see ahead. Some people can see around the next corner or look over the next valley. I truly believe there are people that see and that's a burden for them ... but that enables them, if they have confidence with that seeing ability to lead.

(Interview Participant A, 2014)

Although this comment may sound congruent with the Transcendent Visionary leadership perspective, there is a crucial difference in this act of seeing. Within the Transcendent Visionary model, the seeing is on behalf of the organisation, and involves seeing organisational possibilities and potential that the leader can then actualise. The Ethical Distributive leader, however, describes the seeing as a “burden”, as it involves seeing on behalf of the wider community and perceiving ethical problems and challenges that must be avoided. This senior leader developed their explanation on the moral dimension of leadership, by sharing the example of New Zealand property investor Bob Jones - someone who he describes as having a special character “but he’s applied it to the wrong things”. From a Transcendent Visionary perspective, Bob Jones excelled as he saw potential for his organisation and self, led towards this vision and

successfully gained the rewards. From the perspective of an ethical leader, however, it is not enough just to make profits, the moral character of both the leader, their decisions and their vision of the future must be assessed. For EnviroCare, this is a crucial point of difference, as they stress the “good-ness” of their work, while highlighting the environmental problems that New Zealand will face without intervention.

This thesis argues that there are many positives in doing “good” work where, as Gardner et al. (2001) put it in their book title: “*Excellence & Ethics Meet*”. Leaders who practice an ethical leadership model experience a greater sense of trust and respect among the organisation they are leading (Dirks & Ferrin, 2002). Despite this, it can be difficult to distinguish when ethics are foundational to the leader and when they are simply being used for impression management (Brown & Trevino, 2006). Sosik, Avolio and Jung (2002) have discovered that leaders with a higher degree of self monitoring and awareness have a positive correlation with self-serving impression management. This paradoxical conundrum - is it unethical for a leader to pretend to be ethical? - requires analysis from the researcher, and from the followers of the leader to distinguish the authenticity of the leader’s actions. One possible marker of genuine ethical practices, which can be observed at EnviroCare, is the willingness of the leader to continue their ethical behaviour when the organisation incurs a genuine - often financial cost involved.

I observed the embodiment of this in a senior leader at EnviroCare. It occurred as they described their innovative practices by saying, “We think ahead, think of an idea, put a proposition around it and go out and try and get money for it. We often do it even if the money is not that great”. The driver for this innovation and this effort is neither organisational growth nor financial reward, but grounded in the ethical significance of their actions. Another organisational member commented on the senior leaders, saying that they were “relatively unfazed about the money side of things”, and were driven by the “many environmental problems”. Their ultimate dream was to solve one of these problems - not just slow it down or minimise it – but make a lasting, significant change by eradicating one of these environmental wrongs.

The foundational nature of ethical leadership at EnviroCare appears to have contagious and transformative attributes that manifest in a vocational drive amongst all the organisation members. Although the founding member and senior leader is the originator of this ethical focus, each of the participants communicated a sense of deeper meaning and calling to their involvement at EnviroCare. Employees shared how they felt they were now “in a more ethical role” and described the centrality of “working in an area that I believe in and am passionate about”. These quotes confirm this researcher’s view that, when connected with wider ethics, organisational members perceive their work with significance and deeper meaning, encouraging whole-self engagement and a much more passionate and enthused workforce (Baumeister & Vohs, 2002).

Along with this vocational perspective on work, organisation members, driven by a sense of urgency and purpose, see innovation as a necessity for their environmental ethical focus. Rather than innovation being about growing the organisation or increasing market share, meaningful workers see innovation as fulfilling a much wider group's dreams, hopes and needs (Terez, 2002). Amabile and Kramer's (2011) extensive study on creativity in the workplace concluded that "of all the positive events that influence inner work life, the single most powerful is progress in meaningful work" (p. 5). Within EnviroCare, this meaning is created by sustained leadership alignment with wider community ethics and morals. The work at EnviroCare is imbued with greater meaning and morality, resulting in a genuine, intrinsic desire for innovation.

At a secondary level, the ethical leader also creates an environment that is conducive to creativity. Within EnviroCare, there was a clear value and praxis on honesty, with participants valuing the fact that they "tell a true story". One member told the story of when they made a mistake with the financial book-keeping and began to panic about it. Yet, in her telling of the narrative, she instantly told the leaders of the organisation, who dealt with the situation with honesty and care. She described it by saying:

They went through it really calm and ... I think they saw I was a little distressed. Neither of them get angry or frustrated with me or with staff ... it makes a pleasant work environment,

which is probably why I have been here such a long time.

(Interview Participant D, 2014)

Honesty is depicted in a two-fold approach in this small narrative. The story-teller was instantly honest in sharing her mistake with her leaders, rather than attempting to cover-up the situation. However, the leaders also responded with honesty - acknowledging the mistake and the situation, but then providing help and guidance to fix the situation. Ultimately, these actions have created an atmosphere that is not dominated by fear. As one of the biggest inhibitors of innovation, fear of organisational superiors restricts ideation and communication around creative possibilities (Kelly & Kelly, 2012). By maintaining an atmosphere of honesty, the leaders of EnviroCare allow their employees to contribute ideas, take risks and - most importantly – sometimes to fail, in the pursuit of innovation to support the wider community's problems.

Similarly, the interview participants discussed the high level of care and personal interest that is displayed between all members of the organisation. In a particularly powerful example, one of the participant's wishes for the organisation was, "That [leader] totally recovers from their illness". All of the responses to this question from Town Church were focused on organisational growth and community impact, but this response revealed a level of personal care and relationship that was highly valued at EnviroCare. This was further reinforced by the participant's favourite leadership story, where all the members of the

organisation were involved in a waste audit. Their particular highlight of this experience was the people involved - the work was bad, but “it was fun and we chatted while we were doing work”.

This ethical atmosphere of honesty and care ultimately creates a high level of internal support between organisational members. Amabile’s (1983) seminal theoretical model of creativity posits organisational support - composed of organisational and supervisor encouragement, as well as work group supports - as a key factor to allowing innovation to flourish within any group. Although EnviroCare’s primary *telos* of ethics is grounded in character and a sense of calling to their task as community change agents, rather than innovation, their shared experience suggests a positive secondary benefit to their creative efforts. In creating an atmosphere built on higher values, organisational members gain meaning from their work and perceive their involvement as being related to solving ethical problems, while creating a creativity-enabling organisation environment. From my observations, one of the key properties of leadership at EnviroCare that has enabled this, is the practice of distributed leadership and shared ethics across the community.

Distributive Ethical Leadership

(My dream is the) development of the culture of people feeling empowered to create their destiny. They can envision a different way of doing things and then carry that out.

(Interview Participant C, 2014)

As the above quote suggests, EnviroCare has leadership dreams that are focused on sharing agency and power among all organisation members. Their idealised future is one of a “leaderful” (Raelin, 2003) organisation, where leadership is not seen primarily as an individual position, but is experienced as a collective reality. This perspective offers a unique critique of the Transcendent Visionary approach that was identified as the dominant leadership model at Town Church, and adds a subtle nuance to the Relational Nurturer. Rather than leadership being held on to for the sake of the community, or even seen as something to be grown from a state of non-existence in the individual, EnviroCare practices leadership as a communal act that is distributed among all members.

Distributive leadership is a relatively new theory of organisational reality, with Gronn’s (2000) article suggesting distributive leadership as a third-way between the two dominant leadership perceptions; leadership as individual agency and leadership as part of the system’s organisation. Instead, it is argued:

Distributed leadership is not something 'done' by an individual 'to' others, or a set of individual actions through which people contribute to a group or organisation ... [it] is a group activity that works through and within relationships, rather than individual action.

(Bennett, Wise, Woods, & Harvey, 2003, p. 3)

From this perspective, leadership is not about the individual and their actions, but instead is about the holistic relational organisation and how leadership happens collectively. This is a dynamic and fluid approach (Gronn, 2000), as the realities of the leadership practices move with the ever-changing organic organisation. Although the flexibility in this model has resulted in a diverse and rich array of definitions and characteristics of distributive leadership (Bolden, 2011), there are three essential attributes to the model that are consistent across the literature. First, leadership is seen as emerging from the relational interactions between participants. Second, there are very low boundaries to entry into the organisational leadership and thirdly, differences in expertise are widely dispersed across the many (Bennet et al., 2003). Fundamentally, this is about leader-in-relationship, with the usual leader-follower dichotomy dissolving into a unified leader-leader reality.

EnviroCare was rich in stories of distributive leadership in action. When one employee was asked about the best leader they have followed, they replied by saying, "Interesting - I don't think of myself as following". They

then recounted an experience when a senior leader had put their name down to work on a senior consulting panel with the local government body. Although transactionally - as an employee, rather than practicing consultant - they would not appear to have the leadership capital to contribute in high-level discussions, EnviroCare perceived this participant as a distributed extension of the collective whole. This was not explained as a leadership training exercise, but as a genuine leadership moment, where the participant carried the full agency and authority of EnviroCare into these discussions.

Similarly, one of the senior leaders described a time of empowering leadership at EnviroCare, highlighting a moment of giving full control of some of his projects to one of the more junior employees. Tellingly, he revealed the full difference between distributed leadership and nurturing leadership, with his timely reflection:

Just in the last week there is a project we were working on where I thought I had given them the leadership of that project, but realised I hadn't. I had actually set it as a lecturer would set an assignment for them, and I had essentially just given them an assignment to fulfil.

I recognised that and said, "Don't think of this as an assignment. Just do it. Take it where it needs to be taken.

(Interview Participant C, 2014)

According to a nurturing leadership approach, then treating an emerging leader as a student - with appropriate assessments - would be the ideal activity. Leadership - as a discrete entity - would be gradually handed over as the follower achieved certain goals, with the senior leader as acting as a supervisory coach, motivating their student along. However, with the distributive model that is present at EnviroCare, the leader has rejected this approach and critiqued themselves when they have unwittingly participated in it. The act of “assignment-setting” was not congruent with their intended leadership model, as it limited the distribution of leadership among the organisation, and raised an arbitrary barrier to full participation for this member. As such, the senior leader saw it as belittling the other (e.g., by characterising them as a student), and also belittled the work (into becoming an assessment). This was instead of the work being infused with ethical significance and purpose and so their unintended lapse had diminished its value.

Nor was this just a one-to-one event. The other participant also discussed this narrative - unprompted - as one of their favourite leadership moments during their time at EnviroCare. After describing the experience, they commented:

It was cool that I just got to do it and I'm quite confident in the waste audit area now ... It was nice to be empowered to go and do it myself. (Interview Participant D, 2014)

The highlighted experience that this participant enjoyed was “I just got to do it”. It was not in practicing to be a leader or being developed into a leadership role - their experience was one of being a leader. Although they specifically mention that they grew in confidence and technical ability in this domain, suggesting they were not as competent when they first were invited to step into this role, this lack of skills was not a barrier to their full participation. Instead, when given the organisational support and opportunity, this participant embraced the empowerment and shared in the collective leadership reality at EnviroCare. Also, their focus on their ability to “do it myself” aligns with the observation of the senior leader, who realised they were initially taking this agency away from the participant. It was only after they met and had a meaningful conversation about leadership being truly distributed - and not allocated like an assignment - that this peak moment occurred.

In a similar discussion, another senior leader at EnviroCare explained that they “only want the minimum power I need to lead from and then I want to share it”. This participant perceives leadership power as a valuable energy within any organisation, that to be maximised must be distributed and released. Fundamentally, this attitude and practice of distribution is grounded in the leader’s ethics and perception of what is a “good” organisation. These foundations were revealed in one of their most passionate responses to an interview question, as they were asked to reflect on their most important qualities.

We're not just using people as fodder to get a job done - I want to be committed to your growth. You are working with us, so you have to experience our view to grow and you might grow out of EnviroCare. People do! That is an important driver for me. That makes everyone happy - and I'm happy because everyone is growing.

(Interview Participant A, 2014)

This leader sees their organisation as a dynamic, organic collective that prospers when all are part of the growth effort. When people grow, they both enjoy their work more and achieve the organisational goals that are core to EnviroCare. To achieve this growth, the senior leader actively distributes leadership by giving leadership opportunities and avoiding the retention of unnecessary power to avoid functioning as a gate-keeper to legitimacy. The other interview participants appreciate the flat-leadership structure, and both interviewed employees saw this distributive leadership approach as crucial to the ongoing success of EnviroCare. When asked to describe their ideal leadership future, neither of them wanted significant change, instead speaking only of a growth in staff while maintaining the current leadership model.

But does this distributive leadership lead to a distribution of innovation throughout the organisation? As supportive leadership is considered a catalyst of organisational innovation (Amabile, Schatzel, Moneta &

Kramer, 2004), it would be assumed that an Ethical Distributive leadership approach would excite creativity in all areas of the organisation. However, the interviews revealed that innovation was predominantly driven by the two senior leaders, even though there was an openness to ideas from all the organisation members. One participant said that a senior leader has “always, from the beginning, asked me if I’ve got any work ideas to let him know - unfortunately I never have!”. Another participant talked about contributing art for the walls, but was unable to note a workplace innovation that they had developed to improve the organisation’s activities.

Although the small size of EnviroCare makes it difficult to draw general conclusions, it can be observed that for distributive leadership to enable innovation, there must be an active pursuit of creativity communicated throughout. One senior leader noticed this, as he commented that their support of change and innovation was unclear, especially during busy times. As such, Distributive Ethical leadership is not a cure-all to awaken innovation that is lying dormant within an organisation, but does appear to create an environment which is conducive to the creative seed, as long as it is clearly communicated and consistently valued by the organisation.

Comparative Analysis

In comparing EnviroCare's leadership and innovation approach to Town Church, I identify three critical differences. The first is the language and dreams around the future of the organisation, and what a successful, growing community will look like. The second, is a clear difference in leadership models, with a strong Distributive Ethical leadership model contrasting a rich diversity of co-existing models. Finally, there is a difference in understanding of the innovation process, with the power of symbol and story differing from the more formalised meeting approach.

The appreciative inquiry interviews were designed to conclude with participants dreaming about the possible futures for the organisation, engaging with the "What if ..." transformative nature of language (Cooperrider, Whitney, & Stavros, 2008). EnviroCare participants responded to this with language grounded in organic metaphors, describing the company as "a spider's web of collaboration", a "warm organisation" and with the current people being the ones who have grown. A senior leader specifically said that they "don't want to look at a big organisation with a big sign on the building". They were not interested in building an empire or a monument to themselves, but were more interested in the development of the people. Fundamentally, they perceive EnviroCare as being a community of valued individuals, rather than as a separate entity.

By comparison, Town Church participants had strong and exciting dreams of the future that were focused on structural expansion and numerical growth. Leaders talked about the Sunday service being filled to overflowing, with a new building that opened up new possibilities for growth and ministry. Town Church would be seen as a church that could offer training and development to smaller churches, and would enjoy a much greater visibility than what it currently exhibited. Similarly, many of the interview participants perceived a future with a growth in the visibility of church leaders - both in terms of their communication and in terms of dynamism - to heighten the wider church growth. Where EnviroCare explained the future in terms of life and organic, gradual growth, Town Church employed the language of visibility, structure and scale or “bigness” to paint their picture of the future.

I also saw this difference in pictures of the future represented by the contrasting models of leadership in these organisations. EnviroCare was unified around its clear approach of Distributive Ethical leadership; centred on guiding transformative change for moral good, while seeing leadership as a communal, relational act. The discussion on leadership was multifaceted for a small organisation, with narratives weaving in all the organisational members as leaders at different times. Leadership was seen as a constantly dynamic action, best perceived as an intricate dance, with all members knowing when to lead and when to follow. This leadership model was highly valued by the organisation, who desired this to endure into the future.

Although this model may appear to be similar to the Relational Nurturer approach exhibited at Town Church, there is a critical difference in how leadership is perceived. According to the participants at EnviroCare, they all were involved in the collective leadership reality by virtue of being members of the company. They recognised that each member had a different set of skills and experience that were appropriate for different leadership moments, yet an individual's lack of ability in a particular domain did not exclude them from leadership. The Relational Nurturer, however, sees leadership as a constantly negotiated entity that must be given from a leader to a follower. The Relational Nurturer acts to grow and share this leadership among Town Church members, growing their leadership potential and passing on their skills and experience to their follower.

My research could not find the Transcendent Visionary and Dirty-Handed Rebel approach in EnviroCare. Senior leaders did note the importance of visionary leadership, however, this vision was seen as a much more prophetic role than in Town Church, with the EnviroCare leader discussing the gifting of people as "see-ers". This act of visioning the future was tied in with ethics and the direction of the community-at-large, rather than just seeing a future for the organisation. Also, Town Church saw the visionary nature of leadership as an empowering, exciting reality, whereas EnviroCare noted the "burden" of this vision, which came at a cost to the individual. This burden can be shared among the other participants of

EnviroCare, as it is one of the key ethical driving forces behind the distribution of leadership.

Finally, the thesis identifies a significant difference in understanding of the innovation process at both of these organisations. Town Church saw innovation as primarily emerging from high-level meetings and conversations, with the formalised leaders acting as the collectors and activators of innovation. Although Town Church did recognise ideas could come from many different facets of the church, the leader located the elder's meeting as the channel where ideas would pass through, be critiqued and actioned. This approach was seen to provide consistency, protection and give the ideas the best chance of being transformed into creative realities. The Dirty-Handed Rebel would work outside of this formalised structure, yet they represented a small minority at Town Church, with most ideas being part of a process that would pass through the hands of senior leaders.

EnviroCare, however, did not have a clear process for idea gathering or analysis, yet this did not appear to be a crucial matter for them. Instead, innovation was perceived to flow organically from the organisation, empowered by the use of story and symbol. Although the organisation only had a few examples of innovative ideas, each narrative was powered by a previous story of creativity. The artwork narrative was propelled by the creation of the desks, which were driven by the ethical symbol of all that MDF represented. They hoped that this chaordic web of story and symbol

would catalyse future innovation efforts in a natural way, with participants observing the new sparks of innovation that the desks symbolised.

Innovation, in this model, was not to be planned or processed, but was to be awoken and captured.

Many of these differences can be attributed to the many situational differences between the two organisations. Where Town Church is medium-sized, located in a New Zealand town and primarily concerned with the spiritual needs of the community, EnviroCare is a small, city-based business which is focused on environmental transformation. The impact of size, location and focus will be further developed as this research assesses more organisations and so can draw more comparisons and contrasts.

EnviroCare still serves a valuable role in providing a fourth-way of the leadership of innovation, and stressing the importance of symbols and story in the development of creativity. Town Church could learn and discover more about the pseudo-sacramental nature of symbols and creativity, and seek to create an environment that is richer in celebrating stories of innovation. EnviroCare, however, could also learn to implement some more deliberate conversations and processes to ensure consistency in innovation, and to allow all voices to be heard in the gathering of ideas.

Concluding Reflections

As I left my time with EnviroCare, I couldn't help but think of "The Lord of the Rings". This film, saturated with the beauty of the New Zealand environment, tells the tale of a diverse group on a quest with incredible moral underweighting - they must save the world. This fellowship is composed of wizards and dwarves, hobbits and elves - yet the leadership is equally shared among them. There is no clear leader throughout the journey, but the group is still well-led by the collective, with each member functioning as a leader at significant times. Although this group becomes divided and is challenged, when the task is finally accomplished by one member of the group - all celebrate their victory. Leadership and success is not attributed to Frodo, but is seen as the lived reality of the entire collective.

At a crucial time in the journey, when Frodo is close to giving up on the journey, one of his companions and friends, Samwise, inspires leadership and creativity within him. Not by a structural redesign or by changing the mission, but instead, he casts Frodo's mind to a story. In this powerful section, Samwise says,

It's like in the great stories Mr. Frodo, the ones that really mattered. Full of darkness and danger they were, and sometimes you didn't want to know the end because how could the end be happy? How could the world go back to the

way it was when so much bad had happened?

But in the end it's only a passing thing this shadow, even darkness must pass. A new day will come, and when the sun shines it'll shine out the clearer. Those were the stories that stayed with you, that meant something even if you were too small to understand why.

But I think Mr. Frodo, I do understand, I know now folk in those stories had lots of chances of turning back, only they didn't. They kept going because they were holding on to something.

Samwise presents the power of story to inspire and usher in a new reality. This story inspired more stories - and in a surprising meta-reflective way - the story of "The Lord of the Rings" now serves as a story to inspire leadership and innovation among many around the world.

EnviroCare was an organisation full of stories - yet I don't think they even recognised how powerful this was. One story and symbol - the story of the desk - was such a significant reality for them, and I wonder how many other stories lie dormant here, that could inspire future change and growth? They do perceive themselves as story-tellers in their consultancy, and I think they will see a growth in innovation within their organisation as

they discover and share more of their own stories of perseverance, change and hope.

This organisation serves as an excellent model of distributive leadership and innovation, and should provide a fascinating case to compare against both other churches and businesses. Its unusual market position and strong ethical stance will allow it to occupy a potential “third-space” between faith-communities and the business sector. The healthy dynamic of caring relationship, empowering leadership and strong narratives has created a life-full organisation that will serve as an excellent model for inter-personal relationships among other businesses.

CHAPTER IV. Logico

Creator's Confessional

After two series of interviews with two different organisations, I was beginning to see how the focus on the peak, positive experiences of the participants can be a powerfully transformative approach, as well as a valuable data collection method. The stories shared by EnviroCare were electric and dynamic, and it was fascinating to see somewhat shy participants come alive as they recounted narratives of best practices. From these stories, I identified a cohesive practice of distributive leadership that was strongly based on ethical behaviour.

As a Christian, I am particularly intrigued by the relationship between leadership and ethics, and was somewhat disappointed to find this more clearly exhibited in a secular (albeit still strongly belief driven) organisation than in Town Church. Town Church did have a strong belief and purpose - that cannot be denied - but neither were clearly manifested in the leadership praxis of the church. EnviroCare, however, lived and breathed their ethical stand and it informed almost all parts of their operation. For most of my organisational experience, faith-based communities have a much more intentional focus on ethics and belief - yet in my researcher experience so far, the reverse has been true.

With the previous encounter of a story-rich, belief driven organisation fresh in my experience, I was excited to explore these findings deeper at Logico. I had met with the director of this company earlier in the year, to discuss some innovation consulting with him and learn more about the nature of his work. A Christian himself, his organisation sounded like an intriguing blend of faith and finance, with a strong focus on people and using profit for good. I looked forward with fascination to discover more of the day-to-day reality of this organisation, and also to seeing if the director's view of the company aligned with employee perceptions. Also, as a fast-growing company, I looked to the findings regarding leadership and innovation as providing a valuable framework to review the other organisations' innovative efforts, as well as potentially providing learnings for the other research participants to enact in their settings.

Organisation Description

Logico is a medium sized recruiting and logistics company, with a permanent staff base of approximately 30 employees. They have a number of temporary employees at various sites around New Zealand with their head office located in an urban city in the North Island. Their main clients are large infrastructure, manufacturing, FMCG and produce companies, and Logico assists in training in transportation, logistical support and temporary recruitment. Logico was founded in 2003, with the original company founder now serving as director.

The research involved members of the head office, and included a cross-section of trainers, managers, sales staff and the managing director.

Appreciative Inquiry interviews were held with five members of Logico (the youngest participation was in their 30s and the eldest was in their mid 40s). Four of the participants were male, one was female, and each had been employed by Logico for at least one year.

Interview Findings

At the outset of my research project, I had very few mental maps of what leadership models and actions may enhance the innovative output of such a diverse range of organisations. At this stage, however, after interviewing and analysing the data of two groups, I identified four leadership styles allied to direct leadership practices that have influenced the innovative environments for the participating organisations. I was aware, in moving into the third organisation, that I might “read” these models onto the new data set and fit any new findings into these preconceived concepts. To counter this temptation, I had to constantly remind myself that any form of close-contact, action research is not tidy (Cook, 1998). Lewin’s (1948) pioneering insights on social research introduced the action of “reconnaissance”, where the researcher retreats with the collected data, investigates new insights and then modifies the overarching plan to more accurately represent new findings. In this model, the data is king; not the pre-findings. Any conceptual models are treated as living and malleable, existing in a state of dynamic flux responding to the reality of each new organisation.

Although I am not positioning this research as an auto-ethnography, with myself as the subject, I drew valuable lessons in self-reflexivity from this approach, and adapted them to this project. Examples include journalling and intentional self-reflection, which are usually used to identify social and cultural factors influencing the organisation (Haynes, 2011), and to raise

awareness of the subjective nature of the researcher's position. However, I chose to journal throughout this research to encourage critical reflection on the subjective nature of the data, and to assist deliberate analysis on any emerging themes. Rather than assuming that the data was a 'fit' with the current models, I used journal reflections to question my reasoning and motives for aligning the data in certain models. The journal also provided a helpful guide to see the progression of my thought as a researcher, and to chart the conceptual development of the thesis.

In the light of these observations, Logico's responses represent a unique data-set, as they serve both to test the validity of the leadership models, as well as to challenge and develop them into more rich and 'life-full' explanations of peak leadership experiences. Logico participants discussed the chronology of leadership in their organisation, as well as focusing on the impact of the environment on their creative output. Neither element had been commented on by the participants in the other organisations. As a result, this analysis on Logico focuses on two main actions of leadership:

1. The Leader as Word Smith.
2. The Leader as Environment Creator.

As well as developing three leadership models:

1. Ethical Distributive Leadership - Viral Leadership.

2. Relational Nurturer - Humanising Leadership.
3. Relational Nurturer - Trust.

Leader as Wordsmith

I think the secret to a successful organisation ... comes down to people speaking words that are inspiring, simple and memorable. (Interview Participant A, 2014)

One of the key moments in the United States political year are the Presidential Addresses, where the leader of the nation pauses to deliver their reflections and vision for the future, to a large bipartisan audience. Research covering US presidents' speeches from Washington's inauguration to Reagan's 1981 address has revealed the incredible power of a leader as wordsmith (Emrich, Brower, Feldman & Garland, 2001). Presidents who used image-based language, such as "sweat" instead of "work", or "dream" instead of "idea", were assessed more favourably by historians than their more literal counterparts. At a semantic level, the difference may appear negligible, yet at the realm of motivating change in people, words matter significantly.

Postmodern theorists have highlighted the crucial role words play in creating the worlds we inhabit (Hartman, 1991). This 'linguistic turn' was grounded in the theory that the subject-object dualism (inherent in modern ways of knowing) was inadequate and limiting in conceptualising the actual lived-experience of individuals (Deetz, 2003; Mumby, 1997).

Focusing on the discursively created worlds of organisations, reveals a

much richer picture of the organisation and the worlds that its workers inhabit, as well as allowing intervention in the language of the leaders (Mumby, 2011). This perspective gives much greater agency to the individuals, as the worlds are seen as co-created by the linguistic practices and descriptors that are used by organisational members. I agree with Deetz (2003) and Mumby (1997) that changing organisational language, can change organisational reality.

EnviroCare revealed a focus on the leader as story-teller, but Logico had more of a micro-focus on language. Rather than discussing narratives, they discussed sentences and words, and the significance each of these had on their organisation. Central to this language was a focus on virtue and on people, which appeared to be a significant theme of language throughout this organisation. One of the participants discussed the centrality of this language to their organisation, saying,

We thought of other visions like Google - "Do no evil" - what about "Do good!"? We want people to do good, we want to do good for our customers, do good for our world - and so we thought we could maybe inspire people around that.

(Interview Participant A, 2014)

This language of "good" became central to Logico, with all five of the participants mentioning the alignment of this virtue with their own personal beliefs. At a meta level, these two words became creative realities for

Logico, with the focus shifting and changing towards 'goodness'. The participant concluded that:

We ended up with "People matter - do good". It's not even a sentence ... but we believed it could capture people's hearts and inspirations. It could make them think about the world in a different way, and it did. (Interview Participant A, 2014)

Traditionally, organisational communication theorists have highlighted the oppressive nature of language, and how superiors use it to subjugate, control and limit the identities of the organisational members (Deetz, 1992; Alvesson & Kärreman, 2011; Sherman, 2006). As not all words are created equal, the privileged language of the powerful tends to dominate and reinforce the status-quo, and so legitimise their existence (Foucault, 1980). At Logico, however, the language is used to catalyse an ethical workforce, who are focused on the people (not 'employees') and on doing good (not on making 'profit'). Participants at Logico recognised that this potential had always been lying latent, but they had not been able to express it.

Our Wellington branch manager had been with us for six years, and he's always been on board with what we are about - but he didn't have the language for it.

(Interview Participant A, 2014)

This participant recognised the power of language to create new worlds, as they posit their new phrase - “People Matter - Do Good” - as being key to unlocking the reality for this individual. What they required was not more training, induction or skills, but they required a new *glossia* to discursively create and participate in this reality. These four words - which had been created intentionally by two senior leaders at the organisation - then began to ignite other phrases that reflected this reality, as the discursive world of Logico was genuinely co-constructed. The Wellington branch manager became fluent in the new language, and then shared that:

Only a few months ago, he (the Wellington branch manager) came to us and said, “I don’t call them ‘temps’ anymore because it’s demeaning. We call them “On-site staff”. We went, “That’s amazing!”. So we rolled it out nationally, and call all our people on-site staff.

(Interview Participant A, 2014)

This change in language was empowering for the on-site staff, who are a large group of this recruitment company. The discourse of “temps” suggests disposable, low-skilled, replaceable labour as a unit of production, rather than a valuable aspect of the organisation. By changing the language to “Onsite Staff”, Logico have reflected a belief where all employees are people, rather than production factors, who have equal value and importance as the office staff. Although further research would be required to investigate any change in perception by the on-site staff, all

of the participants (who were office staff) used the language of “On-Site Staff”, and spoke of them as staff members without any noticeable distinction.

Ultimately, this creative communicative act by the leaders at Logico recognises that social and emotional intelligence are critical skills for employers seeking to motivate and transform their workforce (Goleman, 1998, 2007). Employee commitment and engagement is created by a leader’s ability to emotionally stimulate them, often through communication (Conger, 1991; Fairhurst & Sarr, 1996). These beliefs are assumed in Sullivan’s (1988) Motivating Language Theory; the view that strategic leadership speech can have a significant impact on key employee outcomes (Mayfield, 2008). One of the key speech acts identified by theorists is the locutionary language, which is focused on the meaning-making process - how identity, purpose, self and organisation are created by the leader (Sarros, Luca, Densten & Santora, 2013). Although this is primarily achieved through narrative and story, it is also crafted through careful selection of language. It is this locutionary language that helps organisational members see new possibilities and enter into new communicative worlds. At times it shows the linguistic power of their leaders.

For example, one participant at Logico described how a senior leader had motivated them in their personal fitness. They had just begun running, and were talking about it to the founder of the organisation.

I said to (Leader), “I can’t run 2 kilometres - I always have to stop half-way. And he goes, “Sure you can.” And I said, “No, I can’t.” I went home that day and ran the whole thing ... his words were echoing in my ears. He said, ‘Yes you can” and I thought, “Well, maybe I can” - and so I just ran the whole thing. It turns out I can! (Interview Participant B, 2014)

The leader’s intervention with locutionary language created a new possibility for this employee. By changing the language that the participant believed in and lived out - from “I can’t run” to “Yes, I can” - this leader changed the lived reality for the participant. They explained further how this was also a regular occurrence at work, with this leader encouraging them that they can do things that they are uncertain about. They report that “it amazes me how often it happens”.

This resonates with Sarros et al.’s (2013) findings on the impact of motivational language on employee behaviour. Tellingly, the most significant language style that increased innovation among Australian companies was the locutionary, meaning-making language. Although the authors of this study do not postulate on why this relationship exists, it can be hypothesised that this form of motivational language encourages employees to attempt new challenges and pursue the unknown, without fear of failure. In reducing this fear and introducing a new world of meaning, one of the main inhibitors to innovation - fear - is minimised,

while an attitude of discovery and exploration is maximised, increasing the openness to creative discovery (Couger, 1995). After introducing this language, the leader at Logico must also craft an environment to continue inspiring and capturing creative insight, as it occurs.

Leader as Environment Creator

Some of the big turning points wasn't necessarily that you were at a conference and you heard them teach something new - but that you were there and you caught something new. (Interview Participant E, 2014)

In the pre-enlightenment era, creativity was defined in religious terms, with the act of creativity being actualised through divine intervention and visitation of a muse or supernatural force (Tsai & Cox, 2012). After the scientific and technological advances of the 17th century, creativity was no longer defined as a divine attribute or gift, but was focused on the act of the individual and their own cognitive processing (Craft, Gardner & Claxton, 2008). However, the earlier mystical view of creativity has lingered on, with popular language describing moments of ideation in elusive terms - "I was hit by a flash of inspiration", "The idea just came to me" or "It came out of nowhere". In the pursuit of these moments, many people attempt to create a space where inspiration may strike, with Thoreau building a hermitage for isolation, whereas Picasso created a social studio to produce his best work (Courger, 1995).

The physical work environment is an important factor in allowing innovation and creativity to catalyse in the organisation, with several studies showing the supportive nature of a environment conducive to the creative process (Amabile, Conti, Coon, Lazenby & Herron, 1996; Shalley

& Gilson, 2004; George, 2008). Overall, I follow Oksanen and Stahle (2013) as situating the primary focus of these studies as being the social function of the space. This space has to be effective for generating interactions and allowing cross-structural relationships to develop, increasing the frequency of creative conversations (Oksanen & Stahle, 2013). As such, the aesthetic of the space is subservient to the function that is primarily one of relationship. Nonaka and Konno (1998) take this theory one step further with their adaptation of the Japanese idea “Ba”, referring to communal spaces where relationships can emerge. Tellingly, these spaces do not have to be physical - they can be virtual or mental environments. In this understanding of space, the ideal physical environment becomes invisible, to effectively guide social relationships.

Although there is some mention of the attractive importance of space (Oksanen & Ståhle, 2013), there is little research on the impact of the aesthetic environment on creativity. Dul, Ceylan and Jaspers’ (2011) study found that the physical environment is less important than the social-organisational work environment in motivating creativity, yet this research did not explore the relationship between inspiration and physical environments. The participants at Logico, however, noted the importance of inspiring environments in igniting creativity and innovation in their workplace. Although they were discussing an idealised future, rather than existing actualities, their words reveal perceived inhibitors to creativity that they would like to see removed. For example, one participant described the smallest change that would transform Logico as “helping people get

into inspiring environments”. When asked to explain further, they replied:

It’s not the information, it’s the possibilities. Your world opening up. This is why TED conferences are so popular because being at a TED conference is like “BOOM BOOM” - it’s all over the place!

(Interview Participant E, 2014)

The comparison to a TED conference is an illuminating analogy. Yet, for this study, what is particularly interesting is the comment that “it’s not the information” and the reference to TED conferences - a global set of gatherings focusing on sharing ideas, which are focused on the communication of compelling concepts. Nevertheless, this participant sees the environment as more powerful than the information. For them, what was more compelling was the space where TED was presented and the inspiration that this created:

I think that opens up creativity - it opens you up to being in a bigger world - and you see so much more.

(Interview Participant E, 2014)

Although this participant acknowledged that the lectures did play an important role in creating this event, they were more focused on the collective space that was experienced. The social factor was important - being in a TED conference alone would be a very different experience -

but the participant claimed that the physical environment played a crucial role in creating this inspirational moment. Interestingly, Alencar and Bruno-Faria's (1997) report that an environment with adequate light, space and furniture can stimulate creativity appears to run counter to the TED experience. The usual TED conference is dimly lit, with bright lights focusing on the stage. The furniture - often lecture chairs arranged in a semi-circle - is not conducive to conversation, but directs the individual towards the speaker. People do not have space to move, but are restricted to their chairs - yet are seated in a large, high-roofed building. Given the amphitheatre nature of the usual TED room, the audience's eyes are directed forward and then upward.

In fact, the physical space at a TED talk is reminiscent of a church gathering, and functions well to create an inspiration-ready audience. The environments described in the creativity literature, however, are much more effective for sharing and co-critiquing ideas, but may not serve as well for the initial inspiration. This aligns with the experience of a member at Town Church, who described their most innovative environment as:

When I'm in the bush. The colours in the bush are quite soothing - and when I'm running - maybe it's a chemical thing as well? (Interview Participant F, 2014)

This participant also saw inspiration as coming from a space which was different from their usual environment. Their primary focus was on the

aesthetic qualities - the colours - of the environment, rather than on how that space functioned to guide their interactions with others or with self. Although it is difficult to measure the impact of beauty, colour and design on the creative environment, it is revealing that these interviewees believe they do contribute to creating inspiration.

Amabile et al. (1996) position the responsibility for creating this transformative environment in the domain of the organisational leader, who is the one with sufficient agency to make organisational changes. Although their research does not explore the impact of a physical environment on inspiration, their focus on the role of the leader aligns with the responses from Logico participants who see this function as being one for senior leaders to enact. Given that knowledge, Logico leaders could experiment with space and beauty to test the theory further. They could follow the path of Red Bull, and design “creative spaces that ... stimulate creativity” (May, 2008, p.54), but these may only be accessible to certain staff who would perceive a need for creativity. Alternatively, Logico could seek to integrate more beauty and inspiration into all aspects of their organisation, by challenging the ‘usual’ space of what work looks like and introducing art, field-trips, photography, sculpture and other media to catalyse more inspiration.

What I found impressive in Logico was its well-defined innovation process for capturing ideas and developing them into innovative realities. When

asked how the organisation practices innovation, participants responded with a cohesive set of answers:

We have regular catch-ups with the whole company, and they are always asking for ideas.

(Interview Participant A, 2014)

We catch up every fortnight and bounce ideas off people.

(Interview Participant D, 2014)

When we have evaluations, his questions will be, “What have you come up with? What have you done differently?” (Interview Participant C, 2014)

We give people flexibility - we ask them, “How much is it going to cost? What do you think it’s going to achieve?” If it’s within reason, they get the go-ahead and we give people ownership of the program. (Interview Participant B, 2014)

Compared to the informal and ad-hoc innovation processes at Town Church and EnviroCare, this approach clearly reflects a more systematic approach to continuous innovation. Ideas are gathered every fortnight and shared to the relevant people (using Evernote), with each idea passing through a round of questioning by the director or General Manager. These serve as an opportunity to develop the idea further and test its feasibility,

as well as giving guidance for the next step. After the questions and relevant research is completed, authority for the project is given to the idea finder, who can use organisational time to develop this further. One of the leaders discussed their involvement with a particular idea, saying,

Do I have time for it? No, but it's a good idea, so I encourage them, "Flesh it out, and if you need any help, let me know. Otherwise, I'd love to hear next week how it's going. I make a note, and we will chat about that next week ... my gut feeling is that they will probably pull this one off.

(Interview Participant A, 2014)

The senior leaders have created a clear innovation process. It allows them to provide advice and direction, yet still keep agency for the idea in the hands of the creator. This is a critical tension for an organisation to manage, as they seek to develop the creative ideas to their full potential, while still involving the idea founder. It helps Logico to avoid the more common occurrence "when organisations fail to leverage their employees' ideas and when employees stumble in their ability to effectively manage those ideas, the loss of energy at all levels - from individuals to organisations and even to society - is tremendous." (Desouza, 2011, p. 4). If ideas are shared and stagnate - with no process for innovation to grow them - idea generators get discouraged and will refuse to share future ideas, and organisations will suffer from a lack of continual energy input (Desouza, 2011).

Logico's simple and clear innovation process helps motivate continual ideation and sharing of ideas, through fortnightly meetings and performance reviews focused on creative approaches. The ideas are well managed and critiqued by senior leaders, who create an "expectation for us to be creative and try new things", and are described as "very permission giving". The leaders offer support and encouragement for the ideas, encouraging the future creative efforts (Amabile et al., 1996) of their employees. They then promote idea autonomy for employees, who can experience the success and recognition of innovation. One employee described this process as saying, "We're entrusted as individuals to become creative in our own areas". The innovation model is firmly grounded on relational trust, which extends beyond innovation and into the core practices of leadership at Logico.

Relational Nurturer - Trust

They trust our judgement. (Interview Participant C, 2014)

One of the central and most frequently occurring themes in the interviews with Logico is the significance of trust and empowerment. Each interview participant - regardless of their position on the organisational hierarchy - recounted a narrative of the trust between leaders and followers, and the autonomy that resulted from this practice. Although the trust manifested in different ways, depending on the organisational context, it played a crucial role in creating a culture of individual development and ongoing innovation.

Trust is explained as a psychological state allowing the acceptance of vulnerability based on positive expectations of the other (Rousseau, Sitkin, Burt & Camerer, 1998). When followers believe that their leaders have good intentions, integrity and the correct skill-set, they will be more willing to take risks and accept change in following these key individuals (Mayer, Davis & Schoorman, 1995). Similarly, this also creates a reciprocation in voice from the follower to the leader, with the followers feeling more safe and comfortable expressing their opinions and beliefs to the trustworthy leader (Gao, Janssen & Shi, 2011). As well as lowering employee turnover and creating a more positive work environment (Dirks & Ferrin, 2001), trust also has a secondary effect of moderating an individual's perception

of other's behaviour, assuming the best and allowing a culture of grace and co-operation (McEvily, Perrone & Zaheer, 2003).

This secondary effect of trust furthers the leadership model of the Relational Nurturer (from Town Church), which was defined by a central focus on person, development through relationship and the significance of creating a culture conducive to relational nurturing. Logico posits this leadership model as actualised by trust, with shared vulnerability and a psychological state of positive expectation being crucial for any relational development to occur. It is from this assumption that they move to empower their staff and humanise their workforce. One participant highlighted this centrality of trust with their brief account of their experience with a leader.

When I see (Leader), he's not looking at me going - "What are you doing? Why haven't you done this?" He can walk past and give me a handshake, and have the comfort to know that I'm making the right decisions for the benefit of the company. (Interview Participant C, 2014)

The reciprocal nature of trust is highlighted in this hypothetical narrative, with the employee trusting that the leader is not questioning their motives, but is instead believing that this employee is operating for the good of the organisation. This trust arises, however, because the leader has trusted the employee to make their own decisions, practice autonomy and self-

manage their day-to-day practices. The employee identified that they have “empowered me to do that”, recognising that the first-step of trust had to be practiced by the leader. Without the leader initiating trust through empowerment and freedom, the employee would not have a reason to trust the leader. Instead, they might doubt their authenticity and integrity, as they would feel their own identity is being questioned. This secondary impact of trust creates an atmosphere of positive assumption and belief, with the employee feeling confident in assuming that their leader’s thoughts about them are positive (McEvily et al, 2003).

As well as influencing the individual’s perception of their leaders, trust also serves another crucial role in innovation at Logico. One of the often neglected aspects of innovation is the the high value that individuals place on their own ideas (Desouza, 2011). Ideas are seen as valuable and precious to their creators, and to share (or even hand-off) these ideas to another depends on a high level of trust. The case study of an organisation that gathered ideas from employees without defining a clear process of how to collate, define and develop the ideas reveals the centrality of trust to the innovation operation, with a senior leader saying,

We ended up pissing off more staff than those we appeased, lost good employees who felt their ideas were not duly considered, and what hurts me most, employees lost faith in the organisation as a place that valued ideas.

(Desouza, 2011, pp. 94-5)

Logico, however, begins from a place of trust and allows this to govern their innovation program. Individuals are encouraged to come up with ideas, to share the ideas - but then to maintain ownership of the ideas. They are still able to pass the ideas off to others, if they deem it more appropriate or if it requires a different skill-set, but the agency of the idea is maintained by the idea owner. This is grounded in the psychology of trust, with Logico trusting that employees will develop ideas that are for the good of the company, and will want to share and develop any ideas that may benefit the organisation. This trust is a strong motivator for innovation, with one employee stating,

If (Leader) sees benefit to lives and to Logico, he's going to pounce all over that. He won't necessarily give you a massive raise for it - but he's definitely interested in that stuff.
(Interview Participant C, 2014)

This participant was excited about innovation and had contributed ideas to the ongoing development of Logico, yet this was not motivated by any extrinsic benefits. Instead, the employee had a positive perspective of their leader - based on the trust and empowerment they had received - and trusted that their ideas would be valued and actualised by the organisation. This minimised the fear of sharing ideas, with another participant describing the atmosphere as "very permission giving". By intentionally creating the atmosphere of trust - which is an outflow of

Logico's core words 'People Matter' - innovation appears to be flourishing at a rate beyond Town Church or EnviroCare's reality. This atmosphere also creates an intensely caring organisation, that seeks to reduce the distance between leaders and employees, instead fundamentally trusting individuals as humans.

Relational Nurturer - Proximity

In perhaps one of the most fun responses to a question in my interviews so far, one of the participants answered the question “If you could have any leader working alongside you, who would you want and why?” with the bold reply, “Optimus Prime”.

For the unfamiliar reader, Optimus Prime is the fictional leader of the Auto-Bots in the *Transformers* series. Standing 9.75 meters tall, weighing 4.3 metric tons and with the ability to transform into a powerful truck, Optimus Prime was a seemingly bizarre choice to work in a recruiting and training organisation. Yet the participant’s further explanation revealed a particularly enlightening insight into their leader of choice.

He’ll get down and talk with people. He’s way up here
(gestures up with her hands), but he’ll get down to talk with
people. He takes the time to talk with whoever he needs to.
(Interview Participant D, 2014)

The key aspect of leadership this participant valued was about proximity. Rather than Optimus Prime’s *übermensch* attributes legitimising his leadership, the core of his leadership was his ability to get close with people, take time with people and transcend the boundaries of his physicality to become immanently present. Fundamentally, this is humanising leadership, where the leader recognises the individual person

who is following them, and engages with them at that primary level.

Several of the participants from Logico echoed this view, stating that,

I was treated as a person - first and foremost, I was a person
... I was valued and respected - I felt that in all the
interviews. (Interview Participant E, 2014)

They have a genuine care and genuine interest in people.
(Interview Participant C, 2014)

People matter. That is the core focus and drivers of Logico.
(Interview Participant A, 2014)

Perceived leadership nearness is a crucial element in empowering an organisation and creating an atmosphere of trust and community (Coats, 1998). This occurs at three levels, with the physical distance, social distance and interaction frequency mediating the perception of distance to the followers of a leader (Antonakis & Atwater, 2002). Social distance, the difference in rank or authority between follower and leader, can exist in tension to the physical distance, creating a complex and obscure reality of the leader's distance, one that differs from individual to individual (Popper, 2013). Although most organisations of the scale of Logico would share similar levels of physical proximity between senior leaders and employees, the key point of difference is the frequency of interaction and the created social distance. This distance is often controlled by the leader, who has

more agency in the relationship and the power to initiate contact with greater ease. When the leader-follower distance is characterised by a large social distance, followers are only able to describe their leader in abstract terms, as they do not have a strong relational experience of them. On the contrary, when the leader-follower distance is minimal, followers will describe the leader with greater specificity and with narratives involving both the leader and the follower (Popper, 2012).

The leadership at Logico was characterised by proximity with the employee base, that was resonant in each of the interview participants responses. One narrative helps illuminate the social proximity that the leaders at Logico intentionally practice.

Even though he's the director of the company, he's very personable. He'll talk to you about everyday things. I had a problem with my window at home - and he said, "Come on - let's jump in the car, we'll go fix it."

(Interview Participant D, 2014)

The language of this participant reveals the difference in this leadership distance from the usual experience. The usual experience of a company director is positioned as non-personable - aloof and removed from the realities of everyday life. This leader, however, is in touch with the human needs of the followers and does not draw a distinction between work-needs and personal-needs. By first listening about the everyday problems,

and then taking action to help fix this problem, the leader is not only physically close but also socially close. Another participant reinforced this, describing an effective leader at Logico, stating that they “put a large part of that (their success) down to the fact that they (their followers) felt known”. The key aspect to this, according to the participant, was the leader making the time to learn the onsite staff’s names. This helped lower the social difference between a leader and the (temporary) onsite staff, creating the perception of nearness and helping transform the culture at this wing of the organisation.

Perhaps the most striking example of this was in the powerful narrative of a senior leader’s response to the terminal illness and untimely death of an Logico employee. This story was told by three participants, who described the actions taken by the director to ensure this employee and their family were valued and honoured during this time. The senior leader regularly invited their staff to spend time with this employee, making sure that every week at least three people would go and visit this person, without it affecting their pay. The leader initiated three evening events for the organisation to encourage and support the family, including a MasterChef competition and a day when each of the staff would go serve her and her family for thirty minutes at a time. Throughout all of these innovative and caring initiatives, the senior leader exhibited nearness to both the terminally ill employee and the staff, helping transform an awkward, unpleasant time into a caring narrative rich in meaning.

I've spoken to several staff members who said they wouldn't have been as committed to the whole process as they were unless (Leader) had done it. It made them go further than they've ever gone caring for someone.

(Interview Participant C, 2014)

This leader moved near the sufferer, and invited their followers to join in this movement. Although this happened in the wake of the Global Financial Crisis, with Logico struggling financially during this time, the senior leader exhibited a priority on people, rather than on the bottom line. From the participant stories, this continues to influence their organisational culture and leadership practice today. One participant reflected on this time, saying,

That's a true leader. A true leader will make decisions that affect everyone in a positive way. If it's a negative situation, they'll turn it into a positive way. He did that for me - he gave me the time to be caring.

(Interview Participant C, 2014)

Just as the trust shown from a leader to follower was contagious, so does the close physical proximity of leadership encourage nearness amongst all organisational members at Logico. In seeing their senior leader move closer than the social signs would suggest is normal, the other participants see the possibility of becoming more human and accessible individuals

themselves. The usual social barrier at Logico - the line between onsite and permanent staff - was also reduced, with interview participants describing how they see the onsite staff firstly as 'human beings'. Then, described one participant, "they see me as a human being as well". The viral nature of trust and leadership nearness is a clear reality at Logico that is also evident in the wider leadership practices.

Distributive Leadership - Viral Leadership

Distributive Leadership was the dominant model at EnviroCare, yet due to the small size of the organisation, it was difficult to discern how far that leadership praxis had spread. The senior leaders at EnviroCare talked about the significance of this model for their organisation, and it was evident that they were practicing genuine distribution of leadership - yet this was still occurring at a direct and intentional level. As a larger organisation, Logico offers a different perspective on Distributive Leadership in action, and how it can become an aspect of the culture of leadership, rather than having to be a deliberate choice.

Growing a leader-creating culture is a key role for the effective leader, who must recognise that it is through interpersonal connection and giving leadership opportunities, that followers can transform into leaders (Kaye, 2004). The most successful leaders value inclusion in their organisational culture, and empower their followers to make significant decisions, while, at the same time, providing advice from experience (Kaye, 2004). As discussed in the previous chapter, in this model all organisational members are perceived as leaders with valuable skill-sets to offer. At Logico the primary skill of formalised leaders is their experience. One employee described how they are given authority to make their own decisions, and have made mistakes in doing so. However, they narrated how two senior leaders met and offered their advice as to what they would have done - with each offering a different perspective. They valued this

sharing of leadership, saying, “By doing that, they’re giving me two other examples and options, rather than the option I took - to give me a chance to grow”. Leadership was distributed, and has the possibility of spreading through this participant.

An even stronger example was mentioned in passing by a longer-serving employee. They discussed a problem they had solved, and said,

I took a step back from that and thought, “What would (Leader’s) response be? What would (Leader) do?” I look up to (Leader) a lot. There is a lot to learn from them.

(Interview Participant B, 2014)

This leader, however, had mentioned a similar story, and how they had looked up to the founder and learned from them. Leadership had moved through three relationships, from founder, to senior leader, to a junior leader - who was now practicing leadership to develop one of their followers. This development process appears to have been an intentional decision by the founder of Logico, but it has now become an embedded part of their daily habits and organisational culture. In developing leaders by giving them opportunities to make decisions, and by providing clear feedback on their choices, Logico is exhibiting leadership maturity, and creating an ongoing developmental culture (Reynolds, 1995).

The viral nature of this leadership is obscure and complex, as it is difficult to chart the origin of every decision that is made in an organisation, yet many of the interviewed participants appeared to be following in the leadership model of the original founder. Where Town Church had a diverse and often conflicting array of leadership practices, Logico was noticeably unified in using the Relational Nurturer model, along with the practice of wider Distributive Leadership. Grounded in the original founder's practice of trust and relational immanence, the added distributive approach has encouraged their leadership to 'go viral' and spread among the organisation. This goes beyond rational engagement with a strategic program, and instead engages the employees' hearts, by practicing the cornerstones of vulnerability and inclusion (Mirvis & Gunning, 2006).

Comparative Analysis

The key distinction between EnviroCare and Logico is the size of their workforce and operations. I have used it to detect a difference in the leadership of innovation across small to medium businesses. The two main comparisons across the size scale is the level of intentionality of the leader's actions and language, and the importance of soft skills.

EnviroCare had a range of stories about the leadership of innovation, particularly around the use of symbols and their ethical focus. It did, however, appear that these events had a degree of serendipity to them, with the organisation unaware of how powerful these narratives are. The desk story, for example, revealed the significance of symbols and served as a sign of the innovative possibilities and future that this organisation could embrace. Yet, rather than being planned, it had arisen out of a period of frustration at the MDF desks. The participants were surprised by the impact the new desks had on conversations with new clients, and had not assumed the process would be as difficult or rewarding as it turned out to be.

Similarly, the process for developing new ideas and leaders was effective yet fairly haphazard, with informal conversations being the primary driver of both of these areas. There was a lack of clarity in the roles when a leader was attempting to develop one of the juniors at EnviroCare. This was noticed and adapted by the leader, but still revealed the high degree

of improvisation. Given the small organisational size and the physical nearness of all organisational members sharing one office space, many of the problems that would appear in a larger organisation are negated (e.g., informal conversation arising naturally out of the organisational structure. When issues in leadership or a weakness in innovation are noticed, it is likely that all of the organisation would become aware of the issues, and given the distributive leadership model that is practiced, would be welcomed into the conversation.

Logico, however, has a much more deliberate approach to both innovation and leadership development. They have adopted systems and processes that are warm and humanising, yet serve to benefit all of the organisational members. By deliberately asking for creative outputs at performance reviews, and discussing innovation at every fortnightly meeting, this organisation reveals a clear value and approach to gathering employees' ideas and maximising their chance of being actualised. Although the process did appear informal - with ideas shared, gathered, critiqued and then allocated - the process worked well, and was intentional enough to generate a range of innovative outputs. The process for leadership was similar. While it may appear to be casual, it is enacted by deliberate reviews, questioning of decisions and opportunity sharing. This reveals a much more formalised system than what would appear in surface conversations. One senior leader's views on leadership best practices highlight this chameleon-like nature of systems,

All these things seem to happen naturally almost as if by a biological process. It is really beautiful - but behind all that, for it to run smoothly, there's twenty really, really well thought out systems. Systems can feel cold, but when you see them executed, they are amazing.

(Interview Participant A, 2014)

Logico also had a significant focus on soft skills - skills grounded in emotional intelligence and relationship - when compared to both EnviroCare and Town Church. EnviroCare was driven by ethics and beliefs, and appeared to focus on analytical and diagnostic skills to create a compelling narrative for their clients. Town Church had an array of drivers, including the Bible and Jesus Christ, but the skill set that was being focused on was process leadership and mass communication. Logico, however, had a strong focus on the skills of developing trust and care among the organisational members, starting from the senior leadership. Although there was some discussion on the hard-skill of coding of the founder of the organisation, the majority of the interview participants described their humanising skills of care, empathy, concern and sacrificial leadership.

In the narrative of the employee who was suffering from a terminal illness, one of the participants noted that the founder "was prepared to sacrifice a lot, so that we would become better people in caring for this girl". Rather than acknowledging the leader as a shrewd negotiator, skilled

communicator or strategic guru, they focused on the love and care that they exhibited towards their employees. This is condensed in the discussed value that is central to Logico - "People Matter: Do Good" - which was embodied in practice, rather than just words on a wall. It is from this value, and from these soft-skills, that innovation and leadership are practiced, with Logico seeing relationships built on trust as the core of their organisation. This was not about CSR or image-management, but was perceived as vital to the ongoing success of Logico.

Finally, Logico had a strong unity in its leadership philosophy, with all participants sharing the themes of trustworthy, humanising leadership that uses language with intentionality. The single-minded nature of this leadership is clear from the frequency of the language used to describe the leadership highlights at Logico, with each participant discussing trust, relational leadership that had spread wide throughout the business. Town Church, by comparison, was multi-phrenic in its leadership practices, with three strong models operating without much acknowledgement of the other styles. Town Church did have the Transcendent Visionary model as the dominant approach, yet this appeared to be a default, rather than deliberate decision, and one did not show any leader self-awareness. This led to some significant differences between the Transcendent Visionary and Relational Nurturer approach, which are not openly expressed but are privately critiqued.

At Logico, the leadership model is aware and deliberate, with participants being encouraged to join in with their belief in trust and relational development. Participants talked of members who transformed through this approach, and even of some who disagreed with it and left - but at Town Church there is no open discussion on the leadership to disagree with. As Town Church is a long established organisation, the diversity in leadership may arrive from generational differences, with the Transcendent Visionary approach being the historic approach to leadership, and therefore the naturally assumed approach. Logico, however, is a much younger organisation, so has been able to consciously invent its leadership practices more recently. By engaging in conversation with organisations such as Logico, Town Church could learn self-awareness in their leadership model and be more open and communicative about their approach. This also would flow into their management of innovation, and create a more cohesive model for catalysing transformative change within the organisation.

Concluding Reflections

Leadership theorists Jim Kouzes and Barry Posner have long stressed the crucial skill of self-awareness and intentionality as being foundational for effective leadership. The first step in leadership development is to look inward and assess your own leadership history, before beginning to plan how you may up-skill to guide others (Kouzes & Posner, 2003). This stresses a deliberate inward action on the part of the leader, as no sustaining change can occur without the leader choosing to embody the transformation they hope to see. Leadership is an intentional choice.

At Logico, this intentionality has transcended the individual and is the group's defining characteristic. From their deliberate (and lengthy) discussions about the language they would choose to create their social reality, to the planned casual process for capturing innovative ideas, this organisation was a deliberate organisation. Paradoxically, their intentional actions in defining their leadership style and innovation reality did not create a mechanised, artificial culture, but instead led to a warm, humanising environment that was unique among all my experience of organisations.

I was privileged to catch a glimpse of this before the interviews even started. On turning up to begin my first round of research, I was warmly received by reception, shown around and was surprised at how people stopped their work to come and talk with me. In many ways, I felt the

humanising effects first-hand, before the participants began talking about it themselves. Although this environment is difficult to measure on any quantitative scale, it is infectious and attractive, and appears to be something that is 'caught, not taught'.

The oft-quoted Delphic maxim "Know thyself" is a catchy phrase, which finds its way on to fridge magnets and Tumbler feeds, but very rarely into the heart of an organisation. Logico was aware of the power of their language, the significance of their leadership practice and the importance of creating an atmosphere of trust. Their efforts in growing in self-awareness were not simply 'navel-gazing', but represented a genuine desire to improve through intentionality and pro-active decision making. Although Logico are one of New Zealand's fastest growing organisations with a sizeable, dispersed employee base, they have managed to create a unified, humanising culture that informs their innovation and day-to-day interactions, in a unique and powerful way. Logico represents an excellent case study of successful innovation leadership, that will inform future comparisons with my other sample organisations.

CHAPTER V. WebTech

Creator's Confessional

It was only after three rounds of interviews, that I began to see the messiness of linear research inquiries. Each interview is driven by the previous data and encounters, with organisational stories and high-points becoming a subjective lens that I began to gaze through as I continued my research. Perhaps even more frustratingly, I noticed "Interviewer Regret" sneaking in - as I discovered new data from one organisation, I wished I could question and explore this retrospectively in prior organisations. In a sense, each research inquiry sheds light not only on the organisation being studied, but also raises questions and potentials for the organisations that have been explored. Keeping this journal helped me become aware of this, and also helped minimise excessive researcher bias by keeping me accountable to my interview questions and inquiry.

The previous experience with Logico was a genuine high-point of the research project so far, with leadership and innovative practices that appeared to be effective and unified. Their stories of caring, distributed leadership were emotional narratives - and I left the interview process feeling inspired and challenged as to my own leadership practices. As Mirvis and Gunning (2006) noted, this effective leadership that focuses on growing others, is aimed at the heart, transcending rationality, and engaging the emotionality vital to this leadership. In many ways, this joy that was expressed at Logico was contagious, making even the act of

transcribing the interviews and engaging in thematic analysis more enjoyable than my previous experiences.

It was with this enjoyable research history that I began my interaction with WebTech, the business to which I had some of the most personal ties.

Three of the four directors are good friends of mine, and I had watched as they had founded and grown their business over the past five years. I had occasionally assisted the organisation as a contracted copy-writer, and had a few close friends who are now involved as employees. As the directors were interested in my research focus, they agreed to participate in the interview process, and were genuinely interested in finding out what would be discovered.

Interestingly, at the outset of this research into WebTech, I realised that despite my close relationship with the directors and employees, I did not know much about their organisational culture. Although I had pre-knowledge of the organisational members, I knew nothing about how they interacted, practiced leadership and encouraged innovation on a day-to-day level. I felt more comfortable interviewing the participants, as I already had a relationship with them, but my inquiry into the organisation would be genuine in that I quickly realised that I knew as little about WebTech as I did of the other two prior organisations.

This knowledge - or lack thereof - reduced any researcher validity bias and helped maintain the integrity of the interview structure. As I was unaware

of the leadership styles or innovation processes, interview questions were genuinely seeking answers and relatively free from assumptions, beyond what I had already discovered through this research. In addition, given WebTech's medium size and focus in the technology industry, they served as an excellent comparison organisation to test further the findings from EnviroCare and Logico, and to explore the transferability of those learnings.

Organisation Description

WebTech is a small sized web-site design and software company, with seven full-time and five part-time staff. Based on a remote-working philosophy, WebTech do not have central offices, but work with some of their team members in a hired space two days a week, with employees working the rest of the week from their homes. With most of the staff located in a suburban town in the North Island, and three of the remote workers living in distant urban centres, WebTech provide DIY-web design software for small businesses, as well as design-and-build options for larger clients across the globe. WebTech was founded in 2009 by the four current directors, one of whom lives and works for the organisation in Europe.

The research involved three appreciative inquiry interviews, with a director, a junior programmer and a sales person. Each participant was male, with the youngest in their early 20s and the oldest in their early 30s. All of the participants had been involved with WebTech for at least a year, and worked on-site two days a week.

Interview Findings

Appreciative inquiry is characterised by the 4D cycle, where an organisation moving through the Discover-Dream-Design-Destiny steps, with each phase empowering the conversations and actions in the next (Cooperrider, Whitney & Stavros, 2008). Although appreciative inquiry is being used in this study primarily as a research tool (rather than an organisational change initiative), all social science research has a similar cycle which occurs at a meta-level (Checkland, 1991). Primarily occurring at a hidden, cognitive level, this cycle is a continuous negotiation between the ideas that the researcher brings into the organisation with the discoveries that they make, their methodology in action and the focus of their research. When a researcher is focusing their investigation on one organisation, this cycle occurs throughout their inquiry, but when the research is multi-organisational in its scope, this cycle also occurs between investigations. Each new discovery from each organisation becomes part of the framework that the researcher takes into the next organisation, adjusting their focus and understanding of the new data (Checkland & Scholes, 1990).

This cycle suggests that the chronology of research is an important factor in the discovery process. The first organisation - especially in an action research based inquiry - will play a shaping role in the focus of the research, by starting to define the language of the inquiry and by identifying the 'norms' of that organisation (Chisholm & Elden, 1993). In

effect it sets up some conscious, and probably unconscious, benchmarks. Following Blichfeldt and Andersen's (2006) call for greater transparency in the action researcher's methodology and framework, WebTech's position as the fourth organisation to be studied impacts the findings of the interviews. More specifically, the focus of the thematic analysis shifts slightly to help develop the four main leadership models that have been identified, with new leadership actions, and to test the transferability and validity of these models. Although this may appear subjective and biased, it reflects the challenge of social science focus on "complex social systems [that] cannot be reduced for meaningful study" (Baskerville & Lee, 1999, p. 52).

As such, WebTech participants' reflections on leadership and innovation were uniquely constructed but then analysed with the previous responses in mind. This approach revealed a new depth to the Relational Nurturer model, with the analysis adding:

1. The Leader as Pastoral Carer

WebTech, however, tended to focus more on the innovative aspects of their organisation - perhaps because of their positioning in the tech industry - and developed aspects of the innovation process in greater detail than other organisations, with a focus on:

1. Innovation and Mastery

2. Individual/Team Innovation

3. Innovation Culture

Each of these innovation functions were inter-related to the leadership function, with the leader being seen as the catalyst for making them a reality. The following discussion will develop these themes and functions more fully in light of the participants' responses and the current literature, to more fully explore effective leadership of innovation across organisations, and the possible location-specificity of certain traits.

Relational Nurturer: Leader As Pastoral Carer

That's been a thing that's been quite cool - to check in with people, and see how they are doing, because that's so important. (Interview Participant A, 2014)

Since the 1990s, there has been an increase in literature discussing the spiritual dimensions of work and leadership, especially from a Biblical perspective. Examples include *The Leadership Wisdom of Jesus* (Manz, 1998), *Spirit at Work: Discovering the Spirituality in your Leadership* (Conger, 1994;) and *Leadership by the Book: Tools to Transform your Workplace* (Blanchard, Hybels, & Hodges, 1999) through to *Business by Jesus* (Cameron, 2008) and *Doing Business With God* (Gane, 2014). This focus on holistic leadership and development at work has been accompanied by the development of spiritual leadership theory, a model aimed at expanding transformational leadership to the realm of vocation, self-motivation and membership (Fry, 2003). With employees now spending more time at work, and with the reduction in relevance of significant meaning-centres (church, clubs, community groups), the workplace is becoming a space where purpose is sought. This is shown in Giacalone and Jurkiewicz's (2003) definition of workplace spirituality as: "A framework of organisational values evidenced in the culture that promotes employees' experience of transcendence through the work process, facilitating their sense of being connected in a way that provides feelings of compassion and joy" (p. 13).

Transcendence - a traditionally religious experience - is now being sought in the workplace, and seen as a meaningful goal for employers to provide for employees. Similarly, spiritual leadership theory positions employees as 'members' of a community, who strive to feel genuine connection and transformative relationships through their day-to-day involvement in their work (Fry, 2003). Central to this reality is the organisation's leadership establishing a culture of altruistic love between organisational members.

WebTech reflected this intentional caring culture, with a strong leadership focus on providing helpful, employee-focused relationships as a regular part of organisational life. One of the first interview participants reflected on their love of the leadership at WebTech, saying,

Once a fortnight we go out of the office and have coffee.

It's just a catch-up - how I'm doing, how the work's going how I'm doing with WebTech. 'Is there any tension with anyone? Are you still enjoying it here?' That whole pastoral care element. (Interview Participant C, 2014)

The focus on the employee's experience of these leadership catch-ups was on the personal questions they used to open the discussion. The primary question was, "How are you doing?" Only after the employee had felt personally validated and cared for did the discussion transition to the work at WebTech. Again, I stress that this was centred on their personal

experience of the work. This was not about productivity and constant improvement, but was about enjoyment, removal of tension and their emotional experience of work. The location of the space – “out of the office” - is also pivotal to understanding this caring atmosphere, as the employee locates this conversation as beyond office conversations. Ultimately, the interview participant labels this approach as “pastoral care,”, situating this leadership in the realm of the holistic-spiritual, rather than the work-focused leadership approach.

The interview participant concluded this section of the interview by saying about one of the leaders at WebTech,

I've also got to know him at a friend level. Even if I did leave WebTech, I know I'd still be good friends with him. We're equal level friends, which is quite cool.
(Interview Participant C, 2014)

The discourse of friendship was novel to this research, as the primary language around leaders in other settings was about nearness, strategy or character, but this participant suggested that the relationship had transcended a traditional leader-follower dichotomy. The participant noticed that the leader's interest in them was beyond the organisation, expressing that this relationship would extend out into future times when they may not be involved in the same workplace. This description moves beyond contingency, transactional and transformational leadership

models, which are centred around leadership towards a common organisational goal (Fry, 2003). Instead, this is centred around the spirit of the individual, and their potential and well-being over their career.

Central to the development of this pastoral caring leadership is the motive of the leader, a major focus of many leadership theorists (Bass, 1998; Kanungo & Mendonca, 1996). Where critical theorists challenge the leadership motive as “power-wielding”, with leaders treating individuals as a means to achieve their own end (Burns, 1978), pastoral leadership is driven by a genuine interest in the other (Whittington, Pitts, Kageler & Goodwin, 2005). This affiliative leadership begins with a focus on the individual and their dreams, goals and story, and seeks to both actualise the individual’s potential while perceiving them as a partner in the organisational objectives (Whittington et al., 2005). As such, “power” in a pastoral led organisation is expressed in the actions that allow the employees to accomplish their own tasks. Often this holistic care leads to an increase in employee engagement, but this is not the main focus of an authentic and credible pastorally led organisation (Goodwin, Whittington & Bowler, 2004). Their focus is on the employee’s wellbeing, with any other benefits being secondary.

This was expressed by a leader at WebTech, who also reflected on the fortnightly catch-ups with similar language.

It’s kinda like a pastoral meeting. We go and get a coffee -

“How’s everything going?” It circumvents issues that would naturally fester if they didn’t get dealt with.

(Interview Participant A, 2014)

Although this participant did not perceive of themselves as a pastor, they did see themselves leading a pastoral meeting. The practice - which was described as “boring, practical but quite important” - had become a regular feature of WebTech. It was described as a leadership highpoint for both the employee and the senior leader involved. Again, this leader’s motivation is revealed by their primary question - “How’s everything going?” - with employees being free to respond with issues around work-life balance, interpersonal conflicts or other potential problems. Although the question may be focused on identifying negative aspects of the work experience, the ultimate motivation for this leader remains pastoral. They desire the full development of the individual, and the desired goal is removing problems to create a positive environment.

This was expressed fully in a narrative from an employee who described one of these pastoral meetings. As a new salaried employee, they were struggling to make up their hours for the organisation, and also had issues with procrastination and wasting time. Fascinatingly, he was the one who voiced this problem to their leader, revealing an openness and level of trust that would allow this ‘confession’. The leader responded with care and gave some advice, with the employee concluding their discussion with,

All up, it only took five minutes. But it was something that was just really simple and easy, that has had a lasting impact. (Interview Participant B, 2014)

From both the employee and the leader's perspective, this is not an innovative or dynamic practice, with it being described in terms of "simple", "easy" and taking an insignificant amount of time. Yet both of them recognise the significance of both the pastoral care practice and leadership model, with it being a regular part of their work practices. The leader commented on this practice, saying, "It's a boring, practical thing that's quite important. Every company should be doing this."

Later in the interview stage, the leader mentioned that one of their values was "hiring managers of one - people who are responsible for their own thing". Citing the example of tech-firm Basecamp, which they described as having "only 40 staff but eight million paying subscribers", this leader idealised a future where the organisation was full of leaders who could manage themselves and their work effectively and efficiently. Although the participant did not directly link this future to their pastoral care practice, effective holistic leadership has a self-perpetuating effect with pastored followers becoming organisational pastors themselves (Whittington et al., 2005). As the spiritual leadership model directly challenges the destructive emotions that can hamper an organisation, participants are drawn to the positive sight of authenticity, integrity and relationship (Fry, 2003). The

result of this small-scale focus is leaderful communities and companies with effective self-managers (Raelin, 2003; Spritzer & Quinn, 2001).

This practice of pastoral care takes the Relational Nurturer model further than previously expressed at the prior organisations or churches. Initially this thesis discovered Relational Nurturing as a form of mentoring, with the leader developing the individual into a more high-functioning member of the organisation. I now contend, however, that the leader who practices pastoral care is not primarily focused on the individual's relationship with the organisation and their effectiveness, although these are important factors. Instead, they are focused on the individual and their ongoing self-development, taking into account their skills, emotions, experiences and dreams (Fry, 2003). This more altruistic model reduces the agenda of leadership to a lower level than originally seen in the Relational Nurturer, and is more holistic in its scope, with a focus on any and all aspects of life that the follower is wanting to talk about and grow in. As they grow in themselves, they also grow into the organisation, becoming a more active and engaged participant who is willing and able to share in more aspects of organisational life. This was most clearly exhibited in WebTech through their discussion on innovation, and the innovative culture that stretched each member.

Innovation Culture - Stretch

The work sometimes is dull, but it's because of the people and the culture that make me wake up and get out of bed.

(Interview Participant C, 2014)

Organisational culture is ubiquitous and fluid, yet is one of the most researched elements of an organisation, due to both its invisible nature and its obvious impact on working life (Linstead, 2009; Alvesson, 2012; Deal & Kennedy, 2000). Simply defined, culture is an organisation's belief system, that is constantly created and maintained in a symbiotic relationship with the organisational members (Keyton, 2011). The leaders of an organisation play a foundational role in the establishment of an organisational culture and, due to their social power, have a key ability to transform, negate or affirm certain beliefs and aspects of the organisation's life (DuBrin, 2012). Logico affirmed this leadership role, with the senior leaders creating a culture of mutual care and trust, establishing an organisational norm of close relationship between members. WebTech shared this altruistic organisational culture, but had an additional belief in the creation of an innovative-stretch culture, that was foundational to their innovation practices and identity.

Innovation-stretch is an aspect of stretch goal theory, a practice of total quality management theorising that organisations could grow at a rapid rate when given a target that is virtually unattainable (Thompson,

Hockwater & Mathys, 1997). Although this theory contradicts traditional goal-setting beliefs (such as the use of achievable goals, a key component of SMART goal theory), it has the potential of sparking new creative insights, forming strong relational bonds and enhancing organisational culture with each new win (Earley, Connolly & Ekegren, 1989). GE CEO Jack Welch, a firm believer in stretch goals, often cited the example of the bullet train development in Japan, explaining that, “had the goal been merely a modest improvement in speed or operating efficiency, the designers and engineers would have unintentionally limited their thinking to relatively minor alterations.” (Kerr & Landauer, 2004, p. 134). The stretch goal of increasing the speed to a previously unattainable level (and at a previously unattainable rate) forced the engineers to transcend their usual patterns of thinking to achieve the new goals.

Central to the success of stretch goals is the autonomy and empowerment of organisational members, and the structural accommodation to allow employees the freedom to try and fail (Thompson et al., 1997). As stretch thinking is characterised by a focus on the perceived unattainable, it is vital for the organisation to support the employees in their attempts to reach into the unknown, both relationally and structurally. Successful stretch projects at GE, Motorola and Goldman Sachs were characterised by employees given power over resources and funding for the projects, and a greater scope of access to organisational information that had previously been withheld. Similarly, the teams were granted “bureaucratic immunity”, allowing them to circumvent lengthy meetings and permission-

giving processes to speed up their workflow (Thompson et al., 1997).

Although stretch goals are not a cure-all, and when poorly led have resulted in employee burnout and frustration (Sherman, 1995), successful stretch endeavours have created organisations of greater self-belief, creativity and profitability (Kerr & Landauer, 2004).

Although stretch goals have traditionally been used to radically improve an existing product or service line, organisations have more recently been practicing horizontal stretch, where individual takes on different responsibilities than they have experience or qualification for (Kerr & Landauer, 2004). Vertical stretch focuses on the development of the product, whereas horizontal stretch aims to develop the person, by giving them a wider experience, greater understanding of their self and potential, and a diverse skill set to apply in future challenges (Pollitt, 2002). Also, horizontal stretch gives employees a more holistic view of the organisation, seeing how each part of the work process intersects. This can help create an awareness for new organisation possibilities, or adversities that may threaten the organisation (Stumpf, 1989). In this perspective, the individual is stretched to grow in previously unattainable ways, creating new perspectives and value for the organisation.

WebTech proved to be rich in stretch leadership, both in the values organisational members held as central to the culture, and in the foundational practices of the business. One participant reflected on their best leadership experience, from a previous educational organisation,

saying,

He would give you opportunities that you may not have thought you were ready for. He saw potential in people.

(Interview Participant B, 2014)

Foundational to this participant was not just the fact that this leader saw potential in people; it was the act of opportunity giving. This leader saw potential and then empowered by giving stretch roles to organisational members, empowering them to live into this potential. Leadership was defined by communicative action, not just by the communicative voice. This was expressed further in a narrative told by this participant, when the leader gave them the responsibility of running a brand-new technology class at the educational institute.

I was only a second year teacher and he gave me all of the iPads for my class. At times it didn't go well, but he never came to check on me - although he knew what was going on. Because it was so new we didn't have guidelines to follow. We made mistakes, made adjustments and figured things out. (Interview Participant B, 2014)

Again in this narrative, the leader's impact is defined by what they didn't do - they never came to check on the participant. Their non-interference, revealed both a level of trust in the participant to achieve the goal, as well

as providing an opportunity for the participant to grow into the unknown. Interestingly, although the participant acknowledged that he was never checked up on, he does accredit the mistakes and failures to “we” - both themselves and the leader. Despite the intentional distance the leader created in allowing this stretch goal to be achieved, this was perceived as a trusting distance, with the participant still acknowledging the leader’s presence and assistance throughout the process. This is further expressed by this participant’s discussion on the leader they would most like to work under,

Dumbledore, the principal of Hogwarts. He never gave anyone the answers, but he led people to the answers. Through crazy adversity, things worked out. He knew everything that was going on, and let it happen so they would learn. (Interview Participant B, 2014)

This fictional character (a prominent personality in the *Harry Potter* series) is selected because of their inaction - Dumbledore would let things happen. Within the narrative, Dumbledore’s focus is accelerating the growth of the young wizards, by stretching them and allowing them to face situations (often lethal and weighty!) that were beyond their abilities or capabilities to process. This stretch, which was full of mistakes and painful errors, leads to the eventual climactic battle, for which the young protagonists are now more adequately prepared - not because of their abilities, but because of their familiarity with ‘the stretch’.

Similarly, the interview participant valued leadership which stretched their potential, and then empowered them to achieve it by their inaction. Their educational leader was available for wisdom and support, but was not an over-managing presence, providing enough distance that mistakes and errors could be made, and perceived as learning opportunities. This horizontal stretch developed them as a person, by putting them in a role beyond their speciality and requiring them to adapt and grow in a very short space of time.

One of the founding directors of WebTech shared this perspective on stretch-goals, describing their origin narrative by saying,

We knew nothing about designing software ... we were clueless. I firmly believe that we have learnt our own individual skills at a much faster rate by jumping way in the deep end. (Interview Participant A, 2014)

When reflecting back on the beginning of WebTech, this participant noticed the foundation of stretch in their story, describing themselves as “clueless”. However, this lack of ability - when matched by a perceived unattainable goal of starting a software company - is interpreted as a strength that was integral to the individual growth of the founding directors. This gap between what was known and what was needed accelerated their learning process, and developed their ability to think creatively and

move with agility. The founder described how their innovation is created out of “necessity and experience”, with a continual focus on acknowledging the skills and experience they have already developed, and creating a challenging gap between this and what their end-user needs. This horizontal stretch rapidly grows their organisational members innovative abilities, as they are continually learning and experimenting with the new findings they discover. This was summarised by the leader’s comments that,

The key thing is being out of your depth, having to give it a crack and learning from the things that didn’t work.

(Interview Participant A, 2014)

This thesis proposes that the ideal state for WebTech members, therefore, is in the stretch-state between the tension of what is and what could be. This tension is healthy and provides both a drive for innovation and a deeper sense of organisational meaning, reminiscent of Frankl’s (1984) belief that humanity does not need equilibrium, but a deep striving for a worthwhile cause.

Stretch goals were not just part of the foundation of the organisation, but were a shared ongoing reality in distributing innovation throughout WebTech. The leader recounted a story of sharing the stretch with a junior member of the organisation, and described saying to them,

You're really inexperienced. You're not going to get this right a lot of the time. But we want to throw you into the deep-end here, and give you the opportunity to improve quickly in the process ... the opportunity is here for you to be the guy.

(Interview Participant A, 2014)

In distributing the stretch among junior members like this, the leaders are exhibiting belief in their potential along with an opportunity for this growth to be accelerated. The leader did provide support if required, but allowed the employee the freedom to self-manage and develop the new program the best way they saw fit. By acknowledging both the junior's lack of experience and the probability of failure along the way, the leader accepted these as necessary aspects of the stretch process, and encouraged the employee to move beyond their perceived capabilities. This leader described the employee's reaction as, "He was chuffed! He was excited by the opportunity", and reported they had moved into the stretch with increased energy. Although the development of the new project will be helpful, it is not a vertical stretch as it is not unattainable for the organisation. The horizontal stretch, however, is a transformative reality which will grow this employee into an effective leader within the organisation.

Horizontal stretch is mediated at WebTech, as the leaders recognise that employees require a certain amount of experience and organisational trust

before they can be maximised by stretch goals. One senior leader discussed this,

We don't give the junior people exposure to that environment, because they don't have the experience yet to be able to constantly fire reliably, with high-level ideas.

(Interview Participant A, 2014)

This innovative process requires some prior knowledge and also a feeling of belonging to the organisation, that is central to allow employees to share ideas openly (Kesting & Uihøi, 2010). As the leaders do not want to give early employees a sense of failure in their role, the leaders restrict their employees access to stretch goals and projects until they are perceived as ready. Similarly, not all of their role will be occupied with stretch-projects, but they will be given roles in these to work on, alongside their everyday work. One junior employee described their involvement in a stretch project by saying,

We joke about how it's when I can go and play with the big kids. It's fun and different, I can learn from it.

(Interview Participant C, 2014)

This employee had their regular duties, but also had the opportunity to participate in a joint stretch goal with senior developers. Their joking language reveals the difference between their usual work and this project -

big vs little kids - but it is still encapsulated in the language of play. Additionally, the driving force of this “big kid” project is the challenge and the growth that occurs in attempting that challenge. In stretching for an almost unattainable goal - but doing so communally, with others who may not be stretching so far - this participant is continually learning, and able to apply this back into their regular work.

Ultimately, these stretch goals are effective at WebTech because the leaders allow for autonomy within projects. Although employees may not have the autonomy to choose stretch goals or join any project they desire, once involved they experience the freedom that is critical for stretch goals to be effective (Thompson et al., 1997). This autonomy is considered a driving motivator for the 21st century workforce, empowering the individual to innovate, create and work with a greater degree of freedom than was traditionally granted (Pink, 2009). This thesis also discovered a similar motivator for innovation at WebTech is the continual quest for self-mastery and improvement of the services for the end-user.

Innovation and Mastery

It's cool in our environment - because we're aiming for the best - if I do something, I can take time to do the little tweaks, to make it much more reliable and better for the end user. (Interview Participant C, 2014)

A central theme in the research data from WebTech was a drive for mastery in both the processes and the products that were offered to the market. A unique distinction, however, was the clear link between this mastery and the end-user experience of the services. Rather than seeing mastery as an isolated internal element or as the *telos* of intrinsic motivation theory, mastery was a means to a greater end: benefiting the end-user through creating innovative approaches to new problems. As such, the users of WebTech's product become a valuable part of the innovation process, both as a symbol and as feedback providers, and encouraging the organisational members to pursue personal mastery in their goal of excellence.

Fundamental to this approach is an understanding that the end-user is not focused on the technology that is developed, but on the application and experience of the end product (Diederiks & Hoonhout, 2007). Some organisations can fall victim to "product hypnosis" where they become so encapsulated with their own creation, they forget (or ignore) the validation required in the hands of the consumer. Organisations must instead walk a

tension between the inward-looking, energetic passion of organisational innovation, and the outward observation and interaction of the end-user of the products (Heifetz, 1994). This is often achieved through observing the consumer using the product and discussing improvements that they would like to see, a standard process in many organisations (Beyer & Holtzblatt, 1997).

More current technology organisations, however, are attempting to integrate the end-user into all stages of the research process, rather than just for incremental extensions of already available products (Diederiks & Hoonhout, 2007). Fundamental to this approach is interacting with end-users at the primary stage of ideation to discover insights, developing simple narrative scenarios that capture the ideal state, and finishing with the traditional prototype and discussion of application (Carroll, 1995). The consumer becomes more than just a validation of the product, but instead becomes both a key driving force of innovation, a character in a narrative of problem-solving and the final goal of the organisation's process. Central to the success of this approach is a clear, trusting relationship with key consumers, which can be maintained throughout the ideation and prototype stages (Diederiks & Hoonhout, 2007).

Although WebTech does not have clear and intentional narratives of involving the end-user in the ideation process, there were many comments about the end-user focus from all of the interview participants.

Predominantly, these focused on the end-user discovering powerful and

simple tools, which had previously only been available to skilled developers, with participants saying:

We're bringing things that were seen as developer specific into something normal people can do.

(Interview Participant A, 2014)

We're making it easier and making it more accessible to the masses. (Interview Participant B, 2014)

I have the freedom to change it to the best way I see fit, to suit the customer. (Interview Participant C, 2014)

We want our clients to appear in a good light ... that is the dream, and everyone knows that.

(Interview Participant B, 2014)

Just as EnviroCare saw their consultation as “on behalf of” their clients, imparting significance and meaning to their day-to-day activities, so does WebTech’s end-user focus create an altruistic atmosphere over their operations. One participant described this focus as a “social conscience”, explaining that they do not try and sell products that businesses do not need. Although WebTech were open about their goals of creating a sustainable and profitable business, this focus on the end-user was seen as a valuable part of their goal. As such, their insights in the initial stage of

ideation were present from informal conversations with clients and first-hand experience of similar software providers (and the frustrations these provided).

WebTech also have a compelling scenario that is central to their innovation process. One of the employees mentioned this short symbolic phrase, when describing the innovative realities at WebTech,

We have a saying - if you can write an email and attach a photo, then you can keep your website up to date. That's the thing we always come back to - 'Does this fit under that kind of mentality?' If it doesn't, it needs to change.

(Interview Participant A, 2014)

This scenario is both simple and illustrative, with the comparison of a common task (emailing a photo) to the web-design process. Although it is basic, it tells a short narrative of what is a success for the end-user across all of their software, and is derived from the frustration stories they have personally encountered and discovered in conversation with clients. This scenario has become both a decision-making filter that is useful in the innovation process, as well as an easily communicable story that can be shared with new and existing clients. When the end-user is made aware of this scenario, they are then aware of the idealised state and contribute meaningful feedback to WebTech when this is not met. One participant shared a story of how this impacted their innovation process, saying,

We released a product and very quickly we got feedback from clients, within a day, saying, “That didn’t work how I thought it would work.” Very quickly, we saw what we overlooked and were able to fix it. Within a day, it was done - clients were happy and we were happy.

(Interview Participants B, 2014)

The pivot point of this narrative was the end-user’s comment that their software was not intuitive - one process had not worked as they had assumed it would. As this was misaligned with their scenario, WebTech was self-motivated to make the changes required to bring their product inline with their end-user story. Another leader commented on a similar narrative, stating that their goal was to “delight their customer” in both WebTech’s customer service and the customer’s experience of their product. As such, their innovation process begins with the end-user in mind, and then is driven by a simple, memorable scenario, before the usual prototyping and feedback cycle is begun. Throughout this entire process, the organisational members attempt to master their specific domain in the pursuit of end-user satisfaction, with mastery becoming a secondary motivator in the innovation process.

In today’s knowledge based society, this mastery - as well as innovation and organisational learning - are recognised as the most influential factors to improve organisational performance (Glynn, 1996; Nonaka & Takeuchi,

1995). Defined as the drive and capability to grow and learn, mastery is actualised when an individual concentrates their energy on developing their skills and abilities (Senge, 1990). Theorised as an intrinsic motivator for excellent work, individuals with a high degree of mastery have a higher level of systems thinking and personal development, creating a self-perpetuating cycle of constant betterment (Pink, 2005; Garcia-Morales, Lloréns-Montes & Verdú-Jover, 2007). It is within this cycle that mastery impacts innovation, as the creative process involves a recombination of resources, skills and organisational ideas (Garcia-Morales et al., 2007; Johansson, 2004). As an organisational member increases their mastery of their role, they gain a greater understanding of the organisational process - as well as a greater confidence in their ability - leading to more opportunities for insight into process improvements or potential product developments (Glynn, 1996). Their experience, plus their ongoing quest for self-development, has a positive impact on organisational innovation.

This mastery is an individual's responsibility; no-one can force anyone else to pursue this energy concentration (Senge, Roberts, Ross, Smith & Kleiner, 1994). An organisation can, however, encourage employees to be committed to the firm and their own mastery, something WebTech does through their end-user focus (Larsen, McNerney, Nyquist, Silsbee & Zagonel, 2002). In a similar vein, organisational innovation is created by the individual supplying their creativity to the group experience (Amabile, 1996). As Griffin's (2008) inquiry into creativity among junior advertising students revealed, the further the individual's training and mastery of their

craft developed, the greater creativity they were able to contribute to the organisational totality.

Central to this improved creativity was a critical difference in how the students approached a creative task. Individuals who had not mastered their craft focused on the defined problem from the client, whereas masters of the advertising craft would re-articulate the problem to discover the real issue (Griffin, 2008). This reinforces Runco and Dow's (1999) findings that thinking that is focused on discovered problems - rather than given problems - is more likely to reflect higher levels of creativity. As individuals who are mastering their craft also have a more developed 'toolbox' of skills to draw on in their problem solving approaches, these organisational members are able to both define more accurate problems for the end-user and have a higher probability of creating a viable and effective solution.

This dual-nature of mastery as problem definer and solver was clearly seen in the research with WebTech, with participants describing this as a vital part of their organisational activities. In language similar to EnviroCare's description of "leaders as see-ers", one participant explained that,

Nine times out of ten, the biggest innovations and improvements have been from re-defining the problem, stepping back and viewing it in a wider scope ... the best

solutions we come up with aren't, "Here's the problem, create a fix." (Interview Participant A, 2014)

This leader recognised the significance of problem discovery in the innovation process, finding that it allows for better solutions. He recognised that this ability to problem-define was the result of their experience with designing user interfaces, allowing them to have a greater understanding of problems than their clients. This work was still on behalf of the client - working toward their goal of improving other's lives and businesses - but was not limited by the client's lack of experience. Instead, the leader's mastery in this domain allowed them to move beyond the perceived problem of the client, to discover deeper problems that motivated greater, more effective solutions.

Similarly, this leader mentioned that their ideal leader to join their team would be Xero CEO, Rod Drury. His rationale was, "He's not a six-figure exec who's good with finance. He understands software and customers, and marketing software". The greatest trait that Drury exhibited was his mastery of the product and his understanding of the end-user, suggesting that WebTech values this ability over and above traditional financial managers or business strategists. Critically, it was this experience that is viewed as essential to the mastery process, which was interpreted as a key point of difference between the long-term organisation members and the newer hires. A senior leader at WebTech commented on this, saying,

It's interesting that when people are new with us, they don't really have those ideas. But down the track - maybe a year down the track - they have their first big one.

(Interview Participant A, 2014)

The year long process described at WebTech highlights the re-orientation process, where individuals begin to genuinely understand their roles, rather than what they perceive these roles to be (Griffin, 2008). This thesis reveals that in the early stages, individuals attempt to think through problems like they think a web-designer should, based on their previous education and experience. After a year, however, they begin to instead think like WebTech thinks, focusing on their role as problem-solvers for end users, rather than as web-designers. They begin to master both the hard skills of software development, as well as the goal of "creating ways to make peoples' lives easier". As a result, effective WebTech members innovate at a higher rate as they both increase their skill set - allowing them to solve more problems - and as they master the organisation's goals, allowing them to discover new problems to assist their end users. This dynamic interplay of mastery is also reflected in the innovation dance at WebTech, as members intuitively move from individual creativity to group innovation sessions, maximising the innovative potential of WebTech.

Individual/Team Creativity

Starting work before everyone else starts work helps. I do my best design in the evenings.

(Interview Participant A, 2014)

The final innovation action that I discovered at WebTech was the leaders creating a flexible transition between individual and team based innovation efforts. These leaders recognised the different social requirements for different stages of the innovation process, and were able to intentionally manage these social spaces, due to their experience as Relational Nurturers. This allowed WebTech to improve their creativity by being intentional about when they would innovate individually and when they would innovate collectively. These practices allowed them to take advantage of focus and space, as well as diversity and conversation, in their creative practices.

The individual's creative practice is composed of three different domains; their expertise, intrinsic motivation, and creative-thinking ability (Amabile, 1983). When each of these three components are met, the individual's probability of creating new and imaginative ideas and solutions to organisational problems is increased (Titus, 2000). These three requisite traits are also required for a psychological state of flow (an intense optimal state of consciousness) to be achieved (Csikszentmihályi, 1975). It is this similarity that has led to the hypothesised link between individual creativity

and flow, theorising that the highly focused state of flow results in higher quality creative ideas (Cseh, Phillips & Pearson, 2015). Empirical research has revealed a link between flow and the quantity of creative output, as well as an increase in the participant's self-perception of their creativity, minimising their fears and doubts about a project (Landhäußer & Keller, 2012; Cseh, Phillips & Pearson, 2015).

This relationship between a flow-like state and innovation was stressed by one participant, who recounted their story of innovative work practices.

My best, most innovative work always comes from a zombie-like, flow state, which nowadays - because I'm dragged in so many directions in the business - comes from shutting off the emails in the morning and dealing with the aftermath later. It's the only real way to achieve that...once you get in that zombie-like state, you can't turn it off anymore. That's when I do my best work. (Interview Participant A, 2014)

The participant highlighted the mental state which their most innovative work comes from as being 'zombie-like'. Although not traditionally associated with productivity and speed, the zombie is particularly focused in their quest, driven by their unceasing hunger for the human brain (Newbury, 2012). Of primacy to this participant is their single-minded focus, which is key to creating an environment for innovative work. They describe their best work as coming from this state, and deliberately create

a distraction free environment to encourage its actualisation. Once they are removed from emails and other communication from clients and employees, this participant is more able to achieve a state of flow where their most creative ideas are developed.

Of particular note is the type of work this participant engages in when in the zombie-flow state. As a designer in a group of programmers, this participant actively sought out isolated space for their creative design work. This area of his expertise was not shared among the other organisational members, and was a focus he enjoyed working on. This participant described it as,

It's like having an itch you can't scratch - but you need to itch! ... There is that feeling, 'I want to solve this!'

(Interview Participant A, 2014)

Central to this participant's experience is their intrinsic motivation of desiring to solve their specific problem. They have a deep feeling of wanting to solve the design issue they are facing, and recognise that they also are the only one in the organisation with the skills to achieve this. As such, they feel "an urgency to solve the design problem", which serves as a healthy pressure to maximise their creativity (Amabile et al., 1996).

When this motivation is combined with their active seeking of a time and space devoid of distraction, this participant experiences a heightened sense of creativity and their problem-solving ability. This flow-state was

always achieved in isolation and was actively maintained by the participant, who described their actions as “trying to stay in that flow state quite intensely”.

Similarly, this participant reported on the story of a junior employee of WebTech who had a corresponding account of isolation and innovation. He described,

One thing (Employee) did is he - on the weekend, in his own time - played around with an idea that was a real rough version, he thought we could integrate into our software. When I saw it - it wasn't an idea that I had considered at all! It was a lightbulb moment!

(Interview Participant A, 2014)

This employee - who is a junior programmer - had their innovative breakthrough during the weekend, when they were away from the office and other employees. This member both ideated a possibility and prototyped an early draft to test for feasibility, from their own individual effort. Although their skill set was not unique to the organisation, they were motivated by intrinsic benefits (the thought that it would improve the product and solve a real problem). The innovation also happened in a short, intense period of time, with these first two steps of the creativity cycle happening over the course of a weekend, driven by the autonomy of the employee.

These two narratives suggest that WebTech recognises the importance of individual creativity on domain specific problems, especially for the ideation of possible solutions and the implementation of prototypes. However, as creativity involves new and unique combinations of ideas (Zhuang, Williamson & Carter, 1999), it is not enough to remain isolated as the lone, heroic innovator (Bilton, 2010). Instead, organisations must also practice a process of social innovation, where a diverse range of organisational members can work together to unleash diverse ideas. It is in these intersections of difference that organisational breakthroughs occur, resulting in more radical innovations (Johannson, 2006).

Unfortunately, however, the majority of research on innovation focuses on the innovative individual, and how their organisation, team, personality and environment impact their creative output (Amabile, Conti, Coon, Lazenby & Herron, 1996; Somech & Drach-Zahavy, 2013). As an individual's creativity is easier to study (with less variables) than a group's, researchers have assumed that "it is logical that the most parsimonious proposition is to link individual members' creative personalities to team creativity, namely, to the extent to which the team generates novel and useful ideas ..." (Somech & Drach-Zahavy, 2013, p. 687).

Although this assumption appears logical, this thesis contends that it fails to recognise the full range of the creative process. In focusing on the initial ideation stage, this premise accurately links the connection between

creative individuals and the idea creation ability of a team composed of these members (Shalley, Gilson & Blum, 2009). It negates, however, the benefits of team diversity and communication, that play a highly important role in the screening, feasibility and implementation stages of an innovation process (Majaro, 1988). This one-sided view of creativity is weighted towards the individualistic practice of divergent thought, rather than the collective, deliberate process of convergent thinking, and transforming ideas into reality (Bilton, 2007; Bilton & Leary, 2002).

WebTech, however, practice both the isolated individual model of creativity as well as the deliberate, communal model of innovative thinking. One participant reported their group innovation practices,

In a few weeks we are planning on going to a big event. We are going to have a team meeting about what we want to do pre, during and post this event to maximise the opportunity. For lots of our team, they aren't going to be going - but they have idea. For fifteen minutes, we will sit down and brainstorm on a whiteboard ... (Director) and I could sit down and do it ourselves, but we are going to miss opportunities. As a leadership group, they want everyone's opinion on this. (Interview Participant B, 2014)

This narrative reveals a different innovation state to the one described in previous narratives. Before, the participant talked about being in a

lengthened state of isolated flow, whereas here the creative environment is managed in terms of time (fifteen minutes) and place (in front of a whiteboard), with a more formalised nature to it (described as a “team meeting”). Also, this creative gathering involves the wider team of WebTech, rather than just one participant in isolation.

Central to the understanding of this meeting is the nature of the event being discussed. The team’s conversation is centred around their planning for a large promotional event, a task which is outside of the skill set of any one organisational member. Although this participant, who works in sales, is responsible for the promotion of the organisation, there is a recognition that all elements of the product - design, programming, functionality, language - are central to its promotion. As such, it is beneficial for the ideation stage for all organisation members to participate in suggesting promotional possibilities for the sales member to actualise. From this meeting, the participant had a abundance of ideas that could then be developed in an individualistic manner, but had been birthed through the diverse gathering and discussion regarding promotions.

Similarly, one of the director’s at WebTech commented that:

We’ve made innovations in process recently, and that was driven by me - but a lot of the best ideas came from other people in the team. We had a brain storming session, where everybody inputted into that.

(Interview Participant A, 2014)

This participant recognised that a comprehensive understanding of their organisational processes was outside of their skill set and domain. As such, any ideation from this member would be weighted toward innovation in design process, or limited by their lack of understanding of the variety of the processes involved in their organisation. Instead, by involving all team members (including junior staff and contractors), WebTech discovered a much richer range of ideas, with this participant labelling them “the best”. Further conversation clarified that these group meetings had resulted in changes saving the organisation several thousands of dollars a year.

However, the transition of these ideas to become new processes and products requires further iterations and feasibility testing. It is in this space that the individual innovator again creates a time and space to be free from distraction and to encourage the state of flow, so that they can maximise their innovative output. This interplay between individual and communal creativity is a dynamic dance for WebTech - but it is one that they are aware of. In managing innovation in this way, WebTech perceive creativity as both an individual and a collective act, and are attempting to intentionally connect the two through deliberate use of time, space and mental state, to better their organisational innovation (Bilton, 2010).

Comparative Analysis

WebTech stands as an excellent comparison for EnviroCare and Logico, as it occupies a central space in terms of organisation size and history. With 12 staff and having been in operation since 2009, WebTech's innovative environment and leadership practices share some key differences from the other studied organisations. These similarities and differences help to clarify the observations made across all the organisations, and validate the importance of the relationship between innovation and leadership.

Firstly, WebTech has a much more deliberate innovation focus than EnviroCare. EnviroCare's narratives of innovation were based on serendipitous ideas and encounters, resulting in new symbols of creativity for their organisation. Innovation was seen as an organic outflow of the organisation, which would happen when required and when all the required circumstances (of having a strong purpose and supportive environment) were met. As such, the leaders of EnviroCare stressed the importance of ethics, passion and the vocational nature of their work, believing this would resonate among their organisation and pull innovation out of their employees. This innovation pull was idealised to come from an ethical necessity, as innovative change was required to stop more environmental damage.

WebTech, however, were intentional about their focus on innovation, allocating resources to discovering their employees' ideas and developing them further into new products. Although both organisations shared an understanding of the importance of the physical and social environment on creativity, WebTech had the deliberate action of regularly asking their organisational members for their ideas and collating them accordingly. The leaders view their employees' ideas as a valuable resource that require intentional encouragement and questioning to draw forth, from both the one-on-one fortnightly catch-up meetings, or from the collective gathering of the whole organisation. As this is a regular practice at WebTech, employees now openly share their ideas without prompting, pushing their ideas out to the leaders, and developing them individually.

As WebTech has been practicing this active search for ideas since their beginnings in 2009, this action has become a habitual practice and a prevailing attitude, thus part of the organisational culture (Drennan, 1992). They have created an innovation culture, that is receptive to ideas and encourages prototyping and individual development, without requiring permission from the senior directors. Although EnviroCare shared this permission giving culture, they had not actively resourced for creativity like WebTech. Instead of asking organisational members for ideas, encouraging development of new concepts and storing potential innovations for a later time, EnviroCare passively waited for their members to contribute. Although this culture was strong in terms of organisational

support and purpose, this lack of active inquiry and resources for innovation limited their innovation culture (Amabile et al., 1996).

Both organisations, however, did share a commonality in creating an environment of stretch-goals, with leaders and employees contributing narratives of being stretched beyond their skills and experience. The horizontal stretch practices involved participants being “put in the deep end”, while being given strong organisational support to learn from the challenging experiences. Interview participants from both organisations highlighted these stretches - whether it was serving on a committee they felt they did not have the prerequisite experience for, or developing software they felt was beyond them - as key to their growth and confidence in the organisation. Only WebTech, however, extended this horizontal stretch into the ideation process, by asking participants to share new ideas based on their new learnings. This recognition of the link between learning and future creating is a valuable resource at WebTech, as the organisation becomes more idea rich as they invest into the growth of their employees.

When comparing Logico to the innovative environment at WebTech, the most apparent difference is in the source of ideas. At Logico, the majority of the narratives of innovation centred on the founder and managing director’s ideation capability. Although these stories of creativity-under-pressure were impressive and part of the organisation’s wider story, the majority of the interview participants could not remember times of their

own individual creativity. Even in the narratives of employee innovation, there were frequent, positive references to the assistance of the senior leaders, with participants discussing how they would turn to them for help and approval throughout the process. As such, these senior leaders featured heavily throughout all the stories of employee innovation, functioning both as innovation models and as permission givers to allowing the process to develop further.

Although this modelling of innovation can be helpful to illuminate a process for others to follow (Gobble, 2012), strong leadership modelling can also limit participants by the tacit suggestion that they are not as creative as their leaders. This assumption about their own lack of innovation might impact on their belief in their own self-efficacy and limit their creative output. It might lead to a constant comparison of their own creative ideas with their idealised perception of the leader as a creative genius (Rietzschel & Nijstad, 2007). Perhaps nowhere is this better illustrated than in the organisational culture at Apple during the second tenure with Steve Jobs as CEO. As the embodiment of creative genius, Job's personality inspired creativity amongst many employees, but also created a culture of fear and doubt about the validity of one's ideas (Isaacson, 2011). Although a hyperbolic example, this illustrates the tension that must be managed when the leader portrays an image, albeit unintentionally at Logico, of being the model of innovation.

WebTech differs from this approach, with the most shared narratives of innovation focusing on employees who have practiced creative approaches themselves. The interviewed director shared a range of stories highlighting the innovation of a junior designer and a salesperson, as well as two of the other senior leaders, reflecting a practical democratisation of creativity. Each interview participant at WebTech shared this practice, telling narratives involving all members of the team. As such, their model of innovation was not based on the embodiment by a senior leader; instead it was embodied by the organisational culture as a whole. The diversity of this model - with participants telling stories ranging from working on projects in their own time, through to mass processes involving all employees - does not provide a linear, repeatable process to follow. Nevertheless, it does suggest a high level of creative self-perception among all the WebTech employees. Rather than comparing their creative abilities to the idealised perception of another innovative genius, WebTech members appear to see their abilities as contributing to a greater creative whole for the entire organisation who participate in this culture.

Finally, when compared to Town Church, WebTech has a much more immanent and relational approach to leadership, perceiving vision and innovation as being transferred through close relationships. Town Church's dominant leadership style was through a hierarchical, transcendent approach, with senior leaders meeting together, identifying the vision for the organisation, and then communicating it through announcements,

speeches at the weekly gatherings or by filtering it down through other leaders. This traditional model of leadership is practiced by the formal leaders, allowing them to control the message and provide direction in a holistic, united fashion. Town Church does have a secondary model of relational leadership, which exists beneath the formalised leadership structure, and which does help to nurture innovation and develop the individual's potential. This relational leadership, however, is subservient to the more dominant transcendent leadership style, which dominated the leadership and innovation discourse.

WebTech, however, practiced relational leadership as their fundamental style, with all participants highlighting the importance of the regular 'catch-up' meetings between employees and directors. During these one-on-one interactions, participants noticed how ideas were shared, clarification on roles was provided and the values of the organisation were both practiced and articulated. As such, there was a greater transparency of leadership at WebTech, with all organisational members seeing the decision making process and being involved in dialogue around the direction of the organisation. This practice helped to share the organisational purpose across the wider organisation, and encourage the participants to adapt this purpose alongside their own. Each of the participants was clear with their understanding about the purpose of WebTech, and spoke about its values and direction as if it was their own. This value and purpose transfer occurred through the relational immanence of the leaders, and appears to have contributed to the democratisation of innovation throughout the

organisation with participants intrinsically motivated by the shared values and purpose of WebTech.

Concluding Reflections

Adopting the role of the researcher and inquiring into an organisation that is managed by personal friends was both a challenge and a learning experience for me, in ways that I had not foreseen at the beginning of this research. I assumed that I already understood this organisation (having known my friends before its conception). I had also assumed that, as I knew the directors as friends, their organisational actions would be congruent with what I knew of them in their private lives. As mentioned at the outset, it was with these assumptions in mind that I began this inquiry.

Initially, it was an immense challenge to quell my assumptions and allow the participants to contribute their narratives without interruption. This was due to my incredulity at their responses, as they seemed to be almost diametrically opposed to my experience of these individuals as friends. These leaders were quiet, introverted types who did not appear to have a high emotional intelligent. As friends, they preferred to be in the background and were unassuming in their social practices. I assumed that my understanding of their personality and social skills was complete, and would be extended into their professional domain at WebTech.

How wrong I was. From early in the first interview, I began to hear stories of these leaders providing strong, encouraging relational support, nurturing a creative environment, and standing out as bold leaders, who were excellent at listening and sharing advice. These friends of mine, who I

assumed would be quiet, timid leaders of their organisation, were bold, counter-cultural with their pastoral care practice, and imaginative in their dreams for the organisation. At several times, I found it hard to believe that the interview participants were discussing the same people I had known for years. It was a challenge to stay present in the interviews, focused on the participants' responses and ask questions to help clarify the narratives, as I was having my assumptions challenged.

Yet this process also taught me the importance of self-awareness as a researcher, and why discovering assumptions prior to research is invaluable to a qualitative inquiry. I had been intentional about this self-awareness and description of my assumptions in the research with the prior organisations, but I did not have the same jarring encounter as I did with WebTech. Having stated my assumptions from the outset allowed me to recognise this difference between expectation and discovery as significant and valuable for my research inquiry. This unpredictable experience became one of the innovative practice highlights of this organisation. I also came to see that it serves as a leadership practice for other organisations to learn from.

Over the course of this research, WebTech was (somewhat serendipitously for me) rewarded with recognition as one of the most innovative organisation partners, by a large international software company. This award legitimised the importance of their practice of relational care and immanent leadership, as it was given on the basis of a

number of their creative ideas that were sourced from a diverse range of employees. As I met with employees of the organisation, all of them were proud of the award - not just because their organisation had won it, but because each of them felt that they had contributed to this result. As such, WebTech's leadership practices which created a warm, close culture of sharing ideas and dialogue about opportunities and problems, were recognised as a key competitive advantage that other organisations would do well to emulate.

CHAPTER VI. City Faith

Creator's Confessional

As I approached my final organisation to interview and explore, I was beginning to recognise the value of experience in any investigative inquiry. There was a new degree of confidence and assuredness that I bring to the interviews with this church, as I felt much more comfortable with my identity as a researcher and the process of researching. In the early stages of this project, as I ran dummy interviews and practiced interview techniques, I felt like an actor - putting on the pretend role of a researcher and assuming a degree of confidence that I did not have. I remember the nerves of my first inquiry, feeling like I was going to be 'found out' as an imposter interviewer or that my actions and questions would not measure up to what was required for an academic investigation.

At this stage, however, the role of researcher was a much more comfortable fit. I became more confident in my interviewing skill set and felt natural exploring and asking questions to a range of participants. Interestingly, along with this self-belief, my confidence in not knowing had become a central attitude that was an essential underpinning to my research. Several qualitative research theorists stress the importance of the researcher adopting a posture of the learner, and minimising their assumptions and bias by avoiding detailed exposure to literature around the chosen topic (Yin, 1994; Wolcott, 1992; Strauss & Corbin, 1994). However, I would argue, they neglect to recognise that a naive researcher

may feel pressured to assume pre-knowledge. Upon reflection, I can see how I wanted to appear as a knowledgeable researcher, and put pressure on myself to adopt the role of an innovation and leadership expert.

Although this really only manifested itself as an internal pressure (with a fear that one of my participants might ask me a question I did not know the answer to), it was an interesting phenomenon - that the researcher with the least experience may be the one who acts as if they know the most.

Having begun to learn about innovation and leadership through my previous four organisational inquiries, I became increasingly aware of how little I know and how diverse and deep this knowledge domain is. Never before had the oft-quoted Socratic wisdom "I know one thing: that I know nothing" been so real, yet I now recognise this not just as a fridge-magnet phrase, but as key to wise research. As I discovered more, I discovered how much more there is I do not know, and this created a genuine intellectual humility, as well as awakening a desire to discover more.

Paradoxically, however, it has only been through the act of learning more that I have been able to reduce my assumptions and pre-knowledge.

Although each organisation has provided learning and comparisons for the following investigations, I have also recognised the complexity of qualitative research, and the folly of pre-conceptions. Accordingly, as I have become more comfortable as a researcher, I have also become more comfortable recognising that I don't know much about this domain and this encourages more meaningful qualitative research.

It was with this deep comfort in my researcher role that I entered into City Faith to conduct my final round of interviews. Although I knew a few friends who attended City Faith, and had occasionally participated in some of their services, I was unaware of any of the day-to-day organisational realities of this faith community. I was not acquainted with any of the staff members I interviewed and was only aware of City Faith's reputation as a creative church. Compared to Town Church, I was much more of a visiting researcher, and was not bringing pre-history into the research inquiry. As with EnviroCare, Logico and WebTech, I did not know much about their organisational culture, and so had minimal researcher bias, beyond what I had already discovered in my previous inquiries. One member of staff had vetted my interview questions, but beyond their brief exposure to my research instrument, none of the staff had prior knowledge of the interview specifics, thus maintaining the integrity of this research tool and allowing for comparisons between the other researched organisations.

As a large church, I was particularly interested in exploring how the innovative realities and leadership of the creative culture compared to Town Church, and seeing how this size difference may impact on the organisational culture. Similarly, I wondered if comparative analysis would also highlight the innovative practices that are unique to a faith-based setting, and what actions may be transferrable between the business and church domains.

Organisation Description

City Faith is a large independent Pentecostal church of 1000 members, located in an urban New Zealand setting. After a long involvement as a member of a mainstream Pentecostal denomination, City Faith became an autonomous, independent church in the 1990s. The current senior leaders have pastored within this organisation for over twenty years, including navigating the change from being denominationally governed to being locally led. The church currently has 13 full time staff and 10 part-time staff, covering a range of roles from leadership, creative arts, administration and pastoral care.

The church is led by a Leadership Team, composed of volunteer leaders and staff, each of whom is responsible for a specific area of the church. Within this team, the senior pastors and executive leaders provide the overall direction for the church and are responsible for the majority of the preaching and teaching at City Faith. They lead the team of staff and volunteers to keep City Faith functioning in both the day-to-day decisions and the wider strategic direction of the church community.

I held appreciative inquiry interviews with six staff members of City Faith, representing a cross-selection of the organisation (as selected by a member of the leadership team). The youngest participation was in their early 20s, while the eldest was in their mid-50s. The staff members were from a range of ministry foci, including administration, pastoral care and

senior leadership. Three of the participants were male, three were female, and each had been working at City Faith for at least 12 months.

Interview Findings

Although creativity has been posited as one of humanity's greatest resources (Toynbee, 1964), a workable and agreed upon definition has remained elusive for the academic domain of creativity research (Batey & Furnham, 2006). As Batey (2012) argues, the range of definitions has been both a strength of the field, in encouraging a diverse array of investigations into creativity and innovation, and a weakness, with this lack of consensus being held responsible for the degeneration of creative research in the early 1990s. Regardless of the value of the enigmatic definition, Batey (2012) claims it has led to four major foci in creative research; trait, process, press and product. Each of these foci leads to remarkably different researcher levels of analysis in their inquiries, with different assumptions directing the researcher's exploration (Drazin, Glynn & Kazanjian, 1999).

The most dominant of these four foci in recent creativity research has been the role of the product in defining creativity (Batey, 2012). Mumford's (2003) reflection on the history of creativity concludes that "Over the course of the last decade, however, we seem to have reached a general agreement that creativity involves the production of novel, useful products" (p. 17). As such, the dominant identifier of a creative process, environment or person is their ability to create novel or useful products (and by extension, services). This pragmatic and functionalist definition is useful for directing research towards improving organisational outcomes and

profitability, through the increase of creative products. This, in turn, can help in increasing revenue or decreasing costs that have previously been fixed. It does also, however, reduce the other three factors to mere means to achieving this end. For example, it does not define an environmental culture that allows more humanising interactions as creative if it does not result in an increased output.

Batey (2012) prototypes an integrative heuristic framework for creativity measurement, that attempts to locate, centralise and visualise the facets of creativity. Despite that, the functionalist paradigm has become the naturalised position and is assumed in most research inquiries (Drazin, 1990). It was not until this inquiry into City Faith that I recognised this assumed definition of creativity was similarly influencing my investigation. The majority of my focus was exploring the character traits of an organisational member who could help foster innovation, as justified by narratives of creative output. This assumption was also shared by the majority of the interview participants, who would recount stories of organisational creative highlights, which often finished with a discussion of the success of these creative moments. In each instance, the members discussed both the creative person and the creative environment, but only in relation to the success of the creative product.

City Faith, however, reflected on leadership and innovation through a different paradigm. Their definition of creativity was intrinsically aligned with their praxis of theology. This created a much more person-centric

understanding of creativity which let participants describe creativity in a range of ways:

It's an expression of how we see the world and how we do story. (Interview Participant B, 2014)

Creativity is the process of becoming the real me ... it's people becoming and having the permission to function in their gifting. (Interview Participant C, 2014)

Creativity is being made in the image of God and being co-creators ... it's driven by the imagination, gut, heart, desire. (Interview Participant A, 2014)

Given this person-centric interpretation of creativity, City Faith's leadership model was codified under the Ethical Distributive leader approach, reflecting their views on autonomy and leaderful organisations. The following discussion is based on analysis of their interview responses, and was organised under the topics of:

1. Innovation as Process
2. Creativity, Autonomy and Trust

Also, City Faith's responses shared similarities with previous organisations, predominantly along the topic of:

1. Leader as Environment Creator

The following discussion will explore these new interview themes and paradigms in relationship to both the participants' responses and the academic literature in this domain. These new perspectives will widen the focus of creative flourishing within an organisation, given their multi-faceted focus, as well as provide comparative analysis between the impact of story and the environment on innovation within an organisation.

Ethical Distributive Leadership

We want people to own this church, not rent it.

(Interview Participant E, 2014)

The fundamental leadership trait that I discovered at City Faith was a strong desire to distribute power among all the organisational members. Leadership was seen as an action to be embodied, not as a position to be held. As City Faith have a strong desire to see their organisational members and community transformed, they distribute power and leadership throughout their staff and volunteer base. By sharing power, they hope to create more leader-full actions in their organisation, resulting in more positive transformation in their community.

EnviroCare were the first organisation I researched that practiced the Ethical Distributive leadership model. The defining characteristic of EnviroCare's Ethical Distributive practice was the formal leaders providing regular opportunities for others to practice leadership. Participants from EnviroCare shared narratives of being given tasks and roles that were beyond their job description, yet allowed them to lead and enact change for their community. In each of these narratives, however, these opportunities were still mediated by the formal leaders. The participants were given opportunities - and until these were given, they remained passive Ethical Distributive leaders.

City Faith participants, however, practiced an active form of Ethical Distributive leadership. The senior leaders did not provide opportunities for leadership, but instead provided high degrees of autonomy and trust. The participants were then encouraged to pursue their own leadership opportunities, rather than wait for options to be distributed to them by their formal leaders. As a result, City Faith staff practiced responsibility over the entire innovation process, rather than just aspects of innovation, as each had the freedom to ideate, plan and develop ideas (if they chose to do so). Similarly, the participants were acting in an environment that provided almost total autonomy and trust in their actions, which allowed for new observations in the effect of Ethical Distributive leadership on innovation. These differences from the EnviroCare environment provide a deeper understanding of the Ethical Distributive leadership model, and City Faith serves as a comparative case to EnviroCare, showing how this model can be practiced in a faith-based organisation.

Innovation As Process

It's hard to put a finger on just one [creative highpoint],
because it's a process ... it's been a real creative process.

(Interview Participant C, 2014)

When reflecting on a key creative moment - whether an organisational or personal highpoint - many participants focused their narrative on the outcome, rather than on the process. This outcome focus shares a commonality with much of the creativity literature, which Drazin, Glynn and Kazanjian (1999) see as an ignorance of the impact of time on the creative process. As time is seen as an assumed and neutral aspect of the narrative, it takes a background role, leading to the creation of static models of creativity, and thus emphasising the adjustment of variables on improving creative outcomes. These models can function like a partial recipe - explaining the ingredients and the amounts to combine, but silent on the amount of preparation, rest and cooking time required. This approach fails to understand creativity as dynamic, and constantly unfolding over periods of time (Mohr, 1982).

This synchronic focus also minimises the human factor in the creative process. The creation of static models has a homogenising effect, assuming that the individual's engagement, energy and enthusiasm for the creative process remains constant throughout time (and also, across the personality divide of group members). This perspective allows for the

transferability of models across domains and industries, reducing the complexity of reality and increasing the level of perceived control for the organisational leader (Rosseau, 1985). This generalisation and simplification of creativity from “process” to “outcome” is congruent with the dominant functionalist perspective of many creativity researchers. It implicitly assumes that the way to increase creativity in one organisation is merely to adopt the model from another.

In the day-to-day organisational reality, however, an individual may vary in their engagement with the organisation, ranging from the proposal of solutions that may not be deemed as ‘creative’ (as they are neither novel nor useful), right through to fully focused, total engagement (Ford, 1996). This fluctuation in engagement changes in a moment-by-moment process, creating a complex creative action that moves in dynamic waves, rather than in a predictable, steady motion (Kahn, 1990). Similarly, the standard innovation model (ideation - implementation - diffusion) is assumed to move in a linear and recursive process, with organisational members following the steps in a logical and predictable manner (Lubart, 2001). Harvey’s (2014) excellent review of the creativity literature reveals that although studies in the artistic domains have revealed that groups do not often follow the expected linear creativity process (Elsbach & Kramer, 2003; Hargadon & Bechky, 2006), instead creating, rewarding, focusing and rewarding in a chaordic fashion, the linear nature of innovation in business and formal organisations has rarely been questioned (Fryer, 2012).

City Faith provides an interesting alternative to the traditional innovation outcome focus by discussing creativity as a time-based process. When asked to define a creative highlight, one individual commented,

It's hard to put a finger on just one, because it's a process. Even when I look at our internal structure and where we've come from in the ten years we've been here, I think that's been a real creative process.

(Interview Participant C, 2014)

This individual's criterion for creativity is aligned with the notion of process, not with outcome. This creative process had led to the formation of many successful outcomes (greater participant engagement, new ministries, new leadership structures, greater staffing), but had also led to some failed ventures that did not achieve their goals. To this participant, however, the outcome - whether good or bad - does not determine the creative highlight. Instead, the process of the organisation becoming more innovative is their central reference point. When asked further to explain their understanding of creativity, the participant responded,

It's hard to think of moments ... I think it's been a process. I think of creativity in so many areas, that it's a process of growing that in lots of different areas. It's a process that's involved in all parts of life. (Interview Participant C, 2014)

This participant's definition stands in stark contrast to other organisations in this research. Instead of discussing a micro-event of creativity, this participant discussed creativity from a macro-perspective, seeing how innovation has developed and grown over a period of ten years, and in a range of different organisational domains. Although this becomes difficult to define and discuss for the participant, this is the central creative highlight of their organisational experience - being part of a ten year, ongoing process to help transform the church and create new possibilities. Of particular note is the participant mentioning the time of this process - ten years - which was a trait shared among other participants at City Faith.

This is more of a process, than a moment...City Faith's most creative moment is when they saw value in some of our staff to execute and give time to bring creativity in all things ... that's been over the past two and a half years.

(Interview Participant B, 2014)

A creative highpoint - I would probably say over the last 18 months, one of the creative high-points has been as we started trying to do stuff creatively.

(Interview Participant F, 2014)

It's not so much a moment so much as the genesis of City Faith - this frictionless way of doing leadership and shaping a

church that is driven by something different from a lot of other churches ... the moment is one of our origins.

(Interview Participant A, 2014)

Each of these different participants responded to the question with a temporal focus, discussing an event-based question (“What has been a creative highpoint for your organisation?”) with an acknowledgement of time and process. The final response noted above extended the process focus with the language of journey, talking about ‘genesis’ and ‘origins’, suggesting an ongoing narrative of innovation, that City Faith is discovering as they continue in the story. This participant further described their organisation’s creativity as, “Less of a moment and more of a way”, reinforcing this metaphor of journey as a key understanding of their organisational creativity.

Raasch and von Hippel (2013) also use this language of journey in their discussion on innovation, highlighting that the outcomes are not the only meaningful measure of the success of organisational creativity efforts. Writing from a functionalist perspective, they reveal the benefits members receive from both participating in and understanding innovation as a journey, including the enjoyment, learning and reputation of being a creative participant. These are actualised regardless of the result of the innovation journey, and are a meaningful and real benefit to both the organisation and the participating members. This view, however, only partially expresses the perception of creativity at City Faith, as it fails to

fully notice the macro-level perception of the creative process that the participants shared.

Drazin, Glynn and Kazanjian's (1999) interpretation of creativity as a sense-making process provides a fuller understanding of the innovative reality at City Faith. Building on the work of Bateson's (1972) and Porac, Thomas, & Baden-Fuller's (1989) idea that individuals make meaning through the use of frames and cognitive schemes, they posit creativity as a socialised process of answering the question of, "What is it that is going on here?" When faced with the uncertainty of joining a new organisation, or of a new encounter, individuals refer to their cognitive map to make sense of the uncertainty, and then proceed forward in a manner that is congruent with their new understanding (Goffman, 1974). This is a dynamic and constantly negotiated process, both at an intrasubjective level (as the individual reflects on previous encounters and learns from current activities) and at an intersubjective level (as individuals discuss equivocal situations together) (Volkema, Farquhar & Bergmann, 1996).

This process is rarely neat and tidy, but often involves clashing perspectives and divergent frames of reference (Weick, 1995). It is through the dialectical conflicts, however, that unified social meaning emerges, creating a shared sense of "We", instead of the individualised "I" (Huff, 1988; Weick, 1995). This process takes time, and can be expressed as a journey of encounter with the unknown, discussion and disagreement, synthesis and solution, with all the social actors playing a

role, with varying degrees of engagement at various times (Goffman, 1974). In a primary sense, this is a creative act, with the organisation members creating new futures out of the unknown through their innate social sense-making activities. More importantly for City Faith, however, is their commonality of sense making of the innovative process, with all participants united in their conceptualisation of creativity as a process, rather than an event.

This process is critical as innovation flourishes in organisations with a clear collective purpose and a united organisational culture (Martins & Terblanche, 2003; Amiable & Kramer, 2011). The reason for this is twofold. Firstly, an organisation with a cohesive purpose will socialise new members into a commonality of innovation practices and definitions of creativity. Although the results of innovation remain largely unknown, organisational members have clarity on where the organisation is aiming to grow, the process of sharing and creating new ideas, and what stories of innovation are celebrated as part of the organisational history. Secondly, an intentional organisational culture will enact the organisational values and beliefs about creativity, communicating a clear message about what is valuable and meaningful to the organisation and their constituents (Tesluk, Faar & Klein, 1997). Rather than the organisation having to repeatedly direct the organisational members towards a desired future and micro-manage each potential innovation project, this intentional culture will guide the innovation efforts towards a collective, shared future.

Given the large, decentralised organisational structure of City Faith, and the strong voluntary component of their leader base, this understanding of innovation as process helps create a united direction without requiring continual micromanagement of each voluntary leader. Instead, as they begin to understand the stories of innovation and the importance of time in these narratives, the volunteer leaders can begin to participate in various stages of this process. One participant - a full time staff member - highlighted the value of the innovation process in this way.

Over that 18 months, each creative we've worked with has had to do specific parts for us. That's been part of the process of shoulder tapping, meeting together and fleshing some stuff out. (Interview Participant D, 2014)

As this participant described the formation of a creative ministry team, they highlighted the temporal nature of the process and how various volunteers were involved at different stages. Over these eighteen months, this team had been responsible for approximately eight creative events, yet the highlight for this leader was the process of the team developing over this period and different members participating in different stages. This leader recognised that for City Faith, this was the most valuable outcome, as it was creating a united direction for continuous creativity and innovation. Another participant described this result of viewing innovation as a process by saying,

We don't want to just run this, this and this. We're actually looking to have creativity across the community as something that's being lived out, known and experienced ... our core thing, what we're all about - is to cultivate a creative community. Events are one way to pull people together.

(Interview Participant A, 2014)

This comment highlights a key difference between City Faith and the other organisations in the research. The others were trying to innovate to create a product or service (event, ministry, support etc.) whereas City Faith focused on cultivating a community of innovation and creativity. They recognise that this is an ongoing process, and one that will be difficult to measure ("creativity...as something that's being lived out"), yet is essential to the vitality of the church. Whereas in other organisations, employees are a key factor in creating the ends (a product or service), at City Faith events and services are the key factor in creating a community of people. The relative success of this approach can be seen in the unity across the interviewed participants, with each using similar language and sharing the same narratives about their organisation's innovation and creative high-points. This trait was not shared by any of the other participating organisations to this level.

This innovative process has not been without its struggles. Its non-diachronic and organic nature can lead to different people embracing the opportunity to ideate and create in their department, but leave others more

reluctant to engage with such a chaotic process. Although the narratives of innovation are shared across the staff and volunteer leaders, the process perspective (rather than outcome perspective) has not resulted in a clear innovation model to follow. One participant commented:

I don't think there's any words that describe a commonality across the staff. I think we have to work at the sum total being bigger than our individual departments.

(Interview Participant E, 2014)

The struggle for full organisation acceptance of the innovation process is congruent with Gopalakrishnan and Damsanpour's (1997) definition of innovation as "a complex process with multiple, cumulative and conjunctive progressions of convergent, parallel and divergent activities" (p.16). This messy definition of innovation reflects the messy reality of the creative process at City Faith. When innovation is structured around a clear outcome, the organisation is able to action and model a simple and predictable plan. When it is focused on the process of people becoming creative, however, it is a much messier reality, transcending the usual spaces, lines and directions of the conventional models. The process becomes uncertain, and relies on improvisation and flexibility on behalf of the organisational members (Eisenhardt & Tabrizi, 1995).

This messy nature of innovation was noted by a few participants, who reflected on their expectations of their creativity process over the past two years, in light of the reality of their efforts:

Maybe I was being idealistic, hoping more (creatives) would come out. But over the past 18 months, we've probably worked closely with 5-6 creatives.

(Interview Participant D, 2014)

Does (our creative hopes) get lost in the details? Course it does. Too often. But that would be the rationale behind cultivating a creative community.

(Interview Participant A, 2014)

These participants recognise the adaption and participation of new processes takes longer than expected, with a lag between their expectation and the reality of this happening. This gradual acceptance is similar to Moore's technology adoption life cycle model (Moore, 1991), which theorises a bell-shaped curve adoption rate for users of new products. The innovators and early adopters are the first users of a product, followed by the early majority, the late majority and finally, the laggards. Bernstein and Singh (2008) extend Moore's model to the organisational innovation process, grouping organisational members into the same categories as users of a new product. The innovators are those who ideate and support a new creative opportunity; the early majority are

those who develop the idea, and the late majority and laggards are those who implement the innovation (Bernstein & Singh, 2008). As the idea develops and becomes more of a reality, the attitude of the increasing group moves from enthusiasm, to pragmatism, to skepticism, mirroring the emotions that occur in the traditional innovation process. Initial ideation gatherings are full of passion and energy, the iteration and development of the idea requires a more pragmatic, focussed attitude, and as the produce gets closer to launch, often a feeling of doubt surrounds the group.

Research into this innovation cycle has provided data revealing gaps between each of these groups (Sroufe, Curkivoc, Montanan & Melnyk, 2000). This temporal gap is caused by the differing attitudes of each group in the process, as well as a lack of communication between the early innovators and the future members who are required to develop the innovation further (Bernstein & Singh, 2008). As the City Faith interview participants were all full or part-time employees - in an organisation largely led by volunteers - the interview data reflects the enthusiasm and energy of the innovators and early adopters. As mentioned in the prior quotes, there is a gap between this group and the wider church, with a slight lack in uptake of creative opportunities. This is further reflected by the hopes and dreams of interview participants, saying:

Each department learning to believe in their own creativity.

(Interview Participant A, 2014)

People growing and going, “I believe in this, and want to be part of this!” (Interview Participant C, 2014)

People owning church, instead of renting it.
(Interview Participant E, 2014)

City Faith has a desire to see their wider organisational members participate in this innovative process, and recognise this gap between the staff’s time to focus on creativity and explore opportunities, and the volunteers’ limited resources and aversion to risk (as they do not have the same feeling of ownership of the organisation). The paid staff and senior leadership team attempt to minimise this gap through their deliberate practice of empowering autonomy and creating a culture of trust throughout City Faith, in order to encourage a more inclusive innovative environment.

Innovation, Autonomy and Trust

What I enjoy the most is they (City Faith) truly trust you,
at an authentic level.

(Interview Participant C, 2014)

Another dominant characteristic of City Faith I discovered was their focus on innovation as a time-based process, rather than an outcome-based moment, that was deeply desired to be shared among the organisation. As previously discussed, the leaders wanted a democratisation of innovation, with the wider church body participating in all stages of the process. In order to achieve this reality, City Faith leaders actively pursued the creation of a culture of trust, leading to autonomy, in order to empower the wider staff and volunteer basis. This trust has become a defining attribute of City Faith's innovation efforts, and exists as a hybrid action of both the Relational Nurturing and the Ethical Distributive leadership approach. Also, the strong trust at City Faith is a core social resource that is at the core of high-functioning organisations (Kofman & Senge, 1993).

Before exploring the centrality of trust in innovation, it is prudent to clarify what trust is. First, trust is a belief in the other, which assumes their actions will have positive outcomes for oneself (Dietz & Den Hartog, 2006; Whitener, Brodt, Korsgaard & Werner, 1998; Rosseau, Sitkin, Burt & Camerer, 1998). This psychological state is based on assumed probabilities grounded in experience, rather than gullibility or blind-faith in

the other (McEvily, Perrone & Zaheer, 2003). As such, trust begins as an expectation in how another organisational member will act. Trust is thus an inherently relational value, beginning in the mind of the individual in relationship. Second, however, trust must develop from the belief into a decision to trust the other (Costa, 2003). Trust is both a state, and then an intention to act from that expectation (Huff & Kelley, 2003). From this, it can be seen that trust is active and involves the resolve to participate in harmony with the belief, whereas trustworthiness is the passive attribute an individual may have earned. Finally, trust must be manifested in the action of following through with the trust-informed decision (Dietz & Den Hartog, 2006). This process model view of trust, moving from belief, to decision, to action, is central to understanding the role of trust in organisations, as “an expectation, a willingness to be vulnerable and a risk-taking act” (McEvily et al., p. 93).

The first stage of trust, however, can be clarified by determining what the rationale behind the belief in the other is based on. Trust can be grounded in the competency of the other, recognising their ability to solve problems with a predictable outcome (Tyler, 2003). This instrumental trust is useful when the skills and processes required to achieve an outcome are understood, such as when a manager trusts a new employee to complete a task that the manager has experience themselves with. When the process involves uncertainty or a skill range outside of the subject's knowledge, however, trust requires another basis for co-operative action to occur (Tyler & Huo, 2002).

This other basis is hypothesised as social trust, which is grounded on “on attributions about the motives of others. People infer whether they trust that others have the intention to do what is good for them, whether they are motivated to be ethical and fair.” (Tyler, 2003, p.559). This trust allows the subject to co-operate with another into a situation of unknown and risk, especially when this situation is difficult for the other to describe, or when the outcome may change along the way. For example, a patient rarely fully understands the process, skill-set or the particular outcomes of a medical procedure, but they do trust the doctor and their motivation to treat their ailment. As a result, they also trust the doctor to improvise according to the problems they encounter, and to make decisions on their behalf - based on both their medical expertise (which is a skill not shared by the patient) and on their ethical motivation.

It can be seen from this that social trust is an integral part of creating a culture of innovation. Innovation is inherently risky, having a range of potentially undesirable consequences that could prove costly to the organisation (Sgourev, 2012). A key part of that risk is the unknowable outcome of any innovation attempts; in trying to discover new opportunities for the organisation, it is impossible to plan where the process will lead. Within an innovative organisation, the leaders cannot have only instrumental trust in their team members, as both the outcome and the process are not predictable (Tyler, 2003). Instead, they must practice social trust, by believing in their team members, deciding to give

them opportunities to pursue the unknown and acting to allow their decision to be realised. This trusting organisational support is critical for long-term, sustainable innovation, as it has a compounding effect when it is consistently practiced (Amabile, 1988; Howe, 1993; Dovey, 2009). The impact of trust on innovation was exemplified in a PricewaterhouseCooper's study of FTSE 100 organisations, concluding that trust is the number one differentiating factor between the top innovators and the bottom innovators (Shockley-Zalabak & Morreale, 2011).

This thesis contends that trust is more visible when innovation is considered a process, as it is in City Faith. A process-model of innovation recognises the many varied steps involved in any innovation, from ideation through to implementation and future iterations on the outcome (Acklin, 2010). Each part of the innovation process requires a relationship of trust between the participants and organisation, to offset a fear of failure, fear of rejection of ideas, an acceptance of risk and prototyping, and a fear of wasted time (Dovey, 2009). Many innovations have resulted from the risky, unofficial sponsorship of ideas from organisational members, aware of the risk that their informal actions may have on their future in the organisation (Foster & Kaplan, 2001). Given the high level of fear and risk for the individual involved in an innovation process, it is essential that the participant has a high level of trust in both the organisation's missions and values, as well as in their leaders (Dovey, 2009).

The importance of this trust was clearly defined in the interviews with City Faith participants. Undergirding this organisational trust was a clear value set, the first of which was described by one participant:

Whether it's the exact values that matter, or the way they're lived out - it's hard to know. We've got People, Integrity, Authenticity, Vulnerability and Simplicity ... these things matter and they will shape where City Faith goes.

(Interview Participant A, 2014)

Dovey (2009) links the courage of risk-taking innovative participants to “the deep trust that they have in the mission of the organisation – an endeavour that resonates directly with their personal, or existential, value proposition.” (p. 313). City Faith, however, does not have an explicit mission or vision - instead they are driven by a collection of values. These values are not an organisational mantra or the result of a branding exercise (one participant said, “They’ve been seen not as a slogan - they’re not on the wall!”), but have been developed from the story of a senior leader, who has then communicated these over the past twenty years. These values were communicated - either explicitly or implicitly - in the majority of the interviews, and seen as a key factor in the participant relationship with the organisation. For example,

My hope was that I would do ministry with a team that was interested in me, and my life, and my family - not just what I

could produce. That's what I thought I could find - and did find - at City Faith. (Interview Participant C, 2014)

City Faith are really big on this being family - it's more than my experience of what family is.

(Interview Participant D, 2014)

Sitting together, you're sparking each other - because you have relationship and friendship.

(Interview Participant B, 2014)

These responses highlight the strong relational focus that is present among City Faith staff and leaders. They use language of family and friendship to describe interactions with their co-workers and with the organisational culture, rather than more formalised business discourse. These comments suggest a deep resonance between the organisation's values and the individuals' beliefs. Similar to the Relational Nurturing discourse that was present at Town Church, these actions create an environment conducive to social trust - between the individuals, the organisation and the leaders.

This trust, however, is not an asset that is earned by organisational members, but is a gifted or assumed trust from the leadership of City Faith. One narrative from a participant illustrates this:

From day one ... I straight away said, "Can we do this?". I put a new strategy in place, and they (leaders) were like, "Go for it!". There was cool growth and that sort of thing. From the word "Go" I was allowed to kick things off and go for it. (Interview Participant C, 2014)

When prompted to further reflect on this narrative, the participant commented:

There's a massive trust in terms of me trying to fulfil my vision in terms of young adults and young people, with City Faith's value set. (Interview Participant C, 2014)

The respondent's first question - "Can we do this?" - is a question exploring the trust the leaders place in them. As they are implementing a new strategy from the beginning, they recognise the risk of failure and the necessity of organisational support for this new venture (Hamel, 2000). In response to this risk, they request the validation of their leaders in their exploration and innovation process. This was particularly important for Participant C, as they had come from an employment background based on performance and outcome, not on person. The leader's reply revealed their social trust in the individual, as they communicated their belief in them, as well as allowing them to explore new opportunities for City Faith. This trust is shown to be even stronger in the participant's reflection, as they phrase their actions as 'fulfil(ling) my vision', showing their perception

of their actions as being driven by their own dreams of the future. They are aligned, however, with City Faith's values, resulting in a two-way trust relationship; the participant trust the church to allow them to work out of their own vision, and the church trusts the participant to work out of their values.

This high level of social trust that this thesis has revealed at City Faith results in proactive decision among the organisational members, encouraging an environment of autonomy (Nembhard & Edmondson 2006; Morrison & Phelps, 1999). Resonating with the Distributive Leadership practices at EnviroCare, this autonomy is defined as the level of control and discretion organisational members have in their day-to-day work practices (Hackman & Oldman, 1976). Organisations that allow workers autonomy in their individual roles often find an increase in responsibility, flexibility and creativity among their workforce (Chalofsky & Krishna, 2009). This thesis contends that this can be attributed to the value-alignment of the individual and the organisation, and the organisation's trust in the employee's potential to make a meaningful difference. Edison Liu, a division head at Singapore's Biopolis, explained the culture of autonomy at their research centre by saying,

We have been given a paintbrush that is quite broad, with a palette that has lots of colour. We're given tools to really do something, to draw something nice. That artist in us, that desire to create something beautiful comes out because of

the resources and degrees of freedom that are given
us. (Kao, 2007, p.36)

Kao (2007) highlights two key factors in creating this culture of autonomy at Biopolis: trust and degrees of freedom. For Tyler (2003) the trust is manifested through the organisation providing the tools and resources to the organisational member, and so expressing their belief and decision to trust. The provision of degrees of freedom for the employee to control their operations is essential for a sustainable culture of autonomy and innovation, as this allows the employee to contribute their own individual knowledge to their day-to-day task and to the organisation (Siemsen, Roth, Balasubramanian & Anand, 2009). Also, when this knowledge leads to suggestions for change and new ideas, the employee is more likely to accept and implement the change, because they have had a vested stake in the process (Joyce, McGee & Slocum, 1997). Providing these degrees of freedom is both an expression of the trust the leaders have in their organisational members, as well as a motivation to implement change, feel responsibility toward the organisation and work harder (Piccolo & Colquitt, 2006; Ryan & Deci, 2000).

This was expressed by one of the participants, who recounted their employment history prior to working at City Faith.

I was coming from a place where there wasn't as much support or freedom to try anything and give it a go. Whereas

now - anything! Anything! I say something, and they go,
“Yeah man! Try anything!”

I'd never really known that kind of freedom, so I was just
testing the waters a bit and going, “Should we try this? Or
this?” and them going, “Great!”

(Interview Participant D, 2014)

This participant began their narrative talking about the lack of trust in the organisation - “support” - but joined the trust with the lack of autonomy available to them. They suggest that the lack of support directly impacted the lack of freedom they experienced in their role. The leaders in their previous role acted as gate-keepers of the employee's day-to-day activities, and had created a permission-withholding environment that did not allow worker autonomy.

In contrast, at City Faith the participant found a culture that supported them in their activities and was permission-giving in their leadership practices. The participant would still ask for the permission of the leaders to try something new, but encountered trust and support, leading to new innovative ministries and practices within City Faith. In turn, the organisation distributes leadership among all willing members, creating a leader-full organisation. This reinforces the importance of organisational support in creating an environment that is conducive to creativity (Amabile, 1988). When the participant encountered trust and support, they were

encouraged to try new ventures - with the fear of failure minimised by the leadership. One participant reported that the trust at City Faith looked like, “Plenty of room to fail and try things”. The removal of the fear of failure encourages creativity to flourish (Zander & Zander, 2000), and for City Faith to continually learn and innovate from the members’ innovative efforts (Shah, 2013).

Although this autonomy at City Faith does allow for innovation, the degree of freedom is a key factor to explore (Kao, 2007). Counter-intuitively, total freedom does not allow for the most creative environment, with innovation instead flourishing under appropriate restraints (Stokes, 2001; Finke, 1990). When organisations use unbounded creativity methods - giving organisational members total freedom to create and plan wherever their mind wanders - they usually result in ideas that are not aligned with the organisation’s goals, brand and capabilities (Goldenberg, Mazursky & Solomon, 1999). In contrast, organisations that employ constrained freedom increase their creativity, by directing and limiting the scope of their ideation. This reduces reliable, repetitive answers and instead leads to more unusual, unexpected suggestions that are more aligned with the organisation’s vision (Reitman, 1965; Stokes, 2001).

As such, innovative organisations encourage healthy constraints on their projects to foster greater creativity (Kelley & Littman, 2001). Often, these constraints are time or input-resource based, with leaders encouraging members to ideate rapidly, using whatever materials are at hand. These

restrictions can inhibit the conventional responses, force members to prototype and change ideas at a greater speed, and experiment with new combinations of familiar resources (Ridgway & Price, 1991; Scopelliti, Cillo, Busacca & Mazursky, 2014). Although there is a strong body of research exploring the impact of time and resource constraints on creativity (Burroughs & Mick, 2004; Ridgway & Price, 1991; Moreau & Dahl, 2005; Scranton & Gibbert, 2009), there is little exploration on the impact of leadership constraints on innovation practice. City Faith, having a high degree of autonomy, stands as a valid subject to explore the effect of leadership restrictions on the quality of innovation.

Although all of the City Faith participants highlighted the freedom that was available to them, three of the participants mentioned off hand about the high-degree that was entrusted to them. Their comments included:

There's almost too much freedom, with me asking, "You sure you don't want to pull us back a bit?" and them (leaders) going, "Go! Get in that boat!" - and me going, "OK!" (Interview Participant D, 2014)

Sometimes I feel like there's a lot of freedom to have an idea and explore it. There's no-one peering over your shoulder, accounting for your time - which we probably need sometimes!

(Interview Participant F, 2014)

I'd love to see people being focused on the right areas, and then having the freedom to be really creative in that role. I think because of that freedom, we can get distracted or side-tracked.

(Interview Participant B, 2014)

Although the positive comments about the organisation's allowance for autonomy outweighed these critical observations, there is a small desire for more direction or managed freedom from these employees. They recognise that unrestricted freedom can lead to unhelpful distraction or becoming 'side-tracked', focusing their energy on areas and ideas that may not be beneficial to themselves or the organisation. Instead of creatively exploring the domain that they are responsible for, or one that is deemed central to the life of the church, they lack direct focus as to where they should direct their freedom to discover. This highlights the tension required in maintaining degrees of freedom (Kao, 2007), where the balance of leadership direction and autonomy must be maintained for creativity to flourish. Too much control minimises the possibility of employees exploring new ideas and possibilities (Amabile, 1988; Kelley & Littman, 2001), whereas too much autonomy leads to distractions and low creative focus.

One participant recognised this balancing act and its impact on City Faith's creativity, saying,

The beauty and downfall of working in a church is it's easy to get distracted. There's not a set job description of "This is how you do your role ..." - so having tools and ways of working that would help us use our time smarter, and would help us move forward.

(Interview Participant B, 2014)

This participant assumes that autonomy and the lack of clear job demarcations are natural for working at church, and seems to accept this reality. Their proposed solution, however, it not clarifying the job description or providing a tighter degree of freedom, appears to be through using "tools" and alternative approaches to work. As the majority of this participant's work is knowledge based, these tools are likely to be time-management and productivity software, to help prioritise tasks and achieve goals. These solutions, however, still rely on the total autonomy of the employee being maintained, with the tools requiring self-implementation and adaption. There was no discussion of training or creating new organisational processes - changing the person or the process in the innovation cycle - but instead the proposed solutions are resource focused. Despite the organisational members' (partial) awareness of the limitations of their autonomy, they are unwilling to negotiate or critique this aspect of their culture.

The foundation of this aspect of organisational culture is a collection of values and beliefs, that are often expressed in story (Hatch, 1993; Briody, Pester & Trotter, 2012). These stories can be used to promote a particular viewpoint, or to maintain a current norm - making things seem “usual” around the organisation (Vickers, 2008). In this scenario, one participant referred to a key narrative one of the founding leaders had lived and shared, suggesting this is behind the high level of freedom allowed to them.

(The values) come out of a story - they come out of (Senior Leader’s) story, which has massively shaped the story of City Faith. Some of that has been reactionary and probably needs to come back some, but their former years...they had experience with stuff that made them go - “I’m never going to be that kind of leader”. It comes out of that essentially.

(Interview Participant A, 2014)

Although this participant only mentioned this story in passing, further questions revealed that the senior leader had begun their time in professional ministry at another church, many years prior. Unfortunately, this leader was working under a pastor who thrived on power and control, creating an environment of coercion and fear. The senior leader resolved to ‘never be that kind of leader’, and has strived to create an environment of total freedom and acceptance. Although this move is reactionary, it is

highly valued by the employees, with each participant acknowledging the role of the senior leader in their life, for example:

Ultimately, most of us who work here would say, “I’d do anything for (Senior Leaders)”, because they changed our lives. I love getting to work for them, they are the most encouraging, life-changing leaders I’ve ever come across. (Interview Participant B, 2014)

The City Faith leadership style is appreciated by the employees and organisational members, and has some obvious and significant benefits to the organisation: high level of emotional support, genuine care among organisational members, joy at work and creating a true sense of belonging. As this thesis has shown, however, their aversion to any action that resembles control appears to restrict innovation at City Faith, by not providing clear direction or challenge for organisational members to solve. The autonomy that is allowed does provide a catalyst for creativity that is unique to City Faith among the other organisations studied, but its unrestricted nature mitigates the possibility of the innovative reality.

Although this autonomy is central to motivating individuals towards greater engagement at work, it is only one part of the process (Chalofsky & Krishna, 2009). Also required is an ongoing sense of mastery of the individual’s craft, and a deep sense of purpose, connecting their work with a higher vision (Pink, 2009). City Faith’s vision, however, was described by

participants as,

Our vision is to help you fulfil your vision.

(Interview Participants A; B; C, 2014)

Despite the fact that this phrase is playful, catchy and empowering of autonomy, it lacks direction and scale, and does not lead City Faith members to a connection with a larger purpose. Instead, it can leave members with questions, such as - what if I don't know my vision? What if our visions are pulling our organisation in too many different directions? What if our team is composed of people with competing personal visions? What if my vision changes midway through a project?

In terms of autonomy, City Faith was a radical case out of the studied organisations, and the interview participants appreciated this empowerment and freedom that was entrusted to them. The organisation members utilised this opportunity to create and envision new futures, and were excited by the freedom that was available. The autonomy did empower creativity and innovation within City Faith, but I contend that the total autonomy restricted the potential of this creativity, by confusing leadership direction with oppressive control. The leader's formational story of their previous church experience has a powerful shaping effect on the creative reality at City Faith, and highlights the important interplay between degrees of freedom and innovation output.

Leader as Environment Creator

Different environments would draw out our creativity.

(Interview Participant B, 2014)

When engaging in the research interviews with Logico, a common theme was discovered among the participants of the importance of the leader as the creator of environments. Although the participants acknowledged the social environment as a key element in the creative process, they also referred to the physical space as instrumental in their creative thinking. City Faith had a very similar focus on the physical environment, with all the participants referring to the impact space has on both their own creativity, and other's creativity. They are, however, much more explicit in their discussion on the importance of space, building on Logico's concept of 'inspiring spaces', by providing more concrete examples and challenges to their current physical location.

Logico's focus was on external spaces from the organisation, using the example of visiting a TED conference. Here, the participants discussed the impact of the conference ("a TED conference is like 'BOOM BOOM'") by focusing on the environment, rather than just the information being communicated. Although their phrasing around the impact - and the causation of the impact - was unclear and enigmatic, the effect of the impact was clear. This reflects a dominant theme in the literature; researchers are aware that the physical environment does impact

creativity, but they are unaware of what this impact is (Dul & Ceylan, 2011; Sailer, 2010). As such, many researchers have chosen to focus on the social environment's impact on creativity, as "phenomena like creativity, knowledge flow...are not only hard to grasp and measure in their own right, but virtually impossible to coherently analyse in relation to space" (Sailer, 2011, p. 7). This reflects the difficulty of functionally modelling this relationship, given the many variables and unknown moderators that can impact the creative process, itself an intangible (Amabile et al., 1996). City Faith's responses, however, provide a detailed description of the importance of space to their creative process, allowing some general theories to be proposed.

The majority of comments about the significance of the spatial environment were in response to a question asking the participants about the changes they would like to see occurring in the next five years. These comments included:

To have a fully renovated building, from top-to-toe - how we'd dream it to be. (Interview Participant B, 2014)

The building has been built - the environment downstairs is easier to work with. (Interview Participant D, 2014)

A warehouse or studio where we can do these things
(creative arts) and encourage the creativity of City Faith.
(Interview Participant D, 2014)

The building would look quite different. It would reflect more
of who we are.

(Interview Participant A, 2014)

Each of these participants discussed how the current building does not meet their current needs, especially for their creative desires for the future. Inherent in their language is a sense of connection between creativity and space - whether the space is seen as the total enabler of creativity (as with the comments about the warehouse/studio, which was seen as required for these creative arts), or is a result of creativity, as reflected in the language of “how we’d dream it to be”. From this perspective, City Faith see creativity and space exist in a circular relationship, with each inspiring the other - or being limited by the lack in the other.

The spatial environment is seen as inspiring creativity through many participant narratives, with the most striking example being discussed around a worship event, called Hydrate. This gathering involved a diverse range of church members gathering at the back of a farm at Raglan, to make music, read, meditate, walk and worship, over a long weekend. Three of the participants mentioned this event as a high-point of creativity,

and the founder of the event shared the story behind the foundation of Hydrate.

I'd been down the back of this farm a number of times, and it was really birthed out of being there, and my passion for worship. I thought, "Something has got to happen down here! This place is awesome!"

It'd be ideal to have some kind of worship event or experience down there, because the place itself is so cool. That lived with me for some time, and it didn't put too much pressure on me - it just lived with me for a couple of years. (Interview Participant A, 2014)

This participant's use of organic language ("birthed") reveals how this process was conceived through their interaction with the space. The participant did not go down to this farm seeking a site for an event, but being in this space evoked a sense of possibility and inspired the idea for what would eventually become a reality. Space functioned as an inspiring factor, in a mode similar to the ancient conceptions of the creative Muses - divine beings who would encounter the passive agent and give them a creative spark (Tsai & Cos, 2012). Although the classical Muses of Greek mythology were not bound by space, shrines to the Muses were built in the centre of certain Greek towns, to both encourage encounters and inspire the local artists (Sciarrino, 2004). This participant's awareness of

the significance of space to the creative process is part of a long historical tradition, culminating in the appointment of nine European cities to stimulate cultural creativity (Laushway, 2000).

This inspiration element of the creative process is often down-played (e.g., Rothenberg, 1970; Fehrman, 1980) or explained as a mythical hangover from Greek culture (Sawyer, 2006). However, even if inspiration does play a minor role in the creative process, this thesis contends that it is still a significant part of the process. Recent research suggests that inspiration is crucial for efficient, productive creative breakthroughs to occur, and although difficult to measure, is worthy of attention (Thrash, Maruskin, Cassidy, Fryer & Ryan, 2010). It is in the motivational state of inspiration that creative ideas can be created by chance or from the unconscious process, leading to compelling ideas that are pursued by the individual (Simonton, 2003; Dijksterhuis & Nordgren, 2006).

Thrash and Elliot's (2003) research theorised a tripartite model that define the state of inspiration. Firstly, inspiration occurs when one becomes vividly aware of possibilities that transcend the usual experience. This awareness is evocative, and is created and maintained by a stimulus object, or person. Usually, the individual places the responsibility or power of inspiration into the stimulus, speaking of "being inspired", thus positing themselves as the passive recipient of inspiration. Finally, inspiration motivates the individual to express and actualise the new idea or vision (Thrash, 2007; Thrash & Elliot, 2003). As such, inspiration transcends the

ordinary, evokes the recipient and motivates towards actualisation. Thrash and Elliot's (2003) research, however, ignores place as a stimulus for inspiration, focusing instead on discrete objects, people or processes.

The participant's narrative about the inception of Hydrate reveals how the physical environment also functions as a catalysing conduit for inspiration. They talked about a moment when they had the idea for a new event at the back of the farm, that was new and unique to both this individual and this space. This transcendent idea evoked passion within the individual, who talks about the idea "living with me" and "not putting pressure on me" - giving the agency over to the idea and the place. This idea was a living idea, that had been birthed for the participant. Finally, the place motivated the participant to turn the idea into the reality, when they decided, "We could do that!" (Interview Participant A, 2014).

This inspirational state that was created by the farm in Raglan was also something that City Faith participants desired to create in their weekly Sunday gatherings. One participant described the church's creative team's role as 'creating environments', and reflected on a particular Sunday focused on 'Lament':

We created an environment where people were encouraged to come before God and talk about their laments. The way we did the night, the creative elements, the song, the environment we created ... was just a really powerful night

for people, because it was different from what they'd usually find in a church setting.

We gave people time and space in an environment that was dark ... I remember the impression more than the actualities.

(Interview Participant B, 2014)

In this narrative, the participant is agent over the environment, in the hope that the space will be inspirational for those who attend. This shows the two-way relationship between environment and creativity, with the participant's team using creativity to create a space, that they hope will inspire more creativity. This member's description of the night as 'powerful' and 'different', suggests an environment that is a break from the mundane will help empower transcendent possibilities - ideas that are different from the usual experience. Similarly, this language expresses the evocative nature of the evening - the night itself is described as 'powerful' - giving agency for change and impact to the physical space. Finally, the participant is unable to comment on the motivation of the event - as they were the creator of the environment, rather than the recipient - yet alludes to the possible impact this space may have had on attendees:

Being able to walk people on a journey of being able to come before God honestly, and then - also looking to hope at the end of things - was a real powerful time for me."

(Interview Participant B, 2014)

It is this participant's belief that they had created an inspirational environment that motivated people towards God. This unmeasurable goal was shared by the creator of the Hydrate week, who stated,

The thing I value is the role and responsibility I have in creating an environment for people to meet with God, essentially. (Interview Participant A, 2014)

Both of these participants saw the creative construction of a physical environment as a key aspect of their role in City Faith. They believe that it is through encounters with these environments that others are inspired towards change. Given City Faith's function as a religious organisation, their goal is for a truly transcendent encounter, when the participant in the environment does not just encounter ideas that transcend the ordinary, but encounters a God who transcends the usual. Regardless of the *telos* of the environment, the interview participants all recognised that physical space is not a neutral participant in the creative process, but impacts the ideas that are generated and the motivation to actualise the ideas, in an intangible way.

This recognition drives the frustration that some of the interview participants had with their current formal church space. As they understood the significance of space, they felt limited and restricted with the spatial reality they had to work with. Participants said:

Currently we have an environment that does not reflect something of a creative God. It reflects boring, stagnant, bums on seats. (Interview Participant D, 2014)

It communicates that we have neglected the reality that space matters and space speaks to our embodiment. We've ignored it, and we don't really have an idea of what it is to be a person, in a third-space, that matters.

(Interview Participant A, 2014)

Architecturally, we'd have an environment that reflected a lot more about what we thought about humanity and theology.

(Interview Participant B, 2014)

I would see a different space. It's a space where community can better happen and environments where people can sit, chat, meet and talk ... the sanctuary would feel different. It would look different - there would be art, sounds and smells that looked different.

(Interview Participant D, 2014)

Lighting would be different - the way a space contributes to creativity is huge!

(Interview Participant B, 2014)

The environment downstairs would need to be easier to work with. (Interview Participant D, 2014)

The participants saw their communal worship space as an environment that was not conducive to creativity. As a large theatre-like building, they interpret the space as mundane, numbers-focused and normal - it did not inspire difference or creativity. Their current space was perceived as a restrictor on their creative output, and its limitations were assumed to be fixed. The participants were focused on discussing how they would change these restrictions of the space, rather than exploring how they could work within these limitations. The final comment listed above highlights the relationship between the interview participants and the space, suggesting that the space is difficult to work with. This language explains the participant in relationship with the space, and currently struggling to work in harmony with the physical environment - limited by its lack of adaptability. The frustration with a rigid, immovable environment is a barrier to creativity, as it does not create an ideal positive state to ideate and develop ideas in (Seelig, 2007).

One participant from City Faith, however, did not share this focus on changing the physical environment. When asked about three changes they would make to improve City Faith's vitality and health, they responded:

It wouldn't be a new building. I would wager most of the people said that! I think in a sense, we've got greater challenges than a building.

(Interview Participant E, 2014)

This participant identified the restriction of the building as a challenge to the organisation, but did not believe it was of primary importance to City Faith. Rather than being a flippant disregard for the importance of environment to creativity, this participant's prior narrative about their role in environment creating helps interpret their view.

The time I'm at my most creative ... I referee for the Waikato Rugby Union ... In the 80 minutes you have a whole raft of unknowns. That's the challenge for me. Over 80 minutes, you can take peoples' actions, reactions, the bounce of the ball, conditions, the wind, bad tempers ... and you can create an enjoyable spectacle for 35 players and 200-400 people ... that's incredible for me.

(Interview Participant E, 2014)

This participant highlights that their act of creating an environment is a highly skilled process of working with the limitations, restrictions and chaotic events that they encounter, to weave them into a coherent experience. As the creative process itself requires flexibility and adaptiveness to explore new possibilities (Leonard & Sensiper, 1998), this

acceptance of the limitations and chaos is helpful to new knowledge creation (Smith & Paquette, 2010). Knowledge creation and creativity are not static (Smith & Paquette, 2010). This participant highlights that the creation of an environment that is conducive to creativity is also dynamic and enigmatic, requiring a constant negotiation between physical, social, aesthetic and emotional limitations and opportunities.

By combining these two perspectives on the environment, this thesis develops a more holistic model. The physical environment is a catalysing factor in the early stages of creative inspiration, through its ability to stimulate ideas that transcend the ordinary and motivate the individual towards acting on these ideas. These ideas, however, will emerge from the environment that is created by the organisation, which must manage the limitations, seeking to see creative possibilities among the restrictions. Ultimately, this physical environment is only one aspect of the ideation environment, and without a healthy social environment of conversation, honesty and trust, the creative ideas will suffer (Sailer, 2011).

Comparative Analysis

The key distinctions between Town Church and City Faith is their difference in size and their stability of leadership. City Faith is larger in terms of both staff and weekly attendees, with approximately twice as many church members than Town Church. Also, although Town Church has a longer organisational history than City Faith, City Faith has a more stable leadership history, as their current leader has been in their position for over twenty years. In comparison, Town Church's senior leader has only been in their role for two years. These key differences lie behind some prominent comparisons in the leadership of innovation between these two churches.

Town Church has a minority innovation lifestyle of the Dirty Handed Rebel. This role was created by a frustration in the lack of risk-taking by the formal leaders, resulting in other organisational members practicing innovation outside of the formal channels. The members who identified with this approach cited the difference in language and action of the leaders, who talked about taking risk but did not model it. This "saying-doing" gap was a source of tension for these participants, who were then motivated to take action themselves, without waiting for permission from their leaders. Although this was the minority innovation model at Town Church, it was an organisational reality and an alternative voice among the dominant discourse.

City Faith, however, had no participants citing frustration at a lack of consistency between the language and actions of their leadership. As such, there was no narratives of innovation outside of the channels, or behind the leader's backs. Instead, the participants were appreciative of the risks that the leadership had taken, especially the risk of entrusting them with a high degree of autonomy. The integrity of this decision motivates the organisational members to take risks in innovation, with the encouragement of their leaders. Although the high degree of freedom does limit their creativity, it negates the need for rebellious actions or prototyping innovations before communicating them to the leaders. City Faith's permission giving approach to their Ethical Distributive leadership, rooted in the senior leader's story of prior employment, results in the Dirty Handed Rebel being an irrelevant model that is not present in their environment.

Similarly, Town Church leaders spoke of their organisational innovation highlights involving senior leaders making decisions in formal meetings. They recognised a need for more creative thinkers, that they then desired to be in these senior gatherings, where the decisions were made. From this perspective, creativity was essential to decision making at the senior levels of the organisation, which could then be applied down to the organisation. Innovation is required to be pulled out of leaders during formal brainstorming sessions and conversations, in a controlled manner, and then discussed, approved and applied.

The focus at City Faith, however, was on allowing innovation to flourish at all levels of the organisation. The members of the creative team idealised the future where “each department (is) learning to believe in their own creativity”. Given the large size of City Faith, they desired creativity to be dispersed among all aspects of the organisation, as this would be beneficial for the church as a whole. This desire was one of their motivating factors behind creating inspiring environments, as this would allow creativity to grow organically among organisational members. This perspective was also reflected in the language City Faith members used to speak about creativity, talking about ideas being birthed, growing and dying. This organic language reveals their view of creativity as something to be nurtured and developed, rather than managed and drawn out.

This difference was also shared by Logico, which also relied on senior leadership for their creative output. The majority of the narratives of creativity from Logico were focused on actions and results involving the founder or managing director, placing the innovation responsibility on their shoulders. Although Logico was actively attempting to democratise their innovation, by the founder encouraging employees to share their ideas with the senior leadership team, they had not resourced innovation to the extent that City Faith did. Logico required employees to notice issues, generate ideas, assess them for feasibility - and then share them with the senior team. City Faith, on the other hand, actively resourced a Creative Team to help different areas grow their creative potential, and to seek out creative opportunities that City Faith could pursue. This was empowered

by the senior leadership, but was entrusted to make decisions and actualise ideas without senior leadership's authority. Although less restrictive than Town Church, Logico still had a more permission-withholding mindset than City Faith.

Finally, WebTech had a strong characteristic of the leader as Relational Nurturer, with their practice of pastoral care. Participants described the strong level of friendship that the directors deliberately encouraged through regular meetings, using language like, "good friends" and "lasting impact". This was a strong organisational value for WebTech, resulting in a united team that could share ideas and critique concepts together, without critiquing the individual. Each interviewed participant highlighted the importance of their pastoral care and the relational environment it had created, and how this had impacted their enjoyment at work.

Similarly, City Faith described a high level of care and relationship in their organisation. One participant noted that, while engaging in the pursuit of a creative idea:

You're sparking each other - and because you have relationship and friendship - it's a great environment to have a bit of an argument and a bit of a discussion.

(Interview Participant B, 2014)

This relational environment was integral to the innovative success of both WebTech and City Faith, as they relied on interactions between organisation members to improve the ideas. Both organisations shared narratives that had ideas coming from a range of members, with ideas being shared and developed further in teams and through informal conversation. Although City Faith did put a higher value on the importance of an inspirational environment, both WebTech and City Faith intentionally developed a healthy social environment, to improve their organisational innovation.

Concluding Reflections

At the outset of this research, I was hoping to discover some quick-fix, Magic-Bullet solutions that organisational leaders could adapt and see a rapid increase in their innovation output. I was assuming that creating a creative culture was similar to following an ingredient list, and the organisations that were out-performing others simply had adhered to the innovative requirements more faithfully than organisations that were not. Many theorists proposed differing lists required to make an organisation innovative, from Amabile and Grykiewicz's (1999) eight-dimension model leading to creativity through intrinsic motivation, through to Ekvail's (1996) nine-dimensional psychological theory. Regardless of the differences between the models, I assumed my research would discover that some organisations had glaring lacks in their day-to-day practices, and the addition of a factor (whether it was supervisory encouragement, workload pressure or play) would transform their reality.

Through my observations, however, I have discovered that the challenge for the leaders at each organisation is not the addition or removal of these factors as much as the balancing of tension between these factors. To further the baking analogy - most of these organisations had all the ingredients, but their challenge was understanding how much of each to add into the bowl. Magnusson, Boccardelli & Börjesson (2009) highlighted one aspect of this difficult leadership act, stating, "(this) is a delicate situation that many firms find themselves in, having to deal with long-term

demands on renewal, change and flexibility in parallel with short-term needs for efficiency and profitability.” (p.2).

This tension management is one that all organisations must face; understanding how they can be incrementally innovative in the short-term while allowing for more radical innovation to transform their organisation for the future. However, there is a range of other dualities that must be effectively balanced by the organisational leaders, including the autonomy and process balance, time freedom and time pressure, personal and corporate vision, profitability and exploration. Each of these factors are necessary for a healthy innovation environment to occur, yet they often appear to be mutually exclusive to their counterpart. The leadership challenge is defining the equilibrium point and attempting to maintain that, while aware of the constant state of organisational flux that surrounds.

This need for balance became apparent due to the outlying nature of several of WebTech’s practices. I was amazed by the high level of freedom that was given to these staff members, and by the amount of trust that was present in the organisation. I assumed that given this dominant model of distributive leadership, this organisation would be rich in narratives of innovation, and desiring even more freedom to catalyse the cycle. Instead, the majority of the participants noticed a need for a pulling back of the freedom - a balancing of the freedom - with more control provided. This freedom allowed them to innovate, but they were at a disequilibrium point,

and believed they could be more effective when their environment was well balanced.

Each of the leadership styles that has been discovered and discussed over the course of this research appear to represent a point of perceived equilibrium, rather than totally different characteristics. The Distributive Leader, for example, believe the innovation equilibrium is achieved with a high level of autonomy, and a low level of control, whereas the Transcendent Leader values higher levels of supervisory control, with lower levels of freedom. Each style acknowledges the need for both elements, but the relative importance of autonomy and control are different between them.

It was only as the conclusion of this study that this observation became apparent to me. The Transcendent Leader and the Dirty Handed Rebel are not two different compositions of a leader; instead, they are diametrically opposed styles of leadership. This rich array of leadership styles is not a collection of approaches that are right or wrong, but instead reflects a range of approaches leaders can take to foster innovation in an organisation. Hopefully, the organisations that are strong in one area can learn from the other styles, and discover new actions and possibilities to allow innovation to flourish. Then, these leadership styles and actions can become different models of creativity in dialogue with one another, rather than serve as a one-size-fits-all approach.

CHAPTER VII. CONCLUSION

Roughly 2000 years after Joshua's encounter with the angelic being on the shores of the Jordan River, another notable Hebrew reflected on the teachings of the Torah and Jesus. In a short, yet compelling statement, James wrote, "Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says" (James 1:23). Although these words were originally intended for a small Jewish community struggling for identity in the Graeco-Roman world, they have a striking resonance to the academic community's current research efforts and their relationship with participating research organisations (Van de Ven, 2007). As described in the opening to this thesis, I have been frustrated by research that appears to be an end in itself, rather than an instrument for change and improvement. My stated desire has been for the creation of actionable knowledge (Aspinwall et al., 2014) that the participating organisations can benefit from by applying it to their present realities. This concluding chapter, therefore, will not just summarise the main findings of this thesis but then suggest actions for each of the organisation to consider. The aim is that this research will both advance understanding of the leadership of innovation, as well as satisfying the demands of action research by improving innovation in the participating organisations.

Main Findings

Leadership of Innovation Styles

Earlier chapters identified four main leadership of innovation styles from the interview responses of the five participating organisations. These leadership styles were theorised from the initial interview inquiries, and then further developed by the axial coding of the later interviews. Each represents a different approach to fostering innovation, with different ideals of the source of organisational creativity. As established in the comparative analysis between organisations, these models are not totalising within an organisation; different combinations and actions were present within each organisation. Also, I make no assumption or judgment that any differing leadership style is better or worse than another. The inquiry began by simply desiring to discover the different leadership of innovation styles. I found the applicability of each style to the specific organisations to be as follows.

1. Transcendent Visionary

The Transcendent Visionary was the initial leadership of innovation style found in the interview data. This style views the leader in the traditional heroic model, with the individual elevated above the group, leading from their advantaged position. This leader, having access to higher level conversations and decision making than what is allowed for the “normal” organisational member, transcends the experience of the organisational followers. The transcendent position is often delineated by a clear formalised leadership title (e.g., CEO, Pastor, Director), which affirms their elevated role in the hierarchy. These leaders, however, do not perceive their model as an oppressive role of power but rather a sacrificial role on behalf of the organisation. The Transcendent Visionary makes difficult decisions about the strategy and direction of the organisation. They perceive themselves, therefore, as shouldering this burden of decision making on behalf of the organisational members, as they attempt to direct the organisation in harmony with their vision and their members’ needs and desires.

In directing the organisation, the Transcendent Visionary leader aims for a clear unity in vision and voice. Creating this unified mind requires high-level strategic meetings, where different views and options are considered by the positional leaders. Eventually, after conversation and rational thought, a unifying vision will be created. This perspective can then be disseminated to the organisational members by these leaders, using the

primary voice of the formal leader position to add legitimacy to this view. Whether a preacher, pastor, CEO or director, the Transcendent Visionary leader can employ their organisational position to promote the created strategy, and direct the organisation towards a unified acceptance of this direction.

Within this leadership style, it is apparent that the Transcendent Visionaries perceive innovation as primarily happening in formalised meetings. As decisions and strategy are created in these exclusive gatherings, it is in this time and space that creative alternatives are most readily required. These leaders see innovation as needing to be drawn out of the other Transcendent Visionary leaders, with the purpose of creating more ways of fulfilling the organisational vision. As such, innovative ideas are usually focused on new ways of communicating vision or new ways to increase efficiency and productivity within the organisation. The Transcendent Visionaries seek to generate ideas from each other in the formal meeting times and to create a wide range of options. These options are then assessed based on their ability to fulfil the organisational objectives and maintain or improve the unity of the leaders' organisation.

2. Relational Nurturer

The Relational Nurturer leadership style places a primacy on the development of relationships between organisational members. This model positions the leader within the organisation, on the same level as the “non-leaders” and as functioning in regular interactions with them. Instead of highlighting strategy, vision and formal position, the Relational Nurturer’s main focus is on people and their success within the organisation. They view the organisation in a much less mechanised view to the Transcendent Visionary, and assume that when individuals within an organisation are connected and developing, the organisation will similarly grow and develop. In line with this view, their main focus is on creating healthy organisational cultures where they can mentor, train and equip members to grow and participate more fully.

The organisations that had the Relational Nurturer style as a dominant model of leadership valued conversation and listening, rather than the didactic approach of the Transcendent Visionary. Participants and leaders shared stories of one-on-one interactions, emotional encounters and the development of members as a result of being cared for in an intentional way. The Relational Nurturer leader will nurture individuals in an ongoing relationship, aiming to encourage, challenge and motivate them to ensure their growth. As such, their position is less transcendent and aloof, but is validated by their nearness and the quality of their interactions with the organisational members. The organisational strategy and vision - although

important to this leadership style - is perceived as a challenge to be lived out and made real in relationships, rather than a perspective to be discussed and debated.

As a result of this primacy on relationship, the Relational Nurturer sees innovation as something to be developed within individuals who will flourish, rather than a trait that requires to be extracted. Relational Nurturers discussed narratives of innovation focused on innovation-in-relationship; meeting with other members, and experiencing creativity in a serendipitous manner out of the conversations. These leaders perceived innovation as a natural outflow of well nurtured individuals, and did not posit innovation in meetings or offices, but in cafes, informal chats and walks with others. By listening, talking and caring, these leaders believe that organisational members would grow in their ability to ideate and share creative ideas without fear, as they would feel more accepted by the organisation.

Similarly, the Relational Nurturer sees difference and disagreement as an essential part of innovation. Interview participants shared narratives of questioning the organisational vision. This was not to generate dissent, but to create alternative possibilities and ideas. These leaders are comfortable with difference within the organisation, and perceive this diversity as a rich source of creative ideas. Accordingly, these leaders enjoy encountering different cultures and individuals, as they see this as a potential source of learning and development for both individuals, and for the organisation.

3. Ethical Distributive Leadership

The Ethical Distributive leadership style fundamentally views leadership as an ethical activity. This is manifested in two ways. Firstly, their leadership is motivated by a desire to bring about positive change in their community, and secondly their actions as a leader are shaped by the values they desire the organisation to embody. This twofold ethical dimension of their leadership creates a unique style that differs significantly from the previous two models.

The motivation for positive change in the community is a unique driver for the Ethical Distributive leader, as they are motivated by a reality outside of their organisation. Rather than being driven by profit maximisation or organisational growth, this leadership style focuses on wide-scale transformation of their external community. This focus results in an organisation that is deeply passionate about their actions, with participants' narratives focusing on the benefits that others will receive when their organisation grows in effectiveness. The leaders of these organisations would "drive the organisation off a cliff" in their pursuit of the ethical change, would not compromise their value set and would not seek self-aggrandisement or recognition for their work. Simply put, this leadership style desires to make the world a better place.

The Ethical Distributive leader's perception of others, therefore, lacks the leader-follower distinction that is present in the other models. Just as the

perception of internal benefits-external benefits is irrelevant to this leadership model, the Ethical Distributive leader views leadership as a shared action open to all organisational members. Rather than a position held by a formalised leader, or a skill to be passed on before one can be considered a leader, this leadership style assumes that all members are leaders. The only limit on a member's leadership ability is the amount of opportunities the organisation allows them to practice their leadership, and their own willingness to participate in these opportunities. As such, this leader attempts to distribute their power throughout the organisation, giving autonomy to the organisational members and support as they participate in the organisation's mission for ethical change.

Given that ethical focus, these leaders see innovation as emerging from the necessity of the problem the organisation is attempting to resolve. Interview participants from this model would often cite the pressing concerns the organisation was facing, and explain how these needs motivated their creativity. Due to this problem-focused approach, this leadership style also favours the prototyping and development of creative ideas into solutions, rather than just the ideation phase. These narratives of innovation were focused on results and change that occurred as a result of the innovative steps that were taken. This was regardless of whether these were the environmental or spiritual needs of a community. Although this approach often lacked a clear plan for innovation, they place a high value on creating and implementing new solutions, on behalf of the community that was being impacted by the organisation.

4. Dirty-Handed Rebel

The final leadership style that was discovered from the interview participants' response was the Dirty-Handed Rebel. This style was not the dominant approach at any of organisations that were investigated, yet it did feature in a few minor narratives shared by participants. Motivated by action and moving outside of formal channels, the Dirty-Handed Rebel was a leadership style reacting to the perceived dominance of other leaders (often from the Transcendent Visionary ones).

Participants who were congruent with this leadership style would begin by voicing their frustration at a lack of action by the formal leaders of the organisation. Often, this frustration would be at the time it took for decisions to be made, or for approval to be given to creative ideas developed from organisational members. As such, the Dirty-Handed Rebel would create a dichotomy of talk-action, and would criticise other leadership styles for being overly weighted towards discussion and meetings. Instead, this approach favoured action and progress, with participants sharing narratives in which they had taken action in response to a situation of uncertainty. This risk was an element of creativity to be embraced by this leadership style, with participants delighting in their movements into the unknown and the adaptability that this required.

Given this frustration with perceived inaction by formal organisational leader, the Dirty-Handed Rebel sees innovation as growing from action.

This perspective positions creativity as ahead of the leader in both time and space, requiring a risk-taking step towards the unknown to discover the new idea. If instead, the leader pursues stability and a maintenance of the present, they will not encounter the unknown and the creative power that it contains. Accordingly, the Dirty-Handed Rebel encourages continuous action to discover new possibilities, and thrives on high-pressure situations where rapid adaptability and change is required. These situations are full of the unknown, and therefore can act as catalysts for latent creative potential in the organisation.

These four leadership of innovation styles and their main differences are summarised in the table below.

	Transcendent Visionary	Relational Nurturer	Ethical Distributive	Dirty-Handed Rebel
Organisational Position	Above the organisation.	Within the organisation.	Within the organisation.	Outside the organisation's formal channels.
Leadership Approach	Leading from a higher position, directing organisational members.	Leading alongside others, developing organisational members.	Both leading and following simultaneously; no dichotomy between leader and follower.	Independent and subversive; leading through action.
Focus	Strategy, unity.	Growth, personal development.	Positive change for communities, values.	Change, risk and action.
Technique	Meetings, formal communications, speeches.	Conversations, mentoring, informal communications, creating healthy social cultures.	Stories of need and change, emotive language, community engagement.	Stepping into unknown, adaptability, communication in action.
Source of Creativity	Within other formal leaders.	Within relationship between all members; innate trait.	Necessity from ethical problems being faced.	From the unknown space and future ahead of the organisation.
Innovation Process	Formal meetings, discussion and planning.	Developing relationships leads to more ideation and sharing.	Meetings, conversations and prototyping.	Attempting the unknown, finding ideas and solutions as you go.
Dominant Organisational Model	Town Church	WebTech Logico	EnviroCare City Faith	

The discovery of these four main leadership of innovation models was ground in the interview data, yet it remains open-ended (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). Further research into a wider range of organisations, or into a

longitudinal study of the leadership of innovation across time, may reveal new categories or extensions to these initial concepts (Charnaz, 2007). I contend, however, that these styles form the beginnings of an understanding of the predominant leadership styles in New Zealand businesses and churches.

This final section applies insights from across the research to offer actionable learnings for each organisation to consider, as they seek to improve their innovative future.

Recommendations for Action

Town Church

1. *Create shared language around different innovation styles.*

Town Church had the greatest diversity in leadership of innovation styles among all the organisations studied. Unfortunately, each of these styles operated out of a silo mentality, with interview participants sharing narratives that were resonant with their own approach, rather than discussing how other leadership styles benefited the organisation or might be integrated. When they did refer to other styles, it was predominantly in a critical voice. For example, the formal leaders would narrate frustration at a lack of involvement in meetings from potential leaders. In effect they perceive the Relational Nurturing of non-formal leaders as ineffective or not strategic for innovation. Similarly, the non-formal leaders contributed stories of annoyance at the amount of meetings and planning that was required by the Transcendent Visionaries before any action was undertaken. From both sides, these critical voices result in a negative perception of any other leadership style, with organisational members tending to group and work together with individuals who share their approach.

Innovation, however, is a multi-faceted process that relies on a range of skills and approaches to truly benefit an organisation (Kelley & Littman,

2005). Each of the leadership of innovation styles has a unique skill set to offer and to help transform Town Church's ideas into a living reality. For example, the Transcendent Visionary's mastery of strategic conversation, planning and high-level meeting are essential skills for allocating funding for innovative ideas, examining potential opportunities, and providing a focus for innovative activities. However, without the Relational Nurturer developing organisational members who believe in the vision and who are committed to enacting the proposed changes the innovation process will baulk. Similarly, without individuals who are willing to embrace risk and actively prototype ideas, and who are seeking serendipitous opportunities and creative possibilities, the organisation's innovations will rarely have enough elements for transformational change.

This problem of silo-thinking is partially created by the polysemy of language at Town Church. Each of these leadership styles uses the words "leader" and "innovation" in very different ways, leading to confusion and frustration in their interactions. For one, a leader is someone who is above the organisational reality, guiding and deciding on behalf of the organisation; for another, the leader is with the organisation, helping foster the organisation's growth organically and relationally. Similarly, one perspective sees innovation as something to be done, whereas another perceives it as something to be discussed. This semantic struggle comes from the multiple meanings assigned to key words used by Town Church to describe their practice of leadership and innovation.

Accordingly, this thesis recommends that Town Church create a common meaning around leadership styles and the different stages of innovation. They could use the terms proposed by this thesis or adapt them to even more accurately represent their practices. The main thing would be to decrease the mismatch of meanings while still affirming the legitimacy of each position and allowing for the important differences of each model to be appreciated among the wider membership. This action would also help clarify the type of leadership that is required for different situations in the innovation process, which in turn can create clarity in transforming an idea into a reality through shared steps. The creation of a shared language would help remove the current frustration and confusion, help individuals affirm their own leadership style, and allow for more fluid, but less confused, interactions between individuals of different innovation leadership styles.

2. Become more comfortable with uncertainty and risk.

The innovation process is fraught with uncertainty as a necessary element to the creation of novel solutions (Jalonen, 2012). For the Transcendent Visionary - the dominant leadership model at Town Church - uncertainty is a factor that is required to be minimised as much as possible to maintain organisational unity. This approach, however, assumes that total knowledge is possible for the leader, and freezes any innovation process until this totality of understanding is neared. Although the accumulation of

knowledge and investigation are beneficial to creating a culture of innovation (Noteboom, 1999), a belief in requiring total knowledge before action hampers innovation in Town Church.

To counter this tendency, Town Church would do well to look back at one of the central three pillars of the Christian belief system: faith, hope and love. Faith, explained as “confidence in what we hope for and assurance about what we do not see.” (Hebrews 11:1) involves risk, uncertainty and a gap of knowledge. In its very essence, faith is a paradox - to be confident in a hope, to see the unseeable. The foundational text of the Christian faith encourages the faith community to embrace the risk of the unknown and to take action in uncertainty. Similarly, in Paul’s first letter to the church in Corinth, he writes, “For now we see only a reflection as in a mirror; then we shall see face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I am fully known.” (1 Corinthians 13:12). This statement affirms that although, according to the Christian faith, total knowledge and understanding will come to the redeemed humanity, the present reality is one of partiality. Rather than being afraid of this, the Scriptures encourage the global church to embrace their limited reality and “step out in faith”.

Town Church could make this a regular practice by following the action learning principle that, “There is no action without learning and no learning without action” (Revans, 1998, p. 83). At the beginning of each meeting of the formal leaders, the chairperson could open with the simple question, “What have we learned from our innovation actions this week?” At the

conclusion of the meeting, the group could reflect on the question, “What actions are we going to undertake this week, given our new understanding of innovation at Town Church?” Making this a regular habit would help cement the link between learning and action in the Transcendent Visionary’s mind, and provide feedback and accountability to ensure deliberate new action into uncertain areas is being regularly undertaken.

3. Resource and measure for innovation.

Although there is disagreement about whether resource abundance or resource scarcity has a more beneficial impact on innovation, theorists agree that some level of resourcing is beneficial for creating a culture of innovation (March, 1991; Gibbert, Hoegl & Valikangas, 2014). Town Church has allocated resources for staff and volunteer training and development, promotions of their events and office supplies. They do not, however, have any allocated resources - in terms of staffing hours or budgeted finances - for the creation of new ideas. Instead, it is assumed that this will happen serendipitously, without any resource investment from Town Church.

Similarly, an oft-cited phrase in the management vernacular is “If you can measure it, you can manage it” (Boomer, 2006, p. 22). Although pithy sounding, this statement reflects the simple truism that what is valued in an organisation is measured by the organisation (Laabs, 1999).

Measurements allow leaders to see the impact of various inputs on their desired output, and also creates a sense of accountability within the organisation. The figures and KPI's help to show whether an organisation's stated values are aligned with their day-to-day practices. Also, longitudinal measurements reveal the growth or decline in organisational activities, showing the long-term trends that are becoming habitual for the organisation.

Town Church, like most of the participating organisations in this research, does not allocate resources, measure innovation or set innovation goals for their staff or volunteers. Due to this lack of investment and planning, creativity tends to occur accidentally, rather than as a regular and expected habit. This is revealed in the wide range of definitions of creativity by Town Church participants, rather than one more focused perspective. The ambiguous nature of creativity leads many to assume that it cannot be measured or resourced (Pederzoli, Thoma & Torricelli, 2013), a view which appears to be held by the leaders at Town Church.

To transform this situation, Town Church leaders should consider allocating resources towards the creation and development of new ideas. Having a budgeted fund for prototyping new ministry ideas, training in innovation and the communication of these new ideas would help encourage Town Church to be active innovators, rather than passive receivers of creativity. Organisational members would see that innovation was valued by Town Church, as the leaders are willing to invest in the new

ideas that they believe will be developed. This investment would also validate the innovators at Town Church, ensuring that their ideas would have a chance at becoming a reality. In turn, this would encourage innovators to share more of their ideas, as the organisational culture would be more receptive to concepts that have the potential to receive financial backing.

Town Church leaders should also develop a set of quantitative measures to assess the amount and impact of ideas that are being generated each year. These measures would include:

- How many new ideas have been collected from organisational members?
- How many ideas have been selected for resourcing and prototyping?
- How many ideas have been fully adapted by the organisation?
- What has been the increase in attendance/engagement/discipling (etc.) as a result of the implementation of these new ideas?

Adapting these measures, along with the resourcing of innovation, would encourage leaders to raise their awareness of new ideas, ask for innovative solutions, collect and communicate about creative concepts, and encourage the development of these ideas into real solutions.

Although these changes may appear simple, they could have a significant impact on Town Church's innovative output.

EnviroCare

1. *Intentionally link symbols to story.*

EnviroCare was a strong story-telling organisation, with all the interview participants referring to their organisational narrative and how this directed their organisation. Even more tellingly, one of the participants referred to their work as “being a consultancy that would not shy from telling the true story”. Story was a key part of EnviroCare’s identity, with the participants self-aware of the strength of their own organisational story, and interpreting their consulting work as telling alternative stories for their clients. They recognised the transformative power of stories as an agent for change in the environmental domain, with these new stories proposing a new future for the organisations involved. Also, these stories operated as a shared tribal identity for all members of EnviroCare, as they each knew and communicated their origin story along with EnviroCare’s founding narrative. This commonality in story helps create an atmosphere of belonging and togetherness, leading to a united organisational culture (Vaccaro, 2006).

The analysis also revealed that EnviroCare was discovering their strengths as a symbol-making organisation. The key difference, however, was that the organisational members were unaware of the power of the symbols they were creating, with most narratives revealing a strong surprise at how much of an impact their symbols (predominantly the crate

desks) were having. EnviroCare was self-aware of the impact of their story-telling ability, and the change that their narratives would manifest, but they had not yet learnt the same lessons about their own symbol making. The crate desks had inspired conversations, new possibilities and connections, yet this was a serendipitous discovery. As the organisation has become proficient at mastering the art of storytelling, so EnviroCare would strongly benefit in developing their craft of symbol making.

To begin this process, EnviroCare members should reflect on the impact the crate desks has had through a deliberate process. Raising the organisational awareness of the power of symbols will also help with the direction and creation of future symbols with greater awareness. Within a team gathering, EnviroCare should consider the following questions:

- What was the genesis for the creation of this symbol?
- What did we think this symbol was going to do?
- What conversations and moments has this symbol elicited?
- How has this symbol surprised us?
- What is the value of this symbol?

Although seemingly simplistic, the exercise of going through these questions would serve to increase organisational awareness of the impact of symbols, and create a common story about the power of this innovative symbol. As EnviroCare is story rich, this narrative could then be further

refined and developed, and become a key narrative in their organisational discourse.

For their future symbol making efforts, EnviroCare would do well to reflect on their organisational future, the vision they see for their community and the story they are hoping to share. Once they have begun to clarify these components, they can then link them to powerful symbols, by asking questions like:

- What images, sounds and textures does our ideal future contain?
- Where does our story challenge the conventional stories that are shared in our community?
- What organisational symbols do we currently employ that don't communicate this change?
- What is an object that embodies the change we want to see?
- How could this symbol be more evocative to engage emotions?
- How could this symbol be more provocative, to engage new ideas?

By deliberately engaging with these questions, EnviroCare would begin the process of learning to master the craft of symbol making. In raising their awareness, organisational members will begin to see possibilities for communicating their stories through physical artefacts and sensory engagement, which will lead to a wider range of encounters and provoke more innovative conversations.

2. Resource and measure for innovation.

EnviroCare had not allocated resources for innovation. It had no budgeted time for organisational members to explore new ideas to improve the organisation's future. Similarly, they did not have any quantitative measures for innovation, with no way of assessing a return on investment for any new ideas or the effectiveness of any idea generation techniques. There was no shared technique for gathering and storing ideas, nor was there an identifiable measure for critiquing ideas and assessing which ideas would be further developed and which would be shelved for later thought.

Similarly, this lack in resourcing and measurement of innovation is matched by EnviroCare's approach to innovation. Organisation members take a passive posture towards innovation, waiting on ideas to come to them as they face the needs of their community. The organisational leaders share in this trait, by passively asking their employees to share any ideas they may have. This passivity results in the low contribution of ideas, the low frequency of idea generation and a lack of focus in the organisation's innovation efforts.

EnviroCare would improve their innovation efforts by adopting the same measures that were suggested for Town Church, including budgeting time and money for the creation and development of new ideas, and creating

innovation KPI's that are reviewed quarterly and assessed annually. Given their relatively small size, however, EnviroCare would also benefit from focusing their innovation towards a few clear objectives, rather than adopting a scatter-gun approach. Town Church's scale allows them to form many different teams with differing foci, and assign a wide-range of creative ideas to this diverse team-set. EnviroCare does not have this luxury, so needs to focus their ideation, idea critique and idea development on the most pertinent problems and the opportunities that best align with their purpose.

EnviroCare could achieve this by the directors first clarifying their current focus, goals and opportunities for the next year. Following this clarification, an innovation plan would be developed, designing the organisation's innovation process over this period. The initial stages would involve developing a clear critique for what makes a good idea (based on their current goal and focus), to help create a consistent approach in comparing suggested ideas. From here, all organisational members would be resourced to seek creative ideas through research, conversation, serendipitous discovery (e.g., walking through the community, exploring a museum) and idea generation gatherings. All ideas would be recorded in a systematic fashion and digitally stored for future use. This process of ideation would run over 2-3 months, allowing a wide range of ideas to be collected and for the organisational members to be in a state of continual ideation.

Following this period, the ideas would be analysed through the idea critique, to see what ideas hold the most potential value for the organisation. The remaining time in the year would be spent developing, iterating and prototyping each idea, testing it for validity and adjusting as necessary. If they were to follow this approach, they would foster the active pursuit of ideas, rather than a passive waiting for ideas to surface. Also, this approach allows for the creation of an “Ideas Bank” for EnviroCare, with the storage of all ideas that are sought out and proposed by organisational members. This serves as a valuable repository for the future, ensuring ideas are not forgotten and can be quickly recalled for situations where they may be more applicable.

Although this sounds like a sizeable amount of work, this need not cost EnviroCare a large amount of resources. One or two hours a week allocated to innovation will allow for a rich innovation culture to emerge, and the “Ideas Bank” can be simply created using a low-cost web-based content management system (CMS), such as WordPress’s backend software. Maintaining these new practices will help make innovation a regular habit at EnviroCare, and allow them to become more active and deliberate in their innovation practices.

Logico

1. *Create language around innovation.*

Logico has leaders who were proficient at innovation, with many of the organisational narratives focusing on the problem-solving abilities of the founder and managing director of the organisation. These leaders were also intentional about their choice of language, with several organisational phrases that they had coined appearing in all the interviews. The Logico leaders actively deliberated on key phrases for their organisation, with their value statement of “People matter - do good” resulting from planning, walking, talking and dreaming together. This language had been dispersed throughout the organisation, so that other organisational members both knew the language but also lived out the meaning. As such, this language played a strong role in shaping the culture at Logico, and had created a way of doing things that was unique and effective to the organisation.

This intentionality of language, however, does not extend to Logico’s innovation practice. Interview participants did not share a commonality in their definition of innovation, nor in their application of that definition to their current situation. Instead, there was a range of understandings about the meaning of innovation for Logico, with participants talking about it variously as a client-focused act, radically changing the organisational processes, a technique associated with the arts and pushing the boundaries of what is currently known. Similarly, some Logico employees

struggled to narrate stories of innovation from their time at Logico. They would pause and ask for validation throughout their narrative. This was unique to the Logico interview experience, with other participating organisational members all answering this question with relative ease in comparison.

Given their skill set of crafting language, the senior leaders at Logico should create a shared lexicon describing innovation for their own context. This language should reflect a clear definition on what is innovation for Logico, why it is useful, how it is applied and where it is focused. Currently, the language reflects ambiguity in each of these areas, resulting in confusion and inaction by the organisational members. If the leaders applied their wordsmith abilities to this domain, they would see a clearer focus in the innovation practices of their employees and a cohesion to the overall ideation. As they have already successfully distributed their language on values and purpose around their various New Zealand offices, it can be assumed they would be able to similarly disperse an innovation lexicon throughout their organisation.

To begin this process, the senior leaders of Logico should meet and reflect on the following questions:

- What has been the most innovative moment in Logico's history?
- When I say "Innovation" what do I mean?
- Given this definition, what does "Innovation" mean when we use it?

- What is unique about how Logico will practice innovation?
- How does this intersect with our organisational values?

Although this could be a lengthy process, creating this shared language would minimise the current confusion about innovation and would also create a communal understanding of what innovation is. In turn, this would foster a clear action towards innovation, with organisational members sharing a common knowledge of the processes and ideas that are considered innovative in this organisation.

2. *Model and teach innovation.*

As well as the linguistic diversity around 'innovation' at Logico, there was a degree of mystery around the innovation process among some of the organisational members. The senior leaders could clearly explain the techniques and actions they would follow to solve problems, discover ideas and test them for feasibility. The employees who worked in close proximity with these senior leaders could also explain the innovation process with clarity, often citing narratives of the leaders' innovation actions as their framework of understanding. Unintentionally, these leaders have modelled an innovation process and attitude to the organisational members who they work near each day.

Employees who were not as geographically present with these leaders, however, lacked this understanding of the process of innovation. They acknowledged that Logico was an innovative organisation and could discuss some of the creative ideas that had been implemented during their employment but they could not explain how these ideas were developed into solutions. As well as the confusion around the language of innovation at Logico, there was a high degree of ambiguity in the process of innovation. This lack of clarity has led to a paralysis in innovation for these members, who assume that as they do not know the process, they are not creative and cannot contribute to the organisation. They recognise the innovative contributions that the senior leaders have made, but do not believe that these are actions that lie within their capabilities.

Logico leaders have an opportunity to counter the mystery around innovation by developing and modelling a clear innovation process that is unique to their organisation. Currently, the leaders have a casual process for gathering ideas and critiquing them. This involves regularly asking for innovative ideas in fortnightly staff meetings and in performance reviews, and then providing questions for the contributors to think through, in an effort to improve their ideas. The leaders, however, do not innovate in this way but instead gather their own ideas, test and discuss them, prototype and then release the ideas as solutions. Sometimes, this happens with small improvements in a few hours, and other, more disruptive ideas have followed this individualised process over the course of several months. As such, the innovation practice of the leaders happens at the higher levels of

the organisations, and many organisational members do not get a glimpse into this process.

As Logico is a logistics and training organisation, they are well resourced to develop an internal innovation plan that can be distributed around their network. The senior leaders should reflect on their own innovation practices and then consider how this could be simplified into a process that is adaptable throughout all the different domains of the organisation (e.g., sales, administration, trainers). Creating a simple innovation training program - in conjunction with the development of a shared language of innovation - would allow for all organisation members to learn how to look for problems and opportunities, store their ideas, analyse them for potential, share ideas, test for feasibility and development, and integrate innovations into the organisation. As the leaders are already proficient in their own innovative practices, their training program could use a range of case-studies from the organisation to illustrate the process, and to link each step with real-life application.

This innovation program could then be rolled out to all employees in Logico, as well as being used as part of the induction process for new organisational members. All employees would then be equipped and encouraged to pursue innovation as part of their regular day-to-day activities, creating an innovative culture that spreads throughout the entire organisation. Innovation would then become a clear process and an active

pursuit of ideas for Logico, rather than a passive posture of waiting for inspiration to strike.

WebTech

1. *Resource and measure for innovation.*

WebTech appeared to have the strongest innovation processes and leadership of all the studied organisations. Participants were united in their definitions and stories of innovation, discussing their idea generation meetings, idea storage processes and their success stories in turning ideas into solutions. The directors provided a clear direction for the future of the organisation, guiding the ideas that were developed towards actualising this reality. Over the course of this research, WebTech was recognised for their innovation in software development by a global accounting firm, validating their processes and the culture they have created.

One of the directors, however, in an interview talked about the regular time and financial pressures that their organisation was facing, and how that impacted on their innovation practices. Innovation was perceived as a luxury that could be practiced when there was time to spare and resources available. The focus on the day-to-day would ensure that regular payments from clients would come in, small bugs could be fixed and the organisation could maintain their position in the short-term. This approach, however, may be short-sighted and reflects the lack of measurement on innovation at WebTech.

Financial measures on return on innovation across the OECD have long been valued as one of the highest investments an organisation can make (Englander, Evenson & Hanazaki, 1988). More recent conservative estimates place the rate on return of capital investments in innovation at 5% across the thirty most innovative countries (Edworthy & Wallis, 2006). Although this statistic may or may not be a compelling reason for WebTech to budget for innovation, the OECD reports reveal a financial measure on innovation returns that is foreign to WebTech. None of the interview participants talked about innovation using facts and figures, beyond a few haphazard guesses that “changes in process have saved us thousands of dollars”. These reports, however, are using quantifiable measurements to justify their arguments and assess for the impact of innovation investment.

Just like the other organisations in this research thesis, WebTech do not budget time or money towards innovation. They do, however, have a clear innovation process and appear to invest more time and thought into the development of their creative ideas than the other organisations. As a result of this maturity in their innovation process, WebTech should begin to analyse their returns on innovation (ROI) and innovation sales rate (ISR), to provide quantifiable data to study. These simple calculations would provide insight into the true financial value of innovation to their organisation, what should be their focus in innovation, and how much resources should be allocated to the development of new ideas and solutions for their clients.

Although there are a range of more complicated innovation measures available for WebTech to consider (Leading Innovation Measures, In-Process Innovation Measures, Risk-adjusted net present value of innovation), applying the simple measures of ROI and ISR will help provide some initial figures to assess their decision making. As they become more familiar with the metrics of innovation, WebTech could adapt the more detailed measures, but their focus should be on initialising the more basic measures as soon as possible, to begin this analysis process. Once this has begun, WebTech will be able to begin budgeting for innovation, assessing their innovative impact and moving forward in developing their innovation culture with a more informed perspective.

City Faith

1. *Widen their process of creativity to be more inclusive.*

City Faith was the only organisation that had dedicated staff hours and resources to improving their internal creativity. The creativity team, composed of two full-time staff with four hours budgeted for creativity a week, plans and implements the creative output for City Faith, with the help of a collection of volunteers. This team is very intentional about their actions, with participants discussing meetings where they clarified their purpose and calling, concluding that their goal is to “cultivate a community of creatives”. As such, they work to both plan creative elements that support the Sunday messages and foster creativity among their church members. The interview findings suggest that they are doing an excellent job at the first, but are lacking clarity for the second.

This was revealed in the discrepancy between the responses to two key interview questions. Five of the six participants defined creativity as an innate trait among all people, claiming that builders, parents, musicians, artists, businesspeople and teachers are all innovative in their practice. Yet when asked to define Church C’s creative high-point, every participant referred to an artistic event, with a primacy on music. When asked further questions, the creative element was defined by the use of music, lighting and space, and the people who had planned in these areas. As such,

there is a linguistic dissonance between City Faith's stated definition of creativity and their lived praxis of creativity.

Members of the City Faith creative team stated that when they gather, they are calling on volunteers with skills in photography, music and painting. These traditionally 'creative' skills are well fostered at City Faith, but they threaten to limit their definition of creativity to the realm of the artistic. If this continues, then the gap between City Faith's belief that all humans are creative and their praxis of creativity will widen. This will threaten the credibility of City Faith's claims, and limit their innovation potential, as only those who believe they fit the lived definition of creativity at City Faith will participate.

To counter this dissonance and align their practices with their communication of innovation, the leaders of the creative team need to widen both their focus and their volunteer base. Currently, their focus is on their church-based events, primarily worship gatherings. As a result of this focus, the creative team gathers artists skilled in musical and artistic worship to plan their events. If, however, the creative team could be assigned a more diverse portfolio, such as community engagement, housing for refugees, financial longevity or staff development, they would be required to interact with a wider range of church members, with a much wider skill-set. This would allow the creative team to teach and explore creative opportunities in domains that are not traditionally considered

artistic, benefitting the innovation output of City Faith and developing the creative skill set of a wider range of church members.

Also, to help foster a united definition of creativity, the leaders of the creative team should involve members whose skill-set may not be a perfect match with the focus of the gathering. Allowing builders to mingle with musicians and plan a creative worship gathering would increase the amount of new interactions, allowing for more novel ideas to be offered. Although this may sound like tokenism, mixing these groups would increase the chance of seemingly serendipitous ideas to develop, as well as providing a living metaphor for the idealised 'community of creatives'.

2. *Increase accountability and control over staff members.*

City Faith participants enjoyed a high degree of autonomy and freedom in their workplace, with very little organisational control over their day-to-day activities. Every participant mentioned this freedom in the interviews, citing it as unique to City Faith and a fresh experience compared to their previous places of employment. Three of the employees, however, also spoke of the freedom as being "almost too much". Although these comments were out-numbered by the amount of comments supporting the level of freedom they received, this high level of freedom is excessive and can serve to weaken City Faith's innovation efforts.

Creativity thrives under a culture with a high degree of freedom. This freedom, however, is only one element that is required to create an innovative culture. Healthy pressures of time and resources, organisational support and direction, and connection with the organisational purpose all assist in fostering an organisation of innovation. If the freedom exists without this direction and purpose from the organisation, it can become overwhelming and paralysing, as participants do not know where to focus their attention and innovative efforts. Even organisations that practice radical autonomy and industrial autonomy (such as Semco Industries) feature employees using their freedom to provide organisational direction and accountability for each other (Semler, 2004). Control, direction and feedback are not perceived as oppressive power structures in these organisations, but instead as essential organisational practices to improve the efficiency and experience of freedom by all involved.

This high level of freedom at City Faith appears to have come from the senior leader's experience of an oppressive church leader in their formative time of ministry. In a reaction to this control, City Faith now has a libertarian leadership style, with organisational members given almost total freedom in their day-to-day activities. City Faith needs to find a balance between freedom and control, giving their employees a stronger sense of direction and purpose, while allowing them the freedom to achieve these goals. In essence, the City Faith leaders need to recognise that not all control is bad, and strong leadership and direction in ambiguous situations

can lead to an increase in overall innovation and productivity (Adler & Chen, 2011).

Transforming this leadership practice would be difficult, as it is ingrained in over twenty years of habitual action at City Faith. Gradual change could be achieved, however, by implementing the following actions.

- Discuss and plan goals for the church as a whole, and for each department of the church. These goals do not have to be numerical (given the participants' dislike of church being about "bums on seats"), but should be aligned to a clear and compelling purpose. Currently, there was a lack of this focus among the participating organisational members, so the leaders would do well to reflect on their vision and goals for the future, answering some pertinent questions. Where do the leaders desire City Faith to be after the next twelve months? What would they like the community impact to be? What practices would they like to be seeing? What changes to the current culture would they want to have occurred?

Once these questions have been answered, clearer strategic goals can be developed. These goals would be used to assess how effective each department is being, and how well they are focusing their time on what is deemed to be important for City Faith. Each department can use their autonomy to achieve these goals in a variety of creative ways, yet they would be united and focused towards a commonality. The leaders of the

church could also then provide direction, support and challenge for employees and volunteers to stay focused on the goals.

- Implement accountability and review of creative performance. One participant reflected that in their voluntary role as a referee for the Waikato Rugby Union they were assessed after every performance. They then commented that this did not happen in City Faith, stating that “We need to be able to challenge some stuff”. Without accountability and organisational support, innovation at City Faith will not flourish to its true potential.

Currently, the creative team creates and assesses the impact of their creative events. This approach does not allow for external voices to critique their events and processes, and suggest improvements to enhance their creativity. As the creative team is numerically small, they cannot provide a diverse range of perspectives to reflect on the event impartially, and risk restricting their creativity to repeating what has worked in the past. Measured, positive external feedback would increase the amount of voices discussing the creative efforts, and would help improve the future events and programs that are planned by the creative team.

This accountability could be resource cheap and easy to administer, with a few organisational members (reflecting a diverse range of age, gender, occupation etc.) asked to reflect on the following questions.

1. What did we do well?
2. What could we do better?

This approach allows for affirmation of the positive and for growth of the weak areas of the event or ministry. It also provides possibilities for change, with the participants encouraged to not just reflect on what was not the highpoint, but to suggest ways of improvement.

Implementing these changes would not require a large amount of resources, however, they would require a commitment on behalf of the leaders of City Faith to make them consistent and prioritised in their day-to-day activities. As City Faith has a strong culture of excessive autonomy, balancing this back into a healthy equilibrium will take time, consistency and a genuine belief in the processes. It may take several years before these actions become habits, but they will help improve the innovation output and productivity of City Faith.

Conclusion

This thesis opened with the Biblical narrative of Joshua's encounter with a heavenly being, as he stood on the edge of the Jordan River. According to tradition, this moment was transformative for Joshua as he faced the enormity of following Moses as the leader of this community of Israel, entering into a new land (Edersheim, 1962). After this communicative encounter, Joshua was open to a new future as the head of Israel and empowered to bring about change in his nation's history. The external intervention from the heavens disrupted the status quo, forced reflection and led to a new reality for Joshua and his community.

Although self-identifying as an angelic being may be stretching the metaphor beyond breaking point, this research has been a new process for the majority of these organisations and for the researcher. Through the interviews and analysis, models of leadership and actions of innovation have emerged that are grounded in a New Zealand context, having been lying unnamed and unobserved for lengthy periods of time. This thesis has provided a fresh communicative encounter with these organisations, as their latent strengths and unconscious habits have been named and shared back to the leaders. With this encounter of the researcher with the organisation, and with the affirmation of these organisational features that have not been discussed before, it is hoped that new futures of innovation leadership will be made possible for each organisation.

These possible futures lie at the heart of this research thesis. It is the possibility of a new future that motivated the research to investigate New Zealand churches and organisations, an area that had little prior analysis. This possibility also guided the interview structures, pointing participants towards their idealised future and attempting to spark dreams and hopes about their innovative practices. Also, this possibility structured the thesis, culminating in actionable learning that can help unlock futures of change. Finally, I now recognise that the new possible futures extend not only to the researched organisations but also to myself as a researcher. Not only has this research thesis illuminated new models to test, new actions for organisations to consider and new links between theory and practice, but it has also revealed new reflections and learnings as I have developed through the process.

Due to the limited scope of this research, it is hoped that other organisations will analyse themselves through the proposed models of innovations. This would allow for these theorised models to be further adapted and improved, as a wider sample engages with the ideas and practices suggested. Additionally, this would also create a wider body of organisations in New Zealand that are interested in reflecting on their own practices towards innovation and improving their leadership of creativity. Although I recognise this thesis is only one small document, it is hoped that this may spark more conversations and a groundswell in Aotearoa to improving our innovation practices and leadership.

Ultimately, it is hoped that the discoveries and suggestions that this thesis offers will be applied by these organisations, so that the validity of these findings can be further tested. After having taken the brave and risky step of allowing a young researcher to question and explore their organisation, I anticipate degrees of reluctance, fear and paralysis in taking the next steps of action. However, as creativity requires the presence of mystery and the unknown, I hope that these organisations and their leaders can continue in their journey, and begin applying these suggestions in spite of their fear. Whether a Transcendent Visionary or a Dirty-Handed Rebel, I trust these leaders will test, explore, plan and discuss a future that is more innovative and dynamic than their current reality, and will enjoy the adventure of walking towards this possibility.

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Appendix A. Interview Guide

Q1: What were your hopes and dreams you had for your organisation when you first started here?

Q2: Without being overly humble - what are the most important qualities and strengths you bring to your organisation?

Q3: Who has been the best leader you have ever followed? Why were they so good?

Q4: If you could have any leader working alongside you - who would you want and why?

Q5: What has been your best leadership story from your organisation? When was your organisation doing leadership in a way that made you think - "Yes! I want more of that!"?

Q6: What does innovation mean for your organisation? Can you describe a story where your organisation was innovative? What does your organisation do to help support innovative success?

Q7: What has been your most creative moment - when you have operated at your most creative potential?

Q8: When was a time that someone from your organisation has been empowered by a leader to take a risk and try something new. What happened? What was learnt from this?

Q9: Imagine it's 2020, and you've just awoken from a deep sleep. You come to your organisation, and discover that all your dreams for leadership and innovation have come true. What is happening? What does it look like? What are people doing?

Q10: What was the smallest change that was made while you were sleeping, that had the biggest impact?

Q11: If you could make three changes to heighten the vitality and health of your organisation - what changes would you make?