The Heart of Hope City Church: Exploring Volunteer Leadership

By

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Abstract

This thesis employed an action-oriented research project that explored volunteer leadership development in a faith-based religious context. The methodology employed for this project was community-based research, as it best aligned with the organization, allowing research to be guided by the knowledge gained through the lived experience of the research participants. The inquiry included two phases of research conducted using three research methods: storytelling, focus groups, and interviews. A total of 20 participants took part in this research, which was conducted in adherence with all Royal Roads University requirements. The four findings encompassed clarity on the meaning of leadership development in this context as well as engagement and recruitment strategies. Three recommendations suggest the creation of a leadership development strategy, creation of a volunteer engagement strategy, development of a feedback model incorporating a volunteer training resource bank, and planning of a recruitment event that could be a considered in long-range planning.
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Chapter One: Focus and Framing

In this way we are like the various parts of the human body. Each part gets its meaning from the body as a whole . . . the body we’re talking about is Christ’s body of chosen people. Each of us finds our meaning and function as a part of his body. (Romans 12:46, The Message translation of the Bible)

In this engaged action-oriented capstone project titled *The Heart of Hope City Church*, I partnered with stakeholders of Hope City Church (Hope City) to explore volunteer leadership within the context of the church. The heart of Hope City is to serve the community and to create a space where people can grow and thrive. Over the past several decades, Hope City has seen significant growth such that the congregation had to move to a larger facility in 1997. Hope City has continued to experience growth over the past several years and, in fall 2018, expanded to a second campus in the community of Terwillegar in Edmonton, Alberta. A central component of the continued growth and support of the church has been the volunteer leaders who serve.

Currently, Hope City has a large volunteer network that serves in the various programs offered at two campuses in Edmonton, Alberta: Mill Woods and Terwillegar. Hope City recognized that the development of volunteer leaders has a significant impact on the success of the church and its programs. In this thesis, I present an analysis of the role of volunteer leaders in contributing to the success of the church. The thesis is comprised of five chapters that outline the details of the study. In this first chapter, I discuss the primary research question and subquestions, present a systems analysis of the Hope City context, and review the significance of this inquiry to the organization. I close the chapter with an outline of the overall structure of this thesis report.

As a member of the Hope City community and a long-time volunteer, I was interested in this inquiry because of the helpful knowledge it would provide in order to support a church community that I am honoured to be part of. In this inquiry, I first analyzed and then built on the success and strength that Hope City had in its volunteer program. In partnership with the senior
pastor of Hope City, I designed a project to explore how Hope City might further encourage and support volunteer leadership development. I explored the following principal inquiry question: How can Hope City Church encourage and strengthen leadership development in its volunteers? I also examined five subquestions in support of this inquiry:

1. How do the current volunteers in Hope City Church conceptualize volunteer leadership in the church context?
2. How does the pastoral team at Hope City understand the leadership roles of their volunteers?
3. How does Hope City church currently facilitate volunteer leadership?
4. What are the barriers to fostering volunteer leadership potential at Hope City Church?
5. What can Hope City Church do to better develop and foster leadership among its volunteers?

Significance of the Inquiry

The pastoral team members at Hope City recognized that the development of volunteer leaders had a significant impact on the success of the church and its programs; however, the leadership development process for volunteer leaders was something that had the potential to grow (P. Kniesel, personal communication, June, 25, 2019). Recognizing that offering training, support, and encouragement for volunteer leaders was essential to maintaining a strong church community, I initiated this inquiry to help identify the leadership development needs as seen by the pastoral team and by the volunteer leaders. These volunteers are essential, as the Hope City paid staff would be unable to execute all the services and programs without the assistance and leadership of the volunteers. Additionally, the volunteer program provides volunteer leaders with the opportunity for spiritual growth provided through acts of service. The stakeholders who

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1 All personal communications in this report are used with permission.
participated in this inquiry were members of the pastoral team and current volunteer leaders at Hope City. Through conducting this inquiry, I gained knowledge about the volunteer leaders’ experiences that existed at Hope City as well as clarity on the supports that volunteer leaders required, and I unearthed opportunities for leadership development. This inquiry also assisted in clarifying how the Pastoral team at Hope City conceptualized volunteer leadership and the desirable attributes or characteristics of a volunteer leader. The volunteer leaders were given the opportunity to share what is working well and what is needed to enhance their development as leaders at Hope City. In addition, in discussions at the onset of this inquiry, my project partner affirmed this inquiry would be of benefit to the greater Hope City community in that a robust volunteer leadership development program might assist with supporting current volunteers as well as providing support for the recruitment of new volunteers. This inquiry was and continues to be important to me because the knowledge provided will contribute to a positive change to a community that has gifted me with an opportunity for growth and a sense of belonging. This inquiry into volunteer leadership development in a faith-based community has supplied information where a gap exists, which has been acknowledged in the literature (Posner, 2015) and created an opportunity to share this knowledge with other communities, particularly those in a faith-based context.

**Organizational Context and Systems Analysis**

Hope City is a religious congregation in Edmonton that was established in 1976 in the community of Mill Woods in Edmonton, Alberta. Hope City has 4,188 individuals who attend the campuses and online services (K. McIntyre, personal communication, February, 14, 2020). Hope City is part of the Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada (PAOC) an evangelical denomination. The PAOC is an evangelical denomination that “stands firmly in the mainstream of historical Christianity [and] takes the Bible as its all-sufficient source of faith and practice, and subscribes to the historic creeds of the universal church” (PAOC, 2014, p. 1). Hope City has one lead pastor
and 17 pastoral staff members who work full time and several support staff members who are also paid staff. In addition to the full-time, paid pastoral and church staff members, Hope City has approximately 1,300 volunteer leaders who serve in the various programs of the church, such as Sunday morning services, and community service events (K. McIntyre, personal communication, February, 14, 2020). Understanding what constitutes a faith-based religious organization was important to this study, as it provided clarity about the similarities and differences that exist between faith-based religious organizations and other organizations. This was important to understand when considering leadership development and the possibility that the approach to leadership development may differ in a faith-based religious context. Jeavons (1997) described seven dimensions or aspects that can be used as a framework to define a religious organization:

1. Organizational self-identity—how religious is the organization’s self-identity?
2. Organizational participants—how religious are the participants?
3. Organizational resources—how religious are its materials, resources and their sources?
4. Organizational objectives—how religious are its goals, products, or services?
5. Information and decision-making processes—how religious are its decision-making processes?
6. Allocation and exercise of power—how religious is its definition and distribution of power?
7. Organizational fields and interorganizational relationships—how religious are the other organizations or organizational fields with which it interacts? (p. 81)

I found using Jeavons’s (1997) seven dimensions or aspects as a framework helpful in determining if Hope City would be categorized as a faith-based or religious community. Jeavons (1997) noted that organizational self-identity indicates that an organization has “chosen a name
that ties explicitly to a particular religious purpose” (p. 82). When considering this first
dimension, the name Hope City Church indicated a religious gathering space, as the word church
is defined as “a building for public and especially Christian worship” (“Church,” n.d., Definition
section, para. 1). The second dimension is that of the organizational participants. Jeavons (1997)
noted most if not all members of a religious congregation share religious beliefs, which is also
ture to the Hope City congregation. In the third dimension, which relates to organizational
resources, namely capital or material resources, Jeavons (1997) identified most members of a
congregation give financially to the organization for religious reasons out of sense of
responsibility or service; this would mean that most organizational resources are a result of
donations made by members. making donation where most of the organizational resources
derive. This aligns with Hope City, as a regular tithe or offering is collected from congregational
members. In the fourth dimension, Jeavons (1997) discussed the motivation behind the services
or programs of a religious organization and the alignment of these activities with religious
beliefs. Using this fourth dimension as a lens when analyzing Hope City, the primary purpose of
the products, services, and programs is to share the Christian faith with others and to create space
for individuals to learn as well as grow in that faith. The fifth dimension discussed the decision-
making processes within religious organizations and how decisions are made. As a
congregational member, I am aware that Hope City makes decisions through prayer and
organization does integrate worship, prayer, or discernment into a decision-making process, there
is good reason to suspect it is, indeed, religious” (p. 89). In the sixth dimension, Jeavons (1997)
identified that integral organizational influence is power; this includes how it is used, developed,
and distributed. In observing Hope City, it appears that religious principles are at the foundation
of the power dynamics within the congregation. The seventh final aspect Jeavons (1997)
discussed is organizational fields or interorganizational relationships: “We may learn a great deal
As previously mentioned, Hope City is part of the PAOC, a consortium of churches that acts as a governing body. The PAOC sets guidelines for churches within the consortium; however, the pastoral leaders of individual churches have autonomy in running church operations. At Hope City, the lead pastor and pastoral team handle the day-to-day operations of the organization, such as determining the various types of programs offered, deciding on items pertaining to infrastructure, as well as determining maintenance needs and organizing the weekly congregational activities that happen. The pastoral team provides leadership over the operations of the church in collaboration with the church board. The board comprises a group of individuals that are voted for and appointed by congregational members serving a specific term in their board seat. Hope City’s affiliation with the PAOC presents another factor in identifying Hope City as a faith-based religious community. Using Jeavons’s (1997) seven dimensions provided a framework to determine that Hope City is a faith-based religious organization.

Additionally, Hope City’s status as a religious community is supported by the goals and values. Hope City identified the following goals for the congregation:

- to have 1% of Edmonton call Hope City church home; and
- to build a church that greater Edmonton wants to attend (M. Baker, personal communication, June 11, 2019).

Hope City’s vision is that “following Jesus is the best decision anyone can ever make” (Hope City, 2011, para. 6). The goals Hope City has identified are supported by the following core values:

1. We are passionate: We’re passionate about our relationship with Christ, what he is doing in our lives and in the lives of the people in our church and our city.
2. We try hard: We value excellence and do our best to make it look like we tried. We believe God uses our hard work to make a difference.
3. We lean in: We do whatever it takes to accomplish our vision and goals, even if it falls outside our comfort zone.

4. We fight for unity: We choose a culture of peace by getting along, showing respect and presuming the best of each other. We stand up for each other and we don’t throw each other under the bus.

5. People come first: We choose to love first and lead second, but we always do both. People are not a distraction from work, they are the reason we are here. We’re about developing people into amazing followers of Christ.

6. We point people to Jesus: We seize every opportunity to talk and tell others about Christ and what He’s done in our lives.

7. We are future-oriented: We know we can’t stay here and actively pursue God’s next for ourselves and for our Church. (Hope City, n.d., para. 1–21)

Cabrera and Cabrera (2015) created the distinctions, systems, relationships, and perspectives (DSRP) framework that is foundational to systems thinking. Cabrera, Cabrera, and Powers (2015) noted,

*Distinctions* can be made between and among things and ideas; things and ideas can be organized into *systems*, in which both the parts and the wholes can be identified;

*relationships* can be made between and among things and ideas; and lastly, things and ideas can be viewed from the *perspectives* of other people, things, and ideas. (p. 535)

Through a systems analysis of Hope City, I identified that the context can be categorized as complex. This system requires an approach to church decisions and program offerings that is both creative as well as innovative (Snowden & Boone, 2007). Although aspects of Hope City church life are set by the PAOC, many aspects of this system’s context are complex because community and congregational needs can be determined by several factors, such as who attends the church or the location of a particular campus within a city. The needs of individuals within a
community or congregation change as the world changes. These changes require an adjustment to how the church serves the congregation and the greater Edmonton area.

Using the DSRP rules proposed by Cabrera and Cabrera (2015) as a framework, I created the boundaries for this inquiry making distinctions, identifying systems, outlining relationships and surfacing perspectives. This has all been captured in a systems analysis diagram presented in Figure 1.

Hope City is a system within the system of the PAOC denomination. Hope City is governed by the PAOC denominational body, however, day to day church operations are led by
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the lead pastor and church staff. The PAOC Local Church Bylaws and Constitution states “all local churches are recognized as self-governing with the inherent right to sovereignty in the conduct of their own affairs” (PACO, 2016, p. 4). Hope City also includes a church board that assist with church operations and governance in accordance with the PAOC. The relationship between a local church like Hope City and the PAOC is outlined. For the purposes of this action-oriented research, I set a boundary to only look at the Hope City community and to exclude inquiry into other communities similar to Hope City that exist within the PAOC. In Figure 1, the external circle is the PAOC that surrounds the heart, which is the Hope City community. I included a boundary line to represent the separation of these two systems for the purpose of this inquiry. Although the PAOC system impacts Hope City through guidelines and denominational parameters, making a distinction between these two systems was important, as Hope City has factors that are unique to the organizational context. Another boundary was established between the pastoral team members who are paid and church staff members who are also paid. Each pastoral team member functions as a department head and oversees paid staff and volunteers within their department. Although paid staff interact with volunteers, the perspectives of the pastoral team members served this inquiry in a unique way, as they are in leadership positions. In addition to paid pastoral team and church staff members, the Hope City congregation has a mix of volunteers and nonvolunteers. For the purposes of this inquiry, I set a distinct boundary to include only current volunteers. Given that volunteers are such an integral part of how the church functions, understanding the volunteer leadership community and the development of those leaders is paramount to the success of Hope City and its future growth. In Figure 1, the boundary between the pastoral team and staff as well as the boundary between the volunteer leaders and those who attend the church but are not volunteers, is represented by a dotted line to show the separation of these groups for the purposes of this inquiry. This inquiry provided insight into the interrelationships and perspectives that exist between the pastoral team and the volunteer leaders.
In Figure 1, the heart represents the Hope City community, the various groups identified, volunteers, pastoral team members, staff members and congregational members, make up the heart of this community.

Another important consideration made through the systems analysis of Hope City is the relationships that exist within the boundaries created. For the purposes of this inquiry, I considered the relationship between the volunteers and pastoral team. My observation was that the relationship between these two groups within in the system is positive, which provided a stable foundation for inquiry. Finally, utilizing Cabrera and Cabrera’s (2015) DSRP framework, the perspectives of both the volunteers and the pastoral team provided the most support for this inquiry. The perspectives of these individuals in the inquiry process are presented as data throughout this thesis. The distinctions, systems, relationships, and perspectives identified during a systems analysis of Hope City provided a framework for embarking on a positive change in Hope City.

**Overview of the Thesis**

In Chapter 1 of this thesis, I discussed the key drivers for embarking on this inquiry with Hope City and identified the primary research question and the subquestions used to conduct this exploration. I outlined the significance of this inquiry to the stakeholders and, finally, offered an overview of the organizational context as well as a systems analysis, which provided clarity on the distinctions, interrelationships, and perspectives present in this system.

Chapter 2 is a literature review in which I discussed three topics: the unique characteristics of faith-based or religious communities, volunteer motivation in a religious context, and volunteer leadership development in faith-based or religious communities. In Chapter 2, I referred to the literature to explain and further define the Hope City context as well as to further connect how the outcomes of this inquiry will contribute to scholarly activity.
Chapter 3 presents the engaged action-oriented methodology used to embark on this inquiry with Hope City. The community focused nature of Hope City aligned with a community-based research (CBR) methodology, because Hope City, as I refer to in Figure 1 in Chapter 1 is a community of like individuals who share lived experiences (Guta & Roche, as cited in Coghlan & Brydon-Miller, 2014). Using CBR as a framework, I employed data collection methods of storytelling, focus groups, and interviews. These methods all foster experiential participation from stakeholders. Chapter 3 also outlines the participants who were engaged in the inquiry process, the composition of the inquiry team, the study conduct, data analysis and validity, as well as ethical implications connected to this inquiry.

Chapter 4 consists of both the findings and conclusions. The findings reported on my analysis of the data, identifying summaries of participants’ thoughts. The conclusions provide generalized commentary on what was learned through the inquiry process and information gleaned from participants. The scope and limitations of the inquiry are also discussed in Chapter 4.

Finally, in Chapter 5, I discuss the synthesis of the inquiry. I outline a series of recommendations for the organization that aligned with desired outcomes for the partner organization and information gleaned from the data. I discuss the organizational implications and implications for future inquiry, and I close the chapter with a thesis summary.
Chapter Two: Literature Review

For inquiry into volunteer leadership development with Hope City, it was necessary to review literature on the following topics: (a) the unique attributes and characteristics of a faith-based or religious community, (b) volunteer motivation in faith-based or religious context, and (c) volunteer leadership development in faith-based religious communities. A review of literature on these topics was significant to this engaged, action-oriented project because it informed how others have characterized faith-based or religious contexts, what motivates individuals to embark on volunteerism, and how volunteer leadership development, in both secular and religious contexts, is conceptualized.

The Unique Attributes of a Faith-Based or Religious Communities

Embarking on an inquiry in this type of community context required that I first clarify how the literature defined a faith-based or religious community. As noted previously, Jeavons (1997) suggested seven dimensions that categorize an organization as faith-based or religious. Using Jeavons’s (1997) dimensions as a framework, I categorized Hope City as a faith-based religious community. However, Sider and Unruh (2004) argued, “No clear definition exists of what it means to be ‘faith-based’ (Jeavons, 1997)” (p. 110). Pargament, Silverman, Johnson, Echemendia, and Snyder (1983) proposed that there is a lack of clarity or understanding of religious communities, which poses a problem and limits the ability to answer questions with regard to this context. Sider and Unruh stated that some interpret faith-based organizations (FBOs) to be any broad range of organization with religious affiliation. Similarly, Bielefeld and Cleveland (2013) argued that FBOs are a separate organization with a “mission [which ties] the religious identity of the [FBO to] its founding and remains an important calling to attract and motivate employees and volunteers” (p. 449). Conversely, when discussing religious congregations or communities, Ebaugh, Chafetz, and Pipes (2006) proposed, “By definition, congregations are faith-based, regardless of how they may differ in theology, structure, size,
location or types of ministries provided” (p. 2259). On the other hand, Terry et al. (2015) argued the importance of emphasizing the distinction between religious congregations and FBOs. They noted that FBOs primarily focus on social services, while religious congregations have this as a secondary focus (Terry et al., 2015). Wittberg (2013) further supported this view by proposing, “Faith-based organizations [are] a separately organized and administered entity established by its sponsoring faith community to perform a specific ministry, program or service” (p. 541).

Similarly, Frederick (2003) noted a separation between religious congregations and FBOs when she argued, “Churches transform peoples lives” while faith-based organizations “help people achieve a sustainable place in society” (p. 31). While discussing the separation of church and state, Frederick (2003) emphasized the necessity for partnership between churches and FBOs in order to accomplish community development goals. Wittberg (2013) noted, “[A] sponsoring faith community is often a local congregation” (p. 541).

As evidenced throughout the literature reviewed for this paper, Hope City church could be categorized as a religious congregation specifically with its affiliation with the PAOC; however, the community outreach and development pieces would also align Hope City church with an FBO. Given that a definitive description of an FBO does not exist, I have categorized and will refer to Hope City as a faith-based religious community throughout this thesis. In the context of Hope City, there are many factors that motivate individuals to embark on a volunteerism journey in a religious or faith-based context. There is a connection between faith or religious beliefs and the motivation to volunteer.

**Volunteer Motivation in a Religious Context**

Jäger, Kreutzer, and Beyes (2009) posited the definition of volunteering is “time given freely without pay to any organization that has the aim of benefiting people” (p. 79). Volunteerism is a combination of activities of which individuals engage in to assist those who are in need (Wilson & Janoski, 1995). When considering that volunteering is time and service
freely given without the formal means of compensation, it is important to examine motives—what prompts an individual to take on a volunteer position? In light of the fact that there is no traditional form of financial remuneration for volunteers, it is imperative that the volunteer experience is engaging and provides an “affective connection” (Vecina, Chacón, Sueiro, & Barrón, 2012, p. 131). Dwyer, Bono, Snyder, Nov, and Berson (2013) argued that both the needs and desires of an individual should be considered when looking at volunteer motivation. The choice to volunteer is often driven by what Jäger et al. (2009) defined as altruistic “compassion for those in need and willingness to help” (p. 81). They further noted individuals may experience “feelings of moral, religious or political duty to local community” (Jäger et al., 2009, p. 81). A source of altruism or benevolence is often driven by religion, as this behaviour is encouraged in a faith-based context or religious communities (Prouteau & Sardinha, 2015; Stark & Glock, 1968; Wilson & Janoski, 1995). Taniguchi and Thomas (2011) argued that there is a lack of research on the linkage of religious attitude to that of volunteering. Conversely, Trulear (2007) proposed that service in religious organizations is tied to a sense of calling, which is a “central tenet of Christian identity” (p. 317). He further noted that a call to serve, in the religious context, involved offering one’s “gifts and talents, strengths and weaknesses . . . in service of the kingdom of God” (Trulear, 2007, p. 319). Researchers van Tienen, Scheepers, Reitsma, and Schilderman (2011) further supported this notion when they argued religious or spiritual interest intensifies the probability of an individual to embark on involvement in a volunteer capacity.

Within a religious context, the call to serve those who are less fortunate compels many individuals to take on volunteer roles. The thought of giving gifts and talents as acts of service is also be applicable to individuals who determine their gifts are suited to leadership roles.

**Volunteer Leadership Development in Faith-based or Religious Communities**

There has been increased interest in the area of leadership development, which is evidenced by the number of publications dedicated to this topic (Day, 2001). Day (2001) further
noted the requirement for organizations to look at leadership development from the various perspectives, considering both the individual and the collective. It is clear that how an organization chooses to undertake leadership development can be dependent on many factors. The scope of leadership development is likely to also change when considering the development of volunteer leaders within an organization. Furthermore, addressing volunteer leadership development in a faith-based or religious community adds greater complexity, as the motivation to choose how leadership development is conducted is influenced by religious beliefs (Bell, 2010). Volunteer participation in an organization differs from paid staff participation and engagement, which adds additional elements of complexity to this issue (Prouteau & Sardinha, 2015). Hugen, Wolfer, and Renkema (2006) argued, “Volunteers involved in congregationally-supported community ministry provide the social capital—the supportive relationships and resources” (p. 409). Coleman (1988) posited, “Social capital constitutes a particular kind of resource available to an actor” (p. S98). Coleman further noted “social capital exists in relations among people” (p. S100). The concept of social capital in relation to volunteers substantiates the emphasis placed on support and leadership development for volunteer leaders in the faith-based context when considering the relational influence that exists within the volunteer community.

This topic was relevant to the inquiry with Hope City, as a review of the literature enabled me to focus on relevant scholarship that addressed the development and support of leaders to better understand ways to equip leaders who are in volunteer positions (Connors, 2011; Meier, Singletary, & Hill, 2012; Posner, 2015). Scholars have identified the need for further inquiry with regard to volunteer leadership in various contexts (Catano, Pond, & Kelloway, 2001; Posner, 2015). Posner (2015) noted, “Volunteer leadership is a unique and distinct construct that requires further research in its own right, not as a corollary to generic volunteerism or leadership” (p. 886). Pargament et al. (1983) supported this when they further emphasized the “special mission of churches and synagogues, and the special roles, structures, and processes
developed by these institutions to achieve their goals” (p. 352), noting that they require further examination. Conversely, Pargament et al. (1991) posited faith-based communities can utilize similar concepts and methods used by other systems, with “some special considerations” (p. 394). The contrasting viewpoints in the limited literature on volunteer leadership in a faith-based context offered evidence that inquiry into volunteer leadership development contributes beneficial knowledge to the community.

When comparing volunteer leaders to those in paid leadership positions, researchers noted volunteer leaders are not compensated or rewarded in the same way as for-profit leaders (Catano et al., 2001); rather, volunteer leaders, specifically in a religious context, often embark on this journey “as an act or expression of their faith” (Hugen et al., 2006, p. 410). Kouzes and Posner (2017) proposed, at its foundation, leadership development is about self-development. These authors further indicated leadership “is about leading out of what is already in your soul” (Kouzes & Posner, 2017, p. 308). However, when taking on a volunteer leadership role, altruistic motivation does not provide the competency that is necessary or required of a person in a leadership position. In their study of developing leadership skills in a small rural community, Meier et al. (2012) identified that volunteer communities require individuals who not only acquire but espouse competent leadership skills. Catano et al. (2001) argued volunteer leaders should employ transformational leadership approaches to look for ways to prompt both participation and support from volunteers without the ability to provide remuneration or discipline. These authors further argued the necessity for volunteer groups to initiate training opportunities for volunteer leaders (Catano et al., 2001). Volunteer leaders are tasked with similar responsibilities to those of leaders in a for-profit environment, which means they require development opportunities to support the work that they do. It is important to understand the relationship between volunteer leaders and those whom they lead; paying attention to how volunteer leaders operate within the organizational context is paramount to the success of the
leader and the organization in which they volunteer (Oostlander, Güntert, van Schie, & Wehner, 2014).

Noted gaps exist in the literature that offer possible ways to incorporate volunteer leader development, as the impact on volunteer leaders in organizations or communities is an area that lacks significant research (Jäger et al., 2009). Although the literature did indicate that, similar to for-profit leaders, volunteer leaders require leadership skills, the literature lacked discussion around leadership development programs or training for volunteer leaders. Jeavons (1997) noted, “Religious organizations have drawn little attention from either theorists or researchers in the area of organizational analysis” (p. 79). At the onset of this research, I believed inquiry with Hope City would start to fill this gap.

**Chapter Summary**

In this chapter, I reviewed and discussed literature pertaining to three topics relevant to this inquiry project: (a) the unique attributes and characteristics of a faith-based or religious community, (b) volunteer motivation in a religious context, and (c) volunteer leadership development in a faith-based or religious community. The first topic provided definition of a faith-based or religious community to provide context and foundation to discuss Hope City in this context. The literature reviewed on this topic provided frameworks to assist in determining if an organization could be classified as religious (Jeavons, 1997). However, much of the literature indicated a solid definition of an FBO is lacking (Sider & Unruh, 2004). The second topic outlined the motivators for individuals to embark on a volunteer calling in a faith-based or religious community context. The literature identified that the motivation to volunteer in a faith-based or religious context often differs from the motivators for volunteer work in secular organizations (Jäger et al., 2009). As a result, most individuals in faith communities volunteer out of a sense of calling or duty. Finally, the third topic addressed was leadership development in a religious context. Although researchers discussed leadership development at length throughout
the literature and put forward a plethora of theories or frameworks (Bell, 2010; Catano et al., 2001), there remains a gap in the literature for the development of leaders in a faith-based context. Researchers in the literature identified leadership development in a faith-based or religious context is necessary for leaders to execute their roles (Oostlander et al., 2014); however, how this should be developed was not addressed. The literature reviewed for this thesis was foundational to the design and execution of the research conducted.
Chapter Three: Methodology

This capstone project was an engaged action-oriented project in which I partnered with Hope City in an inquiry to understand volunteer leadership development in a religious context in order to support a positive change in the volunteer leadership development efforts that Hope City undertakes. Brown and Tandon (1983) described action-oriented research as an inquiry approach that “aims to contribute to both the practical concerns of people in immediate problematic situations and to the goals of social science by joint collaboration within a mutually acceptable ethical framework” (p. 278). Action-oriented research emphasizes a commitment to participation, action, and change (Small, 1995). Minkler and Wallerstein (2008) suggested action-oriented research stems from the traditions of action research, as established by Kurt Lewin (as cited in Minkler & Wallerstein, 2008), which are based on the involvement of people who are impacted by a problem through the cyclical problem-solving process that is comprised of “fact finding, action, and evaluation” (p. 9). The literature reviewed for this report placed significant emphasis on the involvement and collaboration with partners that is required of action-oriented research (Rowe, Graf, Agger-Gupta, Piggot-Irvine, & Harris, 2013). I found the collaborative nature of action-oriented research to be relevant to the Hope City community because it is a partnership with an aim to achieve a positive change and the goal of Hope City is to positively impact the world. Through the literature, I discovered the characteristics of community-based action research placed emphasis on the importance of community-focused interactions and research for action (Guta & Roche, 2014).

Community-Based Research

Methodology “guides how a researcher decides on what process and methods to use” (Giddings & Grant, 2006, p. 5). The community-based research (CBR) methodology best aligned with Hope City, as it allowed research to be guided by the knowledge gained through the lived experience of the research participants (Coghlan & Brydon-Miller, 2014; Guta & Roche, 2014).
Guta and Roche (2014) defined CBR as research that is conducted with a community of individuals who share lived experiences, such as individuals living with a particular illness or those that provide a service to marginalized populations. Minkler and Wallerstein (2008) proposed community-based participatory research (CBPR) as a form of participatory research. They further proposed a variety of terms exist to describe research based on participation, including action research and participatory action research. Minkler and Wallerstein argued, although the goals of each approach may vary slightly, “they share a set of core principles and characteristics (Wallerstein, 1999; Wallerstein & Duran, 2006)” (p. 9). While CBR and CBPR differ slightly, I believe the principle similarities were interchangeable for the purposes of this inquiry.

Researchers noted a variety of characteristics and principles that are foundational to CBR, with Guta and Roche (2014) proposing that CBR (a) is driven by the community, (b) is relevant to the needs of the community, (c) works collaboratively in partnership with the community members, (d) improves the capacity of community members, (e) attends to process, (f) recognizes several forms of knowledge, and (g) is oriented toward action or outcome. Maiter, Simich, Jacobson, and Wise (2008) suggested the CBPR philosophy is based on the “partnership and principles of self-determination, equity, and social justice [aiming] to break down barriers between the researcher and the researched” (p. 306).

The principles of community identity, collaboration, involvement, and improved processes are some of the foundational elements of CBR (Guta & Roche, 2014), which support utilizing this particular methodology in inquiry with Hope City. Throughout the inquiry process of CBR, the expertise of community members is leveraged (Guta & Roche, 2014). Guta and Roche (2014) proposed CBR “promotes an iterative and cyclical approach to research and action” (p. 164). Faridi, Grunbaum, Gray, Franks and Simoes (2007) proposed the “iterative process of action, reflection and experiential learning [are] essentially the foundation of the
community-based participatory research practiced today” (p. 1). Research conducted with a community provides increased knowledge for community members as well as establishing sustainable practices to improve processes that were developed in consultation and engagement with the affected community (Faridi et al., 2007).

The CBR research methodology utilizes a mix of methods to understand various experiences (Coghlan & Brydon-Miller, 2014; Guta & Roche, 2014). As such, I determined utilizing methods that collectively gather community members and provide space for participants to share experiences in their own voice for example storytelling and focus groups would benefit Hope City.

**Data Collection Methods**

My research was conducted in two phases using three data collection methods: storytelling (Lewis, 2011), focus groups using a 1-2-4-all liberating structure (Lipmanowicz & McCandless, 2013), and interviews (Stringer, 2014). Storytelling as a research method is a narrative practice that is complex and provides various meanings (Adorisio, 2009). Lewis (2011) argued storytelling is the primary way of “understanding the lived world” (p. 505) and “making meaning” (p. 505). This allowed me to collect data written in participants’ exact words. Once the written stories were collected, I extracted themes from the data in order to understand how the Pastoral team conceptualizes volunteer leadership in the Hope City context.

Morgan (1997) proposed that focus groups are “a way of listening to people and learning from them” (p. 9). A focus group is method where a facilitator guides conversation amongst a small group of individuals (Morgan, 1997). Given that the Pastoral team at Hope City was not accustomed to taking part in research, when inviting the participants, I adjusted the language in order to ensure their comfort by referring to the focus group as a volunteer group discussion or a volunteer information conversation. Lipmanowicz and McCandless (2013) suggested that employing liberating structures “transforms how people interact” (p. x) providing an opportunity
to “include and engage everyone” (p. x). They further emphasized that a 1-2-4-all structure allows individual reflection, discussion in pairs, theming of information in groups of four, and then reporting those themes out to the group. This provides an opportunity to engage participants concurrently in order to produce thoughts, questions, and ideas (Lipmanowicz & McCandless, 2013). I believed that this type of structure would work well in Hope City context, based on the individual’s familiarity with group discussions in formats like small groups; therefore, I intended to utilize a 1-2-4-all liberating structure separated into two sections of discussion for the focus groups with the volunteer leaders. However, as the focus groups commenced, I determined this approach was not ideal for this context. I discuss this further in the “Study Conduct” section of this chapter. It should be noted that in order to align with the principles of CBR, it was important to open the invitation up to volunteers in leadership roles within the Hope City community in order to hear from those who are integral to the volunteer program.

A distinct difference between these two methods or approaches to data collection with participants is that through storytelling, participants had the opportunity to describe their lived experiences in their own words. Although this method, unlike focus groups, did not allow for further questions to better understand participants’ experiences, it did allow a glimpse into participants’ personal experiences without outside influence.

In the event that participation numbers were low (e.g., if only one or two individuals attended the focus group) or if volunteer leaders were unable to attend the scheduled focus group sessions, then alternatively an interview data collection method would be used. Morgan (1997) proposed that the focus group method is essentially a group interview; for this reason, switching from a focus group to an interview was necessary and did not impact the questions asked, and sufficient data were produced. In order to make this change seamlessly, I conducted semistructured interviews, using the open-ended questions that had been predetermined for the focus group (DiCicco-Bloom & Crabtree, 2006).
Project Participants

I conducted the first phase of the inquiry with the Pastoral team of Hope City. Currently, Hope City has 18 pastors who make up the Pastoral team, and these church leaders work closely with the volunteers and hold valuable perspectives on the intricacies of the church life and have lived experience working with volunteers. I invited the Pastoral team to participate in the method of storytelling. The pastoral team was asked to tell a story about exemplary support that they received from a volunteer leader and the characteristics that volunteer embodied. The Pastoral team’s relationship to the volunteer leaders was the reason for the inclusion of only these individuals in this phase of research. Although the Pastoral team oversees the work of the volunteer leaders, they also rely heavily on their support. As such, the Pastoral team needs to provide an environment that enables volunteer leaders to feel supported. Understanding how the Pastoral team conceptualizes the work of the volunteer leaders was important, given that I wished to clarify what was involved in volunteer leadership development in the Hope City context. The exclusion of the other Hope City staff members was necessary to limit the scope of this inquiry.

The second phase of inquiry involved the volunteers of Hope City. I extended an invitation to a targeted sample of volunteer leaders within the Hope City community. The targeted sample was chosen to ensure that the number of participants was manageable. This group was selected by narrowing the scope to volunteers in leadership positions. This group included all individuals who are in leadership positions, such as small group leaders, worship leaders, children’s ministry leaders, youth leaders, and connections team leaders. Small groups are groups of 10 to 12 participants who gather on a weekly, biweekly, or monthly basis to discuss faith, the Bible, and Christian living, often using books as a guide for conversation. Worship leaders are part of the music ministry at Hope City. These individuals participate on Sunday mornings or at special services to lead congregational singing. Children’s ministry
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encompasses all programs for kids 0 to 12 years of age; these programs are held on Sunday mornings as well as during the week. Finally, connections team leaders are involved in volunteer opportunities that are outwardly focused such as greeters who welcome people as they arrive on Sunday mornings and ushers who assist people with finding seats as well as navigating around each campus. In order to understand the volunteer leadership development experience, a response was required from volunteers who are in leadership roles. The invitation went to individuals at the two existing campuses. The purpose for including this group of volunteer leaders was that there are volunteer leaders in the above-noted positions at both the Mill Woods and Terwillegar campuses. Only these volunteer leaders were included in this phase of inquiry in order to make the data gathering and analysis manageable. Additionally, this allowed the inquiry to focus on individuals who are leaders in their volunteer area. Although some volunteers were excluded from this inquiry in order to maintain a manageable sample, the volunteer leaders who did in fact participate were provided information that was relevant for the needs of Hope City for this particular inquiry.

My inquiry team included one of the pastoral team members. My capstone partner requested this to ensure a pastoral team presence was maintained throughout the inquiry (P. Kniesel, personal communication, June 25, 2019). The pastoral team member provided assistance with reviewing the probing questions, which were the additional questions asked of volunteer leader participants (see Appendix H) that I asked throughout the second phase of data collection. As well, this individual provided insight into the goals and the vision of Hope City, which were beneficial when coding the anonymized data. Also included in my inquiry team was a long-time colleague, Tiffany, who is familiar with facilitating focus groups, workshops, and other innovative idea-generating activities. Although this individual is part of the Hope City community, this inquiry team member did not hold any volunteer, staff, or leadership positions, so there was no conflict of interest or power-over issues. An inquiry team composed of these
individuals offered expertise and support where needed. I had intended to include a Royal Roads University colleague as third inquiry team member; however, that role transitioned to one that was informal in nature, acting as a support for my reflexive practice with regard to bias or other aspects of the study. All inquiry team members signed a letter of agreement prior to assisting in the inquiry (see Appendix A).

During the CBR inquiry process, I leveraged the expertise of volunteers that are members of the Hope City community to gather information pertaining to the inquiry question (Coghlan & Brydon-Miller, 2014; Guta & Roche, 2014). The stakeholders involved were the most appropriate choice for this inquiry because the sample group size was manageable for the scope of this project and this select group was able to contribute lived experiences to this action-oriented inquiry process.

**Study Conduct**

In this section I describe how my inquiry team and I conducted each phase of the study. As previously identified, this inquiry process included two phases of data gathering. Phase 1 involved the Pastoral team in a storytelling data-gathering method. Phase 2 targeted volunteer leaders.

Coghlan and Brannick (2014) defined action research as “research in action, rather than research about action, a collaborative democratic partnership; and sequence of events and an approach to problem-solving” (p. 6). I applied Coghlan and Brannick’s foundational framework to conduct this inquiry in partnership with Hope City. Coghlan and Brannick’s framework enabled me to ensure the focus of the inquiry worked toward a positive change with Hope City, stakeholders were seen as partners throughout, and aspects were carried out in a clear organized manner.

As previously identified, Hope City members are not familiar with research and inquiry, so communication was important to the success of the project. I developed a communication plan
in collaboration with my capstone project partner and pastoral inquiry team member. My capstone project partner and pastoral inquiry team member verbally shared project details with the pastoral and church staff; pastoral leaders indicated this form of communication worked best for the team (P. Kniesel, personal communication, June 25, 2019). This information was shared with the pastoral staff and church staff for validation and to enlist the necessary support that I needed throughout the inquiry process.

**Storytelling.** I sent an email invitation (see Appendix B) to the pastoral team members asking them to voluntarily participate in the storytelling portion of this inquiry. I invited them to write a story about a time when they received outstanding support from a volunteer leader and to describe the attributes that the volunteer embodied. In order to understand how volunteer leadership is conceptualized at Hope City, I needed to understand how volunteer leadership is seen and understood by the paid pastoral staff at Hope City. As attachments to the email, I included the information letter (see Appendix C) and consent form (see Appendix D). I requested responses be sent directly to me digitally and I advised participants that they could respond with an audio-recorded voice note, a video recording, or a written response. Subsequent to the invitation, I received responses from three pastoral team members. Each participant sent individual email messages to me, which included a digital copy of their consent forms. Two of the participants chose written response stories and one participant chose to send an audio-recorded response, which I transcribed using transcription software.

**Focus groups.** I extended an invitation for to a targeted sample of volunteer leaders within the Hope City community to voluntarily participate in the study. Church staff sent confidential emails of the online participant script (see Appendix E) to the participants, which included the consent form (see Appendix F), information about the inquiry (see Appendix G), and the focus group handout (see Appendix H) as attachments. After discussion with my pastoral inquiry team partner, I determined that all focus group sessions would be held at the Mill Woods
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location for simplicity. I put forward three proposed focus group dates with the option to attend two different time slots on each day, for a total of six focus groups. I asked participants to advise me about which session they would attend when they responded to the invitation to participate; however, I also prepared for individuals who decided to drop in. Some participants sent their consent forms digitally, others attended with signed forms, and some participants signed when they arrived.

There were attendees at five of the six time slots and each focus group was cofacilitated by me and my inquiry team partner, Tiffany. The first focus group and the third focus group each had one participant, so I conducted these sessions as interviews, which I address in the next section. The second focus group had six participants, the fourth had four, and the fifth focus group had two participants. Tiffany and I cofacilitated each focus group in the same way, with introductions of both facilitators and information about the inquiry provided. At each focus group session, I ensured that the copies of the documents I had previously sent to participants were made available, including consent forms, information letters, and handouts for participants to reference (see Appendices F, G, and H). Prior to starting the audio recording, I reviewed and collected the consent forms. I intended to utilize a liberating structure approach (Lipmanowicz & McCandless, 2013) as the format to conduct the focus group; however, it became evident that this method was not appropriate. As the first focus group began, I explained the structure and could sense participants’ hesitation, as research is unfamiliar in this context, so I asked participants if they would prefer to have an open conversation, and the consensus was yes.

Additionally, the smaller focus group sizes did not allow for pairing or groups of four in most instances. Through collaborative discussion with my inquiry team partner, we decided against utilizing the liberating structure format for all focus groups going forward. As each focus group commenced, I chose to keep certain aspects of the liberating structure format: specifically, asking participants to record their inspirational quote on a recipe card, which I collected at the
end of each session. Also, throughout the focus group session, I captured themes on flipchart paper that was visible to participants but also checked in with the group frequently to determine the accuracy of the data captured. I gathered all paper data at the end and stored them in a secured location in my home.

**Interviews.** At the onset of this research, I had planned for the interview format to be employed in the event of low attendance at focus groups. After I had received responses from several individuals who were unable to attend the proposed focus group dates, I also made interview options available to them. Given that the interviewees were participants who were attending in response to the focus group invitation, these individuals had the information that was previously provided to the focus group participants. In addition to the two focus groups that became interviews, I interviewed three other participants individually. I facilitated the remaining three interviews on my own; however, I followed the same format that Tiffany and I had completed in other interviews and focus groups. I conducted all one-on-one interviews in the same way, with introductions and information about the inquiry provided. I ensured copies of the documents that I had previously sent to participants were available at the interview sessions, including consent forms, information letters, and handouts for participants to reference (see Appendices F, G, and I). I posed the same questions outlined in Sections 1 and 2 of the focus group handout (see Appendix H) to conduct the interviews as well as posing the probing questions and inquiry subquestions. As I had in the focus group sessions, I asked interview participants to record their inspirational quote on a recipe card, which I collected at the end of each interview. Throughout the interview sessions I captured themes in a notebook and validated the information gathered by checking in with the interviewees to verify accuracy.

**Data Analysis and Validity**

In this section, I focused on the process I used to analyze the data collected in the storytelling, focus group, and interview data collection methods utilized in this inquiry. I
presented the information in two sections; the first discussed the data analysis and validity for
data collected during the storytelling method, and the second outlined data analysis and validity
for the focus groups and interviews, as I analyzed these in a similar manner. I analyzed all data
from this inquiry from a qualitative perspective.

**Storytelling data analysis and validity.** During the storytelling phase of the inquiry, the
participants responded with stories presented in their own words. During data analysis, I used
storytellers’ words to categorize similarities. As previously noted, I received two written
responses and one voice-recorded response. Once I had transcribed the voice-recorded response,
I printed a hard copy of each story. I simplified my approach to coding the storytelling data using
three codes: thematic, values, and emotion coding. I read through each story three times in order
to highlight salient points connected to the topics identified in my literature review. During my
the first read through my intent was to look for themes that emerged. Ryan and Bernard (2003)
suggested, “Discovering themes is the basis for much social science research” (pp. 85–86). These
authors further noted that the use of themes provides the researcher an opportunity to describe
and compare data collected (Ryan & Bernard, 2003). On the second read through each story I
paid attention to language around values. Saldaña and Omasta (2017) suggested that values
coding is appropriate when exploring “cultural values, identity, intrapersonal and interpersonal
participant experiences” (p. 129). As such, I used values coding for analyzing data gathered
during the storytelling phase of this research, as it was based on participants’ values, experience,
and conceptualizations of the work the volunteer leaders do. On the final read through, I noticed
participants used strong emotions to describe feelings they had about exceptional volunteers, so I
used emotion coding, as the stories provided insight into the emotions present in the relationship
between the Pastoral members and volunteers.

Birt, Scott, Cavers, Campbell, and Walker (2016) stressed the importance of member
checking in to ensure that the results of the research resonated with the participants. I presented
the extracted themes, values, and emotions to the pastoral team participants individually via 
email to validate what was identified. I did this by sending analyzed data in an accessible way 
(Birt et al., 2016), utilizing a table listing themes, values, and emotions and asking each 
participant to identify if their perspectives had been captured. I received responses from the 
participants validating the data.

**Focus group and interview data analysis and validity.** During the focus group and 
interview data collection methods, I gathered multiple forms of data, including voice recordings, 
recipe cards, flip chart paper, and note paper. I transcribed the eight voice recordings (from five 
individual interviews and three focus groups) that I collected using a transcription software. I 
listened and read through each transcription to ensure accuracy. As I listened to the recordings, I 
made connections to ideas presented in the literature review as well. Once that was complete, I 
saved each transcribed recording as a document file and then printed and grouped the 
transcription with the corresponding recipe card and flip chart or note papers. I analyzed the 
focus group and interview data using similar codes as used with the storytelling data, thematic 
coding, values coding, and emotion coding established with the interactions done with the 
pastoral staff responses. For data gathered during the focus group, I utilized thematic coding to 
assist with categorizing and to help classify “more discrete concepts” (Ryan & Bernard, 2003, p. 
87) discovered throughout the inquiry. Values coding is a form of data analysis that works well 
in qualitative research studies due to the fact that value is associated with what an individual 
deems as important (Saldaña & Omasta, 2018). Participants described various aspects of their 
volunteer leader experience that they deemed important or held as a value. Throughout focus 
group and interview dialogue, participants described emotions associated with their volunteer 
leadership role, making emotion coding an appropriate choice for analysis. Although the 
participant group was small, throughout the data analysis I found significant commonalities in 
the information that they provided. My inquiry team member and I both checked in with
participants at various points throughout the focus groups session to ensure that what was being shared was captured correctly. At the close of the focus groups, my cofacilitator and I both shared some themes that arose through the discussion to member check the data with participants prior to analysis. Following analysis, in order to further validate themes, I provided analyzed data themes to focus group participants to ensure their perspectives were accurately represented (Chase, 2017). Given that the perspectives that arose from the Pastoral team and the volunteer leaders were themed during data analysis in order to determine if there were any similar themes that arose from each of the groups.

I maintained a journal as well to participate in a reflexive process. This assisted with clarifying overarching themes in the data collected. As a current volunteer at Hope City, it was important throughout this process for me to recognize my bias and the impact that had on the inquiry process. This allowed me to once more initiate a reflexive process with respect to bias. I have consistently shared my thoughts with members of my inquiry team as well as with my program colleagues to obtain perspectives from those familiar with the inquiry process. I believe that the cyclical nature of action research has allowed me, as a researcher, to revisit aspects throughout the inquiry process.

Ethical Implications

Although being an insider included many benefits, such as the creation of context-based knowledge that surfaced from lived experience (Coghlan & Brannick, 2014, p. 4), it was important for me to consider the possibility of this being a barrier. Holding this dual role of volunteer at Hope City and researcher had the potential to impede my ability to observe critically (Bradbury, 2015; Coghlan & Shani, 2015). Throughout the research, I maintained my volunteer leadership role but at a reduced capacity, which afforded me the opportunity to be an observing participant, allowing my primary focus to be the research (Alvesson, 2003). Through the process of reflection, I actively developed “a spirit of inquiry in [a] familiar [situation]” (Coghlan &
Shani, 2015, p. 51). Inquiry with Hope City posed “minimal risk” (Canadian Institutes of Health Research, Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada, & Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada, 2018, p. 9), as I did not conduct research with any marginalized or vulnerable populations. My position as a volunteer leader at Hope City also posed some ethical considerations, in that there may have been perceived instances of power over because of my volunteer leadership role. I clarified for participants that I had no decision-making power or influence over their status as volunteer leaders and assured volunteers that their participation was voluntary and there was no requirement to participate. This made participants comfortable throughout the inquiry. Although I executed this inquiry in partnership with the senior pastor, I had no influence on the standing of the volunteer leaders or influence on their relationships within the community. Due to the sense of calling that many volunteers feel, it was possible that some individuals may have felt a sense of obligation to participate; however, I explicitly communicated that there was no requirement to take part in the inquiry. Although my capstone partner was the lead pastor at Hope City, this did not impose a power-over dynamic when working with the pastoral team. I mitigated this by reiterating throughout the process that participants’ contributions were voluntary and their identities would remain anonymous. Although a pastoral team member was part of my inquiry team, this individual was not provided access to raw data with participant identifiers, only aggregate data. I remained compliant with the *Tri-Council Policy Statement* (Canadian Institutes of Health Research et al., 2018) core principles of respect for persons, concern for welfare, and justice throughout the entirety of the project. I employed the principles outlined by IDEO (2015): “respect . . . honor participants’ limits and value their comfort” (p. 13), “responsibility . . . act to protect people’s current and future interests and honesty” (p. 15), and “honesty . . . truthful and timely in communication” (p. 17).
Proposed Outputs

The output for this capstone project was an academic essay that “[synthesized] theoretical and empirical information and/or recommendations for further action” (Royal Roads University, Office of Research, 2019, p. 2). This was the required output for the thesis track. However, given the context of Hope City, I also provided outputs that would be more easily consumed by pastoral team members and participants. I provided Hope City with an organizational report and executive summary that detailed the outcomes. This output provided a practical overview of the findings of the inquiry. In addition to the report, using the information around support of volunteers identified by the volunteers themselves, I compiled a list of suggested resources and tools that volunteer leaders may find useful that Hope City could consider making available to them. I utilized the data collected to assist in the creation of a framework comprised of three pillars: a leadership development strategy, a volunteer engagement plan, and a volunteer recruitment plan. As a scholar practitioner, I have offered to provide support in collaboration with Hope City to facilitate the implementation of this framework, working alongside Hope City staff to ensure that training aligns with the research findings toward a positive change.

Contribution and Application

This inquiry has been beneficial to Hope City because it provided clarity on the current lived experience of the volunteers and the pastoral team members and insight into how to encourage and support the development of volunteer leaders in the community through engagement strategies and training opportunities. Additionally, this inquiry has unearthed potential gaps or areas for improvement in the existing volunteer experience. This inquiry surfaced information with regard to the supports that are necessary for volunteer leadership development toward a robust volunteer program that supports the community, the volunteers, and the staff. As a Hope City volunteer, I will benefit from this volunteer support program. As a scholar practitioner, I have already experienced some of the benefits by further developing the
competencies of personal mastery, learning, creativity, and innovation, strategic and collaborative leadership, engaged inquiry, systems change, and evidence-based scholarship. As a researcher, I have benefited from the experience gained through this research. Finally, the knowledge generated through this inquiry has identified a gap in the literature with regard to the volunteer leadership development in a faith-based context.
Chapter Four: Inquiry Project Findings and Conclusions

I begin this chapter by reporting on the data collected and analyzed. I present the themes that arose, which are substantiated by anonymized excerpts from participants’ lived experiences. Additionally, I provide conclusions that emerged from the findings, comparing and contrasting the data to perspectives from the literature. Finally, I conclude this chapter with a brief discussion of the scope of the project, including what was covered, limitations of the inquiry, as well as some reflection on lessons I have learned throughout the process.

I explored the following principal inquiry question: How can Hope City church encourage and strengthen leadership development in its volunteers? I also examined five subquestions:

1. How do the current volunteers in Hope City church conceptualize volunteer leadership in the church context?
2. How does the Pastoral team at Hope City understand the leadership roles of their volunteers?
3. How does Hope City currently facilitate volunteer leadership?
4. What are the barriers to fostering volunteer leadership potential at Hope City?
5. What can Hope City do to better develop and foster leadership among its volunteers?

Study Findings

My intention in conducting this study was to explore volunteer leadership development in a faith-based religious context. The primary emphasis of this study was on the lived experience of volunteer leaders within the Hope City community as well as on positive volunteer leader stories from pastoral team members. In the first phase of the inquiry, I asked pastoral team members to tell a story about a positive volunteer leader experience and attributes that the volunteer embodied. Through the second phase of the study, I asked focus group participants and interviewees to identify how they conceptualize their role as volunteer leaders. I then categorized
the data using values coding and emotion coding, and in both phases of the inquiry overlapping themes emerged.

In order to make the data manageable and easier to digest, I conducted a secondary analysis of the themes, values, and emotions. This secondary analysis allowed for the information to be further clarified and assisted with the creation of a framework composed of three pillars: strategy, engagement, and recruitment. This framework was necessary to assist in categorizing the data in order to establish an actionable plan for recommendations. I utilized the three pillars as the foundation for the findings of this project, and I discuss the pillars in detail in the following sections.

Table 1
Three Pillars: Findings of Inquiry with Hope City Church

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Three Pillars</th>
<th>Finding 1: Volunteer leaders at Hope City experience and display a strong sense of responsibility or calling to their roles, which is supported by alignment with the church values and vision.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strategy</td>
<td>Finding 2: Volunteer leaders at Hope City indicated that good communication is an important component to a successful volunteer program and noted that increased communication improves the volunteer experience. Finding 3: Volunteer leaders at Hope City expressed that they enjoy their roles; however, further training would enable them to be much more successful in their roles.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engagement</td>
<td>Finding 4: Volunteer leaders enjoy the work they do and would like the opportunity to share this with others.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recruitment</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

I expand upon the findings presented in Table 1 using data gathered from the stories, focus groups, and interviews that I conducted. My decision to use the data collecting methods of storytelling, focus groups, and interviews provided the opportunity for participants to use their own words when describing their lived experiences. In order to protect participant anonymity, I assigned each individual a confidentially coded identifier. Any direct quotations used are,
therefore, attributed using the codes. I used the codes FG2, FG3, FG4, FG5, FG6, FG7, FG9, FG10, FG11, FG12, FG13, FG14 for focus group participants, S18, S19 and S20 for storytelling participants, and I1, I8, I15, I16 and I17 for interviewees.

To analyze the data, I identified (a) themes, which I coded using the letter \( T \) then highlighted with a corresponding colour, (b) values, which I coded using the \( V \) and also highlighted with a corresponding colour, and (c) emotions, which I coded with an \( E \) and highlighted with a corresponding colour. The manageable number of participants enabled me to analyze the data in detail and ensure each finding was substantiated by participants’ statements.

Finding 1: Volunteer leaders at Hope City experience and display a strong sense of responsibility or calling to their roles, which is supported by alignment with the church values and vision. In the storytelling phase of the research, I asked the pastoral team to share a story about exemplary characteristics of a volunteer leader. I asked this question in order to clarify how the pastoral team understands the role of volunteer leaders. The description the volunteer leaders provided regarding calling or responsibility was supported by the characteristics the pastoral team found exemplary in volunteer leaders. One Pastoral team participant described a volunteer leader as “[serving] with sincerity and heart because they fully embrace our mission” (S20). Throughout the storytelling phase participants described the ability to pass on greater leadership responsibility to volunteers because of their “trustworthiness [and] teachability” (S18). The responses from storytelling participants aligned with the themes of leadership and initiative. Participants expressed that a large component of conceptualizing volunteer leadership is related to a volunteer’s attitude toward volunteering. Through the data analysis process, I was able to connect the responses from the storytelling participants to those from the interview and focus group participants, who expressed feelings of responsibility as one of their reasons for becoming volunteer leaders.
In Phase 2 of the inquiry, I asked the focus group and interview participants to share a Bible verse or inspirational quote or passage from a book or lyric from a song that best described their reasons for being a volunteer leader. I posed this in association with Subquestion 1, which asked participants to explain how they conceptualize volunteer leadership. In response, participants expressed a strong sense of responsibility, which they called “see a need, fill a need” (I1). It became evident to me throughout the research that volunteer leaders led others by example. One participant noted, “You are a leader by being a volunteer . . . [and by] showing the congregation, as a whole, that this is something that they can do as well” (FG5). This response contributed to the theme of calling and the values coding result of relationship. Along with the feeling of responsibility, participants expressed feeling “called or led to” (FG8) specific roles. The response from participants supported the notion that growing as a leader is part of the responsibility they felt: “A leader has to make sure that they’re building continuously the leadership traits as they pertain to either the ministry that they’re in or their lives in general” (FG7). This was further supported by another participant, who noted, “Volunteerism, not as just something that you’re supposed to be doing, but you’re supposed to be finding a niche that allows for leadership roles to be built into your life” (FG7). Throughout all phases of the research, participants emphasized a high degree of responsibility. As participants explained how they conceptualized volunteer leadership and leadership development, several individuals expressed the connection between responsibility and growth as a leader, suggesting engagement as a pathway to that growth.

Finding 2: Volunteer leaders at Hope City indicated that good communication is an important component to a successful volunteer program and noted that increased communication improves the volunteer experience. Volunteer leaders at Hope City noted there is a strong volunteer community; however, when asked to describe barriers to volunteer leadership development, many spoke about the need for increased engagement between pastoral
staff and volunteers, specifically in the areas of communication. Several participants identified a barrier with respect to communication regarding what was expected of volunteers. In the words of one focus group participant, “There aren’t clear expectations” (I15). This participant further expressed the need to “[create my] own levels of accountability and [my] own responsibility” (I15). Another participant emphasized the greater need for communication around process changes with regard to technological systems used on Sunday mornings: “If they gave a little notice, like, ‘Oh, the system is going to change. A little heads up’” (I16). This participant further suggested, “Maybe if they got us all together in advance to describe the changes” (I16).

Participants expressed that clear and positive communication amongst volunteers and paid organizational members would foster a feedback climate (FG5). Many participants throughout the focus groups and interviews indicated the desire for both formal as well as informal mentorship and feedback (FG5, I17 and I16). During the focus groups a participant explained, “I think, a really good benchmark to know that you are being successful would be really timely feedback” (FG5). One participant expressed feeling clear about their role: “I know what I am supposed to do when I get there on a Sunday morning” (I17); however, this same participant expressed a desire for feedback on ways to improve in that role “I’m getting no feedback. Even when solicited” (I17). These responses from participants contributed to the emotion coding results of lack of clarity and confusion, hesitancy, and disillusionment.

Finding 3: Volunteer leaders at Hope City expressed that they enjoy their roles; however, further training and support would enable them to be much more successful in their roles. In addition to communication, volunteer participants expressed a desire for training, some with respect to their specific roles: “I think they need to do more training on system changes” (I16). However, others expressed an interest in training in areas such as conflict resolution: “Learning to resolve conflicts gracefully and quickly and without gossip and so on. . . . Just learning conflict resolution would be good” (FG12). When asked how individuals could
be further engaged, one focus group participant noted, “I think in general, having resources available” (FG5). Another participant supported this by suggesting, “I think that would be great . . . to attend training or have it on video” (I16).

Another thematic result that arose was mentorship. When discussing mentorship, a focus group participant noted, “I don’t think we do enough of that, and I think we have like the perfect environment in which to do it” (FG11). Storytelling participants, however, described volunteer leaders as exceptional leaders who are essential to the organization (S2), which aligned with the thematic result of leadership and the values coding result of trust.

With regard to the need for support, which was another thematic result that arose for the volunteer leaders, participants spoke about feeling burnt out or tired in their roles. One participant explained the volunteer role as

a huge amount of work. And, I guess, I just kind of grin and bear it and not say too much and then pick up all the loose ends, and since I’ve been in it for so long now I find that I don’t want to pick up loose ends anymore. I want people to step in and help and um that’s, that’s hard. (FG12)

Another participant identified,

What I bring to my volunteer role is what I’ve learned in my vocation or it’s innate. I’ve not felt like I’ve any kind of training or mentorship in 12 plus years at Hope City. I’m not necessarily being poured into or grown. (I17)

I observed an interesting contrast when comparing data from participants in the focus groups and interviews to the information gathered from participants in the storytelling phase. The focus group and interview participants described a need for better communication, a desire for feedback, opportunities for growth, and a need for support. However, the storytelling participants described volunteer leaders as individuals who lead exceptionally without much need for support or guidance. The contrasting responses support the finding that communication, support,
training, and engagement are foundational to a positive relationship amongst volunteer leaders and Pastoral team members.

Finding 4: Volunteer leaders enjoy the work they do and would like the opportunity to share this with others. Many expressed an interest in recruitment strategies to bolster the already robust volunteer program. Participants throughout the focus group and interview phases talked extensively about recruitment strategies and ways to generate a spirit of volunteerism throughout the Hope City community, which contributed to the thematic result of recruitment. One participant asked, “[For] people that are coming to church for the very first time, how do we engender in people who’ve ever never been to church a spirit of service?” (FG5). This response supported the values coding results of teamwork and collaboration. One focus group participant suggested the need to instil a spirit of volunteerism in children from a young age: “Get excitement from the little ones, [make] it fun” (I1). This would set a foundation in people for volunteerism in the future. A participant noted that another was to recruit or engage other volunteers was to lead by example: “Two of my friends saw that I was volunteering even though I’m busy and [they] started to volunteer” (I16).

Participants also expressed that the degree of responsibility a volunteer takes on requires the alignment of their values and vision with those of the organization. A storytelling participant expressed the importance of an exemplary volunteer leader to “embrace the reason why we exist as a church” (S3). This was supported by a focus group participant, who noted aligning vision and values with the organization “puts you on the same page as far as that aspect of your leadership goals” (FG12). Participants expressed the need to not just recruit people but also to “inspire people to serve with excellence” (FG9). Participants also attributed the importance of recruitment to building relationships by noting that volunteering creates a “real sense of belonging” (FG10). A contrasting purpose for recruitment was expressed by a focus group participant who identified feeling disheartened and burnout by saying,
I guess I just kind of grin and bear it and not say too much and then pick up all the loose ends and since I’ve been in it for so long now I find that I don’t want to pick up loose ends anymore. I want people to step in and help and um that’s, that’s hard. (FG12)

Storytelling, focus group, and interview research participants expressed the significance of volunteer leaders and leadership development as foundational to the Hope City and to the growth of the volunteer community. The findings that arose through the research supported a number of conclusions that will be explored in the next section.

**Study Conclusions**

The data gathered and analyzed through this inquiry process has led to three separate conclusions in relation to how Hope City might encourage and strengthen leadership development in its volunteers. The conclusions are as follows:

1. In order for volunteers to develop as leaders, an organizational leadership strategy or framework is necessary to assist stakeholders in conceptualization of leadership development.

2. Volunteer engagement is necessary to improve volunteer experience and foster growth.

3. Volunteer Recruitment is a vehicle to foster growth and development in the Hope City community.

Each conclusion builds upon the four findings previously identified. Table 2 depicts the three-pillar framework used to organize actionable steps for Hope City.
Table 2

Three Pillars: Findings and Conclusions of Inquiry with Hope City Church

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Three Pillars</th>
<th>Finding 1: Volunteer leaders at Hope City experience and display a strong sense of responsibility or calling to their roles, which is supported by alignment with the church values and vision.</th>
<th>Conclusion 1: In order for volunteers to develop as leaders, an organizational leadership strategy or framework is necessary to assist stakeholders in conceptualization implementation of leadership development.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strategy</td>
<td>Finding 2: Volunteer leaders at Hope City indicated that good communication is an important component to a successful volunteer program and noted that increased communication improves the volunteer experience. Finding 3: Volunteer leaders at Hope City expressed that they enjoy their roles; however, further training would enable them to be much more successful in their roles.</td>
<td>Conclusion 2: Volunteer engagement and communication is necessary to improve volunteer experience and foster growth.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engagement</td>
<td>Finding 4: Volunteer leaders enjoy the work they do and would like the opportunity to share this with others.</td>
<td>Conclusion 3: Recruitment is a vehicle to foster leadership growth and leadership development in volunteer leaders.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Recruitment</td>
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</table>

**Conclusion 1:** In order for volunteers to develop as leaders, an organizational leadership strategy or framework is necessary to assist stakeholders in conceptualization of leadership development. I asked participants to conceptualize volunteer leadership development. Most struggled to do so in the context of Hope City, which is a barrier to leadership development. Finding 1 demonstrated that participants tied leadership development to responsibility but were unable to fully articulate what leadership development meant in this context. In Chapter 2, I discussed understanding the unique attributes of a faith-based or religious community. Throughout the literature, authors held differing positions on how faith-based religious organizations are defined. For example, Pargament et al. (1983) argued a lack of clarity around defining religious communities impedes the ability to answer questions with regard to
this context. I believe that the difficulty in fully defining this context provides insight or support to participants being unable to define leadership development in this context. Jeavons’s (1997) seven dimensions provided a lens to view the many aspects of the faith-based religious community, offering a foundation or framework to define this type of community. Jeavons suggested that these dimensions help to clarify if in fact a community is considered faith-based by using levels of religiosity as a measurement. For example, considering what level of religious faith principles are utilized when an organization goes through a decision-making process or the extent to which religious faith principles are used to determine organizational resources (Jeavons, 1997). This supports the notion of using faith principles as a guide to create a strategy for leadership development in a faith-based religious context. The creation of a leadership development strategy that incorporates the beliefs, goals, and vision of Hope City would positively contribute to the entire community by providing clarity on what drives the strategic direction of the organization. The creation of this strategy would also align with the focus group participants expression of interest in further engagement, such as formal or informal feedback programs and further training opportunities.

Conclusions 2: Volunteer engagement and communication is necessary to improve volunteer experience and foster growth. In response to being asked how Hope City currently facilitates volunteer leadership and if there were any barriers to fostering volunteer leadership potential at Hope City, participants spoke about engagement, specifically communication, support, and training. As discussed in Chapter 2, Jäger et al. (2009) defined the choice to volunteer as altruistic, a compassionate act to help. Although some authors in the literature indicated that there was a lack of study focused on linkages between religious attitude and volunteering (Taniguchi & Thomas, 2011), the inquiry with Hope City provided different insight. When participants were asked to discuss their reason for taking on a volunteer leadership position, most connected that decision to a Bible verse, quote, or song lyric that pointed to
service as an act of worship and a calling. This suggests that perhaps Hope City volunteer leaders recognized a connection between volunteerism and religious obligations. Although many volunteer leader participants felt specifically called to this act of service, there was still an expression of interest in greater communication as well as further training and support as identified in Findings 2 and 3, both of which participants suggested may be barriers to volunteer leadership development potential. Dwyer et al. (2013) argued both the needs and desires of an individual should be considered when looking at volunteer motivation. As addressed in all three findings, storytelling participants and focus group participants alike expressed the necessity and importance of relationships in a faith-based religious context. This was supported by the literature in Chapter 2, in which Jäger et al. (2009) and Vecina et al. (2012) suggested the importance of volunteer connection and engagement. A linkage exists between the desire for further engagement expressed by volunteer leaders and their interest in providing mentorship to other volunteer to enhance the Hope City volunteer program.

**Conclusion 3: Recruitment is a vehicle to foster leadership growth and leadership development in volunteer leaders.** In Chapter 2, I reviewed literature on the subjects of faith-based religious organizations, volunteer motivation, and leadership development. The literature on these topics did not speak directly to volunteer recruitment; however, throughout the inquiry with Hope City participants, the theme of recruitment arose frequently. As identified in Finding 4, participants throughout the focus groups and interviews, often discussed recruitment when asked about fostering leadership development and barriers to volunteering. Specifically, participants referred to ways to lead by example or to create an environment in which people who were not volunteering might feel drawn to participate. When discussing volunteer motivation, Vecina, et al. (2012) argued that it is “essential to determine why some individuals choose to volunteer, while others never even consider doing so” (p. 133). As evidenced in Finding 4, participants expressed a need to build recruitment relationships with those who are not
volunteering. Participants viewed this as a part of their responsibility and an opportunity to mentor. Volunteer leaders could utilize recruitment as an opportunity to grow the volunteer leadership pool and to share their volunteer leadership journey. This would foster growth in the volunteer program and provide an opportunity for development for volunteer leaders to provide guidance or mentorship for others. In the literature review, researchers also discussed a religious duty to volunteer (Jäger et al., 2009). Luria, Cnaan, and Boehm (2017) identified that congregational members are an “untapped resource” (p. 596) with regard to volunteer recruitment. Through the research, I determined that many volunteers are satisfied in their roles; however, they also found recruitment to be an important component. Understanding the recruitment and ways to engage in effective recruitment strategies is a task that is paramount to the volunteer community (Merino, 2013).

Scope and Limitations to the Inquiry

My intention in conducting this inquiry project with Hope City was to understand volunteer leadership development in this context from the perspective of volunteer leaders and Pastoral team members. Some limitations to participation were intentional; for example, limiting the volunteer participant pool to volunteers in leadership roles. This was done in order to ensure the scope of the project was manageable. While this limitation was necessary, it has the potential to impact the application of engagement and recruitment amongst all volunteers. I gathered data from a subsection of volunteers who are only a small percentage representation of the whole volunteer population. Another intentional limitation was to only include Pastoral team members in the first phase of research as opposed to including all paid church staff members. This boundary was implemented because Pastoral team members oversee the departments in which volunteer leaders serve. Unintentional limits to participation were timing and location. The focus groups were held on Sunday mornings at the Mill Woods campus, many participants serve on Sunday mornings and were unable to carve out the time and some participants serve at the
Terwillegar campus, which also limited their ability to attend as a commute would have been necessary.

I had initially intended to utilize a liberating structure (Lipmanowicz & McCandless, 2013) format for the focus groups; however, as the focus groups got underway, this format was not comfortable for participants. Additionally, the smaller participant numbers at the focus group did not successfully support this approach. I believe that altering the format did not have any negative impact on the study, as the conversational approach that was used instead allowed participants to speak freely and successfully engage with each other and the facilitators. Although most focus group participants spoke candidly, I found throughout the inquiry process that the interview participants felt more comfortable to express challenges or barriers one on one. I believe that all methods provided important information that contributed to the study in a positive way.

Upon reflection, it would have been beneficial for me to attend a portion of the introductory meeting to speak to pastoral team members. Although, this may have implied some perceived ethical implications, this group leads Hope City and my attendance would not have influenced participation, it would have provided an opportunity for me to be available onsite for questions subsequent to that meeting. As communication with Pastoral team members who agreed to participate occurred, it became clear that sharing my insight and perspectives with regard to project would have been helpful and perhaps facilitated a better understanding of the intentions of the project, which may have increased pastoral team participation. As part of my reflection I recognize that although I am insider due to my volunteer leadership position, being outside of the staff team also resulted in some difficulties with regard to communication.
Chapter Five: Inquiry Implications

In this chapter, I summarize the implications of my inquiry project with Hope City. I begin by presenting recommendations that I developed in alignment with the conclusions and findings identified in Chapter 4. I present how the findings, conclusions, and recommendations will impact the Hope City organization. Additionally, I address future implications that might be present, as well as identify how this study will impact Hope City on a broader scale. Finally, I conclude this chapter with a summary of key elements within this thesis.

I explored the following principal inquiry question: How can Hope City church encourage and strengthen leadership development in its volunteers? I also examined five subquestions:

1. How do the current volunteers in Hope City church conceptualize volunteer leadership in the church context?
2. How does the Pastoral team at Hope City understand the leadership roles of their volunteers?
3. How does Hope City church currently facilitate volunteer leadership?
4. What are the barriers to fostering volunteer leadership potential at Hope City church?
5. What can Hope City church do to better develop and foster leadership among its volunteers?

Study Recommendations

I have developed three recommendations that nest within the three pillars identified in Chapter 4: strategy, engagement, and recruitment (see Table 3). I developed these recommendations in response to the findings and conclusions that resulted from the data collected through the inquiry process. Within each recommendation, I identify actionable steps, providing a clear path forward for Hope City stakeholders. Each recommendation works in association with the other; as such, I advise they be carried out in the order they have been
identified, as each supports the next. The creation of programs or processes associated with these recommendations can work in a cyclical pattern utilizing each element to continuously provide clarity and training as volunteer leaders are recruited.

Table 3

*Three Pillars: Findings, Conclusions and Recommendations of Inquiry with Hope City Church*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategy</th>
<th>Finding 1: Volunteer leaders at Hope City experience and display a strong sense of responsibility or calling to their roles, which is supported by alignment with the church values and vision.</th>
<th>Conclusion 1: In order for volunteers to develop as leaders, an organizational leadership strategy or framework is necessary to assist stakeholders in conceptualization of leadership development.</th>
<th>Recommendation 1: Create a volunteer leadership development strategy by utilizing the church mission, vision, and values as a foundation to assist volunteers in conceptualizing leadership development.</th>
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<tr>
<td>Engagement</td>
<td>Finding 2: Volunteer leaders at Hope City indicated that good communication is an important component to a successful volunteer program and noted that increased communication improves the volunteer experience. Finding 3: Volunteer leaders at Hope City expressed that they enjoy their roles; however, further training would enable them to be much more successful in their roles.</td>
<td>Conclusion 2: Volunteer engagement and communication is necessary to improve volunteer experience and foster growth.</td>
<td>Recommendation 2: Develop a volunteer engagement plan, including communication strategies in which volunteer leaders can see tangible opportunities for growth and development.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Recommendation 1: Create a volunteer leadership development strategy by utilizing the church mission, vision, and values as a foundation to assist volunteers in conceptualizing leadership development. Research participants throughout each phase struggled to conceptualize leadership development in this context; however, all participants clearly expressed the importance of leadership development and growth in order to achieve success as a volunteer leader.

In Chapter 4, the findings and conclusions revealed the importance of communication, support, training, and volunteer recruitment as central components to a volunteer leadership program. The findings and conclusions identified that increased communication, opportunities for further training, and focused recruitment efforts have the potential to foster growth of the volunteer program and the development of volunteer leaders in the program. In light of that, my recommendation is for Hope City to create a volunteer leadership development strategy. If stakeholders have a clear picture of how leadership development is understood in this context, they will be able to engage in growth and development. The implementation of a leadership development strategy in collaboration with volunteer leaders and pastoral team members would provide growth opportunities for volunteer leaders that many participants spoke of. The creation of a leadership development strategy that is focused on volunteers would the volunteer leaders how valued and supported they are by the Hope City church pastoral team members. In the literature reviewed for Chapter 2, Bell (2010) identified the means by which an organization...
undertakes leadership development is complex and further complexity is added when these
decisions are influence by religious beliefs. Jeavons (1997) suggested religious principles applied
to organizational practices help to determine if an organization is in fact religious and faith-
based. This provides support to the recommendation that Hope City utilize organizational goals
as well as its vision and core values to assist in the creation of a volunteer leadership
development strategy. The goals, vision, and core values of Hope City specifically align to
beliefs held by Hope City, which are built on excellence, passion, and relationships. These
beliefs are grounded in the Christian faith, “in common with historical, evangelical Christianity,
it emphasizes Christ as Saviour and coming King” (PAOC, 2014, p. 1). These beliefs are the
foundation of all activities and therefore make Hope City unique from other organizations that
are not faith based.

It is important to create a positive leadership development culture and align development
exercises specifically to organizational goals, vision, and core values. A foundational component
to the creation of this strategy will be to align development activities to faith principles. Similarly
to how participants provided bible verses as inspiration to their volunteer journey, biblical
principles can be utilized to create a foundation for leadership growth. The development of a
positive leadership development culture can be achieved through engaging current volunteer
leaders in the creation of the leadership development strategy. Volunteer leaders can assist with
the creation of a leadership development framework that utilizes the goals, values and vision of
Hope City as a foundation to set a mission and vision specific to leadership development. The
leadership development mission and vision can then be used to set tangible goals or benchmarks
to assess the success of the leadership development strategy. Examples of utilizing goals, vision,
and core values can be found in many leadership frameworks, such as Kouzes and Posner’s
(2017) five practices framework, which takes what is foundational to the organization and uses
that to guide leadership practices and support growth throughout the community. This strategy
will be the first step in the process to address the considerations that arose throughout the research and supports the remaining recommendations. Specifically, involving the current volunteer leaders in the creation of the leadership development strategy would also provide an opportunity for further engagement.

**Recommendation 2: Develop a volunteer engagement plan, including**

**communication strategies in which volunteer leaders can see tangible opportunities for growth and development.** The Hope City volunteer culture is steeped in feelings of responsibility and a sense of calling. Research participants in focus groups and interviews identified both responsibility and calling as the primary reasons for their involvement. In Chapter 2, the literature reviewed revealed that acts of service or an expression of faith are reasons why individuals embark on a journey of volunteerism (Catano et al., 2001). However, although volunteers often do not expect anything in return, there is a desire for connection and fulfilment of the needs of the volunteers that should also be taken into consideration when looking at volunteer involvement (Dwyer et al., 2013; Vecina et al., 2012). Throughout the inquiry, volunteer leader research participants expressed a need for engagement in the form of communication, training, and feedback. Volunteer Canada (2017) implemented a spectrum of volunteer engagement (see Appendix J) that incorporates “education and awareness, active participation and leadership” (p. 12). Utilizing a framework like that of Volunteer Canada (2017) to approach volunteer engagement provides a foundation to assist in building or strengthening a volunteer community. Therefore, I recommend Hope City create a volunteer engagement plan utilizing the Volunteer Canada (2017) spectrum of engagement as a guide. This engagement plan would address needs expressed by the volunteer leader research participants, such as the incorporation of frequent communication. This communication could be in the form of a digital newsletter or an informal departmental email from Pastoral team members informing about organizational changes or updates happening within each specific department.
Volunteer leaders could also be included in content creation for the digital newsletter to foster collaboration and open communication. Throughout the literature, authors placed emphasis on the positive impacts of good communication between volunteers and paid staff members within an organization (Garner & Garner, 2011). This further aligned to the research participants’ interest in feedback to know that they are doing well in their role. Goleman et al. (2013) suggested, “All of us generally crave that kind of appraisal” (p. 94). Feedback provides individuals with clarity on whether or not they are doing well and creates a culture of positive communication in which it can be shared amongst all stakeholders (Garner & Garner, 2011; Kouzes & Posner, 2017). In light of this, I recommend each department work to incorporate a feedback model that is best suited to the stakeholders within the department. This feedback model would utilize elements from the volunteer leadership strategy to provide guidance for opportunities for growth that can be communicated through feedback conversations. Research participants also expressed the desire for training opportunities and resources not just related to their roles but also in relation to other development such as conflict resolution or clear communication. Volunteers will feel an increased degree of satisfaction if their volunteer role has afforded them the opportunity to “learn a new skill and gain knowledge” (Dwyer et al., 2013, p. 184). Therefore, I recommend the creation of a resource bank with leadership development resources such as books or articles that volunteers leaders can access.

As previously stated in Chapter 4, research participants did identify some topics of interest for growth or leadership development. As such, a secondary component of this recommendation is to clarify areas of interest or growth that volunteer leaders may have and source or create associated development or training modules. These could be face-to-face or digital resources that enable volunteer leaders to learn about a desired topic. The use of a framework such as the Volunteer Canada (2017) spectrum of volunteer engagement will address the elements of engagement that the research participants expressed throughout the inquiry with
Hope City. This recommendation can be incorporated into Recommendation 1 the creation of a volunteer leadership development strategy. Connecting a volunteer engagement plan to the creation of the volunteer leadership development strategy provides a further opportunity to, incorporate the vision, goals, and core values of Hope City. The volunteer leadership development strategy and the volunteer engagement plan will provide volunteer leaders the opportunity to see how their volunteerism contributes to the organization's mission incorporating both strategy and engagement as two sections of a potential leadership development framework.

**Recommendation 3: Create a volunteer recruitment approach with existing volunteer leadership support.** Throughout the inquiry, research participants in both the interview and focus group methods spoke about recruitment of more volunteers to the Hope City volunteer program. In most instances, participants’ discussion about recruitment was in relationship to feelings of responsibility and how volunteer leaders hoped to share their experience, leading others by example. In other instances, the discussion related to their desire to move on and pass the leadership responsibility to other individuals in order to address feelings of burnout or to incorporate succession planning. In light of this, I recommend Hope City create a volunteer recruitment process as a third component to the volunteer leadership framework. The literature indicated that recruitment is a topic that requires further exploration (Merino, 2013); however, Hope City volunteer leaders provided insight into certain aspects of recruitment by articulating their reasons for volunteering and reasons why they continued to volunteer, addressing both recruitment and retention. Existing volunteer leaders are a resource that can assist with sharing information about volunteer programs to others within the organization using their social networks to communicate volunteer opportunities (Luria et al., 2017; Paik & Navarre-Jackson, 2011). Research participants in the focus groups and interviews suggested that Hope City Pastoral team members consider organizing volunteer networking events at which existing volunteers share their stories of volunteerism. These events would also provide
opportunity for volunteers to share about engagement activities happening within the organization that they found beneficial and that others may find help as well to assist with recruiting new volunteers.

The creation of a leadership development strategy, engagement plan, and recruitment process create a framework that is focused on volunteers, each of the three elements work together to support, grow, and encourage the existing and new volunteers within the Hope City community. This will foster the culture of leadership development that the Pastoral team desires. A determining factor of the success of a volunteer leadership development framework is the engagement from pastoral team members. If volunteer leaders feel a high degree of support and encouragement from the pastoral team for this type of initiative, it will increase the likelihood of volunteer leader participation. This strategic approach will utilize the core values of Hope City church as a foundation while supporting the achievement of the goals and vision for the organization.

**Organizational Implications**

The purpose of embarking on an action-oriented inquiry with Hope City was to understand volunteer leadership development in a faith-based religious context. It was clear to me from observations as an insider and from initial conversations with my capstone partner that leadership development was an organizational priority that required further investigation and clarification. In order to best utilize the information collected through the research methods selected, I chose to create a three-pillar framework to present the findings and recommendations to my capstone partner. Along with my findings and recommendations, I provided the anonymized themes, value codes, and emotion codes that I utilized throughout data analysis to substantiate my findings and recommendations. During the research process, one of the Pastoral team members began some work to explore leadership development with the paid staff. I confirmed with my capstone partner that I would meet with this team member to share what I
learned through the research process to see if there were intersections where my work could provide some insight. At present, the leadership development work being done with the Pastoral team is specific to paid staff; however, through that conversation, it was clear that my recommendations could provide leadership development within the volunteer community that could bolster or support the work being done with paid staff. The recommendations that I have presented to Hope City require a cultural shift in the approach to leadership development.

Recommendation 1 suggested that Hope City create a volunteer leadership development strategy. Interest in the topic of leadership development has increased significantly over time, which requires organizations to look at it from various different perspectives (Day, 2001). There are a number of considerations required when an organization embarks on a leadership development journey, and this becomes increasingly complex when that community is a faith-based religious community (Bell, 2010). The literature also pointed to the need to address volunteer leadership development in organizations (Catano et al., 2001). This inquiry has contributed to scholarship by providing clarity around the volunteer experience and volunteer motivation, which can feed into how their leadership is developed, specifically in a faith-based religious context. Hope City has already begun work to address leadership development with the Pastoral team and paid staff, which is rooted in the goals, vision, and core values of the organization, and this will provide a foundation to expand this work to volunteer leadership development.

The focus of volunteer engagement in Recommendation 2 is directly linked to Recommendation 1 in that the volunteer leadership development strategy will foster a sense of belonging for volunteer leaders within the Hope City community, encouraging a sense that volunteers are part of something bigger than themselves (Vecina et al., 2012). The literature indicated that in a faith-based religious context, individuals become involved in volunteerism as an act of service (Trulear, 2007). However, there is a need to address volunteer needs and what
one might hope to gain from the volunteer experience (Dwyer et al., 2013). In order to implement a volunteer engagement plan, Hope City will be required to take actions to increase communication and foster feedback. An organizational shift is needed; however, based on the information provided by volunteer research participants, there is openness to this organizational shift, which will support the implementation of this recommendation.

Finally, Recommendation 3 is the creation of a recruitment process, which is directly connected to Recommendations 1 and 2, as both the volunteer leadership development strategy and the volunteer engagement plan will support recruitment efforts. Throughout the inquiry, volunteer leader participants expressed an interest in recruitment efforts. Implementation of this recommendation will not require a significant adjustment to organizational practice because there is a strong volunteer culture within Hope City. This recommendation will require intentional efforts to organize events at which engaged volunteers can share their positive experiences with potential volunteers. This will provide the opportunity for existing volunteers, paid staff, and Pastoral team members to share the successes found with the volunteer leadership strategy and the volunteer engagement plan. Additionally, because recruitment efforts are tied to a positive volunteer culture, this recommendation is in some ways a result of the volunteer leadership development strategy and volunteer engagement.

My capstone partner identified that this inquiry project has provided them with insight into the volunteer experience identifying areas in which they are successful and opportunities for growth (P. Kniesel, personal communication, February 10, 2020). This inquiry has provided clarity and understanding to a component that is vital to the organization, volunteer leaders. Hope City can utilize the knowledge acquired through this inquiry to continue to serve the internal congregational members and those within the Edmonton community. In addition, the outcomes of this inquiry will contribute knowledge regarding volunteer leadership development to the faith community where there is a noted gap (Jäger et al., 2009). Although I provide Hope
City with practical steps throughout my recommendations, it is clear that this process will take
time and subsequent work will be required to implement the initiatives recommended. I believe
that Hope City is in a position to be an exemplar in the realm of volunteer leadership
development in the broader faith-based religious community.

Throughout this inquiry pastoral team participants described the exemplary
characteristics of a volunteer leader and volunteer leader participants exhibited the exemplary
characteristics. A few of the characteristics emphasized were selflessness, kindness, love, care
and appreciation. These characteristics were central in developing the findings, conclusions and
recommendations presented in this thesis. Additionally, the characteristics of an exemplary
volunteer leader will guide and support the continued success of the volunteer leadership
program at Hope City.

**Implications for Future Inquiry**

I explored the following principal inquiry question: How can Hope City encourage and
strengthen leadership development in its volunteers? Throughout the inquiry with Hope City,
volunteer leaders expressed a deep sense of responsibility and Pastoral team members expressed
through their stories the exemplary attributes of volunteer leaders. The unique relationship
between Pastoral team members and volunteer leaders would be a topic of interest for future
exploration. Understanding the relationship dynamic between those who oversee volunteer work
and those who volunteer in this context would provide insight into what is necessary to create
positive mentorship and feedback culture. I believe that another topic for future inquiry would be
exploring leadership development in general in faith-based religious communities. My research
focused on volunteers who are an integral part of faith-based religious communities; however,
general leadership development within these communities is an area that requires further
exploration. Another opportunity for exploration would be the influence of particular biblical
principles on leadership development decisions within faith-based religious communities and how these principles impact or guide leadership learning.

Faith-based religious communities have elements that are similar to other organizations; however, there are unique qualities that impact how these communities function. A unique aspect includes the volunteer leaders who engage in acts of service within these communities on a weekly basis. These volunteers differ in that they approach their volunteerism as an act of worship to God, as identified in Chapter 2 and was described throughout the research by participants. This is unique when compared to other organizations who have no spiritual component to volunteer opportunities or organizations where volunteers embark on the journey to gain something, for example work experience for a resume. Defining leadership development in an organization impacts every area of an organization and that encompasses volunteer leaders. Providing an opportunity for these individuals to share their unique perspectives has offered a broader understanding of volunteer leadership development within the Hope City community. Engaging volunteers in how the organization functions and developing them as leaders will positively impact the community.

**Thesis Summary**

This engaged action-oriented inquiry project with Hope City explored ways to encourage and strengthen leadership development in volunteers. In order to prepare for this inquiry, I completed a literature review that included the following topics: defining the unique attributes of faith-based or religious communities, volunteer motivation in a religious context, and volunteer leadership development in faith-based religious communities. I chose these topics to help clarify how the Hope City community might be defined, to understand what the literature has said about why volunteers embark on a volunteerism journey, and to grasp what the literatures has revealed about leadership development in this context. The review of this literature provided a foundation to the research with Hope City stakeholders. I utilized the methodology of community-based
research as this type of research provided an opportunity to work within a community of individuals. This inquiry explored how stakeholders within Hope City conceptualize leadership development, looking at ways to foster and develop leadership among the volunteers within the community. It was important to understand the lived experience of current Hope City volunteers and how the Pastoral team members who oversee the volunteers understood their work. In order to glean this information, I conducted two phases of research. The first phase included a storytelling method with the Pastoral team members in which I asked participants to tell me a story about exemplary volunteer leadership support. The second phase included focus groups and interviews with existing volunteer leaders. The first three chapters of this thesis describe the details that have been outlined above.

The research methods selected provided data that I then analyzed. Based upon the data collected, I was able to determine four findings and three conclusions, which I outlined in Chapter 4 of this thesis. Utilizing the findings and conclusions as a guide, I then developed three recommendations for action to Hope City, which I outlined in this fifth and final chapter. I presented the findings, conclusions, and recommendations to Hope City in a three-pillar framework, with each component working with the others to address considerations that arose through the research. An executive summary report that I have prepared will assist with the implementation of the recommendations and will provide Hope City stakeholders with a clear plan that is easy to follow. I will continue to work with Hope City through the process of implementation to provide consultation and support as appropriate.

Being a leader requires a willingness to grow, learn, and give of oneself. In a faith-based religious context, being an exemplary leader is at the foundation of every aspect—in every act of service, in every moment of worship, and throughout the entire community.

So let’s not allow ourselves to get fatigued doing good. At the right time we will harvest a good crop if we don’t give up, or quit. Right now, therefore, every time we get the
chance, let us work for the benefit of all, starting with the people closest to us in the community of faith. (Galatians 6:9-10, The Message translation of the Bible)
References


Hope City Church. (n.d.). *Our values*. Retrieved from https://hopecity.ca/values/

Hope City Church. (2011, November 1). *Hope City* [YouTube channel]. Retrieved from https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCbDqfQZowFipFQ6MtpukpnQ/about?disable_polymer=1


Appendix A: Inquiry Team Member Letter of Agreement

In partial fulfillment of the requirement for a Master of Arts in Leadership Degree at Royal Roads University, Rondah Worrell (the Student) will be conducting an inquiry study at Hope City Church to determine how Hope City might encourage and support volunteer leadership development. The Student’s credentials with Royal Roads University can be established by calling Dr. Catherine Etmanski, Director, School of Leadership, at [telephone number] or email [email address]. This project has been approved by the Royal Roads University Research Ethics Board.

Inquiry Team Member Role Description

As a volunteer Inquiry Team Member assisting the Student with this project, your role may include one or more of the following: providing advice on the relevance and wording of questions and letters of invitation, supporting the logistics of the data-gathering methods, including observing, assisting, or facilitating an interview or focus group, taking notes, transcribing, reviewing analysis of data, and/or reviewing associated knowledge products to assist the Student and the Hope City’s change process. In the course of this activity, you may be privy to confidential inquiry data.

Confidentiality of Inquiry Data

In compliance with the Royal Roads University Research Ethics Policy, under which this inquiry project is being conducted, all personal identifiers and any other confidential information generated or accessed by the inquiry team advisor will only be used in the performance of the functions of this project, and must not be disclosed to anyone other than persons authorized to receive it, both during the inquiry period and beyond it. Recorded information in all formats is covered by this agreement. Personal identifiers include participant names, contact information, personally identifying turns of phrase or comments, and any other personally identifying information.

Bridging Student’s Potential or Actual Ethical Conflict

In situations where potential participants in a work setting report directly to the Student, you, as a neutral third party with no supervisory relationship with either the Student or potential participants, may be asked to work closely with the Student to bridge this potential or actual conflict of interest in this study. Such requests may include asking the Inquiry Team Advisor to: send out the letter of invitation to potential participants, receive letters/emails of interest in participation from potential participants, independently make a selection of received participant requests based on criteria you and the Student will have worked out previously, formalize the logistics for the data-gathering method, including contacting the participants about the time and location of the interview or focus group, conduct the interviews (usually 3-5 maximum) or focus group (usually no more than one) with the selected participants (without the Student’s presence or knowledge of which participants were chosen) using the protocol and questions worked out previously with the Student, and producing written transcripts of the interviews or focus groups with all personal identifiers removed before the transcripts are brought back to the Student for the data analysis phase of the study.

This strategy means that potential participants with a direct reporting relationship will be assured they can confidentially turn down the participation request from their supervisor (the Student), as this process conceals from the Student which potential participants chose not to participate or
simply were not selected by you, the third party, because they were out of the selection criteria range (they might have been a participant request coming after the number of participants sought, for example, interview request number 6 when only 5 participants are sought, or focus group request number 10 when up to 9 participants would be selected for a focus group). Inquiry Team members asked to take on such 3rd party duties in this study will be under the direction of the Student and will be fully briefed by the Student as to how this process will work, including specific expectations, and the methods to be employed in conducting the elements of the inquiry with the Student’s direct reports, and will be given every support possible by the Student, except where such support would reveal the identities of the actual participants.

Personal information will be collected, recorded, corrected, accessed, altered, used, disclosed, retained, secured and destroyed as directed by the Student, under direction of the Royal Roads Academic Supervisor.

Inquiry Team Members who are uncertain whether any information they may wish to share about the project they are working on is personal or confidential will verify this with Rondah Worrell, the Student.

**Statement of Informed Consent:**

I have read and understand this agreement.

________________________  _________________________  _____________
Name (Please Print)      Signature                      Date
Appendix B: Email to Storytelling Participants

Dear [Prospective Participant],

As a follow-up to the earlier communication about my inquiry partnership with Hope City I would like to invite you to be part of a research project that I am conducting. This project is part of the requirement for my Master’s Degree in Leadership, at Royal Roads University. This project has been approved by the Senior Pastor Phil Kniesel and I have been given permission to contact potential participants for this purpose.

The purpose of my research is to engage in an action-oriented research project to explore how Hope City might encourage and support volunteer leadership development. Hope City is also interested in exploring how this inquiry can inform volunteer leadership development in a religious community context. This inquiry will benefit Hope City because it will provide clarity on the current lived experience of the volunteers in positions of leadership, and insight into how to encourage and support the development of volunteer leaders in the community, through engagement strategies and possible training opportunities. Additionally, this inquiry will unearth potential gaps or areas for improvement in the existing volunteer experience. This inquiry will also inform what supports are necessary for volunteer leadership development.

Your name was chosen as a prospective participant because you are part of the Pastoral Team at Hope City and you oversee volunteer leaders within your department of oversight. You have a unique perspective on volunteer leadership as you work closely with volunteers on a regular basis.

This phase of my research project will consist of the research method of Storytelling. I am hoping to enlist your help by asking you to tell me a story… a story about a time volunteer leader provided you with exemplary support and some of the characteristics that volunteer embodied. Through this storytelling exercise I am hoping to understand how the leaders of Hope City conceptualize volunteer leadership. The story can be as long or as short as you would like it to be and can be sent to me via email in the form of an audio recorded voice note, a video recording or a written response.

The attached document contains further information about the study conduct and will enable you to make a fully informed decision on whether or not you wish to participate. Please review this information before responding.

You are not required to participate in this research project and your choice to participate is voluntary. If you do choose to participate, you are free to withdraw until November 30th, 2019 without prejudice. In the three to four weeks after I’ve received your stories the data collected from all stories submitted will be analyzed will be and themes that arise will be compiled. I will send a communication to you to confirm that the themes resonate with you, however, after November 30th it will not be possible to remove your anonymized data from the theming.

I realize that due to our collegial relationship, you may feel compelled to participate in this research project. Please be aware that you are not required to participate and, should you choose to participate, your participation would be entirely voluntary. If you do choose to participate, you are free to withdraw November 30th, 2019 without prejudice. If you do not wish to participate, simply do not reply to this request. Your decision to not participate will also be maintained in confidence. Your choice will not affect our relationship or your employment status in any way.
Please feel free to contact me at any time should you have additional questions regarding the project and its outcomes.

If you would like to participate in my research project, please contact me at:

Name: Rondah Worrell
Email: [email address]
Telephone: [telephone number]

Sincerely,
Rondah
Appendix C: Storytelling Information Letter

The Heart of Hope City Church: Exploring Volunteer Leadership

My name is Rondah Worrell, and this project is part of the requirement for my Master of Arts in Leadership Degree at Royal Roads University. My credentials with Royal Roads University can be established by contacting Dr. Catherine Etmanski, Director, School of Leadership Studies: [email address] or [telephone number]. This project has been approved by the Royal Roads University Research Ethics Board.

Purpose of the study and sponsoring organization

The purpose of my research project is to engage in an action-oriented research project to explore how Hope City might encourage and support volunteer leadership development. Hope City is also interested in exploring how this inquiry can inform volunteer leadership development in Hope City context. This inquiry will benefit Hope City because it will provide clarity on the current lived experience of the volunteers in positions of leadership, and insight into how to encourage and support the development of volunteer leaders in the community, through engagement strategies and possible training opportunities. Additionally, this inquiry will unearth potential gaps or areas for improvement in the existing volunteer experience. This inquiry will also inform what supports are necessary for volunteer leadership development.

Your participation and how information will be collected

This project will have two phases. In this first phase I will use a storytelling method. Storytelling is a narrative exercise that provides an opportunity for people to talk about their experiences in their own words (Adorisio, 2009).

Benefits and risks to participation

Information gathered through this process will benefit Hope City as it will provide insight into the volunteer experience. It will also inform how Hope City can encourage and support the development of volunteer leaders in the community, through engagement strategies and possible training opportunities. This inquiry will also inform what supports are necessary for volunteer leadership development, with the potential creation of a robust volunteer program that supports the community, the volunteers and the staff. The risks to being involved are minimal, however, when sharing a personal story there is some vulnerability associated with articulating your thoughts and ideas. Confidentiality is of the utmost importance and you will remain anonymous.

Inquiry team

An inquiry team is a group of people that will assist with the facilitation of the group sessions as well as assist with the collection and analysis of the information collected. My team will consist of:

- Myself
- One fellow Masters student from RRU: David Sannes
- An Experienced Facilitator: Tiffany Linke-Boyko
- One Pastoral Team member: Matt Baker – although Matt is a member of the inquiry team he will only have access to anonymized data
Real or Perceived Conflict of Interest

Because I am currently a volunteer at Hope City there may be a perceived conflict as I gather information about volunteers being an insider to volunteer community at Hope City. Please know that this is an asset to the project as I can relate to your experiences and will do my best to listen openly. I disclose this information here so that you can make a fully informed decision on whether or not to participate in this study.

Confidentiality, security of data, and retention period

I will work to protect your privacy throughout this study. All information I collect will be maintained in confidence with hard copies (e.g., consent forms) stored in a locked filing cabinet in my home office. Electronic data (such as transcripts or audio files) will be stored on a password protected computer on my home computer. Information will be recorded in handwritten format on recipe cards, post-it notes and flipchart paper. There will also be audio recordings made and, where appropriate, summarized, in anonymous format, in the body of the final report. At no time will any specific comments be attributed to any individual unless specific agreement has been obtained beforehand. All documentation will be kept strictly confidential as data will be anonymized removing all identifying information prior to reporting findings.

Sharing results

In addition to submitting my final report to Royal Roads University in partial fulfillment for a Master of Arts in Leadership, I will also be sharing my research findings with the lead pastor, pastoral team and will make it available to the congregation at a later date. This will be done through an organizational report.

Procedure for withdrawing from the study

Please know that you are able to withdraw from the study at any time and can advise me using the contact information provided to you. Please know that if you attend the volunteer group discussion you will still be seen and heard on the audio recordings but this information will not be utilized during data analysis. However, your written information will be part of the data collected and because there is no identifying information it will be difficult to remove information you contributed from this portion of the data collected.

You are not required to participate in this research project. By replying directly to the e-mail request for participation and by providing a signed consent form via email or Canada post mail you indicate that you have read and understand the information above and give your free and informed consent to participate in this project.

Please keep a copy of this information letter for your records.
Appendix D: Storytelling Participant Consent Form

By signing this form, you agree that you are over the age of 19 and have read the information letter for this study. Your signature states that you are giving your voluntary and informed consent to participate in this project and have data I contribute used in the final report and any other knowledge outputs (articles, conference presentations, newsletters, etc.).

☐ I consent to the material I have contributed to and/or generated via written email thorough my participation in the session be used in this study.

☐ I commit to respect the confidential nature of this study not sharing identifying information about the other participants.

Name: (Please Print): __________________________________________________

Signed: __________________________________________________________________________

Date: _______________________________________________________________________________
Appendix E: Volunteer Group Discussion Participant Online System Script

Dear [Prospective Participant],

As a follow-up to the earlier communication about my inquiry partnership with Hope City I would like to invite you to be part of a research project that I am conducting. This project is part of the requirement for my Master’s Degree in Leadership, at Royal Roads University. This project has been approved by the Senior Pastor Phil Kniesel and I have been given permission to contact potential participants for this purpose.

The purpose of my research is to engage in an action-oriented research project to explore how Hope City might encourage and support volunteer leadership development. Hope City is also interested in exploring how this inquiry can inform volunteer leadership development in a religious community context. This inquiry will benefit Hope City because it will provide clarity on the current lived experience of the volunteers in positions of leadership, and insight into how to encourage and support the development of volunteer leaders in the community, through engagement strategies and possible training opportunities. Additionally, this inquiry will unearth potential gaps or areas for improvement in the existing volunteer experience. This inquiry will also inform what supports are necessary for volunteer leadership development.

Your name was chosen as a prospective participant because you are part of the group of individuals who are volunteer leaders at Hope City. You have a unique perspective as a volunteer leader that is important to understand through this inquiry.

This phase of my research project will consist of a focus group. Because you are a volunteer leader in the area of small group volunteer leadership, music ministry volunteer leadership, youth ministry volunteer leadership, children’s ministry volunteer leadership or connections team volunteer leadership here at Hope City you are invited to participate in group discussions or interviews about your experience as volunteer leaders here at Hope City.

The attached document contains further information about the study conduct and will enable you to make a fully informed decision on whether or not you wish to participate. Please review this information before responding.

You are not required to participate in this research project and your choice to participate is voluntary. If you do choose to participate, you are free to withdraw until November 30th, 2019 without prejudice. In the three to four weeks after I’ve analyzed the data collected from our focus group discussions, themes that arise will be compiled. I will send a communication to you to confirm that the themes resonate with you and your experience, however, after November 30th it will not be possible to remove your anonymized data from the theming.

I realize that due to your relationships at Hope City, you may feel compelled to participate in this research project. Please be aware that you are not required to participate and, should you choose to participate, your participation would be entirely voluntary. If you do choose to participate, you are free to withdraw November 30th, 2019 without prejudice. If you do not wish to participate, simply do not reply to this request. Your decision to not participate will also be maintained in confidence. Your choice will not affect our relationship or your employment status in any way.

Please feel free to contact me at any time should you have additional questions regarding the project and its outcomes.
If you would like to participate in my research project, please contact me at:

Name: Rondah Worrell
Email: [email address]
Telephone: [telephone number]

Sincerely,
Rondah
Appendix F: Volunteer Group Discussion Participant Consent Form

By signing this form, you agree that you are over the age of 19 and have read the information letter for this study. Your signature states that you are giving your voluntary and informed consent to participate in this project and have data I contribute used in the final report and any other knowledge outputs (articles, conference presentations, newsletters, etc.).

☐ I consent to the audio recording for the Volunteer Group Discussion.

☐ I consent to the material I have contributed to and/or generated in the discussion and on recipe cards, post-it notes or flip charts and table paper thorough my participation in the session be used in this study.

☐ I commit to respect the confidential nature of the group discussion by not sharing identifying information about the other participants.

Name: (Please Print): __________________________________________________

Signed: _____________________________________________________________

Date: ______________________________________________________________
Appendix G: Research Information Letter: Group Discussion

My name is Rondah Worrell, and this project is part of the requirement for my Master of Arts in Leadership Degree at Royal Roads University. My credentials with Royal Roads University can be established by contacting Dr. Catherine Etmanski, Director, School of Leadership Studies: [email address] or [telephone number]. This project has been approved by the Royal Roads University Research Ethics Board.

Purpose of the study and sponsoring organization

The purpose of my research project is to engage in an action-oriented research project to explore how Hope City might encourage and support volunteer leadership development. Hope City is also interested in learning how this inquiry can inform future growth, meaning expansion beyond a third campus to potential communities in the greater Edmonton region. This inquiry will benefit Hope City because it will provide clarity on the current lived experience of the volunteers and staff, and insight into how to encourage and support the development of volunteer leaders in the community, through engagement strategies and possible training opportunities. Additionally, this inquiry will unearth potential gaps or areas for improvement in the existing volunteer experience. This inquiry will also inform what supports is necessary for volunteer leadership development, with the potential creation of a robust volunteer program that supports the community, the volunteers and the staff.

Your participation and how information will be collected

This second phase of the study will consist of a volunteer group discussions. These discussions are a way of listening to people and learning from them (Morgan, 1997). There will be four sessions available to ensure convenient times for multiple volunteers. Each session will include two sections. The anticipated questions include:

1. What Bible verse or inspirational quote or passage from a book that best describes your ‘why’ for being a volunteer leader?”

2. Part One - How do you conceptualize the role of a volunteer leader in the Hope City context?

Part two - In order to feel successful in your ‘why’ for volunteering for a leadership position what further support or development do you feel that you need?

Benefits and risks to participation

Information gathered through this process will benefit the volunteers of Hope City as it will provide insight into the volunteer experience. It will also inform how Hope City can encourage and support the development of volunteer leaders in the community, through engagement strategies and possible training opportunities. This inquiry will also inform what supports are necessary for volunteer leadership development, with the potential creation of a robust volunteer program that supports the community, the volunteers and the staff. The risks to being involved are minimal, however, when sharing in an open public space there is some vulnerability associated with articulating your thoughts and ideas.

Inquiry team
An inquiry team is a group of people that will assist with the execution of the work to facilitate a group session as well as assist with the collection and analysis of the information collected. My team will consist of:

- Myself
- One fellow Masters students from RRU: David Sannes
- An Experienced Facilitator: Tiffany Linke-Boyko
- One Pastoral Team member: Matt Baker – although Matt is a member of the inquiry team he will only have access to anonymized data

Real or Perceived Conflict of Interest

Because I am currently a volunteer at Hope City there may be a perceived conflict of interest. Please know that this is an asset to the project as I can relate to your experience and will do my best to listen openly. I disclose this information here so that you can make a fully informed decision on whether or not to participate in this study.

Confidentiality, security of data, and retention period

I will work to protect your privacy throughout this study. All information I collect will be maintained in confidence with hard copies (e.g., consent forms) stored in a locked filing cabinet in my home office. Electronic data (such as transcripts or audio files) will be stored on a password protected computer on my home computer. Information will be recorded in hand-written format on recipe cards, post-it notes and flipchart paper. There will also be audio and video recordings made and, where appropriate, summarized, in anonymous format, in the body of the final report. At no time will any specific comments be attributed to any individual unless specific agreement has been obtained beforehand. All documentation will be kept strictly confidential.

Because the volunteer group discussion is an open engagement method, it is not possible to keep the identities of the participants anonymous from me, other facilitators or other participants. I would ask that you respect the confidential nature of the process by not sharing names or identifying comments outside of the group.

Sharing results

In addition to submitting my final report to Royal Roads University in partial fulfillment for a Master of Arts in Leadership, I will also be sharing my research findings with the lead pastor, pastoral team and will make it available to the congregation at a later date. This will be done through an organizational report.

Procedure for withdrawing from the study

Please know that you are able to withdraw from the study at any time and can advise me using the contact information provided to you. Please know that if you attend the volunteer group discussion you will still be heard on the audio recordings but you will not be identified in any way. Any written data will become part of analysis and because there is no identifying information it will be difficult to remove information you contributed from this portion of the data collected.
You are not required to participate in this research project and there are no adverse consequences should you choose not to participate. By replying directly to the e-mail request for participation and by providing a signed consent form via email or Canada post mail you indicate that you have read and understand the information above and give your free and informed consent to participate in this project.

Please keep a copy of this information letter for your records.
Welcome to the volunteer leader group discussion! Please find a chair anywhere and have a seat. Today we will be using a group discussion engagement technique called a Liberating Structure. We will go through two rounds of a 1-2-4-All structure. There are four steps to the structure:

1 – individuals take a few moments to reflect
2 – pair into groups of two and discuss your reflection
4 – two pairs join together to discuss themes of the reflection
All – themes get reported out to the group and recorded

The 1st 1-2-4-All Section:

1 – Individually reflect for 5 to 10 minutes on the following question (use the recipe card for your response):
   What Bible verse or inspirational quote or lyric from a song or passage from a book that best describes your ‘why’ for being a volunteer leader?” Lyric from a song
2 – Now form a pair with a partner and share the excerpt that you chose.
4 – Two pairs will form a group of four to discuss why they chose the passage or verse, how that passage or verse impacts or inspires them while categorizing the responses in to themes.
All – Then the groups of four report the themes created to the group

The 2nd 1-2-4-All Section:

1 – Individually reflect for 5 to 10 minutes on the following question (use recipe card for your response):
   Part One: How do you conceptualize the responsibility of a volunteer leader in the Hope City context? This isn’t a question about naming your role, but as a volunteer of Hope City.
   Part two: In order to feel successful in your ‘why’ for volunteering for a leadership position what further, training, support or development do you feel that you need? Beyond what you already experience and already receive.
2 – Now form a pair with a partner and discuss training, support or development needs
4 – Two pairs will form a group of four to discuss and create themes
All – Then the groups of four report the themes created to the group
Appendix I: Volunteer Interview Handout

Welcome to the volunteer leader interview! Please know that this is a safe space where you can share openly, and your responses will be kept confidential. A reminder that I am audio recording our conversation for the purposes of Data Collection and Analysis. If at any time you wish to withdraw your contribution, please do not hesitate to let us know.

Questions:

1. What Bible verse, inspiration quote, lyric from a song, or passage from a book best describes your ‘why’ for being a volunteer leader?

2. How do you conceptualize the responsibility of a volunteer leader in the Hope City context? This isn’t a question about naming your role, but as a volunteer of Hope City.

3. In order to feel successful in your ‘why’ for volunteering for a leadership position what further, training, support or development do you feel that you need? Beyond what you already experience and already receive.
Appendix J: Canadian Code for Volunteer Involvement