

A PULPIT PARABLE:
CRAFTING AND COMMUNICATING SYMBOL-STORY
FOR SEMIOTIC CHANGE

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For my wife, Mandy,
Whose love and support are my strength
&
For my boys, Anthony and Isaiah,
Whose passion and wonder are my joy

ABSTRACT

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When you enter our church building from the busy thoroughfare of 57th Street in Midtown Manhattan, you are greeted with two symbols that communicate the core of our identity and theology at Calvary Baptist Church (CBC). First, the phrase emblazoned in gold-lettering above our doorway which says, “We Preach Christ Crucified, Risen, and Coming Again.” Second, the ornate, 130-year-old pulpit that is centrally located in the sanctuary. These symbols begin to tell our story before you hear a word spoken. Yet, in our Protestant/Free Church/Evangelical tradition symbolic reflection for meaning and identity is not commonly thought of as a means to communicate our calling and beliefs. Ours is a word-based, not an image-based, tradition.

However, the changing forms of communication in our post-Gutenberg world argue for the power of symbols and images to convey values and truth. This transmission of meaning through symbolic reflection is part of the field of study known as semiotics. Could our congregation build upon its rich theological heritage of proclaiming the story of Jesus by coupling this legacy with a rich and fresh symbolic reflection on the two defining symbols in our midst—the wording above our entryway and the literal pulpit?

In order to answer this, we took a radical step. We took the pulpit outside the confines of our sanctuary and recorded it moving throughout NYC. Along the way, we

collected testimonies from congregants proclaiming Christ through weakness, new life, and hope with the pulpit next to them. These videos were incorporated into a four-week sermon series in April 2013 that also interwove aspects of the Jesus story latent within the wording above our entryway and stories from CBC's past. These sermons, a fresh symbol-story for CBC, were evaluated by Control and Open Group participants. The quantitative and qualitative questions they answered looked for semiotic change and movement in relationship to the symbols in our midst and personal appropriation of their vocation as preachers. These results, as well as the unexpected emerging narratives, are included in this thesis.

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Thank you for your encouragement and belief in me

&

To my parents, Anthony and Lucia Luciano,
Thank you for your love, support, and example

CHAPTER 1

MINISTERIAL SETTING FOR SYMBOL-STORY

A Moving Pulpit

Does the pulpit move? In one sense, yes, our pulpit at Calvary Baptist Church (hereafter CBC) in Midtown Manhattan moves. It has wheels. Most Sundays, this ornate, beautiful, 130-year-old pulpit is rolled behind the platform to allow for other usage of this space. Once its symbolic importance as the centerpiece of our worship environment and platform from which “God’s anointed” utters biblical truth is over, it is hidden away, protected, and preserved for the same task seven days hence. Preaching is the centering event of our worship time and theology, and the visual image of our pulpit helps to reinforce this truth. The pulpit is no small lectern or music stand. Its hand carved cherubim (perched as if ready to speak), Latin inscription declaring “Preach that Word of Life,” and huge Jerusalem cross in the middle make vivid the point that what happens here is significant.

In another sense, however, does the pulpit move with us, the congregation, when we leave the worship space? There is no question that preaching is the centering event of our weekly gathering, but is preaching a centering motif through which we view and understand our life as Christ followers? A message written above the entryway to our sanctuary suggests that this is also a major aspect of our theology. It says, “We Preach

Christ Crucified, Risen, and Coming Again.”¹ With the empowering help of the Holy Spirit, “We Preach” the message of Christ as a congregation when we leave the church edifice and go out into our spheres of influence in New York City. Does the pulpit move? Not just literally behind the platform each Sunday, but symbolically with each of us, as we seek to embody and share the story of Jesus through our own suffering, new life, and hope?

I take seriously the office of preacher. It is no small task to stand behind the pulpit and share the story of Jesus each week. However, in our tradition, the act of preaching can subtly contribute to an unhealthy clergy-laity divide in responsibility. The ornate pulpit’s symbolic role in worship at CBC helps to reinforce this idea. This project applied a “de-mythologizing and personalizing” process to the actual pulpit in order to affect semiotic change (which will be defined along with semiotics in Chapter Two). As a result, our pulpit would become not just a piece of furniture only a select few can touch and speak from, but a living metaphor for how we, individually and as a church, seek to tell the story of Jesus. The following reflection on CBC’s story and notion of church demonstrates why this project was faithful, effective, and applicable for us.

A Living Landmark²

In the following section, I will elucidate the “what is” of the current ministry situation at CBC. Understanding the “what is” of the congregation is a non-value laden

¹ Cf., Appendix A, “CBC’s Pulpit and Wording above Entryway”, for pictures.

² A recent guest speaker called CBC a “landmark in NYC for preaching the Gospel,” an appropriate one, based upon the encoded history between our church and those who have come to know it through its reputation for proclamation throughout the years. Can we recognize this “landmark” heritage

endeavor that seeks to understand the reality of the context, and, as much as possible, begin to discover how it got there.³ In order to accomplish this, I will present and summarize three overlapping stories. The first, a brief history of CBC, highlights our church's roots as a Protestant/Free Church, Evangelical, canonic congregation. The second, a cursory tour of the architecture of the building, giving special emphasis to the pulpit and its prominence in our worship space, will demonstrate the symbolic and embodied ways we share our unique story.⁴ Lastly, the story of our recent strategic initiatives, including the crafting of a new mission statement and core values, will explain the fertile soil for this creative project.

Tell it from Calvary

In 1847, CBC (originally Hope Chapel) was planted in lower Manhattan with its founders and first pastor, Rev. David Bellamy, believing they were making this step of faith in accord with “Divine Providence.”⁵ In an important year for church plants in New York City—both Concord Baptist Church (of Gardner C. Taylor renown) and Plymouth Church in Brooklyn (of Henry Ward Beecher fame) were planted in 1847 as well—CBC began its ministry of preaching to the people of New York City. The historian commissioned by CBC to record our narrative said the following of our heritage: “Other churches in New York City have been in the forefront of civic, cultural, and even

and still engage the next generation with the message of Jesus? Thus, the title for this section—“A Living Landmark.”

³ Cf., Carl Savage and William Presnell, *Narrative Research in Ministry: A Postmodern Research Approach for Faith Communities* (Louisville: Wayne E. Oates Institute, 2008), 87ff.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 85.

⁵ William R. de Plata, *Tell it from Calvary* (New York: Calvary Baptist Church, 1997), 5.

political affairs; none have surpassed Calvary Baptist in heralding the Gospel.”⁶

“Heralding the Gospel” is what CBC is known for, a defining characteristic we gladly welcome as a congregation. The stories told by us and about us mostly center around proclamation, heralding, and preaching. Even the title of our self-published history, *Tell it from Calvary*, makes this clear.

Love for the auditory proclamation of truth is a hallmark of the Protestant tradition. Martin Luther called the church a “mouth-house” in his *Advent Postil* of 1522. “... the Gospel was promised afore in the Holy Scriptures, but it was not preached orally and publicly until Christ came and sent out his apostles. Therefore the church is a mouth-house, not a pen-house, for since Christ's advent that Gospel is preached orally which before was hidden in written books.”⁷ In line with this tradition, CBC has proudly asserted this staple of Protestantism for more than 166 years. “Preaching” is the central event in our weekly gatherings and serves as the primary reason why people attend and become members of CBC. Ask almost any of our current congregants why they are here, and the answer almost always is: “Because, the Pastor preaches the word.”

This Protestant/Free Church heritage and emphasis on the auditory word leads directly into the label of “canonic” as described by James Hopewell in his classic text *Congregation: Stories and Structures*. Hopewell explains four primary world view

⁶ Ibid., x.

⁷ Martin Luther, “Advent Postil,” <http://www.lutherdansk.dk/Web-advent%20engelsk-KP/Adventpostillen.htm> (accessed January 9, 2014).

categories that different churches fall into: canonic, gnostic, charismatic, and empiric.⁸ Differing values held by these various congregations—about the world, the scriptures, authority, the spirit, and other world view categories—help to shape the story that congregation tells about itself. A canonic congregation has a “Reliance upon an authoritative interpretation of a world pattern, often considered God’s word or will, by which one identifies one’s essential life.”⁹ For canonic churches like CBC, the authority of scripture is a defining feature, and we are our most authentic self when we are giving prominence to the proclaimed word in our worship services.

This historic emphasis on the “heralded” word of God from the pulpit offers a blessing and presents a challenge. As a blessing, if you are the preacher, there is a certain sense of importance to the work you feel called to, which is encouraged by our community. The scriptures are held in high esteem and the opportunity to share them at CBC is like no other. Preaching greats in the Evangelical tradition, from Stephen Olford and Billy Graham to Chuck Swindoll and Haddon Robinson, have spoken there, and when you enter into the pulpit, you sense the weight of the task ahead of you. However, because of this great history and emphasis on the proclaimed word, congregants can too easily come, listen, and leave without realizing their responsibility to herald the news of Christ in all our “preaching lives.” This project attempted to de-mythologize the pulpit among our congregants in order to nurture our communal identity and responsibility as heralds of the gospel.

⁸ James Hopewell, *Congregations: Stories and Structures* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1987), 72. Hopewell uses classic literary genres (irony, comedy, romance and tragedy) and the defining features of each to describe empiric, gnostic, charismatic, and canonic churches respectfully. *Ibid.*, 58.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 69.

From the Street to the Pulpit

As you walk into the church building off of 57th Street, the gold-lettered phrase “We Preach Christ, Crucified, Risen and Coming Again” atop of the entryway grabs your attention. You then proceed through the narthex into the sanctuary. We have a small narthex, which is congruent with many Protestant church structures built at the beginning of the 20th century. This architectural design helps to evoke the story of what this congregation has valued from its beginning, the preaching space. After proceeding quickly through this common space, you take a seat in our 800 seat sanctuary, rather simple and plain, and see one outstanding article on top of the platform, our huge pulpit. It is ornate. Hand-carved cherubim rest atop each corner; a Jerusalem cross is in the center; and a Latin phrase translated “Preach that Word. Preach that Word of Life.” is inscribed in the center. The paradox is that, while the words out front proclaim “We Preach”, the arrangement of the auditorium and distinctive pulpit sends a different message: “He preaches. I listen.”

While we are a distinctly Protestant congregation and believe that hearing takes precedent over seeing, it is visually apparent from our pulpit’s prominence in the worship space that that is where our emphasis is placed. Even the two ordinances we celebrate, baptism and communion, are visually subservient to this heralding. The communion table, for our monthly celebration, and our baptismal tank, used roughly quarterly, are both stationed below and to the right of the platform. Though these ordinances do serve in our Baptist Theology as “visual sermons” of the life, death, and resurrection hope of

Jesus that proclaim “the Word of God through picture and symbol,”¹⁰ the explicitly proclaimed word through preaching is the focus of worship. James F. White, describing preaching in Protestant worship, says, “For most Protestants, preaching is the most lengthy portion in the service. At least a third of the time of worship is usually allotted to the sermon, and it frequently occupies half or more of the time that the community is assembled.”¹¹ This is true of CBC.

Understanding the role of the sermon as the centering event for our communal identity helps to shape the narrative of opportunity I see for the church. It is from the pulpit that we collectively look to God’s word for direction, encouragement, and identity as his people. We are a canonic church that esteems the Biblical story as climaxed in the death, resurrection, and return of Christ. The opportunity is there, in the words atop our entryway and the magnificent article of the pulpit, to extract and explain the meaning of the “preaching life” as not just a responsibility for the ordained, but a responsibility and privilege for all of God’s people to “tell the story” of Christ in their lives. As Baptists, the ordinances of believer’s baptism by immersion and regular observance of communion serve as “oaths of fidelity and obedience”¹² that propel us all to the vocation of preacher.

Resurfacing the Landmark

Appreciating our rich history of preaching is important going forward. Our Protestant, canonic, and Evangelical roots laid the foundation upon which CBC was built

¹⁰ Stanley J. Grenz, *The Baptist Congregation: A Guide to Baptist Belief and Practice* (Vancouver: Regent College Publishing, 1985), 31.

¹¹ James F. White, *Protestant Worship: Tradition in Transition* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1989), 20.

as a “living landmark”. Likewise, taking into account the story of our theology and values that are apparent via the architecture and words that adorn our building and worship space helps to thicken the narrative. Savage and Presnell say the following in regard to the importance of stories and their generation in shaping the identity of a faith community: “The way in which faith communities realize and share what they hold dear and meaningful to them is through the generation of stories. These stories capture their ever-changing faith experience and embody the words, symbols, rituals and other actions that have formed them and will form new generations of believers. When sampled at a moment in time they are like snapshots of a faith community’s compiled identity, historical expressions, faithful praxis, and imagined futures.”¹³

A final facet of our story, which gives rise to our narrative of opportunity, is our current push to rearticulate our mission and values at CBC. Into this milieu of new ideas and fresh initiatives, a fertile soil is laid for a ministry project. The “landmark” is going through a resurfacing phase. Four years ago, the board of elders commissioned the pastoral staff to craft a new mission statement for the church going forward. This was not the first time that CBC has gone through this process. The last time was in the year 2000. The events of 9/11, however, caused upheavals within the city and community, and CBC changed its approach and ministry goals “on the fly” to help meet the needs that arose. Some nine years later, as the tangible needs and goals have been met or left as no longer applicable, we again endeavored to craft a clear mission for our congregation.

¹² Grenz, *The Baptist Congregation*, 31.

¹³ Savage and Presnell, *Narrative Research in Ministry*, 67-68.

Over the course of several months, the staff met and began to ask questions about who we were as a church, what our identity-forming values were (both actual and desired), and how we might articulate both to our congregation. Through much debate and honest sharing we came up with the following mission statement: “Calvary Baptist Church’s Mission is to engage New York City and impact the world with the message of Jesus Christ.” The following ten core values were highlighted as a result of this process: Gospel (proclamation of truth), reconciliation, diversity, orthodoxy, life/personhood, compassion/justice, faith, transformation, witness, and leadership.¹⁴ Various online and printed communications from our church highlight this mission statement and these core values. We intend for them to take root in our community’s self-articulation, and they have begun to shape the story of CBC going forward through various church-wide strategic initiatives.

I’ve laid this out to highlight the importance of preaching—“proclamation”—in both our mission statement and first value. We state that the “message of Jesus Christ” is the pivotal content we desire to share with the city and the world. By engaging those around us with this message of the life, death, resurrection, and return of Christ, we at CBC believe we are being faithful to God’s task for us in this city. This is consistent with our Canonical Narrative Theological understanding of ministry and the Christian tradition.¹⁵ Likewise, the first value, the proclamation of the gospel story, is the initial

¹⁴ Cf., Appendix B, “CBC’s Mission Statement and Core Values”.

¹⁵ Cf., Chapter Three for a description of Canonical Narrative Theology and its theological foundation for CBC.

way we believe that impact and engagement occurs. As we embody and proclaim this message, we are being true to our best selves.

Preaching serves as a unifying motif around which we gather weekly at CBC, and, therefore, our understanding of the Christian story and our congregation's story are centered in this act. Though I will not be using Appreciative Inquiry as a method in this project, one of its defining mantras rings true for my upcoming work as it relates to preaching's importance in our history. I want to bring the best of this heritage into conversations about "what is" and "what could be". As Mark Branson states, "If we carry parts of our past into the future, they should be what is best about the past."¹⁶ Preaching is what is historically "best" about CBC.

However, there is potential for disconnect between our belief in the importance of the weekly act of preaching and its relevance for us as we go our separate ways each week into the enormity and diversity of New York City. Transience, congregant turnover, and the far distances of the congregants' homes from each other, all contribute to the difficulty in forming a congregational identity that goes beyond the worship service. Can the centering act of preaching in our worship also become a unifying concept that we take with us as we engage in God's missional activity in the world during the week? This "what could be" aspect of the project is an important step in deciphering the preferred story. Savage and Presnell define this as: "...a new state or condition that excites them

¹⁶ Mark Lau Branson, *Memories, Hopes, and Conversations: Appreciative Inquiry and Congregational Change* (Herndon, Virginia: The Alban Institute, 2004), 139.

and advances God's ministry among them."¹⁷ In this project, in order to encourage this type of movement at CBC, faithfulness to the past was needed.

Summary & Thesis Synopsis

The history, architecture, and current mission statement all serve as interwoven stories which give CBC identity and help envision a preferred future. CBC's Protestant/Free Church, Evangelical history reveals the canonic nature of our congregation. This project sought to highlight the best from this history and re-envision a preferred future, where the responsibility to preach is more clearly understood as the vocation of all. Likewise, the symbolic nature of our pulpit and the wording above our entryway convey symbolic messages about our theology and identity, important aspects of our past and future. Rob Webber says, "The task of the leader is holding in careful tension the powerful pieces of the past, emerging visions that are being created, and the future that is yet to become. In that dynamic tension between past and future, there is a power and an energy that enable faithful, purposeful movement into the preferred future without jettisoning the richness of heritage."¹⁸ This project explicated and rearticulated the stories around our symbols in order to affect a new, positive, and faithful semiotic relationship with them, understanding that "... we need to be sensitive and wise as we talk about the past our people treasure."¹⁹ Lastly, the recent vision and strategic

¹⁷ Savage and Presnell, *Narrative Research in Ministry*, 75.

¹⁸ Rob Webber, *Visual Leadership: The Church Leader as ImageSmith* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2002), 139.

¹⁹ Samuel R. Chand, *Cracking Your Church's Culture Code: Seven Keys to Unleashing Vision & Inspiration* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2011), 179.

initiatives, which encourage our congregants to see where God is calling them to share the story of Christ, brought the church-wide impetus for a project to act upon.

Taking the ministerial setting's narrative of opportunity into consideration, along with a preferred future that would enhance the story CBC shares, the following thesis question was formed: Will crafting and communicating a uniquely CBC symbol-story enhance our understanding of and collective participation in the "pulpit ministry" (i.e., value of proclamation) at CBC? Chapter Two will lay the philosophical foundation for symbol-story. In that chapter, the role of symbolism and story in conveying themes and truths, as well as the shift from a "Gutenberg" to "Google" platform in current ministry paradigms, will elucidate the cultural milieu upon which this project was built. With the ministerial and cultural setting in mind, Chapter Three will explain the Biblical/Theological basis for the project. This is where it is argued that Canonical Narrative Theology is the methodology at work in our congregation. Also, a brief look at the role and content of proclamation in the scriptures will further solidify the faithful nature of this project to CBC's and the Christian story. Chapter Four will explain the project itself, as it acted upon these ministerial, philosophical, and biblical/theological footings. The chapter will follow the project through the stages of conception, crafting, and communication. Lastly, Chapter Five will evaluate the project's success, looking for quantitative results, qualitative responses, and emerging narratives. It will ask: Did the pulpit move and what difference did that movement make in the lives of our congregants?

CHAPTER 2

PHILOSOPHICAL FOUNDATION OF SYMBOL-STORY

Introduction

There is a palpable sense at CBC that our church is in a period of transition, as the previous chapter's explanation of the "Narrative of Opportunity" sought to explain. The new mission statement and core values, recent staff hires, emerging opportunities for ministry, and the architectural upheaval on our block are just some of the dynamics at play around and within our congregation that give rise to this feeling of movement and change. Into this setting, the project attempted to introduce semiotic reflection that would give comfort that our mission is still the same, "We Preach Christ," though our methods and means are changing. Gene Getz, in *Sharpening the Focus of the Church*, talks about the difference between form and function in the church. The functions of discipleship and evangelism stay constant, while the forms in which they are pursued are ever-changing based upon the current context of the church.¹ The distinctively CBC symbol-story that was the content of this project was a fresh attempt to help in personalizing our mission and core value of proclamation.

This chapter's goal is twofold: 1) to lay a wide philosophical foundation for the use of symbol-story, and 2) to erect a current framework in church philosophy and

ministry approach upon which the uniquely CBC symbol-story can rest. In the first section, two aspects of the cultural milieu of our time, semiotic reflection and the identity-shaping power of story will lay the groundwork for crafting a unique symbol-story within our church. In the second section, reflection upon the shifting methodological approach in church ministry—from Attractional, Propositional, and Colonial (APC) to Missional, Relational, and Incarnational (MRI) in focus and from “Gutenberg” to “Google” in practice—will highlight the reasons for extending the ordinary “meaning” of the two primary symbols in our midst—the ornate pulpit and wording above our entryway—from the responsibility of a few to the calling of all.

Cultural Milieu

Though the church is often a culture unto itself, it does not live in a cultural vacuum free from influence from without. There are themes, ideas, and movements at work in the wider culture that have bearing on the church’s identity and the role it plays. This section will highlight just two of these cultural aspects, semiotics and story, and their relevance to CBC. The symbol-story that emerged for this project finds its philosophical underpinnings here.

Semiotics’ Goal

Semiotics² is the “discipline that endeavors to understand the human quest for meaning... It does so by unraveling the meanings of the symbols, known more exactly as

¹ Cf., Gene A. Getz, *Sharpening the Focus of the Church* (Richardson, Texas: Center for Church Renewal, 2000), 32ff.

² For a brief history of the philosophy of semiotics and its historical development as field of study, as well as reasons why the sign serves as a mediator of meaning and not the ontological source of

signs, that make up the *system of everyday life* that we call a *culture* or *society*.”³ All around us are varying signs that seek to garner our attention and shape our identity. This reality is especially true of the location of CBC. In Midtown Manhattan, a simple stroll down the block brings one into direct contact with a myriad of symbolic messages vying for attention and interest. Some interpret the labels of high-end retailers as an offer of status through owning their products. Others may see the pulsating lights on Broadway billboards and interpret that as a message to pay high prices to see and hear the best of the dramatic arts. Signs automatically bring you to these and similar interpretations and meanings that are particularly nuanced based upon countless personal factors.⁴ This is the semiotic goal—meaning.⁵ Marcel Danesi says the following to highlight the role of semiotic reflection in life and the three dimensions in which it works to affect this:

The basic goal of semiotics is to identify what constitutes a sign and what its meanings are. A sign can be identified by virtue of three dimensions. First, there is a physical dimension—the sounds that comprise a word, the movements that define a gesture, and so on. This is called interchangeably the *signifier*, the *representamen*, or even just the *sign*. Second, there is a *referential* or *representational* dimension; that is, the actual function of the sign, by which it directs attention to some entity (object, event, idea, being, etc.) This entity is called, equivalently, the *referent*, *object*, or *signified*. Finally, there is a

meaning itself, see the following: Ferruccio Rossi-Landi and Susan Petrilli, *Between Signs and Non-Signs Critical Theory* (Amsterdam; Philadelphia: J. Benjamins, 1992), 59-85. While these serve as the historical underpinnings of this project, thorough analysis of them goes beyond the intent and parameters of this thesis.

³ Marcel Danesi, *Of Cigarettes, High Heels, and Other Interesting Things: An Introduction to Semiotics*, 1st ed. Semaphores and Signs (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1999), vii.

⁴ While much in the field of semiotics addresses language signs and symbolism, this project dealt with the area of objects as signs. The “... communicative potential of cultural artifacts and natural objects” is, therefore, the focus of this project’s semiotic reflection. Cf., Winfried Nöth, *Handbook of Semiotics Advances in Semiotics* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1990), 440.

⁵ Nike, Disney, Coca-Cola, Volvo, Harley Davidson, etc, are all selling more than products. They sell a story—a meaningful experience, lifestyle, and communal identity. Cf., Leonard Sweet, *Aquachurch 2.0: Piloting Your Church In Today’s Fluid Culture* (Colorado Springs: David C. Cook, 2008), under “4126,” Amazon Kindle Edition.

conceptual dimension, by which the sign evokes in different people diverse thoughts, ideas, feelings. This dimension is called, alternately, *signification*, *interpretation*, or simply *meaning*.⁶

The three dimensions—sign, signified, signification—play themselves out in a natural way every time we face a new or known sign and look for meaning. Historically, the church is no stranger to the power of symbols and signs to communicate significance. The architecture of church building, layout of the worship space, practice of the sacraments, attire of the priests, and order of the service are just a few of the countless ways in which semiotic reflection occurs within the church. However, this type of intentional symbolic crafting is not common in the more “image-less” Protestant Evangelical church. The heard word is emphasized over the seen, and reflection on the signs in the church is not encouraged or recognized. However, this type of semiotic interpretation is happening anyway.

Consider the three dimensions above when looking at one facet of the pulpit at CBC.⁷ This ornate piece of furniture has cherubim adorning the sides. This is a simple aspect of the “sign” itself. Yet, this “signifies” an idea—what happens here is in accord with the heavens and carries weight and significance. This is no mere lectern. It is the platform for “heavenly talk.” Lastly, what does this “mean” when we consider the final dimension of “signification”? Perhaps, it communicates that the one who stands behind here and proclaims has a special responsibility. They are the mouthpiece of “otherworldly” and authoritative truth. For some this may serve to comfort them as they look for God’s word. Others may be turned off by the apparent “power play” at work in

⁶ Marcel Danesi, *Of Cigarettes, High Heels, and Other Interesting Things*, 11.

this symbolic message. Semiotic reflection occurs, even in our non-sacramental church setting, even if our tradition and theology do not explicitly state it. Therefore, can we intentionally pick up on this aspect of cultural reflection and craft a fresh perspective for the symbols in our midst? One that would give renewed meaning and personal responsibility to all who gather, not just to the one who stands behind the pulpit? This was a penetrating question that philosophically drove this project. However, in order for new meaning to be communicated, there would need to be an intentional process. This is where the power of story to affect this change emerged.

Story's Shaping Effect

In order for a fresh semiotic reflection upon the images in our midst to occur, there needed to be a platform from which to effectively share this. Simply referencing the symbols, saying what they mean, and encouraging a personal response may be the most direct route, but not the most effective. This is where the power of story emerged as the platform to couple with symbolic reflection. Bobbette Buster, USC professor and “story expert” for Pixar animation, lectures on the power of story to elicit emotion and shape identity. She argues that stories are much more than short-term entertainment and an escape from the ordinary. Rather, a story has the capacity to give courage and, through generational adherence, a “map” for how to best live out your place in the world. She says the following to this point:

Stories are, at heart, like the baton handed over in a relay team, only they are passed from one generation to the next. They give each of us a visual template of what to expect, a map of the ‘wilderness’, but most of all the best stories provide a sort of psychological preparation for life’s inevitable struggles. In short, stories

⁷ Cf., Appendix A, “CBC’s Pulpit and Wording above Entryway”, for pictures.

are prescriptions for courage. They illustrate how to run the race. And Win. We are not born with courage. We may possess bravado, even arrogance. Youth normally does. But courage is a quiet, spiritual muscle discovered only when you face your greatest fear. Stories embolden, strengthen, and establish how we can become our very best.⁸

For our 166-year-old church, the stories that have been passed on from generation to generation are moving. Our church history, *Tell it From Calvary*, chronicles key stories and events from our past that gave rise to our church as we know it. From a small church plant in 1847, through moving to various locales in the city, to new endeavors in international mission and radio ministry, the highs of our past have come to shape us. Also, challenging periods, such as the bold church leadership forty years ago that addressed the segregation that prohibited non-citizens and African Americans as members for decades, demonstrate that there are many “shadow stories” that impact us to this day. This project sought to evoke these and other stories from our recent past and retell them afresh as a “map” for our congregation to follow going forward.

Story is the foundation upon which our Christian identity is based. Mere principles and abstract reasoning are not the basis for our Christian identity. It is our conviction, that God’s story of redemption and new creation through Jesus is the ultimate narrative in which our lives and congregation play a role. We are characters in this greater drama. The stories from our congregational history find their significance in that they are part of the larger story of God’s gospel at work in the world. The Christian life is given significance because of its retelling of this story ever new, and this story changes everything.

⁸ Bobbette Buster, *Do Story: How to Tell Your Story so the World Listens* (London: The Do Book Company, 2013), 85.

The shared conviction that a church is meant to be a story-telling collective that bears witness to the gospel and bears one another's burdens changes the inward workings and outward expressions of a local body of believers. In the church there exists something that cannot exist in an empire, a republic, a federation, a state, a city, a neighborhood, even a social club: community rooted in the story of God and indwelt by His Spirit... we must be careful observers and communicators of God's Story as found in Scripture, in our lives, and as it continues to unfold. We must gather in fellowship around the story of God, celebrate it, and worship our Creator and Redeemer. Morality is not enough to bind us. Obligation is not enough to move us. We have to be caught up in a common story.⁹

The common story of Jesus is what binds us as a congregation, and we are to be the "story telling collective" through which the story of Jesus is seen and heard.¹⁰ Story, with its rise and fall in action, setting, characters, climax, resolutions, and unanswered questions gives a solid structure upon which a meaningful life can be built. It is how God has communicated with us. It is how we are to communicate his love to the world. "Story is the structure through which God gives us His Gospel and sends us out into the world. Story is a lens through which we might see the world and better understand its meaning and movements. Story changes everything."¹¹ For CBC, changed and ever changing by the message of Jesus, our mission is clear: Proclaim that word of truth through your life. Story shapes us, whether we acknowledge it or not. This project sought to couple this shaping effect of story with symbolic reflection in order to craft a unique "symbol-story" for our congregation.

⁹ Scott McClellan, *Tell Me a Story: Finding God (and Ourselves) through Narrative* (Chicago: Moody Publishers, 2013), 127.

¹⁰ The theological basis for this argument is articulated in Chapter Three through a "Canonical Narrative Theology" framework.

Symbol-Story's Emergence

Leonard Sweet argues that the 21st century church has an “image” problem. Our ministry approach is so “word-based” (logo-centric) that it is missing the image-rich environment through which communication and change can occur.¹² Therefore, symbolism and the field of semiotics have much to contribute to our ministerial practices. Pastors must learn how to share vivid metaphors and use rich symbols in order to teach and encourage life change.

Sweet explains that our culture communicates in story and image, not words.¹³ Narrative and metaphor are the language of this culture, and the use of such “naraphores” (a word he coins by combining narrative and metaphor) is a powerful tool in the preacher’s toolbox. Therefore, just saying in a sermon that we at CBC must take our preaching lives seriously will not affect the kind of change it could. The appeal needs to be coupled with an ‘image-rich’ symbol-story. In Sweet’s recent work *Aquachurch 2.0* he talks about the impact “icon-parables” (or “symbol-story,” the term I am using)¹⁴ can have in shaping group identity and unifying scattered parts of an organization or church. He says:

¹¹ McClellan, *Tell Me a Story*, 21.

¹² Leonard I. Sweet, Brian D. McLaren and Jerry Haselmayer, *"A" Is for Abductive: The Language of the Emerging Church* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2003), 152-155.

¹³ The following explanation of Sweet’s thoughts comes from a lecture given at a recent Christian and Missionary Alliance Conference. Leonard I. Sweet, “Session 1,” <https://www.dropbox.com/sh/wg78p1lbih5uczo/WkMki0FpLZ/District%20Conference%202012/Len%20Sweet%20Session%201.mp3> (accessed November 25, 2012).

¹⁴ Jørgen Dines Johansen explains the difference between icons (contains qualities in common with the object), indexes (real indication to object like smoke to fire) and signs (the thought gleaned from the object is emphasized, not common qualities with that referenced) which all fall under the larger category of signs. This is the basis for my usage of symbol-story as opposed to icon-story in my research.

What is icon-parable storytelling? An icon-parable is an image or metaphor that conveys a lifetime of experiences and stories. Icon-parables story people's lives. Icon-parable storytelling helps us make decisions or reverse decisions we've already made... Certain ideas, events, missions and people, but most especially icons, serve as magnets that organize into coherent shape scattered filaments. Icon-parables line everything up, gather scattered wits together, make everything fall into place, and put everything into perspective... There are various kinds of iconic stories. 'Stories of identity' help convey values, build morale, develop role models, reveal inner mechanisms of community. These icons serve as carriers of identity, values, and memory. They are the primary carriers of religious culture.¹⁵

By crafting a distinctively CBC symbol-story, I attempted to encourage a collective awareness of and identification with our churches' preaching life—a reshaping of our story. Gil Rendle explains the impact that the leader can have on congregational identity through such reshaping: “By reshaping the story, leaders help a community's identity take on a new form. In the end, people live up to who they think they are, whether as individuals or as congregations. Leaders risk to make the story of who congregations think they are, a better and more faithful story for them to live out than the story of who they have been.”¹⁶ In an effort to capture and reshape our congregational identity in a way that would bridge theology and symbolism, I chose the sermon as the format for our symbol-story.¹⁷

Church 2.0

The cultural observations of semiotic reflection and the power of story were part of the wider philosophical basis for crafting CBC's symbol-story. Two trends within church ministry philosophy—missional focus and looping communication—also played

Cf., Jørgen Dines Johansen in *Dialogic Semiosis: An Essay on Signs and Meaning Advances in Semiotics* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1993), 55-57.

¹⁵ Leonard Sweet, *Aquachurch 2.0*, under “4127.”

¹⁶ Gil Rendle, “Narrative Leadership and Congregational Identify,” in *Finding Our Story*, Larry A. Goleman, ed. (Hernden, Virginia: The Alban Institute, 2010), 38.

an integral role in developing this project. Leonard Sweet calls the “MRI” emphasis (i.e., missional focus) the operating system upon which the “Google” interface (i.e., looping communication) works. This section will highlight these two trends and their relevance to CBC for this project.

The Operating System: APC →MRI

Once again, the insights of Leonard Sweet help to frame this discussion. In his recent work, *So Beautiful: Divine Design for Life and the Church: Missional, Relational, Incarnational*, he argues that the current American culture does not so readily identify with the Christian story as it did in the past.¹⁸ America has transformed into a more multi-religious faith society. Now as one voice among many, the church must put aside former assumptions that governed its ministry approach. Sweet argues that the church, when its significance in culture was prominent and most people had at least an understanding of the Christian story, was able to craft its ministry approach and identity around the following three emphases: Attraction, Propositional, and Colonial.¹⁹ He labels this the APC Model and argues that the church must move toward being Missional, Relational, and Incarnational in its ministerial philosophy in order to tell the story of the church in the new post-modern culture.²⁰

¹⁷ Leonora Tubbs Tisdale, *Preaching as Local Theology and Folk Art* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1997), 124.

¹⁸ Leonard Sweet, *So Beautiful: Divine Design for Life and the Church: Missional, Relational, Incarnational* (Colorado Springs: David C. Cook, 2009), under “182ff.,” Amazon Kindle Edition.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*

²⁰ Darrell L. Guder and Lois Barrett in *Missional Church: A Vision for the Sending of the Church in North America*, in commenting on the modern way of life with its emphasis on Rationality and Reason, the Autonomous Self, and the Social Contract, argue that the following facets of the modern self

The Attractional emphasis believes if you build something well enough and have enough “products” to offer people, they will come. These individuals will then, hopefully, become members who will be able to help you in crafting ministries and attracting more people to come. Incorporating the gospel into your life and church in a way that makes it attractive to others is an important goal for churches and individuals; however, if a church is too inwardly focused in its efforts, it is missing its larger responsibility. Churches are meant to create missionaries to share and represent God’s story in their spheres of influence. This (M)issional task is “God’s Go” for the Christian.²¹

The propositional emphasis of church philosophy makes certain that the right things are believed and communicated. Believers come to hear the truth claims of scriptures in order to be better members in this model. While this communication and knowledge of truth is integral for the church, as the creeds and confessions of the church throughout history attest, it must affect change in the life of the hearer. The propositions must be communicated in such a way that the story of Jesus compels those who are listening to go and share this message through a life lived in intentional relationships with others. The (R)elational component is “God’s Yes” that we are more than just a building people come to or a set of dogma we adhere to, but that the church is a complex web of relationship spaces where the scriptures, creation, God and each other’s all interweave

are the result: the modern self as (1) citizen with rights and freedoms, (2) consumer, (3) constructed roles and identities, (4) product of technique feeling, (4) intuition and desire. These features of the modern self manifest themselves in the APC approach to ministry in various ways and reveal the context for a MRI methodology. Darrell L. Guder and Lois Barrett, *Missional Church: A Vision for the Sending of the Church in North America*, Gospel and Our Culture Series (Grand Rapids, Mich.: W.B. Eerdmans Pub., 1998), 19-32.

²¹ Sweet, *So Beautiful*, under “918.”

and overlap.²² It is our responsibility to understand ourselves as relational beings who strive to bring the story and relationship of God to the surface of all our spheres of influence. This project sought to enhance this relational emphasis at CBC.

Lastly, moving from a Colonial mindset (where we bring to the world what we think they need) to an (I)ncarnational approach is important for the church in this new world in which it finds itself. Sweet is clear to highlight that the church is not anticolonial. In fact, we are called to “colonize earth on behalf of heaven,” as the Lord’s Prayer calls us.²³ Rather, the critique is to an approach to Christian mission that believes the culture, habits, look, and feel of the church must be transported in the world.²⁴ The incarnational mindset understands that the Christian expression of faith will manifest itself in different ways through different people. The story of Jesus communicated through our own has many creative avenues to do so. This is “God’s No” in that it reminds us of how we are to approach our mission mandate, with incarnational attempts in the culture, not imposing our culture on others.²⁵ Sweet argues that this emphasis on incarnating the story of Jesus is actually part of the God’s commission from the beginning of the church. The centrifugal nature of this mission means that for each congregant at CBC, there is the opportunity to be faithful to the call of God on their life wherever they find themselves. Sweet says the following:

There is a little incarnational participle in Matthew 28:19 that we improperly translate as a command: “Go!” A more accurate translation would be “While

²² Ibid., under “2609.”

²³ Ibid., under “2914.”

²⁴ Cf., Ibid., under “2912ff.”

²⁵ Ibid., under “2771.”

going.” Without respecting that incarnational participle, we’ve taken the commission to mean go and pull people out of their contexts and make them disciples within the protected zones of our churches, and then send them out to spread a unitary Christian culture. Not so. Our starting point is not telling people where they should be, but being with people where they already are “while going” and catching up to the Spirit. The incarnational life begins by saying and meaning these two two-letter words: “I’m in.” An incarnational paradigm is not a sidewalk-safe church paradigm, but a blistering off-the-beaten-path missional paradigm. If anything, we need to set people free from their on-path “churchy captivity” and release them for their trail-blazing ministry and mission in the world.²⁶

As I considered the Narrative of Opportunity at CBC, it was encouraging to note that these Missional, Relational, and Incarnational emphases were a part of our renewed vision. Our mission statement is to “Engage NYC and Impact the World with the Message of Jesus Christ.” This is an outward-focused statement that reveals our desire to “go and be” the church, not just to ask people to “come and hear” the truth. As Christopher Wright says, “Fundamentally, our mission (if it is biblically informed and validated) means our committed participation as God’s people, at God’s invitation and command, in God’s own mission within the history of God’s world for the redemption of God’s creation.”²⁷ It is to this task that CBC believes it is called.

The Interface: Gutenberg → Google

Sweet uses the metaphor of an operating system to describe the MRI approach to Christian living and church ministry described above. He states that this OS is the original one for the Christian faith, because it is based on the biblical story, in both the

²⁶ Ibid., under “2771.”

²⁷ Christopher J.H. Wright, *The Mission of God: Unlocking the Bible’s Grand Narrative* (Downers Grove, Illinois: Intervarsity Press, 2006), 22-23.

Old and New Testament and the Great Commission itself.²⁸ Based upon this MRI OS, designed by God for his church, different interfaces are used during different periods of history in order to make interaction with the OS as smooth and usable as possible.

For generations, the church was able to operate its MRI OS on a Gutenberg interface. The “Gutenberg” culture produced “people of the book” that revolved around “print technology” with ministry forms that were “... highly linear and left brained, performance based, word driven, and individualistic.”²⁹ This interface proved useful for centuries. Generations of Christians were raised from the time of 15th century to study the word, think in a progressive linear fashion, and personalize the responsibilities to obey the scripture and respond to the call of God in their life. There is nothing wrong with this interface. It is amoral. The only critique is that we no longer live in a Gutenberg world and surrounding culture. The interface must change to meet the new cultural environment.

The shift is now towards a “Google” interface and culture. The dynamics in this setting are vastly different from those of the word-based, linear culture of yesteryears. As a culture, we have moved from being “people of the book” to “people of the screen.”³⁰ This does not discredit the scriptures or argue they are no longer viable. The opposite is true. More than ever the story that the scriptures communicate about creation, redemption, and new creation are needed. Rather, the medium through which this same

²⁸ Sweet, *So Beautiful*, under “589.” This story-forming/proclamation basis will be explored more in Chapter Three.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, under “545.”

story is shared is changing. The church must not see the screen as a detriment but as a vehicle to be used and redeemed for God's purposes. Idolatry only occurs when these images are substituted for the divine. Their proper usage in theological reflection is beneficial.³¹ A look around the sanctuary during worship each Sunday proves that many people use their electronic devices to read and study the scriptures. Sweet talks about the characteristics of this "Google" culture as EPIC—experiential, participatory, image-rich, and connectional.³² These are no more sacred than the linear, individualistic, top-down interface of the prior era. Rather, they are the current forms through which the same story can be shared, and churches are wise and faithful to use them appropriately to share the story of Jesus.

Another aspect of this "Google" culture is the looping nature, as opposed to linear, in which communication is shared and meaning is found. Think of a standard Google search. You can begin looking for one thing and end up, within just a few minutes, in a totally different spot in your query box or on a seemingly unrelated webpage. This looping method of information gathering poses new challenges for the church as it seeks to communicate the message of the gospel. It is paramount, therefore, that the communicators understand this reality and seek ways to bring people to the truth of Christ's story even though it may occur in a less than tidy linear fashion.

³⁰ Ibid. For more on the power of video to convey symbolic meaning see Gregor T. Goethals, *The Electronic Golden Calf: Images, Religion, and the Making of Meaning* (Cambridge, Mass.: Cowley Publications, 1990).

³¹ Alan C. Purves, *The Web of Text and the Web of God: An Essay on the Third Information Transformation* (New York: Guilford Press, 1998), 100-131. While Purves is arguing primarily for media and TV's role, the theme of proper usage of media in theological reflection is applicable beyond this.

³² Sweet, *So Beautiful*, under "545."

A similar phenomenon is seen in the current platform used in website development. This is often called Web 2.0. No longer do websites present a static feed where information is one-way and linear. Now, the emergence of interactive websites, social media, and comments section on the bottom of articles and product lines are just some of the ways that allow for information to be processed, responded to, edited, and rearticulated on the fly. Companies, banks, businesses, social movements, etc. all use this medium to advance their causes and get their messages out. This demonstrates that the “Google era” of culture, as described by Sweet, is here, and the sooner churches recognize this changing ministry setting the better they will be in crafting and communicating the story of Jesus within it. For CBC, a “Gutenberg era” designed and operating church, slow but intentional introduction of these new forms of looping communication is needed. This project attempted to initiate some of this movement.³³

This Gutenberg→Google movement in culture at large and within the church helped in shaping this project. Understanding the prominence of the screen in conveying information in our age led to the incorporation of video as a movement within the sermon symbol-story. The need to loop information opened up the opportunity to use three interlocking stories in each sermon (ancient, recent, current) that each found ways to come back to the story of Jesus. Allowing feedback via online reflections opened up a Web 2.0 experience not common for our church body. The image-rich aspects of our Google culture allowed for the infusion of symbolic reflection and semiotic change that

³³ For more information around the Web 2.0 concept see the following article from Tim O’Reilly, who is often credited as the creator of this term: Tim O’Reilly, “What is Web 2.0,” <http://oreilly.com/web2/archive/what-is-web-20.html> (accessed January 14, 2014).

was the goal of the project. While staying loyal to the MRI OS, new avenues for communicating the same message in our new cultural setting were forged.

Summary

This chapter highlighted two cultural themes that formed the philosophical foundation for the unique CBC symbol-story that was crafted and communicated for this project. First, the larger cultural observations surrounding semiotic reflection and the influence of story to empower and shape identity led to the concept of “symbol-story” as a unique way to communicate the shared value of proclamation. Second, observing the shift in ministerial practice back to an original MRI operating system while still upgrading to a “Google” interface set the platform for introducing a missionally faithful message through a fresh medium. Chapter Three will fill in the biblically faithful and theologically rich content of this symbol-story

CHAPTER 3

BIBLICAL/THEOLOGICAL FOUNDATION OF SYMBOL-STORY

Introduction

The narrative of opportunity that emerged in CBC (our congregation's renewed vision around proclaiming the story of Jesus through our own) gave rise to this project's attempt to use the symbols in our midst to affect semiotic change in accord with this vision. The previous chapter's emphasis on the shaping effect of symbol-story and the shifting approach to ministry in our postmodern context (APC→MRI) highlighted aspects of the philosophical milieu of our times and gave cultural reasons for symbolic reflection in our canonic congregation.

Having established the ministerial setting's narrative of opportunity and several applicable themes from within the philosophical framework of our times, the content of this chapter will lay the biblical/theological foundation upon which these observations and the project, a unique and timely approach to theological reflection for CBC, will rest. Savage and Presnell say the following about the importance of theological reflection throughout the project-thesis exercise in the narrative research model: "Positively, IT is a theological reflection and description of ministerial practice that represents the synergistic dialogue between various contexts of all those impacted by the process: social

and cultural contexts, biblical, theological and denominational contexts; and personal contexts.”¹ This biblical/theological context is the work of this chapter.

The two prominent symbols at CBC, the ornate pulpit and gold wording above our entryway, communicate a theological method that governs our congregational identity. It is the work of this chapter to extract and apply this biblical/theological foundation upon which a faithful yet fresh project stood. In the first subsection, a brief description of Canonical Narrative Theology as the primary theological method at work in our congregation will be given. The second subsection will highlight the diachronic use of “proclamation” in the scriptures by looking at the usages of the Hebrew word *basar* in the OT and the Greek word *kerysso* in the NT. Finally, taking the theological method and use of “proclamation” into account, the collective responsibility to “proclaim” the story of Jesus will emerge as an appropriate and necessary response. CBC’s “Preaching Life” is the vocation of all.

Canonical Narrative Theology

Whether explicitly stated or intrinsically adhered to, all churches have a theological method that shapes their identity and forms their mission in the world. Implicitly at CBC, Canonical Narrative Theology (hereafter CNT) lays out a pattern of life to follow and gives us a sense of significance, which is based on the story of Christ overcoming and shaping our own. Leonard Sweet says the following regarding our life being what we offer to the world in the Great Commission. “My translation of ‘Go Make Disciples’ is ‘Go Do Me.’ Is this not the second-best mission statement in the Bible: ‘Go

¹ Carl Savage and William Presnell, *Narrative Research in Ministry: A Postmodern Research*

Do Me’? Doing the gospel is primary speech; talking about the gospel is secondary speech. Unfortunately, we swallow the secondary ‘talk’ with ease but strain at that primary ‘do.’ To ‘Go Do Me,’ to ‘doing God’ by doing good, I must be simultaneously seeing, following, and being Christ. I have no theology to impart, no biblical interpretation to argue, no agenda to accomplish. I only have my life.”²

This method, though not the only one espoused by faithful Christ followers, has a rich and deep tradition. Eucharist and baptism in the biblical text serve as distinct ways in which the life of Christ is “taken in” and “secured” in the life of the Christian.³ St. Francis and his ascetic call to identify with the poor Christ, Ignatius’s Spiritual Exercises, and the Anabaptists as a cross-bearing community are all historical examples of people and movements within the church who have taken this responsibility to bring the life, death, and resurrection identity of Christ to bear in how they lived and acted.⁴ I believe it is because of this strong history and expression of the Christian tradition, that “preaching as the life” can be understood as a way of identifying with and patterning one’s life after Christ. Emblazoned in gold lettering above the entrance to our building is a statement which attests to this as the defining theological method for CBC.

This section will highlight the congregational and personal pattern and significance of this method for CBC. This is not meant to be an exhaustive explanation of this method, detailing its historical progression and various expressions in different

Approach for Faith Communities (Louisville: Wayne E. Oates Institute, 2008), 27.

² Leonard Sweet, *So Beautiful: Divine Design for Life and the Church: Missional, Relational, Incarnational* (Colorado Springs: David C. Cook, 2009), under “1018-1022,” Amazon Kindle Edition.

³ Elaine Graham, Heather Walton and Frances Ward, *Theological Reflection: Methods* (London: SCM Press, 2005), 81, 91.

church traditions such as the Anabaptist, Catholic, and Neo-orthodox. Rather, by taking two aspects of this method highlighted in various traditions, I will explain its significance in our church, as we seek to be faithful to the value of proclamation.⁵

Christ's Story—Our Pattern

Our culture is not wanting for stories and narratives that vie to shape our lives and identities. The problem is quite the opposite. It is hard to differentiate a true and enriching narrative from the cacophony of dramas screaming for our allegiance. Scot McKnight says the following to this point: “Our culture offers us a myriad of false stories rooted in superficial worldviews. These stories, more often than not, refuse entrance to the gospel story or reshape that gospel story or seek overtly to destroy that story.”⁶ He goes on to list no fewer than eight stories/worldviews that keep us from patterning our own lives after the story of Jesus.⁷ McKnight lists, among others, individualism and its promise of autonomy, postmodern tribalism that esteems only what those within its circle values, and consumerism and its tempting allure to find worth in your net worth and accumulated toys and trinkets. All fail to craft a story worth living, one that gives worth and identity to the individual and community as well as lasting purpose and affect for the

⁴ Cf., *Ibid.*, 82-92.

⁵ Cf., *Ibid.*, 78-108.

⁶ Scot McKnight, *The King Jesus Gospel: The Original Good News Revisited* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2011), 157.

⁷ “Individualism—the story that ‘I’ am the center of the universe. Consumerism—the story that I am what I own. Nationalism—the story that my nation is God’s nation. Moral relativism—the story that we can’t know what is universally good. Scientific naturalism—the story that all that matters is matter. New Age—the story that we are gods. Postmodern tribalism—the story that all that matters is what my small group thinks. Salvation by therapy—the story that I can come to my full human potential through inner exploration.” *Ibid.*

common good of all. This is why the narrative Christ-followers act out must be a counter story worth proclaiming. CNT offers such a pattern.

This method of theological thinking regards the Christian faith as God's self-narrated story told through the life and death of Jesus Christ. The Gospel narratives of Jesus' words and actions are taken as the key to interpreting not only the rest of Scripture but also the unfolding events of human history. As the incarnation, passion and resurrection constitute the central reality of existence, the challenge facing Christians is to pattern their own life in conformity with this great drama.⁸

The belief in this methodology, that God is directly involved in the narration of his story through the life of Jesus Christ, is important for us as a congregation. It gives theological weight and validation to us that we are not making up our own pattern or looking for one that will best fit our needs; rather, we believe that God has revealed himself through Jesus Christ and made explicit for us the "patterned" life we are to follow in his death, resurrection, and return.⁹ "Here we must recall that Jesus' story is that of God's Christ who was dead but is risen. It is not just a story that culminates in the death, resurrection and ascension of Jesus, as narrated in the gospels. It is the story that continues in the history of the church in the life of community to whom Christ returns always."¹⁰ We Preach Christ, as the wording above our entryway states.

Christ's death and crucifixion, his suffering, procures our salvation and offers us an example to emulate. In times of greatest personal suffering, denial, betrayal, struggle, and hurt, we are not left alone, for Christ was "a man of sorrows, acquainted with

⁸ Graham et. al., *Theological Reflection: Methods*, 78.

⁹ Gerard Loughlin calls this life Christians are to live the "Imperative Narratives" of the saints. Gerard Loughlin, *Telling God's Story: Bible, Church, and Narrative Theology* (Cambridge [England]; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 218.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 214.

grief.”¹¹ A key time when Christians are to proclaim the story of Christ is when we find ourselves in greatest need, yet cling to him for hope. At CBC, our congregants are full of personal stories of facing trials and hardships with Christ as their hope and comfort. In the end this helps them to better “know him in the fellowship of his sufferings.”¹² This project sought to highlight several of our congregants who have proclaimed Christ in the midst of great difficulty.¹³ We Preach Christ *Crucified*—our pattern in suffering.

However, the story of Christ does not end with his suffering and death. Thus, this aspect of his life does not communicate the whole drama that the church is called to emulate. We Preach Christ *Risen*. “If you know who Jesus is then you know that he is risen; if you don’t know that he is risen you don’t know who he is. That Jesus is risen from the dead is analytic of his identity in the gospel narratives. Therefore, to understand his identity is to understand that he lives, and is now the presence of God to the church.”¹⁴ The new life Christ experienced in resurrection displays for us his power over evil, sin, and death and offers us the hope that, even in our own trials and sufferings, there is new life that God desires to bring through Jesus. We too can “know him in the power of his resurrection.”¹⁵ At CBC, many within our congregation continue to

¹¹ Isaiah 53:3. Cf., 1 Cor. 2:1-5; 2 Cor. 1:5; 4:10-12; Gal. 2:19—3:1; 6:17; Phil. 3:10; Col. 1:24 for additional scriptures that teach of identification with Christ through suffering.

¹² Philippians 3:10.

¹³ Cf., “Communicating Symbol-Story” in Chapter Four and the survey responses to the week 2 sermon, “We Preach Christ Crucified,” in Appendices N and O.

¹⁴ Loughlin, *Telling God's Story*, 210.

¹⁵ Philippians 3:10. Cf., John 11:25; Rom. 6:5; Eph. 2:5-6 for additional scriptures that teach of identification with Christ through resurrection.

experience this new life that Christ offers, and this project sought to highlight these stories.¹⁶ We Preach Christ *Risen*—our pattern in new life.

Lastly, Christ’s coming again is a future promise that brings substantial hope to the Christian. There is an end to which we are called that has affected how we live today. Our lives, when lived in hope of Christ’s coming again, are a picture to the world of the great story of Jesus at work in the world. “Christ in you, the hope of glory.”¹⁷

The Christian telos is paradoxical in that one moves towards it by following after. The promised life of the kingdom is already given in the person of Jesus, and it is in the practice of discipleship that the future arrives. This story of Jesus is not only the beginning of the Church, but its conclusion: alpha and omega. He is both the beginning of a practice and its culmination.¹⁸

With the words “We Preach Christ Coming Again” above our entryway on 57th Street in Midtown Manhattan, our church is proclaiming to all who pass by that hope resides here, in our story... in Christ’s story. Our congregants have wonderful tales of living as people of hope in NYC.¹⁹ We Preach Christ *Coming Again*—our pattern in hope.

The pattern of Christ explained in a CNT best expresses the theological method that undergirds our congregational identity. In times of suffering and difficulty, we see Christ’s suffering proclaimed through us. In periods of great new life and renewal, we give credit to Christ whose resurrection means we too can be brought up from death’s grip. Finally, in displaying hope in our spheres of influence, we are a foretaste of the

¹⁶ Cf., “Communicating Symbol-Story” in Chapter Four and the survey responses to the week 3 sermon, “We Preach Christ Risen,” in Appendices P and Q.

¹⁷ Col. 1:27-29; Cf., John 14:1-14; Eph. 1:18 for additional scriptures that teach of identification with Christ through His Second Coming.

¹⁸ Loughlin, *Telling God's Story*, 215.

¹⁹ Cf., “Communicating Symbol-Story” in Chapter Four and the survey responses to the week 4 sermon, “We Preach Christ Coming Again,” in Appendices R and S.

kingdom to come. Christ's story is our story, or as Sweet explains it, the fifth Gospel: "The Christian life properly conceived and experienced is simply a reproduction and a reliving of the life of Jesus. Your Christian life begins with Christ, continues with Christ, and ends with Christ. Simply put, the history of Jesus is both the experience and the destiny of every believer. In other words, if God were to write your biography, it would be a fifth gospel, so to speak."²⁰ Christ's story ultimately matters, and ours, found in his, matter as well. It is to the topic of Christ's story and our personal and congregational significance that we will now turn.

Christ's Story—Our Significance

One of the advantages of the CNT methodology is the validation it gives to those who pattern themselves after the story of Jesus in increasingly secular, post-Christian contexts where cultural relativism rules the day. This is especially true for our congregation based in the heart of Midtown Manhattan. Graham, Walton, and Ward say the following to this point: "The appeal of this method of theological reflection is particularly evident in the contexts where Christians have felt the need to affirm their distinctiveness in challenging or threatening environments. In situations of social fragmentation or cultural relativism it provides a basis for the reconstruction of *Christian identity*."²¹ This significance is not a false confidence or bravado. It is not claiming that our significance lies in the individual or congregational clout we are able to build for ourselves apart from Christ. Rather, our identity and significance is based in the greater

²⁰ Leonard I. Sweet and Frank Viola, *Jesus Manifesto: Restoring the Supremacy and Sovereignty of Jesus Christ*, (Nashville, Tenn.: Thomas Nelson, 2010), 43.

story of Christ at work in the world. Our personal and congregational lives are enveloped into this drama as we seek to view our own identity through this framework. You see this type of reasoning from Paul when writing to the churches throughout the Roman Empire that found themselves in ambivalent or even hostile settings to Christ. He called the Philippian church to “have this mind in you which was also in Christ Jesus” (Phil. 2:5), the Colossian Church to “Continue to live lives in him” (Col. 2:6), and the Corinthian Church to “build on the foundation of Jesus Christ” (1 Cor. 3:11), to highlight just a few.

For CBC, the Jesus story gives our story (a congregation facing new cultural opportunities and challenges) the grounding upon which we can find confidence and significance. Our lives and reality are not to be overcome with the world as we see it, but with the way in which the scriptures portray it. The narrative of Christ’s life, death, and resurrection is important to our understanding of reality and gives us great significance as we seek to represent God in the world.

Diachronic use of “Proclamation” in the Scriptures

CBC’s congregational pattern and significance are found in Christ’s story expressing itself through the lives of our people. This is clearly seen when we understand ourselves through the CNT methodology just described. This, however, raises the following question: Is there a biblical theme that is particularly applicable for our church to unify us as we share the story of Jesus through our own? This section will argue that the theme of “Proclamation/Preaching” within the scriptures is a solid one upon which

²¹ Graham et. al., *Theological Reflection: Methods*, 78.

our congregational identity can rest. Both the OT and NT use of this theme of preaching give prominence to the act as well as clarity to the content.

Old Testament Usage

There are various ways in which CBC is faithful to the CNT methodology in its practices. Baptism and the Lord's Supper are the two ordinances we practice that proclaim our identification with Christ's story. Baptism, as an outward profession of identification with Christ after coming to faith,²² and the Lord's Supper, monthly in our gatherings, as a re-commissioning of our church body to "proclaim the Lord's death until he comes."²³ However, in our non-sacramental worship tradition, the proclaimed and preached word is the climax of our services. This is even highlighted visually, as the baptismal tank and communion table are positioned to the side of the central pulpit. Therefore, the biblical basis for the role of proclamation carries great weight for our identity, and could be used as a unifying theme for our congregants in fulfilling our mission. The Hebrew Scripture's usage of *basar* with its "there-here" implications helps to shape the reason and import for preaching Christ.²⁴

Walter Brueggemann talks about the Hebrew word *basar* ("proclaim," "tell," "bear good tidings"), and its usage in Psalm 96 to proclaim the kingship of Yahweh. He highlights the "there-here" dynamic that occurs when one proclaims a message, reporting

²² Colossians 2:12.

²³ 1 Corinthians 11:26.

²⁴ There are several other Hebrew words which can carry the idea of preaching, teaching, sharing, and declaring, but this one was chosen to illustrate the "there-here" dynamic at work when proclamation occurs.

on events that have occurred (in this Psalm, Yahweh's victory over other god's) and demonstrating their import for the current:

In a religion of historical memory the “there-here” reality of news can also be paralleled temporally. It happened then, but its retelling makes it effective now. It is the very announcement that lets the news be received, affirmed, celebrated, acted upon. The liturgic assertion of news (“tell it”) is here and now. The participating congregation does not really ask about then and there, because the reality and its future is so powerful here and now.²⁵

This same “there-here” dynamic occurs in our current responsibility as proclaimers. The importance of the events around the story of Jesus, when “proclaimed” time and again, say that this story continues to shape ours. Our retelling is powerful. Though preaching is not considered an official sacrament in our church tradition and theology, our identification with Christ's story lived thousands of years ago (i.e., there), through our preaching (i.e., here) is in line with our views of the symbolic and rich meaning expressed in the ordinances of baptism and communion—“...a deeper spiritual reality that comes about wholly independent of the rite itself.”²⁶

By the time of the exilic period *basar* came to mean “herald as glad tidings: ‘the salvation of God’”²⁷ and is the Hebrew verb that in the LXX becomes the word *euaggelizesthe*, “preach the gospel.”²⁸ The good news about Jesus needs proclaimers, and when we as a congregation engage in this act, we are saying that the events of the past are

²⁵ Walter Brueggemann, *The Message of the Psalms: A Theological Commentary* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1984), 35-36.

²⁶ Stanley J. Grenz, *The Baptist Congregation: A Guide to Baptist Belief and Practice* (Vancouver: Regent College Publishing, 1985), 30.

²⁷ Francis Brown, S. R. Driver, and Charles A. Briggs, eds., *The New Brown-Driver-Briggs-Gesenius Hebrew-English Lexicon* (Peabody, Mass: Hendrickson Publishers, 1979), 142.

²⁸ Brueggeman, *The Message of the Psalms*, 31. He also highlights that the nominal form of this word is what the LXX renders.

worth celebrating and following. Brueggemann notes, “In Easter we do not celebrate an ancient resurrection, but we sing, ‘Christ the Lord is risen today.’ That resurrection today gives freedom and energy and courage. This dramatic enactment is not game-playing. It is the necessarily and inevitably imaginative enterprise of world-making which is the only way a historical religion can make and sustain a world for the faithful.”²⁹ This world-making is what we are called to do, as our lives proclaim the story of Jesus.

New Testament Usage

The “there-here” dynamic of preaching found in the OT carries over into the NT understanding as well. “... It is evident that the New Testament understanding of ‘proclaim’ goes back to the Old Testament, especially to Isaiah, and includes the object of God’s saving activity.”³⁰ Preaching/proclamation is not just a rhetorical act where arguments, style, and delivery are the main goals. The act of proclaiming is a way to bring into the present the lasting import of the story of Jesus, the goodness of salvation, and the purpose in life for all through him. This story’s message has bearing on the way we live in and understand the current world, and, thus, patterning one’s life after the story is a message worth delivering.

The ministry of preaching and proclaiming the good news of Jesus has roots in the New Testament’s emphasis on this task. A Greek word translated “proclaim aloud” or

²⁹ Ibid., 36.

³⁰ Robert K. Farrell, “Preach, Proclaim” in *Baker’s Evangelical Dictionary of Biblical Theology*, edited by Walter A. Elwell (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1996), <http://www.biblestudytools.com/dictionaries/bakers-evangelical-dictionary/preach-proclaim.html> (accessed November 19, 2013).

“preach” is *kerysso*,³¹ and it is used over forty times in the Gospels, Acts, Pauline Corpus and General Epistles. Robert K. Farrell makes note of the following two characteristics associated with this word and its usage in the NT: the preaching is public in nature and the content is centered on the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus.³² These two points, the public nature of proclamation and the content centered on the story of Jesus, are of special importance for CBC, as we look to preaching as a defining symbol/motif for our congregation’s shared missional life.

First, the public nature of the preaching act means that proclamation has no limitations to space and audience. It is meant for all to hear anywhere possible. The act of preaching is not a closed ritual meant only for those who gather at the appropriately designated locations. Rather, the task is given to all to be done everywhere, by all means necessary. The leper “proclaims” how Christ has healed him on the streets (Mark 1:45). Jesus, while in cities and villages, “preaches” the gospel to all within earshot (Matt. 9:35; Luke 8:1). The story of the woman who anointed Jesus’ body will be told in conjunction with the “proclaiming” of the gospel story throughout the world (Mark 14:9). The great commission is a “preaching” call on the lives of Christ followers (Mark 16:15, 20). The spreading of the gospel message in Acts is closely tied with the “preaching” of Jesus (8:5; 9:20; 15:21; etc.). These and other references in the Pauline Corpus, General Epistles,

³¹ Walter Bauer, Frederick W. Danker, William F. Arndt, and F. Wilbur Gingrich. *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, 3rd ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 543-544.

³² Robert K. Farrell, “Preach, Proclaim” in *Baker’s Evangelical Dictionary of Biblical Theology*.

and Revelation highlight the important and central role of this task.³³ Outside of the walls of the church, the proclaiming of the life and message of Jesus is to be the task of all who follow Christ.

Secondly, Christ's life, death, and resurrection are to be the content we share in our spheres of influence. Farrell says the following about the content intended when *kerysso* is used, along with its relationship to the complementary terms *euangelizomai* and *keryx*:

The word for "preach," "proclaim" in the Greek New Testament is *kerysso*... "Proclaim" is complementary to the more specific term "evangelize" (*euangelizomai*) or the phrase "announce the good news," which contains within its meaning the object that is announced or proclaimed the good news. However, usually when "proclaim" (*kerysso*) is used the context includes its object, which in the majority of instances is the gospel or Jesus. The noun proclaimer, herald (*keryx*), refers to one who proclaims news publicly.³⁴

In a very important sense, we at CBC, as well as Christians the world over, are continuing in the vocation of herald (*keryx*). Herald, along with teacher, witness, and interpreter, is a primary "Preaching Image," according to James A. Wallace. "The image of the herald points the preacher toward the explicit proclamation of the good news of Jesus Christ, of the salvation that has been effected through his saving life, death, and resurrection. Just as the herald was the one the king sent to proclaim to the people that the battle had been won and the enemies had been overcome, so too the preacher as

³³ Cf., Gal 2:2; 5:11; Rom. 2:21; 10:14-15; 1 Cor. 1:23; 15:11; Col. 1:23; Phil. 1:15; 1 Pt. 3:19; Rev. 5:2; et. al.

³⁴ Robert K. Farrell, "Preach, Proclaim" in *Baker's Evangelical Dictionary of Biblical Theology*.

herald.”³⁵ The intention is that all will share, and the message will stay consistent. It’s about Jesus. Building on this Biblical basis—*basar*’s emphasis on the “there-here” dynamic of preaching in the OT and *kerysso*’s clarification as to location (everywhere by everyone) and content (The Jesus Story in his life, death, resurrection, and coming again)—a “preaching life” for the congregants of CBC can be built.

Our Preaching Life

Preaching—proclaiming the truth, beauty, and mystery of God—is more than an act that occurs once a week on Sunday mornings from the pulpit in a church. Preaching is the life, that is, the whole of one’s experiences, beliefs, convictions, and actions that he/she lives out every minute of every day. Barbara Brown Taylor, in her classic text on this topic entitled *The Preaching Life*, argues that the state of the church, personal call, collective vocation, sanctified imagination, the scriptural story, and worship all play important roles in framing the life of the preacher.³⁶ Therefore, when the preacher steps into the pulpit each Sunday, he/she is bringing all of these facets of life into that act. It is indeed a sacred and serious task.

I have been called to this life. Since childhood, the allure of the pulpit and ministry of preaching has chosen me as much as I have chosen it. Through generational Christian influence, early experiences, and an inward desire to pursue the office of minister, I have never questioned this calling. The questions of Romans 10:14 (“But how are they to call on one in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in

³⁵ James A Wallace, *Imaginal Preaching: An Archetypal Perspective* (New York: Paulist Press, 1995), 11.

one of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without someone to proclaim him?”³⁷) continue to beg for answers to which I feel especially equipped and commissioned to reply. However, I have grown in my understanding of what this type of ministry encompasses.

Preaching is more than the life to which the ordained or official minister of the church has been called. It is the life of all those assembled as the people of God. Taylor states, “Preaching is not something an ordained minister does for fifteen minutes on Sundays, but what the whole congregation does all week long; it is a way of approaching the world, and of gleaning God’s presence there.”³⁸ Preaching, therefore, is the life all of God’s people are commissioned for as they make much of Christ and his presence in the world. The questions of Romans 10:14 are asked not only of the pastor but of each congregant. Who will proclaim Christ? Who will declare of his hope, life and forgiveness? Who will preach him? The answer: We all do.

Looking at preaching from this angle takes to heart the belief in the missional focus of the church. The church is God’s sent people out into the world who are called to “preach” the good news of the in-breaking of the kingdom of God in Christ in the world—a reign of love, mercy, forgiveness, justice, and shalom.³⁹ This is not a proud triumphalism or militaristic commission. It is the peaceful proclamation in word and deed

³⁶ Cf. chapters 1-7 of Barbara Brown Taylor, *The Preaching Life* (New York: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 1993), Amazon Kindle Edition.

³⁷ Scripture quotations are taken from the *NRSV Standard Bible*, (New York: Harper Collins, 2007).

³⁸ Taylor, *The Preaching Life*, under “400.”

³⁹ “We are persuaded that any responsible missional ecclesiology must be centered on the hope, the message, and the demonstration of the inbreaking reign of God in Jesus Christ.” Darrell L. Guder,

that Christ reigns in all. The church is called to bear witness to this reign by taking seriously the “preaching life” to which we all are ordained.

Preaching is the call of all of those who claim the name of Christ. While this may be the official office of a few, it is the collective vocation of all. Preaching can be done through explicit oral proclamation of the gospel message, but is also done through a life fashioned after Christ’s, his life, death, resurrection, and returning hope. For Calvary Baptist Church, a stalwart of “old-time preaching,” this collective responsibility in word and deed can be strengthened in our self-identity. This was the task of this project.

Summary

This chapter highlighted three main thoughts that helped to form the Theological/Biblical basis for the unique CBC symbol-story that was crafted and communicated for this project. First, after reflecting on the two main symbols in our midst, it became evident that a methodology that implicitly governs our congregation is CNT. The story of Jesus continues to shape and guide ours. As Gerard Loughlin says, “Jesus’ story is but the start of a story, which both retells his story and extends it in an indeterminate fashion, producing ever new, non-identical repetitions. For each Christian life aims to be the life of Jesus in its own circumstance.”⁴⁰ This project sought to capture and communicate this ancient story in CBC’s recent and current history.

Second, the biblical precedent for the role of the “preacher/proclaimer” serves as a unifying theme around which the story of Jesus is shared. The “there-here” dynamic

Missional Church: A Vision for the Sending of the church in North America (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1998), 10.

⁴⁰ Loughlin, *Telling God's Story*, 214.

involved in the act displays the pulling together of what has been and what is now (and can be) through the story of Jesus—the good news—heard afresh. The herald, *keryx*, is therefore involved in a sacred and consequential act.

Third and finally, proclaiming this rich theology found in the story of Jesus from the life and lips of Christ's heralds is not the private responsibility of a few. As we saw in the NT survey above, it is a shared responsibility of all who claim the name of Jesus. While the office of preacher may be for a few, the vocation of preacher is for all. At CBC, demythologizing and personalizing this responsibility is an important charge. It is to this end that this project sought to generate movement. In Chapter Four, we turn to the project design and implementation that is built upon the narrative of opportunity (Ch. 1), philosophical milieu (Ch. 2), and Biblical/Theological foundation (Ch. 3).

CHAPTER 4

FORMING SYMBOL-STORY

The Setting for Symbol-Story

The re-articulation of the core value of proclamation at CBC served as the ministerial setting's "narrative of opportunity."¹ With a new impetus to faithfully proclaim the story of Jesus on the minds of the congregation and leadership, a recurring pedagogical challenge arose: vision leaks.² While the value and mission statement fall easily off the tongue of those in key leadership positions, the regular attendees and members do not so easily recall, and thus personalize, the collective responsibility to proclaim. Into this setting, the challenge to demythologize and personalize the pulpit ministry was born.

A defining feature of the cultural milieu in the post-modern world is that story and symbol more easily shape world view than impassioned propositional charges do by themselves.³ Yet, while this may be true of culture at large, our "canonic" church still values the spoken word. Could a healthy middle-ground approach employ the use of the spoken word together with visual images to challenge and strengthen our church's preaching life? Could story serve as the foundational element to link the two? These and

¹ Cf., "Summary & Thesis Synopsis" section of Chapter One.

² Bill Hybels, *Axiom: Powerful Leadership Proverbs* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2008), 52.

³ Cf., "Summary" section of Chapter Two.

similar questions were the basis for this project from conception through crafting and on to communication.

The theological method by which our church operates, whether the congregation would articulate it as such or not, is Canonical Narrative Theology.⁴ CBC understands its mission as “Telling God’s Story” to the world. Our mission statement, “CBC exists to engage NYC and impact the world with the message of Jesus,” illustrates this missional identity. However, this theological conviction and identity marker needs further support from the symbol-rich and story-laden aspects of its emphasis. This is especially true as CBC, with its historic, first church model, looks to speak with relevance in the 21st century post-modern context of NYC.

Keeping the fresh narrative of opportunity within CBC, the cultural and philosophical milieu of our day, and the firmly held theological convictions of our congregation in mind, this project sought to answer the following thesis question: Will crafting and communicating a uniquely CBC symbol-story enhance our understanding of and collective participation in the “pulpit ministry” (i.e., value of proclamation) at CBC? In order for this project to proceed from theory to practice and evaluation, a three-phase process was used: Conception, Crafting, and Communication. This chapter will explain how this process worked.⁵

⁴ Cf., “Summary” section of Chapter Three.

⁵ See Appendix C, “Project Timeline”, for a detailed layout of the project through each phase.

Conceiving Symbol-Story

This section will survey the Conception phase of this project. This covers the time frame from August through November of 2012. The birth of the initial idea in my mind and its fine tuning, through the skillful aide of the Lay Advisory Committee (hereafter LAC), will be the content of this first subsection. During these crucial months, the uniquely CBC symbol-story was born.

The Birth of an Idea

I first began to contemplate the significance of symbols within our congregation in the fall of 2011. As part of a written assignment for the course “Theology of Sacrament and Story” we were charged to consider the congregational profile of our local assembly based upon the categories listed in Hopewell’s *Congregation: Stories and Structures*. As I began to think about CBC and evaluate its probable answers to Hopewell’s “World View Test,” it was clear to me that we understood ourselves as a canonic congregation. Hopewell describes these congregations as having, “... canonic reliance upon an authoritative interpretation of a world pattern, often considered God’s revealed word or will, by which one identifies one’s essential life. The integrity of the pattern requires that followers reject any gnosis of union with the pattern but instead subordinate their selfhood to it.”⁶ This subordination to the pattern in God’s revealed word clarified for me the importance that CBC places upon the scriptures and how integral they are in the formation of our world view. It was then that I began to notice two primary symbols in our midst that represented this commitment visually, the words “We

⁶ James F. Hopewell, *Congregation: Stories and Structures* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1987), 69.

Preach Christ Crucified, Risen, and Coming Again” in gold lettering above our entryway and the 130-year-old, ornate pulpit in our sanctuary.⁷ These initial observations served as the foundation upon which the project was constructed.

In the summer of 2012, I began to consider afresh the importance of these two symbols in shaping our congregational identity and mission. As we move from being an APC to an MRI congregation⁸ in postmodern NYC, these symbols are no longer calls to “come and hear” but to “go and be.” I began to ask the question “Can the pulpit move?” Literally, yes it does. It takes some effort, but it is wheeled behind the podium most Sundays after its use. In a more semiotic sense, though, could the pulpit be seen as a unifying symbol that, when we are gathered before it, serves to remind us all of our collective responsibility to go and proclaim the life and message of Jesus Christ where we live and work? It is here where I got the initial idea to take the pulpit from the confines of our sanctuary to the streets of NYC, visually demonstrating our commitment to go and be the church in the world.

In August 2012, I met with the chairman of the LAC committee, Tim Y., for the first time and shared my initial thoughts. We both agreed that taking this antique piece of furniture outside had a small chance of getting approval from the leadership, rightly so considering its age and condition. We decided the smaller auxiliary pulpit that has been in use for several decades would serve to make the same point. The initial idea was first to take the pulpit around our city and film it in various locations, then collect testimonies from congregants speaking from the pulpit in their sphere of influence. This would

⁷ Cf., Appendix A, “CBC’s Pulpit and Wording above Entryway.”

⁸ Cf., “Cultural Milieu” section of Chapter Two.

demonstrate the varied arenas in which God has called each of us to represent him. It was unclear at this point the exact details of how this would be done, but images of the pulpit moving throughout our city as a symbolic image of our witness in the world began to flood our imaginations. The next step in giving this project life would be assembling an LAC to help flesh out this rough idea.

The Formation of a Team

Diversity is another stated core value at CBC. No longer a shadow story of our past, we constantly look for ways to cultivate and celebrate our differences. This project continued in this vein. Three primary ways in which the diversity of CBC can be seen are the socio-economic, ethnic, and generational make up of our congregants. As Tim Y. and I were contemplating LAC members, including a cross-section of our congregation became important. We looked for men and women who would bring their diverse perspectives in order to add depth and richness to the overall project.

After meeting with my LAC chairman in August, I began the process of recruiting a diverse committee in September. This task proved difficult at first. Several kindly rejected my request while expressing their love and support of both me and the project. The two main factors that contributed to this inability to commit were distance and time. First, our congregants come from all five boroughs, as well as New Jersey and Connecticut, so meeting monthly for this project was just an untenable commitment for them. Additional travel time to Midtown Manhattan would be too much. As my recruitment went on, I laid out a simpler plan for the meetings, including several in-person gatherings with others done via phone conference and e-communication. Second, time is a precious commodity in NYC, and many of those I asked were already

overbooked with work, school, family, church, and recreational activities. Another item on their calendar was not welcome.

At first, I found it disconcerting that many of my first choices were unable to commit, but, after further reflection, I realized that this project would be a timely and unique response to the pressures of distance and time that NYC and the modern world create. I began to think of the symbol of the pulpit as more than just a unifying sign for us when we gathered. It could also serve as a uniting symbol for our congregants when they scatter throughout the city and region. Wherever we live, work, and play, we are all on the same mission: to proclaim the story of Jesus. The pulpit could serve as a reminder and rallying image of this shared vocation. This initial frustration ended up giving depth to the project's design and intent. By October 2012, the LAC was recruited. The seven members, including myself, represented the diversity of our congregation.

Four men and three women were on the LAC. The ethnic, socio-economic, and generational diversity of this committee was a key component of the project's success. The varied perspectives and opinions allowed us to see the issues from every angle so we could make well-informed decisions. One example of this wisdom applied occurred when the LAC was recruiting congregants to share their video testimonies. I thought we were done, when one of the LAC members raised the issue that no one past a certain age was included in our list of participants. This oversight was quickly remedied and the final participant added to the overall strength of the videos, demonstrating the beauty of diversity at work.

Finalizing the Plan

We met for the first time in October 2012 to review the topic outline that I recently submitted. I started this meeting by showing a video clip that Facebook had recently used in an online advertising campaign. The video was just a few minutes long, but it was a powerful example of the type of symbol-storytelling this project would pursue. The video starts with a picture of a chair and says the following:

Chairs. Chairs are made so that people can sit down and take a break. Anyone can sit on a chair and, if the chair is large enough, they can sit down together. And tell jokes. Or make up stories. Or just listen. Chairs are for people. And that is why chairs are like Facebook. Doorbells. Airplanes. Bridges. These are things people use to get together, so they can open up and connect about ideas and music and other things that people share. Dance floors. Basketball. A great nation. A great nation is something people build so they can have a place where they belong. The Universe. It is vast and dark. And it makes us wonder if we are alone. So maybe the reason we make all of these things is to remind us that we are not.⁹

Just as something as simple as a chair or ball game could spark unity and mutual participation, the symbol of our pulpit could tell a story uniquely our own. After seeing this clip, the LAC understood the power of symbol-story and saw that crafting one for our congregation would help to clarify and unite us in our mission of proclaiming Christ.

Over the next month, the project began to take shape. We would film the pulpit in various locations throughout the city, and, hopefully, film some congregants sharing their testimony from the pulpit within their spheres of influence. Initially, we thought that the videos would be used in a Sunday School setting as a means of bringing the diverse classes together, but, because of scheduling and liability issues in recruiting minors to participate, we decided to use the videos in our evening service as part of a sermon series.

⁹ Alyson Shontell, "Why Facebook Thinks It Is Like A Chair," <http://www.businessinsider.com/facebooks-chair-ad-video-and-transcription-2012-10> (accessed October 22, 2013).

The sermons themselves, including the ancient story of Jesus and the church found in scripture, recent stories from our congregation, and current stories in the video testimonies, would comprise the CBC “symbol-story.”

The final purpose, as stated in the prospectus, was to craft and communicate a uniquely CBC symbol-story to enhance our understanding of and participation in the core value of proclamation through a creative, four week preaching series. Stated as a question: Will crafting and communicating a uniquely CBC symbol-story enhance our understanding of and collective participation in the “pulpit ministry” (i.e., value of proclamation) at CBC? The four week preaching series would take place during the four Sundays in April of 2013. With the idea of a uniquely CBC symbol-story birthed in these early conception months of deliberation, team formation, and project clarification, the next phase of crafting would begin in December 2012.

Crafting Symbol-Story

The Crafting phase for this project lasted from December 2012 through March 2013. It began with the LAC agreeing about which testimonies of church members to include in the videos; moved into recording and editing the four weekly videos; and ended with the initial composing of the sermons that would interweave ancient, recent, and current stories. During these crucial months, the uniquely CBC symbol-story matured and took shape.

Stories to Tell

In early December 2012 and January 2013, the primary task of the LAC was to discuss which members from our congregation should be included in the four weekly videos. I communicated to the committee members early on that their roles would be

advisory and recruiting in nature. The other details of a successful project, the actual taping, editing, writing of sermons, composing of surveys, administering of surveys, etc., would be done by me and others recruited to help from within the church. The LAC comprised a list of roughly 15-20 individuals from our congregation who could potentially participate, and who represented the diversity in which we strongly believed. Some of the best discussions during our meetings happened around this issue. We challenged each other as a committee to truly seek diversity in our participants. When one LAC member noted that the initial list lacked socio-economic diversity, we were challenged to continue brainstorming names. I believe our honesty and open dialogue around this issue enabled the final participant list to be the beautiful mosaic of our congregation that we hoped it would be from the outset. Each committee member was asked to contact a few of these individuals to gauge their interest in being a part of this project. They were told that I (along with our tech staff) would be coming to their sphere of influence in the city, if possible, with the wooden auxiliary pulpit from CBC's sanctuary, and that they would be filmed answering a number of questions. These questions would be based around the motto above our entryway: We Preach Christ Crucified, Risen, and Coming Again. After the committee members asked these potential participants, the following individuals agreed to take part.

Todd W.

Todd is a married, middle-aged man who works in finance in NYC. He is a member of CBC, serves on the deacon board, and is part of the choir. Todd's experience in the financial world was a key reason he was selected. His character as a representative for Christ in this important sphere of influence in our city is a compelling story of

integrity and excellence that we believed was worth telling. We filmed his story at his former office overlooking Rockefeller Center in Midtown Manhattan.

Ariel M.

Ariel is a young, stay-at-home mother of three. Previously a teacher, her main sphere of influence is now in the home and neighborhood in which she lives. Her humble and intentional testimony to those she interacts with in the daily routines of life was a unique story of proclaiming Christ that the LAC wanted to highlight. We filmed her story at our church due to scheduling difficulties.

Marilyn D.

This elderly parishioner at CBC brings decades of faithfulness to Christ to our church. Through the highs and the lows of a life well lived, she demonstrates the long-term commitment to telling the story of Jesus through one's own story. Her wisdom, candor, and faithfulness were integral character traits that made her inclusion in the videos rich and insightful. She was the last member recruited to participate, and the LAC believed that her inclusion brought the generational diversity we were looking for to completion. We filmed her story at our church due to her last minute inclusion in the project.

Artur B. and Krystal H.

Artur, a twenty-three-year-old man of Russian descent, and Krystal, a twenty-three-year-old female of Native American and Guyanese heritage, were the two youngest

participants in the videos.¹⁰ Both are Ph.D. students at New York University in the field of chemistry. Their unique stories, as single students in the academic and science fields, brought another perspective to our videos. Living for Christ in these spheres is a challenge and privilege that these two young people embrace. Their stories of hope and resolve in the midst of doubt are moving. We filmed their stories together at New York University.

Deborah P.

Deborah is a single, middle-aged African American female who has resided in NYC for several decades. At the time of the filming, she was unemployed for several years. Her brave approach to living for Christ in the midst of searching for employment, and her strength and resolve as a survivor of child abuse were compelling reasons to share her story in this series. Deborah was also a member of the LAC. We filmed her story at our church due to the distance of her home and time restrictions.

David M.

David is a middle-aged Latino MTA employee in NYC. An Elder in the church, David seeks to make much of Christ in his daily interactions with the thousands of riders at his busy metro station in the Bronx. This father of three and grandfather of two is a well-respected man in our church whose lively personality and wit made for fantastic footage, and demonstrated the way he uses his unique personality to live the story of

¹⁰ We initially wanted to have teens as part of the videos, but due to the public use of the videos and the necessary releases that would need to be filed, it seemed best to the LAC and leadership to restrict the participants to those eighteen and older.

Jesus for those he comes into contact with. We filmed his testimony at his train station in the Bronx.

Cherelle H.

Cherelle, another member of the LAC, is an African American thirty-something teacher at a charter school in Harlem. The challenges of her childhood and struggles of changing career goals and employers are powerful testimonies for a humble young woman, whose spheres of influence for Christ have broadened over the years in ways she would never have expected. We filmed her testimony at her school in the Bronx.

Sabrina C.

Sabrina is a middle-aged, single Latina female who works in finance in NYC. Her love for Christ and desire to represent him well in her strategic role at a major NYC finance company were evident in our interview. Also, her infectious love for her family and the witness she has among them for Christ is moving. We filmed her testimony at our church offices, due to access restrictions at her place of work.

Filming and Editing the Symbol

After the nine participants were finalized, the next step in the crafting phase was filming and editing. I began the process by meeting with our Media and Technology Manager at CBC, Miq M., in early September 2012 to cast the vision for the videos. He was on board right away. Miq is an accomplished film-maker who has won awards at independent film festivals in NYC and Toronto. His expertise was an integral part of the project's success. He understood right away the value of symbol-storytelling and was eager to help craft this unique CBC story. He and I would meet often in the early months

of the project to brainstorm what the videos would look like and how to best go about executing the filming of them. He entrusted me with the responsibility of scheduling the participants and casting the overall feel of the videos, while he was given the artistic freedom to add and edit content as he saw fit. This arrangement worked perfectly.

Our first day of filming was December 18, 2012. We recruited a young man from our church, Sam P., to carry the wooden auxiliary pulpit from our sanctuary throughout the city for filming. We were nervous this first day, not knowing the reactions we would receive or whether or not the image of the pulpit would communicate the message we were hoping, but right away our fears were relieved. The first shots Miq took that day were of Sam walking out of the front doors with the pulpit over his shoulders, and the dramatic image of that symbol moving beyond its normal confines showed all of us of the power of symbols to communicate. Sam commented that carrying the pulpit was a keen reminder to watch how he spoke and acted, and made clear to him the message that his life is to proclaim Christ's life. The pulpit began by moving the one who was moving it.

We went to the Bronx, to film David M. at the train station where he works, recording images of the pulpit in the subway system of NYC along the way. We discussed, as we went along, that this image of the pulpit leaving the church and going on the subways would hopefully communicate the message their lives proclaim to the world right away on the commute home from church. We began to consider the hundreds of people each Sunday who return to their spheres of influence in the city from worship at CBC and to visualize the important role they played in fulfilling the call to live the story of Jesus through their own life. Before we even reached our first participant, the symbol began speaking to us.

David's joyful response to seeing the pulpit in his station was moving. He grasped right away the importance of the image and began to share how he viewed his role as an MTA worker through the lens of being a Christian witness. Miq filmed him with the pulpit right next to his booth, as I asked him a series of questions relating to the four themes that the sermon series would consider.¹¹ These four themes, sharing Christ's story through identification with him, suffering, new life, and hope, were derived from the phrase above our entryway. They served to unite the story of Jesus through the symbols of the phrase and the pulpit to the personal story of David. He got it, and answered how he sought to offer hope in his sphere of influence.

Our second day of filming was December 20, 2012. Sam once again carried the pulpit through the city as Miq filmed. We went to visit Artur and Krystal at NYU and filmed their responses to the same questions we asked David. They too were able to visualize the symbolism and importance of their stories as part of Christ's. For several hours after recording Artur and Krystal, we filmed the pulpit moving throughout Midtown Manhattan, Times Square, and Rockefeller Center. Miq was able to catch some remarkable footage of the pulpit crossing busy intersections, being left alone in front of Macy's, getting lost in the midst of huge crowds, and standing out against other various backdrops of the city. Once again the power of symbol spoke to us as we saw the importance of representing Christ in the world, no matter how seemingly small in

¹¹ I brought the following list of questions with me to each location for filming and used them as a general guide for our discussion with the participants: What was the first thought that came to your mind when you saw the pulpit at your workplace? Does the pulpit look right here? What does its presence here communicate to you? How do you approach suffering and trials at work? Does the message of Christ's suffering help you face these trials? Knowing Christ has suffered and gone through trials, do you embrace them differently? What's the cross you carry at work? Tell me a story of new life, a resurrection story if you will, that you have gone through at work? What does it mean to "practice resurrection" at this station? What does distinctively Christian hope look like in this field? In this line of work?

relationship to the vastness of the city it sometimes seems. We were stopped along the way numerous times and asked what we were doing and were given opportunities to share our project. We ended the second day of filming at Todd's office. We shot some fantastic images of him and the pulpit in a board room, illustrating the unique location that Todd found himself in as a witness for Christ.

Our final day of significant offsite filming was January 15, 2013. Sam, Miq, and I filmed the pulpit in Harlem on our way to Cherelle's school. Images of the pulpit moving throughout the streets of our city were another moving display of the role that our congregants play in sharing the story of Jesus in their lives. Once at Cherelle's school, her lucid responses to the questions and willingness to share her personal history and struggles were touching. At the end of this third day of offsite filming, we had gathered the bulk of the footage we needed to compose the four videos.

During the month of January, we filmed the remaining four participants at CBC in various areas of our church building alongside the auxiliary pulpit.¹² This was chosen as a satisfactory option for them, because of filming restrictions at certain venues and scheduling issues. Also, the hours of footage of the pulpit throughout the city would allow for creative editing that juxtaposed these remaining participants with the pulpits movement. Deborah P. and Arial M. provided vulnerable and honest stories of representing Christ through difficulties. Sabrina C. displayed courage while sharing the life of Christ through her own life choices, and Marylin D. offered timely and wise council on how to live for Christ over a lifetime. By January 23, 2013 we had concluded

¹² The following are the dates the remaining four participants were filmed: January 20th – Arial M. January 22nd – Sabrina C. and Marylin D. January 23rd – Deborah P.

the significant portion of the filming. Miq would choose to record a few more segments on his own without the need of the pulpit.

We had amassed roughly twelve hours of footage that needed to be trimmed down to four, four-minute videos. The job of editing was massive. I relied on Miq for direction in this as he brought the experience and expertise to this aspect of the project. He asked that I help him select the music to accompany the videos and help him select the best parts of the testimonials to include. Together, over several days, we selected the appropriate footage to include for each the four video themes: identification with Christ, suffering, new life, and hope. This allowed us to carefully choose the best responses to each of the questions relating to these themes. Once we decided who would be highlighted each week, I left the rest of the editing up to Miq. He said that he valued the trust I placed in him for the final product and felt empowered by it. While working with Miq on this project, I learned the importance of allowing the creative people in our church the freedom to express their gifts. He carefully interwove the stories of the participants with the images of the pulpit moving throughout the city to tell four unique and beautifully crafted symbol-stories. He worked tirelessly on this from mid-January through March, and even added some material in April during the project itself. He estimated that, including filming, editing, and rendering, each roughly four-minute video took thirty hours to create, for a total of one hundred and twenty hours of work. Without his motivation and belief in this project's goal, this project would have failed. In order to add additional symbolic reflection during the sermons, our graphic designer at CBC

photo-shopped our pulpit into various settings throughout NYC. Each week a different image was on display on our screens the whole time I preached.¹³

Recruiting Participants and Survey Development

Once the filming was completed and editing was underway, the next major responsibility for the LAC was to recruit a control group of participants from our church who would commit to either attending the Sunday evening services in the month of April or watching the sermons online. In the Conception phase of this project, the committee discussed whether to include participants from outside the congregation. While the prospect of getting the thoughts and perspectives of those outside our church was an intriguing option, it seemed best to keep the participants to members and attenders of CBC. The research is analyzing how the responsibility is perceived and acted upon, not how the message is received by others once the proclamation occurs. This kept the semiotic analysis within (*emic*) the congregation as opposed to outward (*etic*).¹⁴ The committee members were responsible for contacting these individuals and gauging their interest. We asked all potential control group participants to give us their final word of commitment a few weeks prior to the beginning of the sermon series. Once they had agreed, the quantitative survey was emailed or printed for them to fill out prior to the first sermon.¹⁵ These participants were not told specifics about the project, videos, or

¹³ Cf., Appendix D, “Sermon Series Logo and Weekly Pictures”, for logos crafted by Corey Melton (coreymelton.com).

¹⁴ Cf., Savage and Presnell, *Narrative Research in Ministry*, 129.

¹⁵ One of the LAC members connected me with Kimberly Reeve, a member of our church handbell choir, who works at Cathedral Consulting Group in NYC. She helped me to finalize the survey questions, layout, and intended results. Her suggestions for using a four-point scale for consistency of analysis, to include demographical data for potential future use outside the projects intent, and the process

symbolic-storytelling that it would require reflection upon. They were simply asked to watch four of Pastor Luciano's sermons and complete surveys anonymously before, during, and after.¹⁶ Thirty-two control group participants completed the initial survey prior to the project's launch.

Two weeks prior to launching the project, the surveys were also distributed to any attendees of the evening service, including those from the Young Adult's Sunday School who attend in the evening as well. This was to intentionally collect data not only from those committed to the project, but also from those outside this recruited group, in order to see if any trends, variants, and/or commonalities could be discerned between the two. This second group of participants was labeled the "open" group. Twenty-nine open-group participants completed the initial survey prior to the project's launch. With the filming, editing, and recruitment of participants completed, the project was ready to launch Sunday April 7, 2013.

Communicating Symbol-Story

This section will survey the communication stage for this project. This stage lasted from April through mid-May 2013. The sermons and weekly surveys were crafted throughout the whole process, and would continue to be worked on during the month long series itself.¹⁷ The ancient, current, and future stories that would comprise each weekly sermon, along with the initial responses, and overall reception of the project will

of testing surveys with smaller set groups prior to wider launch were all integral factors in helping give the surveys statistical weight and usable outputs.

¹⁶ The surveys will be evaluated in Chapter Five.

¹⁷ For sermon videos, visit the following webpage: Michael Luciano, "Sermon Videos," <http://vimeo.com/user17616178/videos> (accessed March 13, 2014).

be discussed in this section. Analysis and evaluation of the quantitative, qualitative, and unforeseen narratives that emerged will be covered in Chapter Five.

Week 1: Christ's Story, CBC's Story, and Our Story

The project launched on Sunday, April 7, 2013. Right away, the initial plan was tweaked. Upon hearing about the content of the sermon series, the Senior Pastor David E. asked me to preach this message for all three services, wanting the larger church to see and hear the symbol-story. We had initially designed the project for the smaller evening service of seventy-five, but now the almost one thousand congregants who attend our morning services would also hear this uniquely CBC symbol-story. Since this would only be the case for the first week, we decided to keep the survey distribution limited to the evening service for the open group participants, in order to keep statistical data consistent.

The symbol-story for this week centered on the first part of the phrase above our entryway: *We Preach Christ*.¹⁸ The emphasis of the message was on the collective responsibility of all to share in this vocation to proclaim. This sermon, as well as the other three, was structured with three looping stories told and retold throughout. The first is the ancient story, the story of Jesus. As noted in Chapter Three, this is the story that overcomes all other competing stories and narratives in our lives. Saturation and identification with it is the starting point for our own stories. I shared how story has the capacity to shape identity and form us on mission for Christ, using the scene from Acts 1 where Jesus gives his final commission to the disciples before the ascension. He charges

¹⁸ Cf., Appendix E, "Week 1 Sermon - We Preach Christ."

them here, as they wait for the consummation of all things, to be witnesses of him. “You will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you and you will be my witnesses, in Jerusalem, Judea and Samaria and to the uttermost parts of the earth” (Acts 1:8). This ancient story serves as the basis for our current action. In our word-centric congregation, establishing the biblical basis for the sermon and series was integral.

The next movement in the sermon was a recent story, a CBC story. I shared the history of the church and its identity as a witness for Christ by explaining the history of the two symbols this series would reflect upon, the pulpit and the wording above our entryway. I highlighted the important role these symbols played in the past for our church, during times of transition and struggle, as well as during times of great advance and prominence. I argued that symbols, unless reflected upon and re-imagined, could become relics with no lasting import for the current generation.

Next, I moved to the final movement of the sermon: the current story. I explained that, even though the first two stories have different characters, a common strand unites them. Both the disciples and our ancestors at CBC sought to make the Jesus story their own story. I then introduced the video by asking a question: Where’s your pulpit? This is the place in the symbol-story where the uniting of the ancient, recent, and current would take place. I wanted the congregants to imagine themselves as actors in this same drama, as preachers who were called not just to hear the word proclaimed, but also to look for how they could join this vocation of preacher. Then, as a means to segue into the video/current story, I asked the congregation what would happen if the pulpit moved with us throughout our week, as a reminder of the story we are called to proclaim. The video came up and showed the pulpit moving throughout our city with the video testimonials of

our congregants. The sermon moved from ancient, to recent, and, finally, current using word and image to tell an old story anew.

The response in the services was positive. Individuals were encouraged by the message and pleasantly surprised by the videos. The qualitative answers of both the open and control groups (to be evaluated in Chapter Five) demonstrate this.¹⁹ This type of preaching and storytelling is new to our church, so it was a stretch for some to grasp. I did field a phone call from a congregant who said he had to explain the symbolism to a friend who did not understand the imagery of the pulpit, confusing it with the call to carry our cross in Matthew 16:24-26. He called to tell me that he understood and hoped to see others grasp the value of the message. Even the few misunderstandings gave opportunity to reiterate the message's point. We are all called to proclaim.

Week 2: Stories of Suffering

The second sermon was delivered on Sunday, April 14th during the evening service at CBC. The theme this week was “We Preach Christ Crucified.”²⁰ The ancient story shared was an exposition of Luke 23:26-43, where different responses to the crucified Jesus are described. The despair of the women at the cross, the mockery of the soldiers and religious leaders, and the silence of the others in the crowd were all contrasted in the first movement of the sermon with the faith of the criminal. Faith in the crucified Jesus is the correct response for those who claim to follow him. Proclaiming

¹⁹ After the sermon, the control group and open group participants in the evening service completed a four question qualitative survey about the sermon, which sought to help personalize the message. Twenty-nine control group members and eight open group members completed the survey to add to the qualitative responses. These will be evaluated in Chapter Five.

²⁰ Cf., Appendix F, “Week 2 Sermon - We Preach Christ Crucified.”

Christ means identifying and trusting in the crucified who calls his followers to find their lives “crucified with Christ” and thus truly live (Gal. 2:20).

The second movement included a story I collected from the archives at CBC. It was the record of a missions meeting from 1945 that shared the personal suffering experienced by a missionary family in the Philippines who found themselves in the Santo Tomas Internment Camp during World War II. Their son’s tuberculosis and emaciation due to lack of food were just some of the recorded sufferings they experienced while proclaiming Christ crucified in their life and witness. I sought to draw the connection to the current day by explaining that these missionaries sat in the same pews as the current congregants, and that our identity is linked with theirs through the same common strand—suffering in faith as Christ did.

The final movement was the current story on video. This week we highlighted just two of the participants, Deborah P. and Ariel M. They shared how they sought to proclaim through their lives the sufferings of Christ as they struggled through the challenges of family, unemployment, and abuse. Their honesty and candor in relaying how they identified with the crucified Christ in the midst of pain and loss was a touching reminder of this difficult calling for the believer. The ancient story from Luke’s Gospel, the recent story of our own missionaries almost sixty years prior, and the current stories of proclamation through suffering all sought to show the unique sermon our lives are meant to preach.

Once again, the response was positive from the roughly seventy-five in attendance and others who watched the videos online.²¹ I noticed, however, that this sermon was just less than forty-five minutes long. While this length of sermon is commonplace in our word-centric, proclamation-based worship paradigm, it was not in spirit with the intent of this series, which was to unite the spoken with the visual word to affect semiotic change. I was rightly approached by a LAC member about this incongruence and sought diligently to limit the sermon lengths in the following weeks to the roughly thirty-minute length goal. I was personally challenged as I recognized how easily and naturally I can fall into the word-dominated format.

Week 3: Stories of New Life

On Sunday, April 21st the third sermon, “We Preach Christ Risen”, was preached in the evening service at CBC.²² The theme of new life came to dominate this presentation while we thought as a congregation about what it would look like to proclaim new life in all our spheres of influence. The ancient story this week came from John 11:17-27, where the resurrection of Lazarus is told. The emphasis here was on verse 25 where Jesus says, “I am the resurrection and the life. Those who believe in me, even though they die, will live, and everyone who lives and believes in me will never die.” Here, I explained that Jesus is saying the resurrection is part of his story and those who believe him will be resurrection people, as well. New life, out of the grasp of death, is promised for those who believe.

²¹ After the sermon, twenty-eight control group members and seven open group members completed the qualitative survey for week 2. These will be evaluated in Chapter Five.

²² Cf., Appendix G, “Week 3 Sermon - We Preach Christ Risen.”

After sharing this ancient record from John’s gospel of the new life Christ gives, we showed the current story of Cherelle H. in the video. With the pulpit next to her at her school in Harlem, she explained how through job changes and overcoming challenging personal struggles, she found new life and fresh ways to proclaim Christ from seemingly dead experiences and environments. The weaving of the Lazarus story with her story served well to illustrate what unites them—Christ Risen.

I closed this sermon with the story of a man who came to faith in Christ while attending CBC in the 70s. Ken found new life from an addiction to drugs through the prayers and personal interest a choir member took in him. Now a mission’s leader in a national collegiate ministry, Ken still points to the new life he found while worshipping in the pews of CBC. The ancient, current, and recent stories in this sermon were all linked by the resurrection life Jesus offers—a message worth proclaiming.²³ In this sermon, as in the others, the personal responsibility to proclaim the message of Christ was emphasized.

Week 4: Stories of Hope

The sermon series ended on Sunday, April 28th when I preached the final symbol-story: We Preach Christ Coming Again.²⁴ This week, the personalized aspect of the Jesus story was hope in his coming again. The ancient story came from John 14:1-4, where Jesus talks about his return as an invitation to identify with himself in hope. By identifying with the return of Christ through belief in him, we carry around in us the hope

²³ After the sermon, twenty-six control group members and sixteen open group members completed the qualitative survey for week 3. These will be evaluated in Chapter Five.

²⁴ Cf., Appendix H, “Week 4 Sermon - We Preach Christ Coming Again.”

of his coming again. No current drudgery or pain can outweigh in our lives the hope we proclaim through him, for it is “Christ in you, the hope of glory” (Col. 1:27).

The recent story from the history of CBC was a personal one of mine. I shared how as a student in bible college on 9/11, CBC played a role in giving me hope. I did not know the church at the time, but in the chapel service the following day, the Senior Pastor, David E., was on the phone telling our student body about how the church in NYC was offering hope to those affected. While he spoke over the loud speakers, an image of the entryway of CBC was displayed on the screen. The wording “We Preach Christ Crucified, Risen, and Coming Again” was displayed in gold lettering. I remember feeling the encouragement that day and committing to returning to my home city as a minister one day. The symbol spoke to me more than ten years ago, although I didn’t know it at the time. In Chapter Five, I explain how this project and the symbols at work in CBC played a larger role in shaping my call and commission to proclaim Christ in NYC than I had realized.

The final video/current story was a joy-filled rapid moving montage of all nine testimonial participants. It highlighted the hope we can have as we seek to proclaim Christ in our lives. It ended with the words of Marilyn D. challenging us to faithfully trust and follow Christ until he comes again. We concluded the message that evening with the images of the pulpit moving throughout the city. It was a joyful way to complete the Communication stage of the project.²⁵

²⁵ After the sermon, twenty-four control group members and ten open group members completed the qualitative survey for week 3. The initial quantitative survey questions were asked again, as well, in order to gauge the semiotic movement throughout the series. These will be evaluated in Chapter

Summary

Symbol-story is both identity shaping and mission forming. The goal of this project was to conceive, craft, and communicate a unique symbol-story for the congregation of Calvary Baptist Church, NYC. In our historic, canonic, “Gutenberg” era church, a new path for communicating the story of Jesus was blazed with this unique four week preaching series. It interwove the ancient story of Jesus and the early church, the recent stories from our church’s history, and the current stories of our own people as they seek to proclaim Christ through suffering, new life, and hope in NYC. Analysis of the quantitative and qualitative data amassed during the project and evaluation of the unforeseen narratives that emerged will determine the success of the project’s stated goal: to demythologize and personalize the pulpit ministry of CBC. Did the pulpit move? Chapter Five will answer this question.

Five. All of the surveys from weeks 1—4 were left open for completion online until May 22nd to allow time for some to catch up with watching the sermons. This was anticipated in the prospectus.

CHAPTER 5

EVALUATION OF SYMBOL-STORY

Looking for Movement

With the planning and execution of the project successfully completed, evaluation of the generated data could begin. The answer to the following thesis question shaped the project and formed the evaluation criteria: Will crafting and communicating a uniquely CBC symbol-story enhance our understanding of and collective participation in the “pulpit ministry” (i.e., value of proclamation) at CBC? Evaluation of the data was initiated by the Lay Advisory Committee in the weeks following the end of the sermon series. It was decided, during the conception stage, that three data streams would be collected for analysis. The first stream was the quantitative results from the eight-question survey distributed to the Open Group participants and Control Group participants. The same questions were asked of both groups before the project and after its completion. This is evaluated in the first section below, with an eye towards semiotic movement. The second stream of data was the qualitative reflections by both groups of participants, in response to the sermons given weekly. These reflections on the ancient, recent, and current stories which comprised the weekly symbol-story are evaluated in the second section below. Finally, throughout the project, we kept an ear out for unforeseen emerging narratives. The result was several responses from the pastoral staff members, those most natural “behind the pulpit,” that demonstrate the semiotic change that

occurred for them personally. In this final section, the expansion of the “pulpit ministry” through new media initiatives, as well as the emerging insight into the formation and development of my own personal “preaching life” as it relates to CBC, is also explained. This personal effect brought the project to a welcome, if unforeseen, conclusion.

Quantitative Results

The quantitative survey was developed during the months and weeks prior to the launching of the project. Measuring semiotic change within (*emic*) is not easily done with clear numbers and statistics, but, the LAC believed that some form of useful quantitative data could be generated. A simple eight-question survey was developed to gauge any movement in the semiotic relationship of our congregants with the wording above our entryway and the literal pulpit.¹ Once again, the goal was to enhance our understanding and collective participation in the “pulpit ministry” of CBC.

The first three questions gathered information about the age, length of attendance, and level of involvement at CBC. While this did not produce any data that directly answered the thesis question, the results do display the wide range of generational involvement in the project, as well as the high commitment to our church of those who participated, whether longtime members or recent attendees. The Open Group participants leaned younger with less involvement, but this was not unexpected, since

¹ Cf., Appendix I, “Initial Survey.”

many of these participants are the regular attendees of the evening service, where this project was done.²

Question four³ asked participants to order the importance, from 1 (highest) to 5 (lowest), of the ways in which CBC preaches: weekly services, in-house ministries, local outreach, global missions, and in the personal lives of the congregants. For both the Open and Control Group participants, the preaching in the weekly services and the personal lives of the congregants were the two of highest importance. This question was asked prior to the project and afterwards and generated this same result. These responses helped to further solidify the narrative of opportunity discerned earlier. There is a great love for the proclaimed word and the personal impetus to share Christ in the lives of our congregants. This project would help to bring the two areas together into one collective “preaching life.”

Questions five through seven asked for semiotic reflections from the participants as it related to our pulpit and wording above our entryway.⁴ Question five asked, “When looking at the literal pulpit each week during our worship services, how personally responsible does it make you feel to participate in the pulpit ministry of CBC?” Just over 40% of the Control Group participants responded in the highest two categories, ranging

² The answers to these same questions stayed relatively consistent when asked again at the conclusion of the project. Once again, the Open Group leaned younger. Cf., Appendix R “Week 4 Survey – Control Group Participants” and Appendix S “Week 4 Survey – Open Group Participants” for this data.

³ Because the first question of the Initial Survey for the Open Group asked if they were a Control Group member or not, this question is #5 for them when listed in Appendix S. This “one-off” numeration for the Open Group continues in the following questions.

⁴ I initially thought a scale from 1—10 would give the most accurate statistical data, but the advice I received from the consulting firm was that most survey respondents will answer in the middle of the pack for such questions and not give any measurable change at the end. She suggested using a scale of 1—4, which would force the respondent to pick above or below the middle ground while answering.

from “not responsible” (1) to “very responsible” (4), for personal responsibility in the initial survey. When the same question was asked after the sermon series, 75% of the participants answered in the highest two categories. The same type of movement from before to after the sermon series was discernable in the Open Group responses.⁵ This was definite movement and the exact semiotic change we were hoping for when crafting this project.

Question 6 had a picture of our auxiliary pulpit on a subway car that we captured during our travels throughout the city. Above this picture, the following questions were written: How appropriate does the CBC pulpit look in the setting below? The intention of this question was to gauge the initial semiotic thoughts about seeing this pulpit in a setting outside its normal place before the videos and of the series would seek to stretch it. Just under 22% of the Control Group participants responded in the highest two categories, ranging from “very inappropriate” (1) to “very appropriate” (4). However, after the sermon series, this same group saw a jump in the highest two categories to 83%. The Open Group saw a rise in appropriateness as well. Once again, this gave us a statistical analysis that argued for the occurrence of semiotic change. After the series, seeing the pulpit as having significance and appropriate usage outside of the sanctuary was more natural.⁶

Question 7 asked: How often does the slogan “We Preach Christ Crucified, Risen, and Coming Again” above our entryway on 57th Street evoke personal responsibility for

⁵ Cf., Appendices J, K, R, and S for the data showing the movement in the answers given to this question from before the project to after.

⁶ Cf., Appendices J, K, R, and S for the data showing the movement in the answers given to this question from before the project to after.

you? When the Open and Control Group participants were asked this question before and after the project, the responses were in the highest two categories, ranging from “never” (1) to “all the time” (4). For the Open Group, there was no discernable change (just under 68% in the highest two categories prior to the sermon series and just under 67% after). However, for the Control Group, movement went from 84% before the project in the highest two categories to 66% after. On the surface this would indicate a shift downward, but, when factoring in the fewer participants at the final survey and looking at the average rating shifting from 3.34 (on a scale of from 1—4) prior to the sermon series to 3.14 after (less than a quarter of a rating drop off), the movement is less dramatic.⁷ This result demonstrated the initial belief that our congregants take seriously the responsibility to proclaim Christ, also validating the Narrative Canonical Theology method foundation. This project sought to connect the strong personal semiotic relationship with the wording above our entryway with the personal responsibility for all to partake in CBC’s “pulpit ministry.”

The final quantitative question asked about the current participation of our congregation in the core value of proclamation. They were allowed to check more than one category that they felt applied to them. These categories touched on aspects of the preaching series such as the verbal communication of the gospel, being a faithful presence at home and work, and embracing personal suffering, new life, and hope. This was intended to highlight any potential arenas where identification with proclamation

⁷ The average rating for the Control Group participants for question 5 went from 2.34 before to 3.00 after the project and for question 6 from 1.91 before to 3.25 after the project. Thus movement for these questions was discernable from a percentage and average rating perspective, while less so for question 7. Cf., Appendices J, K, R, and S for the data showing the movement in the answers given to this question from before the project to after.

was lacking that could be emphasized during the series and in other church initiatives after the project. This question was suggested by the consultant working with me on the survey formation as a means of gaining additional data that may become relevant for other usages, outside the confines of this project, within the church. For example, if most people did not see suffering as a way to embrace our calling to proclaim Christ, then additional teaching and modeling in this area could occur afterwards. It did not reveal any such discernable misunderstandings.

The quantitative questions generated two prominent results. The first was that our congregants take seriously their commitment to the ministry of our church and the Gospel of Christ. This was demonstrated by the data confirming the personal faithfulness in various arenas of life to represent the story of Jesus that our congregants display. They realize the personal importance of the “We Preach” mantra. The second result was the semiotic change and movement with our literal pulpit that occurred. Feeling a heightened sense of personal accountability when seeing the pulpit in worship, as well as having a favorable reaction to the pulpit outside the confines of our sanctuary, were semiotic movements this project generated. From a statistical standpoint, this project was successful in affecting semiotic change that de-mythologized and personalized the “pulpit ministry” of CBC, but quantitative data alone is not sufficient to argue for a successful project. This is where the following qualitative data helps to fill in the story.

Qualitative Results

In order to give descriptive depth to the semiotic change this project was designed to generate, the LAC agreed that the Open and Control Group participants would complete weekly qualitative questions after watching the sermons. These survey

questions sought reflection on each movement of the symbol-story/sermon— an ancient story from scripture, a recent story from CBC’s history, and a current story from the life of a congregant in the form of the videos. The following analysis will highlight answers that summarize the weekly response. Also, any discernable outlier responses will be discussed. There are no discernable differences between the Open and Control Group responses, so comparison between the two is limited.

Week 1 Responses

The first week’s sermon’s main idea was that preaching is the collective responsibility of all—We Preach Christ. This is the foundational theme upon which the rest of the sermons were built. The qualitative questions this week were designed to capture the initial responses to this theme, as well as the responses to seeing the pulpit move around the city in the videos. Overall, the responses were positive, some saying this confirmed what they already believed, but most expressing how this enhanced their perspective of the symbols in our midst. Respondent 18,⁸ in answering the first question, said the following: “I identified with the pulpit--- as a symbol, we as Christians should not lose sight of what the pulpit stands for. The location of the pulpit is not what gives it its purpose; we must be willing to minister to others regardless of location.” Respondent 21 had the following to say: “... I never thought about how we actually should be carrying ourselves as though we had the pulpit with us at all times. What we say as

⁸ In the design of the surveys, the LAC felt that anonymity was important for the respondents. While this did allow for honest feedback, it did not allow for individual tracking of responses to the sermons from week to week. Therefore, Respondent 18 for week 1 is not the same Respondent 18 for week 2, etc. This was a necessary, if statistically unhelpful, choice the LAC made.

Christians, should reflect what we believe.”⁹ This type of semiotic reflection and change was the intent of this project.

Respondent 19, in answering the third question (about initial responses to seeing the pulpit in the streets of NYC) said the following:

The video made a lot of impact on me. During the initial survey, when it was asked if the pulpit was appropriate inside the car in the subway, I think I answered that it was inappropriate. But after seeing the video, it opened up a whole lot of perspective. It’s true that if you carry that pulpit with you literally, it becomes a symbol that you are about to preach the gospel. On the other hand, if you carry that pulpit in your heart wherever you go, your life becomes the testimony of the word of God. You’re putting yourself on the spot to proclaim the word of God by your deeds and your words. The literal carrying of the pulpit once translated into a pulpit in one’s heart will exude a life that is a living testament of God’s word.¹⁰

This response displayed his/her semiotic change from the initial survey. Similar responses given throughout this week display that real change occurred. As a result of the semiotic reflection, most felt confirmed, challenged, or enlightened in their understanding of the collective responsibility of all to partake in CBC’s “pulpit ministry”.

Respondent 11, however, gave responses that were completely different than the others. He/She believed that the reflection on the ancient story from Acts 1:6-8 was done inaccurately with personal commentary as opposed to a true “unfolding of the story.” When asked about the recent story shared around the history of our pulpit and wording above our entryway, he/she responded by saying, “This again is troubling, as the preacher chose to preach on symbols and not on the authority of Christ as written in the Bible.”¹¹ Lastly, when asked to reflect on the current story portrayed through the video they said,

⁹ Cf., Appendix L “Week 1 Survey – Control Group Participants” and Appendix M “Week 1 Survey – Open Group Participants” for these and similar responses.

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Ibid.

“Ridiculous, as it is only for the drama effect. The preacher should have used his time in the pulpit much more wisely by simply unfolding the gospel of Christ in a expository way and allowing the inerrant Word of God work thru the hearts of the congregants.”¹²

This respondent’s reaction was an outlier to this project, but I’m sure others in our church felt the same way. This validates the canonic description of our congregation from Chapter One, as well as the “APC” and “Gutenberg” descriptions of CBC offered in Chapter Two. This response was a reminder that because semiotic reflection is new for our congregants, not all will respond favorably, and by allowing feedback, individuals can be heard and loved despite differences.

Week 2 Responses

This week, the main idea was that through our personal weaknesses and struggles—We Preach Christ Crucified. The story of Christ weaves through our own as we seek to share Him through those most difficult times. The respondents were asked to reflect on the ancient story from Luke 23, and the recent and current stories from our congregation, in order to think more deeply on the ways in which their own struggles are a proclamation. Once again, the responses were insightful. The majority of the answers demonstrate thoughtful self-analysis of their own struggles and the struggles of others they know in the light of Christ’s.

This week, the women in the videos were vulnerable in their testimonies, sharing stories of abuse and doubt. These testimonies resonated with the respondents, with many expressing gratitude that the testimonies were so truthful and heartfelt. This allowed for

¹² Ibid.

the interlocking and correspondence between Christ’s story of suffering, those on the video, and those who watched—Christ’s story of suffering... their story of suffering... my story of suffering.

Once again, the personal reflection and semiotic change is highlighted in the following replies from Respondents 18 and 20 in the Control Group: Respondent 18: “For when I am weak, then I am strong. Vulnerability, humility, and meekness are seen as bad in today's society. But we are called to Preach Christ, not US.” Respondent 20: “I’ve never thought of my weakness as my pulpit before, but He has taught me to trust Him more and to speak of his faithfulness and the strength he has blessed me with when I do share things with my friends or family.”¹³ Respondent 4 from the Open Group conveyed similar reflection and personalization of the role to proclaim. “That my weaknesses are permitted in my life so that the strength of Christ living in me can be visible to others. When those who do not know Christ see me struggle with the same things they struggle with, but see me handle them through the power of Christ and not my own strength, Christ is glorified. My life is not my own; it is meant to glorify Him. I am encouraged.” The qualitative responses from this week demonstrate that new understandings and the confirmation of already held convictions around proclaiming Christ through our weaknesses occurred. Once again, “the pulpit moved.”

Week 3 Responses

“We Preach Christ Risen” was the theme of the third week’s sermon. Stories of new life were shared in the videos, CBC’s past, and in the ancient story of Lazarus in

¹³ Cf., Appendix N “Week 2 Survey – Control Group Participants” and Appendix O “Week 2 Survey – Open Group Participants” for these and similar responses.

John 11. The responses this week were fantastic. The respondents truly understood the call to embrace the new life Christ offers as a personal pulpit. The semiotic reflection for this week's symbol-story led to enhanced understanding and personalization for most of those who responded, as the following example from Respondent 11 of the Control Group says: "God has called me to proclaim New Life where ever and with whom ever (sic) I encounter in my living journey. I can truly preach Christ Risen because he bought me from the brink of death."¹⁴

Respondent 14 from the Control Group had this to say in response to the symbol-story, "With New Life as my pulpit, God has called me to proclaim it to my friends and family. My family and friends know the kind of person I used to be and by showing them and telling them what God has done in my life, I know that I can reach many loved ones through God. God has also called me to proclaim New Life to total strangers. By sharing stories of my past and how God has shaped the defeats and turned them into present day victories, I can touch the lives of many people willing to listen."

One response that stood out this week was given by Respondent 11 from the Control Group. In answering the questions about what resonated with him/her from the video, he/she said the following: "In 2006, I concluded that the only solution to end the unbearable and unending pain of my dissapointing (sic) life was to end it by my own hand. I was not sucessful (sic) in my attempt but, I did get a chance to spend some time in a psych hospital. While I was there I felt the Lords pressence (sic). Through prayer and conversation I stated my belief in him and asked the Lord to order my steps and show me

¹⁴ Cf., Appendix P "Week 3 Survey – Control Group Participants" and Appendix Q "Week 3 Survey – Open Group Participants" for these and similar responses.

the path to salvation. The Lord heard my prayers. I am alive and healthier (sic) today because Christ lives within me.” Many of the responses throughout the weeks were heartfelt and honest, but this one demonstrates quite vividly the power of the resurrected Christ to bring rebirth to our lives, even when we try to destroy it. Once again, the symbolic reflection this week helped in personalizing the call of all to proclaim Christ.

Week 4 Responses

The final week’s emphasis was on proclaiming hope through our lives—We Preach Christ Coming Again. The reflections collected this week centered around the ancient text from John 14, and asked for specific applications for how we, as a congregation and individually, could preach the hope that only Christ offers. Lastly, general opinions about this series were welcomed. The following quotations are just a small sampling of the depth of reflection and semiotic change that occurred as a result of this individual sermon and series as a whole:¹⁵

Respondent 1 from the Open Group said, “This sermon series has provided a tangible link between the stories of old, the stories of Jesus, and how people live out His mission in the present day...a link which many think is broken!”

Respondent 14 from the Control Group said, “By making Jesus’ story our story, we, by association, must proclaim the gospel message. By seriously accepting the challenge that the “Pulpit” is not only the place of proclamation for the “professional preacher” but for every member of the church body, we have a responsibility to share this message of hope, in our work place, in our homes, in our Nation (through our outreaches

¹⁵ Cf., Appendix R “Week 4 Survey – Control Group Participants” and Appendix S “Week 4 Survey – Open Group Participants” for the following and similar responses.

to such places as Detroit, Mississippi, Brazil, etc.) and in countries around the globe where those whom we have sent to preach the gospel are our voices in the spiritually dark places in the world.”

Respondent 8 from the Control Group said, “After attending this series, I will never see the pulpit and the sign outside the front door the same again. Rather than just passing them by, I will now look at them as symbols for my life's calling. These are now symbols for my mission as a follower of Christ to preach the Gospel where ever I am.”

Lastly, Respondent 14 from the Control Group said, “This sermon series ‘Pulpit Parable’ has helped to make me more aware of my own responsibility in proclaiming the gospel of Jesus Christ through all aspects of my life. Watching the videos where the wooden pulpit was being carried around through the streets of New York City, accentuates the fact that we who sit in the pews should get away from the idea that the ‘professional preachers’ have the prime responsibility of sharing this gospel of hope and salvation.”

This sampling illustrates the semiotic reflection and change that occurred for many as a result of this project. Enhanced understanding and personalization of the “pulpit ministry” of CBC was the result for many. Through the symbol-stories shared, semiotic change was enhanced. Considering the quantitative and qualitative data together, this project’s goal was met.

Unexpected Emerging Narratives

The quantitative and qualitative data collected provided the evidence needed to deem this project successful. It is understood, however, that in this type of narrative research “... evaluation is tentative, provisional, and modest. One should always be

aware that ‘nothing gets solved for very long.’”¹⁶ It is not possible to track the individual respondents going forward, to assess whether the semiotic change has stayed with them as they relate to the symbols in our midst; but, for the period of the project, it did occur. Reference has often been made to this project by congregants and leaders in the months since its completion, so, if only in an anecdotal fashion, it could be argued that further effects are still being felt and processed. The final responses for evaluation are the unexpected emerging narratives that arose. They give further evidence to the changing semiotic relationships resulting from this project. The narratives that stood out came from the men in our church who most naturally and most often stand behind the pulpit—the pastors. Also, the expansion of the “pulpit ministry” through new media and outreach initiatives that arose as a result of this project is discussed in this section.

Pastoral Responses

Two pastors expressed an altered semiotic relationship to our pulpit as a result of this project. The first was Rev. Michael V., our Pastor of Education. He is one of the key individuals who preach from the pulpit at CBC in the weekly services throughout the year. Upon viewing the first video and reflecting with me one afternoon about the imagery and scope of the project, he said the following: “I will never stand behind this pulpit the same again.” I asked him for clarification and he said that seeing the pulpit move around the city was a vivid picture to him of the responsibility of all to preach. He would now step into the pulpit when called upon with a new awareness of the responsibility of all to proclaim.

¹⁶ Carl Savage and William Presnell, *Narrative Research in Ministry: A Postmodern Research Approach for Faith Communities* (Louisville: Wayne E. Oates Institute, 2008), 126.

The second pastor, who expressed a new semiotic relationship, was the Senior Pastor, David E. While preparing the final video (week 4), Miq M., the LAC member responsible for the filming and editing of the videos, incorporated footage of which I was unaware. In the final scene, various congregants are shown passing the pulpit to each other in a fast paced sequence, demonstrating our communal responsibility to proclaim. The final scene has Senior Pastor David E., in slow motion, lifting up the pulpit and handing it to the camera. The man most closely associated with our pulpit and role of preaching hands off this great responsibility to us all. It was an appropriate conclusion to this video and the series as a whole. When discussing this with David E., he said that he was honored to be a part of sharing this message, one in which he strongly believed. The “pulpit ministry” of CBC belongs to us all. The project was designed to affect change for the congregants, but in the end it also brought about healthy movement in the attitudes of those who stand behind the pulpit weekly.

Proclamation through the Screen

Another emerging narrative that was unforeseen at the outset of this project was the ministry expansion of our core value of proclamation that took place in the area of media and film. Miq M., our Media and Technology Manager at CBC, was the key contributor to the success of this project. He was responsible for the filming and editing of all four videos. His creative vision as well as technical expertise was showcased through the weekly videos that were incorporated into this project’s symbol-story. A seasoned filmmaker already, Miq understands the significance of this medium to share values, shape identity, and engage a wider audience through this approach to “proclamation.”

Upon using his gifts throughout the project, others in the church, especially the Elder and Deacon leadership, came to value the use of the screen to “proclaim” in greater ways than ever before. As a result, less than a year after the project’s completion, Miq cast the vision for a “movie mission trip.” The leadership of CBC enthusiastically approved it. With a \$10,000 financial backing from the church, Miq will be leading a team of budding artists, filmmakers, and entertainers from CBC to Canada this summer to record a full-length independent film. These individuals will be given a practical opportunity to use their gifts to “proclaim” the story of Jesus. This film will address such themes as eternity, hope, consequences, and new life from a Christian perspective. Miq hopes to enter the film into upcoming festivals as well as premiere it in New York City at CBC in the upcoming year. While recently discussing this expanded ministry opportunity with Miq, he pointed to a draft of this thesis sitting on my desk and said, “That project and research is why this new ministry is happening.” This is a direct, if unanticipated, result of this project that will continue to expand our “pulpit ministry” in the lives of our congregants, as well as in faithful and fresh media ministries, for years to come.

My Personal Response

While writing the final sermon, “We Preach Christ Coming Again,” I looked for a recent story of hope from our congregation to share. It was then that a personal story came to mind, one that brought the whole project into perspective for me. The attacks of September 11, 2001 occurred while I was a student in Bible College in Chicago. I remember going down to Lake Michigan and grieving for my home city that I loved. It was at that time that I recommitted to going back to New York City, once done with ministerial training, to serve as a pastor to proclaim Christ. The next day in chapel, the

college president had on the phone (broadcast over the speaker system) a pastor from New York. On the projector screen, while the pastor spoke, there was a picture of a church door, with the words “We Preach Christ Crucified, Risen, and Coming Again” emblazoned in gold lettering above it. With this image on the screen, Senior Pastor David E. from Calvary Baptist Church in New York City shared a message of hope with the students in our chapel service. From thousands of miles away, the symbol from CBC spoke to me. I remember that day feeling encouraged, challenged, and renewed in my calling to return to NYC to “preach Christ.”

Twelve years ago the imagery and symbolism of our church door here at Calvary Baptist Church had a significant impact on my personal call to preach and proclaim, and it wasn't until the end of this project, as I composed the final words of my final sermon, that I realized Christ's story has been shaping and guiding my own through CBC's for many years. In this project, I was able to share the semiotic effect of CBC's symbols in my own life with our congregants. The crafting and communication of a uniquely CBC symbol-story brought an enhanced understanding and personalization for my own life. This was an unexpected yet welcome realization. Christ's story... CBC's story... my story.

Summary

Isaiah's vision of the temple in Chapter 6 of his prophecy has always captivated me. In this majestic scene, the Lord's presence is made manifest to the prophet. There's smoke. Things are shaking. Angelic creatures are flying around with face and feet covered. Isaiah's response—I'm undone. Humbled by his surroundings in this vision, he sees himself as inadequate to stand and speak. His lips need cleansing, as well as those

around him. Into this chaotic scene, the angel comes with coals to cleanse and anoint the lips of the prophet. Then, when the voice of the Lord asks who will go out and preach on their behalf, the prophet utters, “Here am I; Send me.” Cleansed. Anointed. Sent.

This story helps to summarize the view I have of the preaching life. Though feeling inadequate for the task, I believe I am prepared, anointed, and called to go out and share this life by the power of the spirit. In this project, I sought to inform our congregants that they too are called and equipped to “Preach Christ” in their spheres of influence. De-mythologizing CBC’s pulpit and gathering the stories that emerged as a result caused semiotic transformation in our community towards a more preferred future of mutual identification with this collective calling. As preaching was understood as not only a weekly proclamation to listen to, but also as a defining symbol of our daily lives as Christ-followers, fresh insights into how to live the preaching life in New York City emerged.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

CBC'S PULPIT AND WORDING ABOVE ENTRYWAY



APPENDIX B

CBC'S MISSION STATEMENT AND CORE VALUES

Mission Statement: The Mission of Calvary Baptist Church is to Engage NYC and Impact the World with the Message of Jesus Christ.

Core Values:

Gospel (Proclamation of Truth) - Calvary Baptist Church is committed to the faithful, loving, and uncompromising preaching and teaching of Jesus Christ and His Word, the Bible. *Ps. 19:7-14; Jn. 6:60-69, 14: 1-6; 2 Tim. 3:16- 4:5; 2 Peter 1:19-21*

Reconciliation - Calvary Baptist Church practices reconciliation with God and with one another which is the heart of the gospel message - former enemies became friends through mercy, repentance and forgiveness; hostility is replaced by active good will and peace. *Luke 15:11-32; Luke 23:32-43; 2 Cor. 5:17-21; Eph 2:11-18*

Diversity - Calvary Baptist Church cultivates and celebrates our congregation's ethnic, racial, social-economic, generational, and cultural diversity within our unity in Jesus Christ. *Mt. 28:18-20; Acts 2:5-11, 40-47; Gal. 3:26-29; Rev. 5:9-10*

Orthodoxy - Calvary Baptist Church is committed to biblical truth, the gospel Jesus preached, and "the faith once and for all delivered to the saints". *John 3:1-17; 2 Timothy 3:14-17; Jude 3-4*

Life/Personhood - Calvary Baptist Church believes that life is a gift from God our Creator and that every human being is made in the image of God and has intrinsic value and dignity; we also believe that God offers every person new life through the love and forgiveness of Jesus Christ. *Gen. 1:26-28; Deut. 30:11-20; Acts 17:22-34; 1Jn. 2:1-2*

Compassion/Justice - Calvary Baptist Church is committed to sharing God's love with everyone and is resolved to stand up for what is just and right in the sight of God, according to His Word. *Micah 6:8; Mt. 25:31-46; 2 Timothy 3:16-17*

Faith - Calvary Baptist Church desires to trust God enough to obey His will, even when he calls us out of our comfort zone and tells us to take risks for Him. *Mt. 17:20; Heb. 11:6, 8-10, 13-16; Js. 2: 14-26*

Transformation - Calvary Baptist Church is committed to discipleship and spiritual formation, where every believer grows and matures and becomes a tender hearted and tough minded disciple of Jesus Christ, "speaking the truth in love". *Mt. 10:16; Luke. 6:40; Rom. 8:28-30; 12:1-2; 2 Cor. 3:16-18; Eph. 4:11-16*

Witness (Evangelism and Missions) - Calvary Baptist Church is committed to sharing the gospel of Jesus Christ boldly and effectively in both local evangelism and international missions. *Mt. 28:18-20; Rom. 10:13-15*

Leadership - Calvary Baptist Church is committed to practicing biblical, servant leadership and to recruiting and training servant leaders in our congregation and the larger Christian community. *Mt. 20:28; Jn. 13:1-17; 1 Peter 5:1-4*

APPENDIX C

PROJECT TIMELINE

August & September 2012

- Initial meeting with LAC chair for the purpose of brainstorming the proposed idea.
- Beginning Research into the Theological and Philosophical foundation for the project.
- Recruitment of LAC
- Skype meeting with faculty advisor

October 2012

- Continued reading and research
- Topic Outline developed and tweaked
- Meeting with colloquium at Drew University to discuss project idea
- IRB Approval
- Skype Meeting with faculty advisor
- LAC Meeting

November & December 2012

- Continued reading and research
- Prospectus developed and tweaked
- LAC Meeting
- Meeting with colloquium at Drew University to discuss prospectus
- Recruitment of video testimonial participants and control group members (can be added to later if needed)

December 2012 & January thru March 2012

- Monthly LAC Meetings
- Quantitative and Qualitative surveys developed
- Video and photo shoots with media team members from LAC

January thru March 2013

- Sermons written and discussed with LAC
- Videos edited and discussed with LAC

April 2013 – Project Implemented

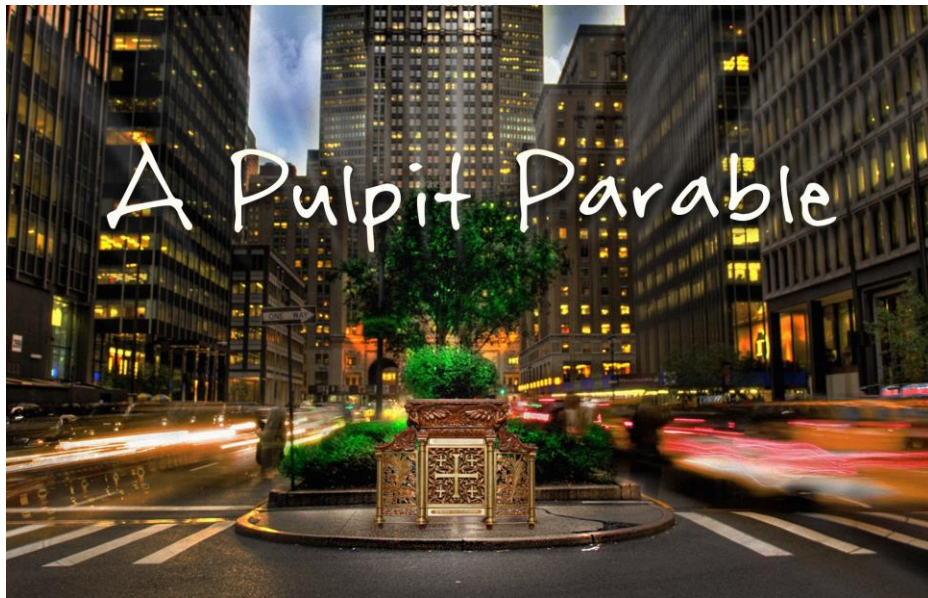
- Sermon series preached at CBC and taped for those who wish to watch them online
- Surveys distributed and collected (this will start a few weeks earlier in March and end a few weeks later in May)

May 2013

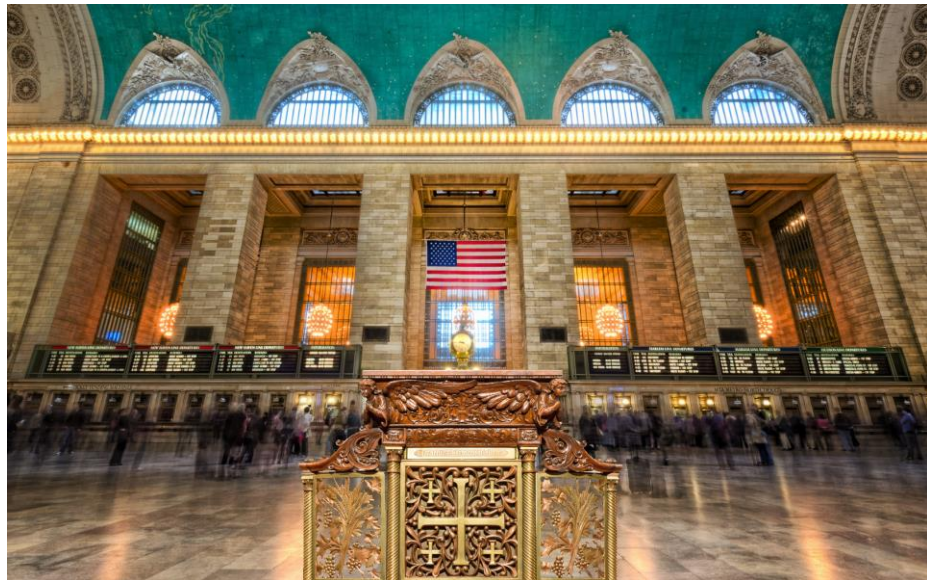
- LAC evaluation of project
- Site visit by faculty supervisor

APPENDIX D

SERMON SERIES LOGO AND WEEKLY PICTURES



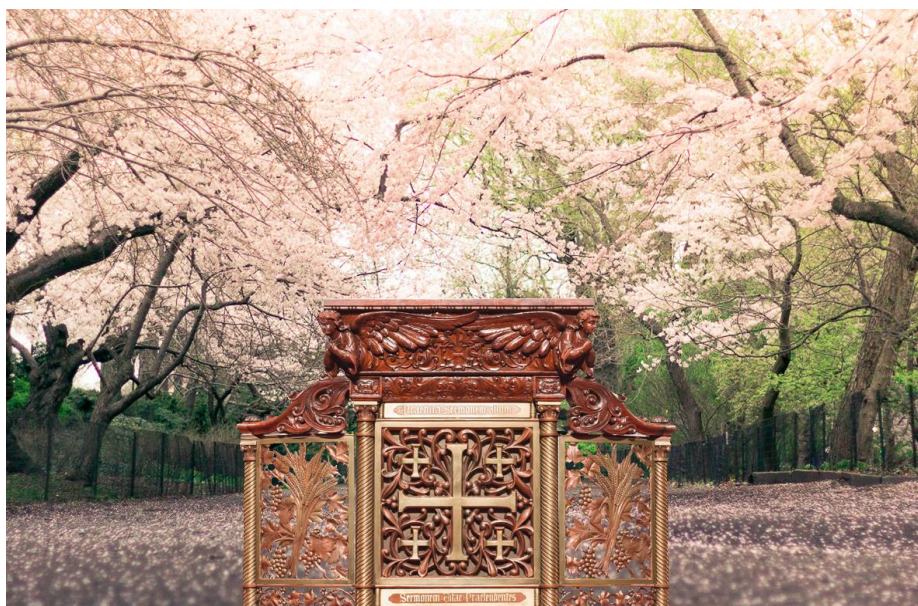
WEEK 1 – WE PREACH CHRIST



WEEK 2 – WE PREACH CHRIST CRUCIFIED



WEEK 3 – WE PREACH CHRIST RISEN



WEEK 4 – WE PREACH CHRIST COMING AGAIN



APPENDIX E

WEEK 1 SERMON – WE PREACH CHRIST

Introduction: “Will you tell me a story?” This is the question asked of my wife and me each night at bedtime in our house. My sons love stories. We always say yes. There are two types of stories the boys love most—first, stories of me as a little boy and of my wife as little girl. They find tall tales of bruised knees, family myths, and school yard legends exciting enough, but the stories of our childhood only serve as the opening short. Without variation they both ask: “Will you tell me a story about Jesus?” The Jesus story is fascinating to them. His inauspicious birth, radical life, unjust death, and triumphant resurrection and ascension to the Father set the framework for specific tales of healings, miracles, angels, tears, wisdom, and joy. And, within these mini epics, the one they love the most is the story of Jesus and the little children. “Tell us about Jesus and the little children.” Why? I believe it is because they see themselves as characters in those dramas. Jesus and the little children in their minds could easily be called Jesus and Anthony or Jesus and Isaiah. The Jesus story is becoming their story, and it’s a wonder to behold. The power of story to shape the mind. The wonder of story to ignite the imagination. The capacity of story to move and convict. The stories they are hearing become a story to live, as they act out these Jesus scenes during play time. Story is identity shaping and mission forming. What story frames your identity and moves you to action, mission, purpose, and sacrifice? Is it the story of the Nazarene?

This morning, I'd like to share three stories as we begin this new series—One Ancient. One Recent. One Current. The settings are all different and exactly the same. The characters are unique to each, but the same people are seen throughout. The purpose,

conflicts, and journeys I will share are specific to the time and place of their original occurrences, and, yet, the purpose, conflicts, and journeys are copies of each other. These three stories—ancient, recent, and current—though special unto themselves, have a common thread that runs throughout, a thread that binds them together in order to weave a beautiful tapestry, with all its diverse expressions. This common strand: The story of Jesus.

Ancient Story: Our first story, the ancient one, is found in the pages of scripture at the beginning of the book of Acts. It is here that we see that ragtag group of disciples in their last moments with the risen Lord. Peter is there, just weeks past his great denial of Jesus. What was Peter thinking, as he stood before Jesus this final time? Simon the Zealot is there, perhaps hoping for one last upheaval of the Roman establishment through the risen Christ. James and John are there in our ancient story as well. Standing before the Lord in whose kingdom they so longed to partake, but not as mere citizens, as rulers on his right and left. The doubter, the tax collector... all present in this final scene. All wondering, in their unique ways, what was really next.

They had walked with Jesus these many years, been with him through miracles, healings, attacks, sermons, hunger, and now on the Mount of Olives in this his final earthly moment with them, the disciples still had a burning question? What about the Kingdom? In verse 6 they ask if this was the time when the kingdom of Israel would finally be scene in all its glory, restored in power and authority, and governed by this Jesus they came to know so well. After all, He has just proven his authority through resurrection forty days prior. Seems like a good question to me. The story of Jesus that they have been experiencing first hand had yet to come to its intended result. Kingdom...

For Israel... and all others as a result. They, along with their kindred have waited, patiently for centuries for the consummation of the reign. Why not now?

Jesus was clever throughout his life in the answers he gave to questions. For the Pharisees and teachers of the law who asked for a miraculous sign, he replies with "The Sign of Jonah is all you are getting." For the religious who tried to trick him with the inquiry as to what authority he had to do his works, Jesus, before answering, posed a question back. John's Baptism—was it heavenly or human? If they answered heavenly, they would look foolish. Human and a riot would ensue. They chose not to answer. Jesus didn't either. You'd expect in the scene in Acts, that Jesus would once again give an opaque and perhaps shadowy answer. He doesn't. He simply says, "It's none of your business." Though I doubt his Aramaic had the New York accent I just used.

In verse 7 of chapter 1 of Acts, he says that it is not their business to know "the times and epochs that God has set out in his own authority." That *kairos* moment to come, when the kingdom would be fully seen and manifest, when God's perfect rule and reign in Jesus Christ would be seen by all was for an undisclosed time, sometime in the future... a time set by God's authority alone... a time, even Jesus did not know. The term for "epochs" was often used by ancient historians to catalogue different eras in history and was sometimes used as a means to predict when the end was near. Yet, Jesus says this *kairos* and *epoch* work is not mans... it is God's. So they were to wait. Stay. Remain. It's not your business to know. Wait. Stay. Remain. It's not our business to know.

If we could peer inside the mind of the disciples here, what would they be thinking to themselves? Perhaps frustration was the emotion of Simon the Zealot as he was processing in his mind: "Really Jesus? More waiting? Can't we just rise up against

these Romans and set this thing up already?" Frustration, waiting for the kingdom's consummation. Or, it may be that doubt quickly rose up in the inner mind of Thomas once again: "I knew it." Thomas might say. "Is this Jesus for real or not? Perhaps my apprehensions before were not so far off?" Doubt, as they stood before Jesus, waiting for the consummation—the kingdom. Or, maybe anger at Jesus words was the emotion welling up within those Sons of Thunder, James and John, as they heard Jesus' reply: "Enough is enough!" These thunderous brothers might have said. "Those seats on your right and left are ours. We want to reign... with you... Now!" Frustration, doubt, anger, may have been in the minds of these disciples. Who knows? What we do know from the story is that Jesus does not leave them without purpose while they wait. He gives them a mission. Preach Me.

In Acts 1:8 he says, "but you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you and be my witnesses... witnesses of me... in Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, and to the ends of the earth." Jesus makes a theologically rich declaration. Power from the Spirit will come upon them for this mission. This spirit anointing for the mission of God would be a familiar theme for these disciples as they heard this promise from Jesus. In Isaiah 42:1-7, this spirit anointing is promised to God's Servant. It reads: (read passage)

Catch the nuance and great depth that Jesus is bringing out for the disciples here. This promised servant, anointed as the remnant within Israel, was given the task, the end-time mission to proclaim light to the nations... freedom to the captives... sight to the blind... release from prison. Jesus was this ideal servant, and now the disciples are to continue this prophetic mission of the Israelites for the sake of the nations. I, the LORD, officially commission you. I take hold of your hand. I protect you and make you a light to

the nations. Did you catch it? Because Jesus was the fulfillment of this hope, the disciples are enlisted to continue in this mission. As lights, anointed and empowered by the Spirit, to testify of Jesus as His witnesses—those who saw Him in His life, death, burial, resurrection, and ascension—to the ends of the earth. In Acts this is Rome, and we see throughout this book that indeed they are Christ’s witnesses until the end.

Jesus was saying to them: “My story has become your message to proclaim.” Being witnesses of him entails proclaiming and preaching to the ends of the earth that Jesus is the hope of the hurting, the light to the nations, reconciler of enemies, the Lord of all. What Jesus accomplished on the cross and in his resurrection has conquered sin, death, and evil, and, now, this message—this sermon of forgiveness, healing, and Lordship—must be proclaimed. What Jesus had accomplished was unique, climactic, and decisive. Now, their task was to implement Christ achievement through proclamation in word and deed to the ends of the world. As they wait for the consummation, preach Christ! Everywhere you go... proclaim Christ. His story continued in the church’s story.

Jesus was saying to this crew of weary followers: “As you proclaim/preach this witness of me, my story consumes and becomes yours. Because of what I’ve done for you, in faith, trade your old identities for mine. Witness of me.” And if you read the rest of Acts you know the disciples and others within the early church did just that! Peter preached of Christ at Pentecost to the Jewish leaders and gentiles through Cornelius. James was killed for witnessing of Jesus. Stephen was as well. Philip, in response to persecution goes to Samaria along with others, preaching Christ wherever they went. And Paul, three journeys later, ends up sharing the story of Jesus to the highest authorities in Rome itself. As they wait for the consummation, preach Christ!

The Jesus Story is identity shaping and mission forming in this ancient story we have just heard. What story frames your identity and moves you to action, mission, purpose, and sacrifice? The first story—an ancient one. Very different from our time. But one thread connects us. The story of Jesus. The preaching did not end.

Recent Story: The second story I'd like to share this morning is a more recent one. Unique unto itself, and, yet, the same as the ancient one we've just heard. The common thread—Jesus. It's the story of Hope Chapel (aka Calvary Baptist Church). This local body is one expression of the thousands if not millions of congregations throughout history who have been heralds of the story of Jesus as they waited for the consummation of all things. In the 165 year plus history of this church, there are many people and events—both good and challenging—to highlight that have come to shape our identity and guide our vision, and, in the coming weeks I intend to do so in this series. We are heirs of a rich and storied tradition here at CBC, a story that God has been crafting and joining into his greater story of Jesus. But this morning, I'd like to observe with you two symbols in our midst, which have served and will continue to serve as identity and mission shaping signs for us.

First, let's look at the pulpit. In this beautiful and elaborate piece, we observe the roots of our history. For many years we were located downtown as a congregation. We moved from Broadway to West 23rd Street to here on 57th in 1883. The original building on this site was gorgeous with a 1,500 seat auditorium, ornately carved woodwork, and dozens of stain glass windows depicting biblical messages, stories, and themes. And, central to this worship space, was this very pulpit. McArthur, the pastor at the time, along with church architects designed it. Made of antique bronze in 1883, this 130 year old

piece of furniture is the only symbol that came with us into this new building in 1929. It must tell a story worth paying attention to. Look closely with me.

Adorned atop this pulpit, on either side, we have these chubby little cherubs. These angelic images with mouths open communicate the theme that something divine and heavenly occurs from this place. Preaching is more than a perfunctory act of public speaking. It is an important means through which the story of Jesus is shared. As Paul says, “how will they hear without a preacher!” Like the Apostles in Acts, we too have been given this responsibility. Notice as well with me the elaborate Jerusalem Cross with the Latin inscription saying, “Proclaim that word. Proclaim that word of life.” Proclamation. It’s what we do. It is no small point that of all the elaborate and beautiful elements of the previous building on this site, that the only one chosen to remain all these years is this pulpit. It serves as an identity forming symbol for Calvary.

And this is not the private property of the one who stands behind it. Though intimidating and massive, it is the property of all who come to be a part of this congregation. It must not convey that what occurs up here is better than what occurs in the lives of every one of our congregants, wherever they live in this great city and region. We are all given the vocation to preach. It is a reminder that the collective responsibility of everyone here at this church, is to be a herald for the gospel, proclaiming the story of Jesus as his witnesses wherever we are—in word and deed. When you enter into this sanctuary each Sunday and see this pulpit, personal responsibility and participation in the proclamation of the gospel should be sparked by looking at it. The second symbol makes this personal responsibility more vivid.

The second symbol is the message above our doorway. I was recently talking with one of our members and asked her if she knew the wording emblazoned in gold lettering above our entryway. She thought for a moment and said, “In God we trust.” She was a bit surprised when I reminded her that that is a national motto we most often see on our coins and paper currency. A symbol, if present and not noticed and reflected upon loses its power to convict, challenge, and shape us as God’s heralds. A symbol, if present and not noticed and reflected upon, loses its power to convict, challenge, and shape us as God’s heralds.

In the late 1920s the church made a decision to build this current building and tear down the one that had stood here for 37 years. It needed extensive remodeling, and the church being in debt at the time, needed a fresh start. While this hotel/church complex was being constructed, Calvary met another challenge. October 29th, 1929 was a history altering day in the life of our country, as the stock market crashed on that Black Tuesday. That day also altered the life of this congregation as the pastor at the time, Pastor Straton, passed away. Calvary was meeting at another facility on West 70th during the time of construction and found itself in the precarious situation of being a church without a home and now without a Pastor. Through much prayer and deliberation, the church called Pastor Houghton as the next shepherd of this congregation. And this godly man was aware of the temptations to pride and arrogance that this new church facility and new pastorate might bring.

He was deftly aware of the competing stories that you can get pulled into in NYC—position, influence, pleasures. This city has many alluring narratives that all of us, if not aware, can be subtly drawn, even the church. And this shepherd wanted a symbol to

remind himself and this church of why God placed them here on 57th Street. He saw the opportunity to carve above our portals a message that would serve to define and enlist all in the storytelling of Jesus in his generation, and for the generations to come. It says, “We Preach Christ, Crucified, Risen, and Coming Again.” I’ll refrain from a grammar lesson here, but “We” is plural, not singular. “We” means the banker who attends, the college student who is here for a few years, the youth who are on the frontlines of schools, the retired who reside in the neighborhoods throughout our city. We Preach Christ. Houghton had a vision for CBC, that it would be a congregation that continued to be on mission with God as witnesses of Jesus. The Jesus Story would become the Calvary Story in the lives of its congregants as they proclaimed in word and deed that Christ is indeed the creator, sustainer, and reconciler of all things.

The message above our entryway is there as a reminder to each of us every time we walk through these doors, that we are all preachers/heralds of the Gospel. And when you walk through those doors and see this pulpit, it once again unites us in this call. It proclaims that the message to preach is not the sole responsibility of the one who stands behind this pulpit. It is the call of all. When we look at one and don’t remember the other, we become spectators and consumers of religious goods and services. But, when we see the connection, we join the story—this ancient and recent one—to proclaim Christ. Some here have been called to the office of Pastor, but all have been called to the vocation of Preacher. The preaching life of each of us is manifest as we seek to share the Jesus story in the unique settings and places God has placed us.

Proclamation of the gospel is the first of our core values listed in the bulletin. The mission statement is to “Engage NYC and impact the world with the message of Jesus.”

Once again, the story of Jesus is our content. Preaching is our means... Our means... wherever we are.

We are all responsible for the “pulpit ministry” of this church. One stands up here, but we all take the pulpit with us wherever we go. In word and deed as a proclamation... a witness... a sermon that the story of Jesus is ours. The “pulpit” moves with us at home, school, work, and wherever else we are sent, as the apostles were, as witnesses of Jesus. The Jesus story we preach frames our identity and moves us to mission, service, new life, and hope. We preach Christ when, by all means and everywhere we go, we embody the story of Jesus in word and deed. This recent story, Calvary’s story, is different than the first, the ancient, and exactly the same.

Current Story: This bring us to our third and final story—the current one.

Different than the ancient and recent, but the same. Where's your pulpit? I'm not talking about street preaching. As you think of being part of this body, in time and place, and as you seek to be part of the mission passed down, where is your pulpit? Where has God uniquely placed you as his witness? It is so easy for us to forget this responsibility when we leave this place... when those competing narratives of this vibrant city call for us. So what if the pulpit moved with you... literally, with you. What if it showed up at your place of work, home, on the subway, in Times Square as you shopped, as a reminder to you of the story you are to proclaim?

Play Video Here:

Conclusion: These three stories—ancient, recent, and current—though special unto themselves, have a common thread that runs throughout, a thread that binds them together in order to weave a beautiful tapestry, with all its diverse expressions. This

common strand—the story of Jesus. Preach Christ! Proclaim Him. In word and deed, join in heralding the story of Jesus as we await the consummation of all things. Where's your pulpit?

APPENDIX F

WEEK 2 SERMON – WE PREACH CHRIST CRUCIFIED

Introduction: Good evening. This is the second week in our new four-week series entitled: A Pulpit Parable. During this month, we are reflecting on two symbols in our midst, the pulpit and the message above our entryway. These symbols help to give identity and direction to us as a congregation and as individuals. Identity with and direction alongside the cosmic drama God is crafting in the story of Jesus. Story has the capacity to shape and to guide us as followers of Christ, and we want to reflect on the story of Jesus deeply in our lives in order to follow more faithfully the roles God has envisioned for us. Each week, we will look at three stories and how they overlap around this common thread of Jesus. An ancient story from the scriptures, a recent story from the history of our congregation, and a current story of how men and women in this church, today, are seeking to proclaim Christ.

Last week we learned that preaching is our means of proclaiming the story of Jesus, in word and deed, wherever we go. And as Christians, we have the promise of God's Spirit indwelling and empowering us as witnesses... as lights to the end of the world. We are the city on a hill. This pulpit serves as a reminder of the collective responsibility of us all to join in this common vocation of preacher. Each time we see it, we are reminded of our responsibility to proclaim. Last week, we answered the questions of who is responsible to herald Jesus (all of us) and where (everywhere). This week and in the two following, we will get into the specifics of "how" and "what." How are we to preach Christ in our spheres of influence in this city? What does this sound and look like? Once again, reflecting upon the message above our entryway will clarify this content for

us. It says “We Preach Christ Crucified, Risen, and Coming Again.” This evening we will begin to dissect this phrase looking for the high calling each segment calls us to. This evening the phrase: We Preach Christ Crucified.

Identifying with and following after a crucified Christ will entail approaching personal suffering, weakness, trials, pain, and hardship differently. As Deitrich Bonhoeffer’s famous book title admits, there is a Cost to Discipleship... to becoming like your master... to joining his story. Two approaches to dealing with the painful implications of following Christ crucified often rise to the surface. The First... suppression. Some of us go to great lengths of denial in order to minimize the ever present reality of pain and weakness. This causes us to wake up every day and take deliberate steps in order to suppress it with the hope of eliminating it completely, putting up facades of wholeness, while deep down we know we are deeply broken and experience great hurt. Side industries have even spawned up in some so-called Christian expressions that promise release from these implications. Just say this prayer... order this trinket... Ultimately, however, we realize these attempts to suppress or eliminate pain are futile.

The second approach realizes that hiding and suppressing pain, this ever present reality in our personal and corporate lives, is a foolish endeavor, and so instead we allow it to consume and overwhelm us... utterly. It cripples us. We find ourselves always thinking about it, always comparing ourselves to others around it. This second group knows hiding is not the answer, so, wallowing in pain for themselves for all others to see appears to be a better response. Those in this second group think it is a more genuine response, to openly and often mention our weakness and pain, but in reality, they are

playing similar games as those who hide it. This second way, wallowing in despair for all to see.

Weakness can be in the forms of personal hardships and trials, ones we have brought upon ourselves and others which we have been victim to. Some gathered here find ourselves under immense pressures at work and family that we feel inept to respond to, and the thought of not knowing what to do has become a heavy burden. Others of us have had evil perpetrated against us that is beyond words to describe and imagination to wonder, and we bring these scars with us in every conversation and encounter. We suppress hardship... or... We wallow in our trial.

These weaknesses may also be in the form suffering and persecution for the sake of what is right and just—for the sake of Christ. Standing up for the right is not always a celebrated decision and suffering often comes as a result. Weakness in the form of suffering... persecution.

Is there a third way beyond suppression and despair? I want a third way, and I'm sure if we are all honest, we'd all like a third option. A third way that doesn't minimize the pain and struggle of identifying with a crucified Christ and doesn't allow it to overwhelm and consume us either? How are we as followers of a crucified Christ to respond to weakness? What is the distinctively Christian response to weakness—in whatever form it takes—in our personal and corporate lives?

Let's begin by looking afresh at the greatest display of weakness, pain, hardship, and trial—the scene of Christ on the Cross (our ancient story), and, by reflecting on it first, a third way will begin to emerge. Looking back at the cosmic story God has revealed in Jesus—the history altering events around his life and death—serves as a

means to shape our identity and form our mission around this concept of weakness.

Considering the cross afresh is the beginning point for addressing our own pain. To the cross we look

Ancient Story: Turn with me in your Bibles to Luke's account of the cross found in chapter 23. In his telling, we will see several different responses to this scene of suffering and weakness. Read along with me. This is the Word of the Lord. (READ LUKE 23:26-43)

After the cross is handed off to Simon of Cyrene to carry, the first response to Jesus in his weakened and humiliated state is weeping from the women who are following him. It is sorrowful to watch this innocent in such pain. The text tells us that they beat their breasts and wailed for Jesus. Jesus the innocent wept over in the midst of his greatest trial. He is innocent, yet enduring such hardship. And, shockingly, Jesus turns to them and says to stop. It's not he but they and their children who should be wept over. Only in Luke's account do we hear from the lips of Jesus a lament for the coming age that would be experienced in Jerusalem, for God has allowed his innocent son (the green wood) to experience this injustice, how much more should weeping be a part of the sinful nations fate (the dry wood)? Catch what Jesus is communicating to the wailing at his death. He is saying that ultimate anguish, pain, and defeat are not for the righteous sufferer but for the sinful. Complete despair is reserved for the perishing, not the innocent. Weeping at the cross, though appropriate in some measure, is not one of ultimate anguish.

A second response is mocking from the lips of the religious leaders and the soldiers from two angles. The religious leaders are deriding his claims as the Messiah, anointed one, the Christ, God's chosen one. His claim to authority and divine commencement has ruffled the collars of the religious and they jeer at him. Once again, the innocent receives unjust treatment. The soldiers deride him for his lack of power, saying if he is a king then he should save himself. Rome loved holding the hammer, and Caesar alone was lord. The sign above his head was a tribute to the apparent foolishness of Jesus. The irony in this response of the mockers is latent in this text. Their mocking accusations are actually true statements, for Jesus is the King, the chosen, the Messiah of God. Their mockery is actually a proclamation of the divine truth on display before them. And yet, Jesus, the innocent receives it. Mocking at the cross. Christ endured.

The third group is stuck between. They just stare. Perhaps in confusion... perhaps not understanding... or they are just in it for the show. It says in verse 35 that people just stood by. The innocent on the tree, misunderstood and underappreciated... a spectacle to behold for the gawking eyes of the passersby. They did not know what they were beholding? So they stared, failing to grasp that the one they gawked at was procuring their eternal life in this act of weakness.

In these first three responses to the cross, we see three weighty theological reflections for consideration by all when we look to Jesus at Golgotha. The first, despair is not for the righteous but for the perishing. Weep but do not wail. When considering the cross, despair at the crucified is not appropriate, for Christ the innocent, will not ultimately perish. Second, mockery is only as effective as it is accurate. And the guards and the leaders were off base. Jeering at Christ in his pain was evil. Bartering for his

belonging... disturbing. Taunts from the religious leaders... beyond words. Yet, Jesus the innocent suffered this... for us all... Lastly, looking at the weakness and humility of Jesus at this time without response doesn't mean transformation. It's one thing to be overwhelmed and another to mock, but inaction at the site of the cross misses the point as well. Christ crucified, as much as many would like to ignore or diminish or pass by, doesn't allow such a noncommittal stance. It requires an appropriate response. There is a final response to the cross that is instructive for us. It is not wailing... not mockery... not gawking... but faith.

The final response... faith. It comes from the most unforeseen of places... the criminal... a thief. His cohort joins with the others and asks for help: "Get me off of here." But the other thief rebukes him and looks on Jesus in his weakness, realizing his innocence, and finds faith. (Read vs. 40-42). Belief... hope that in this crucified one he could have life and purpose and a home... the kingdom... with Jesus.

And what does the innocent and weakened Jesus do? Show that in his weakness... others are made strong! Saved! He promises that "Today, he would be with Jesus in Paradise." When the cross is considered and faith in the crucified is spawned—faith in a better purpose, promise, and end—then comfort is offered. Hope can be given. This thief, by considering the cross and who was on it and what he offered, finds faith and a future.

Have you considered the cross afresh recently? As you and I are going through our own trials and hardships, do we look to the cross as a source of healing, forgiveness, and ultimately hope. What is the distinctively Christian response to weakness? Faithfully look to the cross and find hope. The distinctively Christian response to weakness: faithfully look to the cross and find hope.

The others couldn't see completely. Mourning alone was not the answer. While giving in to despair seems genuine, it lacks deeper reflection. Mocking wasn't satisfying. It showed the heart of these mockers and makes the work of the cross even more vital for them. Even Jesus says, "Father forgive them, for they know not what they are doing." Staring and moving on, indifference, or at least inaction at the cross, is not right either. But, looking to the crucified and finding faith and forgiveness and hope is. Have you found that forgiveness? Hope? Have you considered the cross?

How do we respond when faced with our weaknesses? Look back to the cross and, then, look through it as a defining characteristic of our story—one that has saved us and serves to shape our mission. Christ himself tells us that a student is not greater than his master, and our master, Christ, has gone through the ultimate trial on our behalf, securing our salvation and future. So we must not shun weakness, because it would be against the fabric of what it means to follow Christ. The cross is a call to follow after Jesus—to look at our own trials and hardships differently. To not be in despair or crumble at the mocking of others. To not dispassionately move past and ignore them. But to see our weaknesses as an opportunity to consider the impact of the cross afresh and find solace... comfort... and a role to play in God's Story.

Recent Story: One of the great treasures of our church is in a small room just above our sanctuary. It's our archives. In these pages and mementos from our past, we can see how this congregation for over 165 years has been allowing the life of Jesus to shape its identity. I came across some mission council minutes from 1945. In just a few short lines it tells a story of missionaries that we supported during that time—the Friederichsen's in the Philippines. While sharing the story of Jesus on this island nation,

they find themselves as prisoners in an infamous prison camp during the war. Listen to the brief report of their time in these recorded minutes. “Once again God has proven his faithfulness in undertaking for Calvary’s missionaries even during these trying war years. We are particularly thankful for his deliverance of those in enemy occupied territory;- Mr. Friederichsen and Mr. Guyot and their families. The Friederichsens were released from Santo Tomas Internment camp and are well, though all were emaciated from lack of food. Little Bobby, however, shows no signs of the former incipient tuberculosis.”¹

How matter of fact. Preaching Jesus and getting caught up in global affairs while you do. I love how it communicates their steadfastness... resolve... Even their son experienced weakness in the course of witnessing for Christ. What really inspired me were the words from these missionaries in a prayer notice to CBC, after these events. “With only five evangelists besides ourselves and 40 places crying for help, with only a few months of suitable dry season, little literature, no Scriptures, 10 trained Filipino pastors without support, the task appears overwhelming – except as you kind prayer helpers get under the burden with us.”²

What hope! They knew some of the trials they would be facing, but nothing like what they would ultimately experience. Yet in and through it—hope. And, this church, through prayer (and prayers for each other in weakness lay ever present before the throne of God) and identification with the trials both experienced and coming for this couple, were able to proclaim Christ crucified in all its rawness and power! Revelation 12:11 is

¹ Barbara Peterson, “Report of the Missionary and Benevolence Committee for the Year May 1st, 1944 through April 30th, 1945” (New York: Calvary Baptist Church, 1945).

² Paul Friederichsen, “About Overwhelming Needs” in “Calvary’s Outreach Missionary Program” (New York: Calvary Baptist Church, 1950).

printed next to a picture of the father, Mr. Friederichsen (read passage). CBC, The Friederichsen's ... in weakness faithfully looked to Christ crucified for identity and mission. They found intimacy with Christ in the midst of their weakness.

The cross is a lens through which we are to understand our identity and mission. The NT authors began to see their lives and ministry through the life of Jesus. Paul had a cross-shaped mission. Identifying with Christ's life and work gives identity to his followers. Turn with me, to Galatians 2:19-3:1 (read passage).

Catch what Paul is saying. My identity is in Christ. I have been crucified with Christ. And Christ, the crucified, now lives in me. Christ's death and life are his. We don't have time this even to exegete all of the insights in this passage, but look with me at verse 1 again. Paul says that it was before their eyes that Jesus was exhibited and crucified. What a strange comment. These Galatian Christians were far away from the events of Jesus in Jerusalem around two decades earlier. What does Paul mean? My ministry was a demonstration of the life of Christ and his death. In my working among you, you saw Christ crucified. What a profound statement! That, coupled with proclaiming Christ in word, his life was a means to proclaim Christ in visible form.

In 1 Corinthians Paul makes similar statements (read 1 Corinthians 2:1-5). Weakness, fear, and trembling... a personal proclamation of Christ. (read Colossians 1:24). Again... Identifying with the crucified shapes mission. Paul continued the weakness and trials of Christ through his suffering, as a means to proclaim Christ crucified! Philippians 2 as well is a call to consider Christ's humility as our pattern.

The crucifixion was not just a mere event of the past that one attests to as a matter of intellectual assent for salvation. For Paul and the church, the Friederichsens and us, it

is a model as well as the way of discipleship. This does not discredit the crucifixion of Christ as unique and decisive and climactic, rather it magnifies it to include a life ethic based upon what it has accomplished. Death to self as a continuing characteristic of discipleship. Proclaiming in weakness, difficulties, and giving up our rights... the cross of Christ. We preach Christ when we embrace weakness and suffering as the means through which God's power is seen and our mission is carried out. How do we respond to weakness? Faithfully look to the cross and proclaim it!! For our lives are a proclamation of Christ crucified. Weakness is our strength. This is a great paradox of the faith. When we embrace weakness in our life, we are a message, a sermon, a testament that the life of Christ has become ours.

Current Story: Show Video Here.

Conclusion: Weakness. Trials. Suffering. Not the same for everyone. Different amounts and timings. We are not to compare ourselves and our suffering as a source of pride or discouragement. We are to know ours, and to not shy away. In so doing, we preach Christ crucified and demonstrate, to a world that attempts to eliminate and belittle pain or to be in utter despair because of it, the way of Christ. The result—Intimacy with Christ is offered as we follow him and are drawn into his story and mission even further. Where has God entrusted you with the message of Christ crucified? Where does denial of self mean a sermon for Christ? Proclaim Christ Crucified! Faithfully look to the cross... and proclaim him!

APPENDIX G

WEEK 3 SERMON – WE PREACH CHRIST RISEN

Introduction: (John 11 has just been read by a congregant) For resurrection to have its glorious, life-giving, identity shaping, and mission guiding effects in our lives, death must precede it. Death... it has been on all our minds this week, as we are still processing the events of last Monday's Boston Marathon. A day meant for celebration ends up being marred by attacks, bloodshed, and young lives lost. One of our own here at Calvary, Jill Basile, had just passed the finish line fifteen minutes prior to the explosion, and all day she ran on the left side of the road, right by the as of yet un-detonated explosives. She was just a few hundred yards away from the explosions when they occurred. Unscathed herself, she saw the people running to give aide. She heard the cries of those terrified like never before. She witnessed the wounded fleeing.

Can't we just avoid the pain? The heartache? The loss? Can't we just experience the new life... the resurrection life of Jesus without going through the pain of death? In our own lives, fear and uncertainty, difficulty and struggle, loss and bereavement all take up so much of our thoughts, time, and efforts, and we ask, "Can't we skip to the end? Just press fast-forward and experience that new life now?" This is exactly what is on the mind and lips of the two sisters mentioned in our ancient story which was just read this evening. Both cry out to Jesus, "If... only if you would have been here, Jesus, my brother, our brother, would not have died." And yet, for new life to come—resurrection life to manifest itself in all its cosmic power—death must be the precursor.

We'll see in just a brief portion of this epic tale in John 11 two rich reflections from the lips of Jesus in regards to resurrection life, and one question for us all to

consider. Two reflections on resurrection life that help to shape our identity and guide our mission as we learn to submit our lives to His, and one question for us all to consider throughout our life journey. Turn with me to John 11:17-27.

Ancient Story: We learn right away from this text an interesting bit of information. It states in verse 17 that Lazarus has been in the tomb for four days. There was a tradition, a superstition of sorts that was probably around during the time of Jesus that believed the human spirit hovered around the body of the deceased for three days trying to reenter, prior to leaving for good. With Jesus coming on the 4th day, this explanation was being ruled out. What Jesus was about to do would be a miracle, called a sign in the book of John, to his unique power and authority.

And Martha knows his power well. While expressing discontentment with Jesus for not showing up prior to her brother's death, she does exclaim at the end of verse 22, "I know God will give you what you ask of him." And Jesus complies with her expectations by saying, "Your brother will rise again." It's here where Martha gives the right theological answer. She shows her good biblical upbringing. She gives Jesus an answer that any Jew of the time would have thought of immediately. "At the last day, I know he will rise again." Already within the second temple Judaism of the first century, resurrection was a common hope and theme of the nation of Israel, but this resurrection was reserved for the end of all time, when the messiah would inaugurate the new world, and all true believers would be brought back to be with God forever. Ezekiel and other OT prophets started to shape this resurrection mindset, and Martha is hoping for this end-time reality. Yes, Jesus, resurrection... but in the end.

It is here that we see Jesus give his first theological reflection. He says to Martha, because of me, the future has come into the present. The future has come into the present Verse 25 says, “I am the resurrection and the life. Those who believe in me, even though they die, will live, and everyone who lives and believes in me will never die.” Never die! Think with me of the shocking nature of this statement on the ears of the original audience. The Jews have been hoping for a time to come—a future time—when all would be set right. When Yahweh would establish his just and peaceful reign on earth, and all true Israelites, dead and alive would partake of this glorious kingdom. And resurrection was a key element of its appearing. Jesus is saying, “Right now, in your presence, this resurrection life is seen. The dead... will live in me! The living... will never die!” You see in this text the principle of death preceding life is still the same. Surrender, death to self, precedes life anew in Christ. For even the living to experience this never-ending life, they must first believe, which entails surrender of the old and trust in Christ for what he brings anew.

And how does Martha respond to this: “I believe you are the Messiah, the son of God coming into the world.” The Messiah, meaning the Christ, the anointed of God who would be the chosen one for this end time task of resurrection. The Son of God, a favorite moniker applied to Jesus in the fourth Gospel is another technical term, referring to the unique role and responsibility of God’s anointed one. No doubt Psalm 2 is in the mind of Martha as she references Jesus as this “begotten” of God. His coming into the world, is a reminder of the blessing on “he who comes in the name of the Lord” found in Psalm 118. Martha, by calling Jesus the Messiah and coming Son of God confesses for all gathered to hear, that Jesus has brought that future life into the present in his person. The

resurrection, new life of the age to come... Jesus already has it. Believe in him. The future is coming into the present. This is the first rich reflection from this ancient story. Future life now!

There's a second reflection in the response of Jesus to Martha that is latent within the first. In verse 25 it says that this life is for those who believe "into me." "Those who believe in me, even though they die, will live, and everyone who lives and believes in me will never die." The phrase "believe in me" used here has the natural meaning of "believe into me". The idea being that identities need to be changed in order for new life to be experienced. In other words, Jesus is saying: My life must become yours. My Story of resurrection must become your story of new life. The future is now... when my life story becomes yours. Believe "into me." Have your identity wrapped up in mine, and experience new life... resurrection life. Once again, we see, as we have throughout this series, that the life, the story of Jesus must become our story. Paul in Ephesians 2:5-6 says something similar of the resurrection identity we have in Christ, when he states that "we have been made alive together with Christ... and been raised with him." And this new life of Christ overcoming ours is also found in the plea from the apostle's lips in Philippians 3:10-11. When he cries out: "I want to know Christ—yes, to know the power of his resurrection and participation in his sufferings, becoming like him in his death, and so, somehow, attaining to the resurrection from the dead." Eugene Peterson has a wonderfully insightful book on Ephesians that he has entitled, "Practicing Resurrection." And that title is the essence of this passage in John 11 as well. Jesus' Story of resurrection becomes our story of new life. The future is now... when His resurrection becomes ours. Practice resurrection in and through Christ.

The question in response to this revelation about himself that Jesus asks of Martha is the same for you and me this evening: “Do you believe this?” Belief here, as in the rest of the book of John, means more than just intellectual assent to facts about Christ. It means complete trust and reliance that manifests itself in faithful obedience. Jesus is asking Martha, do you believe, trust, and follow me? Because if you surrender and give up the old and submit to and follow me, then new life is the result... forever.

The rest of the story in John 11 comes as a sign of this cosmic power of Jesus. What Christ does in the physical for Lazarus, raising him to new life, is what Jesus promises in both the physical and spiritual when we believe in him and submit to his resurrection as our own. The future age of hope is offered... now. Identity, not wrapped up in our prior attempts to save ourselves or manufacture new life, but wrapped up in surrendering our lives to his, is ours... now. Do you believe this? Do you submit your fears before him and seek life in the midst of them? Do you surrender your dreams to his will, and trust that he will bring it to life... if he wills... in his time? And have you come to initial saving faith in him which is the bedrock of all of this. Trust in the person and work of Christ on your behalf, forgiving your sin and giving resurrection to newness in your life. He offers it. But for resurrection to have its glorious, life-giving, identity shaping, and mission guiding effects in our lives, death to the old life must precede it.

This ancient story continues to occur in all our lives as we seek to submit to, surrender and follow Christ, allowing his resurrection life to manifest itself in us. The resurrection of Christ has demonstrated that his sacrifice on our behalf is accepted and a new way to live is possible. “I am the resurrection and the life... those who are dead, shall live again. Those alive... through belief in me may experience physical death, but

will live forever.” As we preach Christ risen to those in a city and world all too familiar with death and loss, our lives become a herald for the age to come life, found only in Jesus. What Jesus is calling Martha to, as well as all of us, is to be mini-displays of resurrection power in our lives. As we live lives of surrender and trust in Christ, his resurrection reality indwells and permeates our own. As theologian Gerard Loughlin, says, “Each Christian Life aims to be the life of Jesus in its own circumstance.”¹ We Preach Christ Risen! Do you believe this?

Current Story: Show Video Here.

Recent Story: Thousands of men and women, like Cherelle in our video, have walked through the doors of this sanctuary through the years under the words: “We Preach Christ Risen.” They’ve sat and heard from this pulpit the call to proclaim that word of new life. Remember, that’s what the Latin inscription in front says. And there has been story upon story of the resurrection life of Jesus bringing newness and purpose to those who have called CBC home.

I heard one such recent story just a few weeks ago. It was the story of a man named Ed, who attended Calvary for just nine weeks back in 1975. Like many in NYC, he came here looking for answers and purpose, but found himself addicted to drugs and without hope. He was running numbers and found out later that there was a hit out on his life as a result of his time here. He started attending CBC, and came to faith in Jesus and his resurrection life. I’m sure he heard many messages from this pulpit, but as he reflected on his time at CBC, he said the one that preached most clearly to him was that

¹ Gerard Loughlin, *Telling God's Story: Bible, Church, and Narrative Theology* (Cambridge [England]; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 214.

of one man in the church. A man named Sid, who took interest in him. Sid was a member of the choir. He took time to share with Ed the beauty of surrender to God in Christ. Sid took time with Ed, and showed the love of Christ. Ed wanted to serve at CBC and was given a sort of security responsibility in our foyer during his time. He was to watch out for any shady characters that might come to prey on the unsuspecting here. He was on the lookout for guys like he had been. And Ed says, it was the kindness of Sid that helped him to start afresh. Sid through his humble personal pulpit proclaimed Christ risen to this wayward soul, and, as a result, new life was spawned in Christ. Ed, now a mission's leader for college students and leaders around the country, is still thankful.

Conclusion: We Preach Christ Risen! The life of the age to come starts now through faith in Christ, allowing his identity and mission to become ours. Join with what God has been doing in the lives of his people for thousands of years, this ancient and ever fresh story of new life in Christ. The surrender of our fear, addictions, dreams, and desires is worth it. Death to the old is worth it. And, as we do so, may the words of Christ to Lazarus be ours as well: "Unbind Him... Unbind her... and let them go!"

APPENDIX H

WEEK 4 SERMON – WE PREACH CHRIST COMING AGAIN

Introduction: We've been reflecting on two defining symbols in our midst: this very pulpit—this 130 year old piece of furniture that came with us years ago into this building from the previous one—and, the wording above our doorway which says, “We Preach Christ Crucified, Risen, and Coming Again.” Every time we walk through the front door and see that wording, we are to be reminded that we have a personal responsibility to proclaim Christ wherever we are. This pulpit may seem imposing, ornate, intricate, and reserved for the one who stands behind it, but it should serve as a reminder to all of us that God has called each and every one of us to proclaim Christ wherever we are. It is our collective responsibility, whether through weakness, new life, or hope to proclaim Jesus in this city, nation, and world. These two symbols serve to remind us of the story we are all a part of—the story of Jesus—that great story of redemption. This is the story of the life, person, and work of God in Christ that we are grafted into through belief in him. Christ's story becomes our story when we proclaim him wherever we are.

Tonight, we are finishing our Pulpit Parable series by contemplating that last section of the phrase above our doorway: We Preach Christ Coming Again. Hope. Hope. A four letter word that this city desperately needs—hope. I'll never forget the most vivid display of hopelessness that I've ever personally witnessed. It was around two years ago while commuting back to Staten Island. It was the normal rush hour hustle and bustle. Everyone is nudging other people as they go. I've spent all day at church studying, counseling, praying with parishioners, working on strategic plans for the church with

other pastors—encouraging people with the things of God. I'm in my own world. I'd given God enough of my day hadn't I? With my headphones on, I went up to the top of the ferry and sat outside, just looking out on the harbor... oblivious to those around me. And the ferry stops. Abruptly. An emergency signal goes off throughout the boat. We were all scared. Was there a fire on the boat? Then, screams from those looking over the side at the rear of the ferry came rushing up towards the front where I was sitting. I was one of the last to get up. As I looked over the ledge into the water, I saw the body of someone floating... someone who had just jumped over committing suicide. Face down... her bare back exposed... an image in my mind of hopelessness I can still see clearly this many years later. Hopelessness, bringing someone to that point... so quickly. I learned later of her testimony from the news and papers, about her personal struggles that brought her to that point. Hopelessness. This city needs hope doesn't it?

We think we can gain hope through different avenues of personal fulfillment: finances, relationships—finding the one. If I can attain these things, then I will have purpose and hope and fulfillment. But if you've ever read the book of Ecclesiastes, you know this is a vain pursuit. "Vanity of vanities all is vanity!" says the preacher. He tells us that he found all these pleasures. Experienced them at their highest, and he was still found wanting. Hope can either be lost, like that woman who jumped off the ferry, or searched for down all the wrong avenues. So this evening, as we close this series and talk about Christ coming again, we want to ask a few questions: What is unique about Christian hope? And, how does a Christian proclaim that hope everywhere they find themselves?

Ancient Story: Turn with me to John 14:1-4, one of my favorite passages on hope (read passage). These verses have a special meaning for me. In college, I taught a Sunday School class for 7 and 8 year olds at an inner-city church in Chicago, and we would sing the “Countdown Song” almost every week. It was their favorite song—a song about Jesus coming again. And after we would sing it, we would quote the verses just read: “If I go... I will come again... so that where I am there you will be also.” In this great text, there are many deep layers that we often miss at first glance. John’s gospel is notorious for its nuanced double meanings. There is great theological depth in this gospel written roughly sixty years after the events of Christ’s life, truths that take a second look to grasp.

In chapters 13-17, the “Upper Room Discourse” is the last instructions of Jesus for his disciples who have been with Jesus through the great drama and tension of his story, as he lived it out among them. They have seen him falsely ridiculed and rightly praised. They’ve witnessed him walk toward and walk away from crowds. And in this final discourse to his students, Jesus wants his followers to not give into despair, but to hope. I must give credit to a seminary professor of mine, Dr. Hall Harris, who gave extra insight into this text when I was student in seminary. The following are his insights that have opened up the depth of this passage for me in many ways. Jesus says to the disciples to not let their hearts be distressed. He uses this same term, distressed, earlier on in John’s gospel at the Lazarus scene when Mary and others come before Jesus weeping (11:33). Jesus is “distressed” here. In 12:27, as Jesus is contemplating the hour of his crucifixion, it says that he is distressed. In 13:21, Jesus is distressed amidst his disciples, as he thinks about his betrayer in their midst. This distress that Jesus has been

experiencing is now placed on his disciples in John 14. They are looking at Jesus, and they recognize where his life is leading to. Death. A cross... and it's coming quick.

Into this distress, Jesus builds an intricate argument to encourage them. In 14:1, he tells his followers that the belief they have in God the Father, they can now have in him as well. Trust me. And then he talks about his Father's house having many rooms. Many of us have heard the old English translations of the bible that interpret this word for rooms as mansions. Unfortunately, the images that come to mind when we think of mansions is not what is in this text. When Tyndale and others used this word, at their time it did not mean imposing homes with elaborate features, that you and I think of. It just meant a dwelling place. And that is what it means in John 14.

Jesus is saying that in my Father's house are many dwelling places. I hate to burst any bubbles here, but your twenty-five room mansion in the sky that you've been looking forward to in heaven... it's not there. The Father's house is used elsewhere in John's gospel in 2:16 at the scene where Jesus is cleansing the temple (read passage). This zeal for his "Father's house" is the temple in this passage. My Father's house equals the temple in John. Then a few verses later in verse 19, Jesus talks about the destruction and rebuilding of the temple in three days (read passage). Here Jesus is equating the temple with his body. Catch what is going on here. My Father's house is the temple, and the temple, is me. Jesus is the place where divinity dwells and access to God is available, Keep that in mind as we turn back to John 14:1-4 (read passage).

Jesus is saying that comfort for your distress is found in the Father, in whom I am intricately and intimately linked. I and the Father are one. The dwelling place where divinity resides, the temple itself... it's me! So my Father's house with many rooms is

me. And, how am I going to prepare this place for you... the cross... to prepare in himself a dwelling place for all peoples. We find hope and belief in the Father when we look to the Son in whom divinity fully dwells. And we look to the Son as the temple, the dwelling place of God that we have access to through faith in Jesus Christ.

Distinctively Christian hope is not found in disembodied bliss on some heavenly clouds, in some palatial heavenly mansion; it is found when we are united into the person of Jesus... when we believe in that Father's house, the temple, Jesus himself. Christian hope is found in a person, Jesus. There are layers to this truth in John's gospel in this scene as we see it. After Jesus' resurrection, he appears to his disciples and makes explicit for them this opportunity to dwell with the Father in this new temple through faith in him. And, as well, this same hope that you and I have through faith in Jesus has a second layer and meaning as we wait for his coming again. We now in part embody the hope that will one day be manifest from one end of the world to the other—the hope of God's temple coming and dwelling on earth forever and ever. The biblical scenes of this new heaven and earth have Jesus as the new temple—where fellowship and intimacy with God will be experienced by all.

You and I, through faith, have that hope within us now. Through Christ you and I carry the hope of his coming again everywhere we go. Christ in you, as Colossians 1:27-28 says (read passage). “Christ in you the hope of glory!” We proclaim Christ's coming again when we live in a world of distress and need and hopelessness and echo to them the power of the person of Christ. Power to live now and forever. Hope is what we carry as a pulpit everywhere we go. This is another way that the Jesus story becomes our story—Jesus in our weakness, in our new life, and in our hope. This world needs men and

women who do not shy away from weakness but use it to share the love of Christ. Who proclaim new life wherever they are. And... Hope at all costs. All of these are only found in the person of Christ. Distinctively Christian hope is a person—Jesus!

During our most difficult times, this need for hope becomes ever more apparent. Doesn't it? We get the chance in times of difficulty to proclaim Christ coming again. Preach it! We are all called to this vocation as heralds. The pulpit ministry is the responsibility of everyone here. This world does not need empty promises found in a ten step plan, or new politician or political party, or business plan for your life. Direction and meaning and purpose are found in him. Through faith in him you unite in his body, the temple, the dwelling place of God. This is an ancient story worth proclaiming,

Recent Story: In the recent story of our congregation at CBC—a 165 plus year history—through times of distress and despair in NYC, God has been calling us as his people to declare hope. “Christ in us the hope of glory” for NYC. Just think of our national struggles in just the time period of this church’s existence; slavery, world wars segregation—a sin through which we even as a congregation needed to repent and reform. But, perhaps no other struggle that we as a city had to go through was greater than the aftermath of 9/11. CBC was truly a beacon of hope for many in New York and the surrounding region during this time. It was during those events, that my story, Calvary’s story, and the Christian story began to interweave and interlock. At that time I was a student in Chicago. I remember I was up early in the morning studying as the reports of the day came in. Many of us fellow New Yorkers were in despair that day as we called home to check in on family and friends. The next day we went to a chapel

service on campus, looking for encouragement and hope during this time of great uncertainty.

The president of Moody Bible Institute at the time, Joe Stowell, got up and told us that he had on the line a pastor from a church in NYC that was on the ground bringing hope to those affected. On the screen in the chapel, much like the screens we have here, they put up a picture of our entryway at CBC, with the words, “We Preach Christ Crucified, Risen, and Coming Again.” And over the loud speaker, Pastor Epstein encouraged the student body. I didn’t know him or CBC at the time, but this church was used as a beacon of hope for me and the other students gathered halfway across the country. Why? Because the message of Christ is the only hope for us in times of despair. And here’s the beauty. As you and I personalize that message of preaching Christ’s coming again, as we carry this message from our pulpits wherever God has placed us in whatever spheres of influence we find ourselves in, we are reminded that God has engrafted us into the greater story of Jesus. And this cosmic story of redemption of all things that is at work right now, whether we see it or not, is our personal story as well.

Where has God placed you to proclaim hope? This ancient story of Jesus is ever new in the life of this church as we preach his coming again. This common thread of the Son who lived, died, and rose again on our behalf is the same story that unites us together. And here’s the beauty, the story is yet to be finished. I remember as a child reading those books that would allow you to pick the different endings with numerous options for you to change the story as you went. Jesus, likewise, invites us to finish the story in our spheres of influence... for as long as he has us there... for Christ will return and complete it. Christ considers you a character in his drama. Where do you preach his

story today? Every time you see the phrase above our entryway and look at this pulpit be reminded that we preach Christ. We Preach Christ Crucified—in weakness. We Preach Christ Risen—in new life. We Preach Christ Coming Again—eternal hope. The world is listening for your sermon.

Current Story: Play video here as conclusion to the sermon and series.

APPENDIX I
INITIAL SURVEY

Thank you for participating in Pastor Mike's Doctoral Project at Calvary Baptist Church, NYC.

Your honest answers to the following questions will be kept anonymous from all involved, including Pastor Mike. Therefore, do not feel like you need to answer the questions in ways you think others would want you to, rather, honestly answer the questions from your unique perspective and opinion.

Once again, thanks for participating!

- Project Committee

***1. Which category below includes your age?**

- 18-20
- 21-29
- 30-39
- 40-49
- 50-59
- 60 or older

***2. How long have you been attending Calvary Baptist Church, NYC? (Hereafter, CBC)**

- Less than 6 months
- At least 6 months but less than 1 year
- At least 1 year but less than 3 years
- At least 3 years but less than 5 years
- At least 5 years but less than 10 years
- At least 10 years but less than 15 years
- 15 years +

***3. What is your level of involvement at CBC?**

- Regular attendee with no specific role
- Involved in a ministry of CBC
- Leading a ministry of CBC
- Missions Council, Deacon or Elder Board Member

Other (please specify)

4. In order of importance, rate the following ways in which CBC preaches. (most important (1) to least important (5))

<input type="text"/>	CBC Missions Globally (Detroit, Mississippi, International, etc.)
<input type="text"/>	Weekly Scheduled Services
<input type="text"/>	In the personal lives of our congregants
<input type="text"/>	CBC Outreach in NYC (Street Evangelism, The Bowery Mission, Etc.)
<input type="text"/>	In-house CBC ministries (ie, Bible studies, Sunday school, etc.)

***5. When looking at the literal pulpit each week during our worship services, how personally responsible does it make you feel to participate in the pulpit ministry of CBC?**

	1	2	3	4
Not Responsible (1) to Very Responsible (4)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

***6. How appropriate does the CBC pulpit look in the setting below?**

	1	2	3	4
very inappropriate (1) to completely appropriate (4)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>



*** 7. How often does the slogan “We preach Christ crucified, risen and coming again” above our entryway on 57th street evoke personal responsibility for you?**

never (1) to all the time (4)

1 2 3 4

*** 8. Currently, how do you participate in CBC's value of proclamation? (You can choose more than 1)**

- Through a faithful presence at work and home
- Verbally Communicating the Gospel
- Through sharing stories of New Life
- In Embracing humility and weakness
- In demonstrating Hope

Other (please specify)

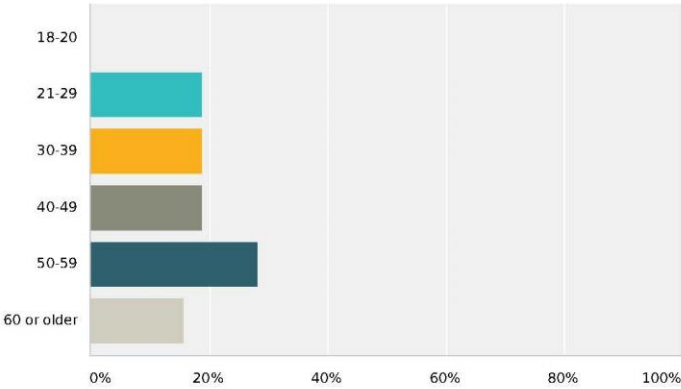
APPENDIX J

INITIAL SURVEY – CONTROL GROUP PARTICIPANTS

Initial Survey - Control Group

Q1 Which category below includes your age?

Answered: 32 Skipped: 0

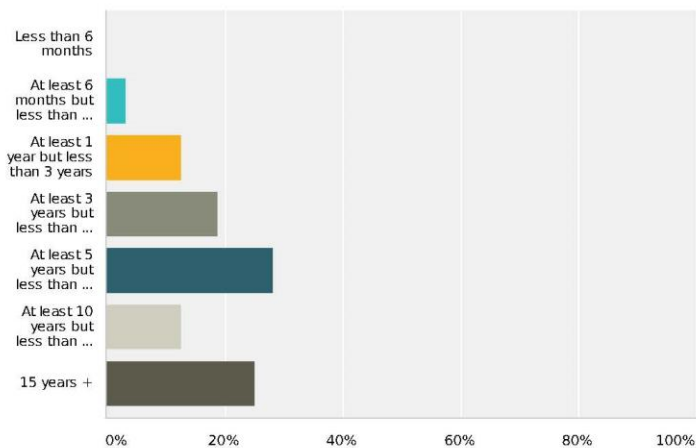


Answer Choices	Responses	
18-20	0%	0
21-29	18.75%	6
30-39	18.75%	6
40-49	18.75%	6
50-59	28.13%	9
60 or older	15.63%	5
Total		32

Initial Survey - Control Group

Q2 How long have you been attending Calvary Baptist Church, NYC? (Hereafter, CBC)

Answered: 32 Skipped: 0

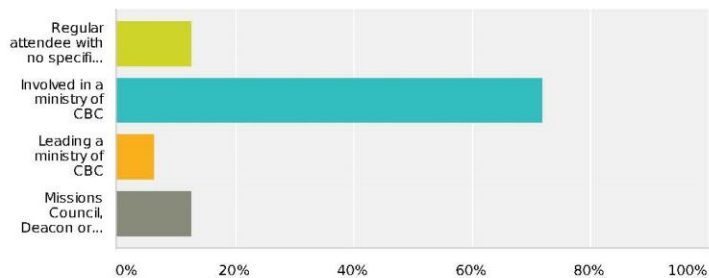


Answer Choices	Responses	
Less than 6 months	0%	0
At least 6 months but less than 1 year	3.13%	1
At least 1 year but less than 3 years	12.50%	4
At least 3 years but less than 5 years	18.75%	6
At least 5 years but less than 10 years	28.13%	9
At least 10 years but less than 15 years	12.50%	4
15 years +	25%	8
Total		32

Initial Survey - Control Group

Q3 What is your level of involvement at CBC?

Answered: 32 Skipped: 0



Answer Choices	Responses
Regular attendee with no specific role	12.50% 4
Involved in a ministry of CBC	71.88% 23
Leading a ministry of CBC	6.25% 2
Missions Council, Deacon or Elder Board Member	12.50% 4
Total Respondents: 32	

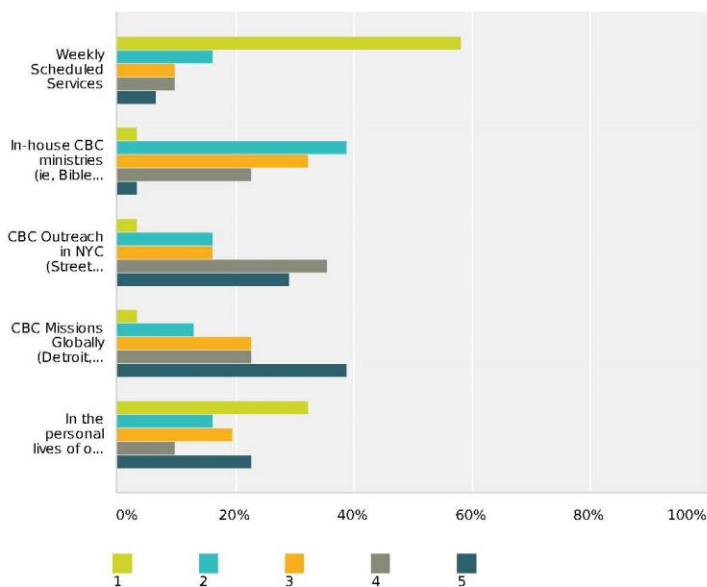
Other (please specify) (3)

#	Other (please specify)	Date
1	Deaconess	4/4/2013 12:32 PM
2	short term mission, social committee	4/2/2013 9:39 PM
3	Formerly Chair of Missions Council for 4 yrs. member for 17 years. Music Ministry	4/1/2013 7:31 PM

Initial Survey - Control Group

Q4 In order of importance, rate the following ways in which CBC preaches. (most important (1) to least important (5))

Answered: 31 Skipped: 1



	1	2	3	4	5	Total	Average Ranking
Weekly Scheduled Services	58.06% 18	16.13% 5	9.68% 3	9.68% 3	6.45% 2	31	4.10
In-house CBC ministries (ie, Bible studies, Sunday school, etc.)	3.23% 1	38.71% 12	32.26% 10	22.58% 7	3.23% 1	31	3.16
CBC Outreach in NYC (Street Evangelism, The Bowery Mission, Etc.)	3.23% 1	16.13% 5	16.13% 5	35.48% 11	29.03% 9	31	2.29
CBC Missions Globally (Detroit, Mississippi, International, etc.)	3.23% 1	12.90% 4	22.58% 7	22.58% 7	38.71% 12	31	2.19

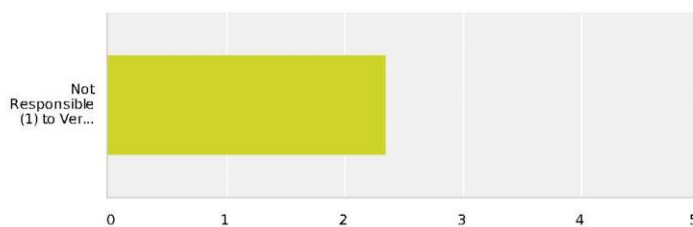
Initial Survey - Control Group

In the personal lives of our congregants	32.26% 10	16.13% 5	19.35% 6	9.68% 3	22.58% 7	31	3.26

Initial Survey - Control Group

Q5 When looking at the literal pulpit each week during our worship services, how personally responsible does it make you feel to participate in the pulpit ministry of CBC?

Answered: 32 Skipped: 0



	1	2	3	4	Total	Average Rating
Not Responsible (1) to Very Responsible (4)	18.75% 6	40.63% 13	28.13% 9	12.50% 4	32	2.34

Initial Survey - Control Group

**Q6 How appropriate does the CBC
pulpit look in the setting below?**

Answered: 32 Skipped: 0

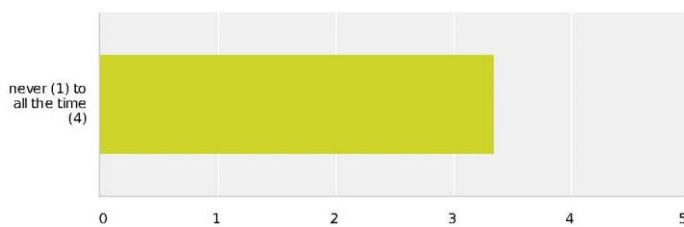


	1	2	3	4	Total	Average Rating
very inappropriate (1) to completely appropriate (4)	40.63% 13	37.50% 12	12.50% 4	9.38% 3	32	1.91

Initial Survey - Control Group

Q7 How often does the slogan “We preach Christ crucified, risen and coming again” above our entryway on 57th street evoke personal responsibility for you?

Answered: 32 Skipped: 0

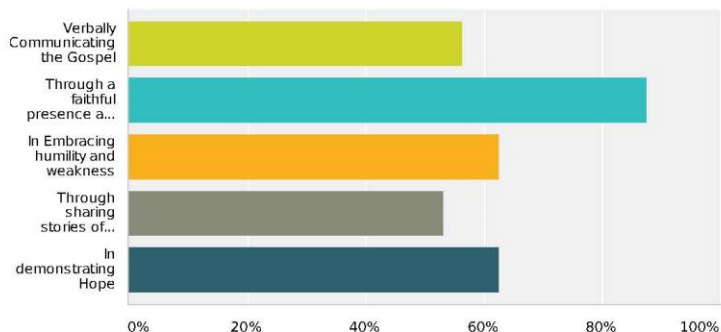


	1	2	3	4	Total	Average Rating
never (1) to all the time (4)	3.13% 1	12.50% 4	31.25% 10	53.13% 17	32	3.34

Initial Survey - Control Group

Q8 Currently, how do you participate in CBC's value of proclamation? (You can choose more than 1)

Answered: 32 Skipped: 0



Answer Choices	Responses	
Verbally Communicating the Gospel	56.25%	18
Through a faithful presence at work and home	87.50%	28
In Embracing humility and weakness	62.50%	20
Through sharing stories of New Life	53.13%	17
In demonstrating Hope	62.50%	20
Total Respondents: 32		
Other (please specify) (3)		

#	Other (please specify)	Date
1	Ministry support (Deacon)	4/4/2013 8:17 PM
2	application of biblical principles	4/4/2013 12:36 PM
3	Encouraging and praying for fellow Christian believers	4/1/2013 7:38 PM

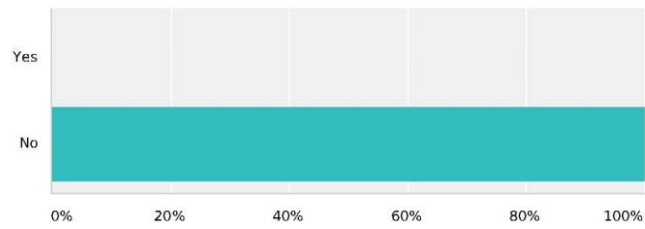
APPENDIX K

INITIAL SURVEY – OPEN GROUP PARTICIPANTS

Initial Survey - Open Group

Q1 Are you a control group member?

Answered: 29 Skipped: 0

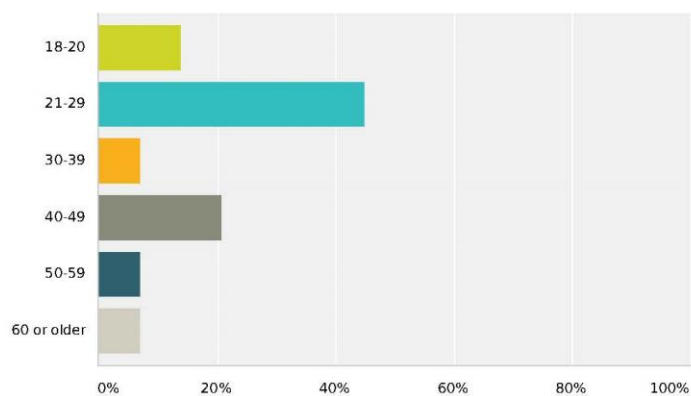


Answer Choices	Responses
Yes	0% 0
No	100% 29
Total	29

Initial Survey - Open Group

Q2 Which category below includes your age?

Answered: 29 Skipped: 0

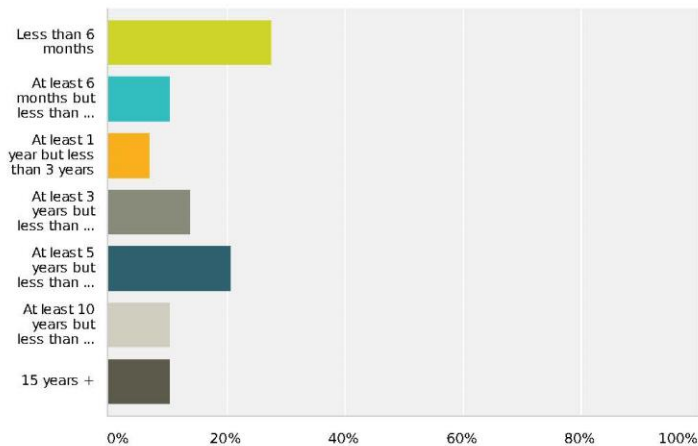


Answer Choices	Responses	
18-20	13.79%	4
21-29	44.83%	13
30-39	6.90%	2
40-49	20.69%	6
50-59	6.90%	2
60 or older	6.90%	2
Total		29

Initial Survey - Open Group

Q3 How long have you been attending Calvary Baptist Church, NYC? (Hereafter, CBC)

Answered: 29 Skipped: 0

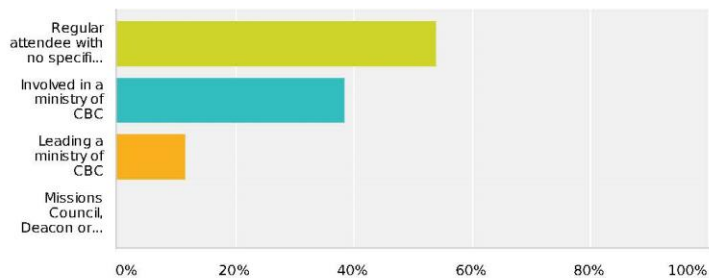


Answer Choices	Responses
Less than 6 months	27.59% 8
At least 6 months but less than 1 year	10.34% 3
At least 1 year but less than 3 years	6.90% 2
At least 3 years but less than 5 years	13.79% 4
At least 5 years but less than 10 years	20.69% 6
At least 10 years but less than 15 years	10.34% 3
15 years +	10.34% 3
Total	29

Initial Survey - Open Group

Q4 What is your level of involvement at CBC?

Answered: 26 Skipped: 3



Answer Choices	Responses
Regular attendee with no specific role	53.85% 14
Involved in a ministry of CBC	38.46% 10
Leading a ministry of CBC	11.54% 3
Missions Council, Deacon or Elder Board Member	0% 0

Total Respondents: 26

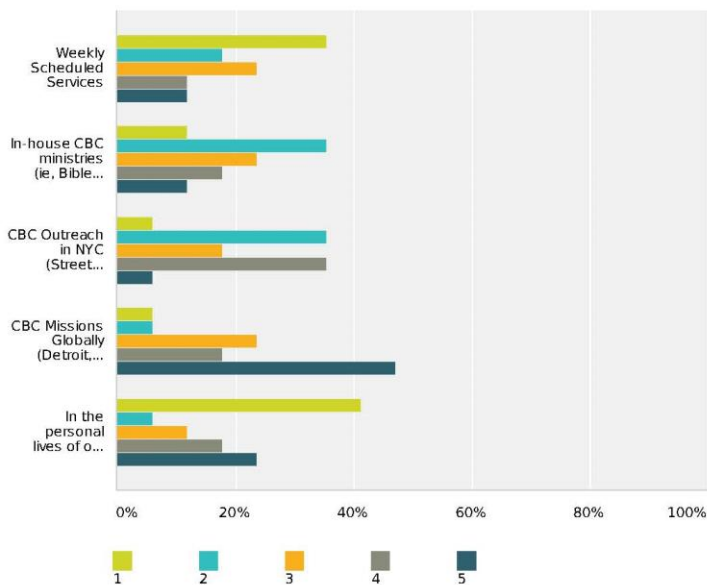
Other (please specify) (6)

#	Other (please specify)	Date
1	Deaconess' group	5/16/2013 10:11 AM
2	I visit but I have my own church	5/16/2013 10:08 AM
3	and student at NYSB	5/16/2013 9:59 AM
4	children's ministry	5/16/2013 9:52 AM
5	visiting on occasion	5/16/2013 9:49 AM
6	Help with worship	5/16/2013 9:35 AM

Initial Survey - Open Group

Q5 In order of importance, rate the following ways in which CBC preaches. (most important (1) to least important (5))

Answered: 17 Skipped: 12



	1	2	3	4	5	Total	Average Ranking
Weekly Scheduled Services	35.29% 6	17.65% 3	23.53% 4	11.76% 2	11.76% 2	17	3.53
In-house CBC ministries (ie, Bible studies, Sunday school, etc.)	11.76% 2	35.29% 6	23.53% 4	17.65% 3	11.76% 2	17	3.18
CBC Outreach in NYC (Street Evangelism, The Bowery Mission, Etc.)	5.88% 1	35.29% 6	17.65% 3	35.29% 6	5.88% 1	17	3.00
CBC Missions Globally (Detroit, Mississippi, International, etc.)	5.88% 1	5.88% 1	23.53% 4	17.65% 3	47.06% 8	17	2.06

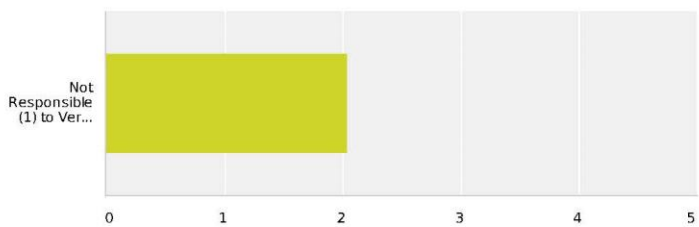
Initial Survey - Open Group

In the personal lives of our congregants	41.18% 7	5.88% 1	11.76% 2	17.65% 3	23.53% 4	17	3.24

Initial Survey - Open Group

Q6 When looking at the literal pulpit each week during our worship services, how personally responsible does it make you feel to participate in the pulpit ministry of CBC?

Answered: 28 Skipped: 1

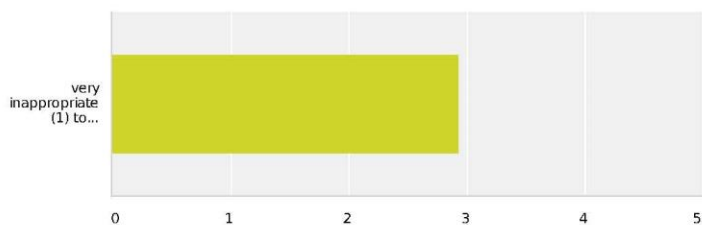


	1	2	3	4	Total	Average Rating
Not Responsible (1) to Very Responsible (4)	39.29% 11	28.57% 8	21.43% 6	10.71% 3	28	2.04

Initial Survey - Open Group

**Q7 How appropriate does the CBC
pulpit look in the setting below?**

Answered: 28 Skipped: 1

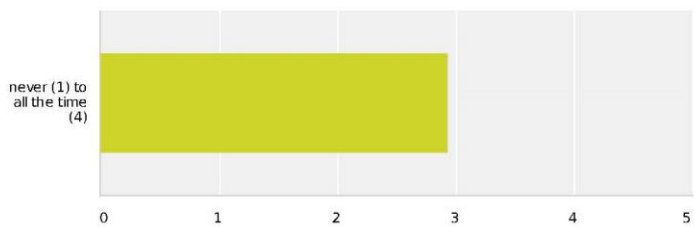


	1	2	3	4	Total	Average Rating
very inappropriate (1) to completely appropriate (4)	10.71% 3	21.43% 6	32.14% 9	35.71% 10	28	2.93

Initial Survey - Open Group

Q8 How often does the slogan “We preach Christ crucified, risen and coming again” above our entryway on 57th street evoke personal responsibility for you?

Answered: 28 Skipped: 1

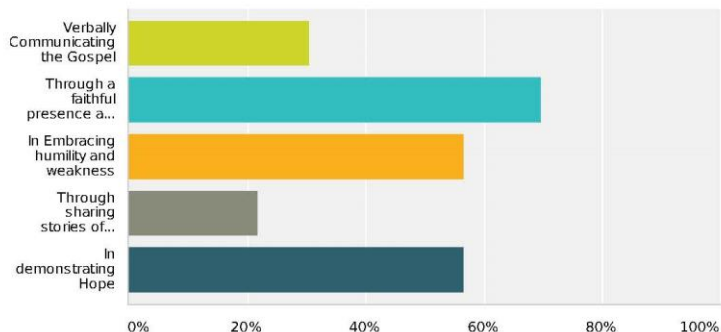


	1	2	3	4	Total	Average Rating
never (1) to all the time (4)	7.14% 2	25% 7	35.71% 10	32.14% 9	28	2.93

Initial Survey - Open Group

Q9 Currently, how do you participate in CBC's value of proclamation? (You can choose more than 1)

Answered: 23 Skipped: 6



Answer Choices	Responses	
Verbally Communicating the Gospel	30.43%	7
Through a faithful presence at work and home	69.57%	16
In Embracing humility and weakness	56.52%	13
Through sharing stories of New Life	21.74%	5
In demonstrating Hope	56.52%	13
Total Respondents: 23		
Other (please specify) (2)		

#	Other (please specify)	Date
1	occasionally preaching at Bowery	5/16/2013 10:17 AM
2	missions	5/16/2013 9:42 AM

APPENDIX L

WEEK 1 SURVEY – CONTROL GROUP PARTICIPANTS

Week #1 Questions - Control Group

Q1 In the “ancient story” from Acts 1:6-8, what aspect - if any - stood out to you and why?

Answered: 29 Skipped: 0

#	Responses	Date
1	The last verse sticks out for me because it says that God is the one who will give the power necessary to do his work. It's not something through human will or reasoning.	5/16/2013 2:09 PM
2	The disciples were called to go out and preach God's words even to areas that were previously avoided like Samaria. It served as a stark contrast to the cultural norms of the day. It was also interesting to consider that they wanted the kingdom to be restored at the time. It was interesting when the point was raised that the disciples could have potentially lost hope after Jesus' death regarding the kingdom being restored. This was before they were aware of and understood the resurrection. At that point what exactly would their faith in God have been?	4/17/2013 7:02 PM
3	Instead of concerning with the time, our responsibility is to spread His message of salvation and who He is around the world	4/16/2013 9:46 PM
4	It is difficult for as humans to comprehend the kingdom of God apart from His word.	4/16/2013 9:35 PM
5	The mindset of Jesus' disciples was still very limited - these followers could only imagine a Kingdom on earth with Israel at the Center. Christ, however, points out that they will receive the Holy Spirit and become His witnesses, spreading the good news of God's Kingdom in Heaven to the ends of the earth.	4/15/2013 9:09 PM
6	That the LORD, has giving us the Holy Spirit freely to everyone who believes.	4/14/2013 9:33 AM
7	When Jesus said that we will receive power from the Holy Spirit. This power should make us bold when witnessing to others. The power is not from ourselves it is from God himself.	4/14/2013 9:28 AM
8	The specific questioning of Jesus by the chosen puzzled me. They still didn't seem to understand Jesus' way of doing God's work.	4/13/2013 11:48 PM
9	Jesus telling the disciples that they are not to know when He will return.	4/13/2013 11:11 PM
10	Although Jesus is telling the disciples that they can not know the day the kingdom would be restored, which could be taken as a blow to the disciples' confidence in their significance, He does make it a point to end by telling them that they do indeed play a significant role as witnesses.	4/13/2013 10:06 PM
11	The pastor's illustrations of Jesus's words to the disciples "it's none of your business" was troubling as it depicted an inaccurate view of the character of Christ. The pastor did not unfold the story in Acts 1:6-8 but rather shared his own commentary on telling stories.	4/13/2013 9:40 PM
12	It was a compelling example whereby Christ's story became the story of men.	4/13/2013 8:51 PM
13	We as humans tend to want know the answers right now and in our own timing. But the Lord declares that we are not to always know all answers or whys at all times or seasons - we are instead to just trust Him in all circumstances and proclaim His precious name in trust and faith. He declares the power of the Holy Spirit will be our power and that although we do not always have the answers to our whys or ifs, we will have just what we need - faith through the Holy Spirit and His Son Jesus Christ to have the ability to share His Gospel with others.	4/13/2013 7:44 PM
14	Jesus explains that it is not for us to know when the kingdom will be restored, but through the power of the Holy Spirit, his believers will be his witness here on earth. Jesus is charging his believers to spread the word.	4/13/2013 6:59 PM
15	What stood out to me in the "ancient story" was how Pastor Mike characterized the disciples and was able to give us a view into their minds when Jesus was talking to them in Acts 1:7-8. The biggest concept I took away from this was that Jesus gave His disciples a purpose; the mission to spread His Word to the ends of the earth. This stood out the most because it is the calling of all Christians. We all have a responsibility to spread the Word of God, where ever we may be.	4/13/2013 1:00 PM
16	Jesus' direction on focusing to receive the Holy Spirit's Power to be witnesses of Him, and not be concerned with the Father's matters stood out most in the "ancient story."	4/13/2013 11:10 AM

Week #1 Questions - Control Group

#	Responses	Date
17	Pastor Luciano recounting how the Spirit empowered the flawed people Christ called to proclaim His Gospel despite their limitations. It stands out because it encourages me: the Spirit can empower this flawed individual to effectively proclaim Christ.	4/13/2013 10:59 AM
18	the Holy Spirit gives us the power to give witness to Jesus Christ	4/13/2013 12:31 AM
19	What stood out for me is when Jesus was asked by his disciple when He's going to restore the kingdom of Israel. He answered, - Acts 1:7 "It is not for you to know the times or dates the Father has set by his own authority." Every now and then we would hear a self-proclaimed prophet prophesying the second coming of Christ. And it's surprising to know that people believe and follow. The bible says and Jesus Christ proclaimed it himself that the Father has set it by his own authority. So, no man can prophesy when He is going to come again.	4/12/2013 10:57 PM
20	Value of Holy Spirit	4/12/2013 6:24 AM
21	Verse 7, where Jesus says: it is not for you to know the times or dates the Father has set by his own authority. This stand out for me because we always want to know everything about God's plans. We are always impatient.	4/11/2013 11:39 PM
22	God's timing is under His divine authority and in His perfect plan	4/11/2013 5:06 PM
23	The curiosity of his disciples when they asked when Jesus was going to restore the kingdom to Israel	4/10/2013 10:57 PM
24	Although the disciples wanted to know if this was when the kingdom would be restored to Israel, Jesus wanted them to focus on being his witnesses. This should be their, and my, main focus in life, rather than getting sidetracked with other things that, while somewhat important, are not the most important thing.	4/10/2013 8:50 PM
25	Vs 7 God is in control of when Jesus returns and we do not know the hour or day.	4/10/2013 7:43 PM
26	The fact that we don't know when Jesus is going to come back, but that we know what we're supposed to do until He comes. Be His witnesses.	4/10/2013 6:49 PM
27	What stood out the most's that Jesus' reminding them to be about the business of witnessing for him, throughout all the earth. It's like when the scripture says, "no man knows the hour, etc." of Jesus' return. He's really helping them to keep their on the primary thing, winning souls to Christ.	4/10/2013 6:23 PM
28	We need to know the what when and why from God.	4/10/2013 3:47 PM
29	Truthfully, I don't remember what you taught regarding this passage but reading it again, it is unbelievable that this disciples still did not understand Jesus' reason and mission for coming to earth. So like us!	4/10/2013 1:40 PM

Week #1 Questions - Control Group

Q2 As you heard the “recent story” of Calvary Baptist Church and its two primary symbols—the pulpit and the message above our entryway—did you identify with either in a greater way as a result? If yes, which one (or both) and how?

Answered: 29 Skipped: 0

#	Responses	Date
1	I think I identified with the pulpit more because of its history and the meanings by the sacred/holy nature of God's Word, and the responsibility to preach without compromise.	5/16/2013 2:10 PM
2	The message above our entryway particularly stood out - We Preach Christ Crucified, Risen, and Coming Again. It's a collective statement that puts the responsibility on all of us and not just the Pastors. Considering it was something that had been engraved several years beforehand and had become the mission of the church was eye opening. The concept of preaching Christ to the world is not new to our church but had been envisioned by members from its beginning.	4/17/2013 7:04 PM
3	Honestly no, above our entryway I just took it for granted that the message for perfect and captivated for the entryway, as people pass by and read the message many will realize that message represent the location of a church	4/16/2013 9:57 PM
4	We preach Christ etc stood out because it emphasizes the importance of our declaration and our walk must one.	4/16/2013 9:43 PM
5	As a member of Calvary for quite a few years, having heard the message of Christ preached from the pulpit and been urged to be a part of the body that spreads the Word, the history of the "pulpit" again, impressed on me that the whole body has a responsibility to preach the gospel through our testimony/witness - not leaving this task to elders, deacons and pastors only.	4/15/2013 9:20 PM
6	I can identify with the symbol of the pulpit. I really think the visual telling of carrying the pulpit everywhere you go is very true to what I need to do more often.	4/14/2013 9:35 AM
7	The message above the entryway. When Pastor mentioned that the "We" means all the members of the church.	4/14/2013 9:29 AM
8	The message; I identify with it because we as believers should all preach the Gospel of Christ.	4/14/2013 12:00 AM
9	The adherence of message above the entryways what brought me into Calvary, why I sought membership, and what keeps mein attendance every opportunity I have available to me.	4/13/2013 11:54 PM
10	I identified with the symbol of the pulpit, only because I felt as though it was easier to apply as a part of my daily routines.	4/13/2013 10:08 PM
11	This again is troubling, as the preacher chose to preach on symbols and not on the authority of Christ as written in the Bible.	4/13/2013 9:42 PM
12	I guess I was struck by the fact that the pulpit and the message above the entry both represent the message of the gospel. Hearing about the history of the church and the pulpit is very engaging. I have to admit that our old pulpit mostly represents to me our heritage, of which I am proud but sometimes feel is a barrier to moving forward. The message over the door, though, speaks very loudly to me because it is tied clearly to the scriptures.	4/13/2013 8:58 PM
13	The pulpit represents the meaning that as the head of the Church has his responsibility, the body has also their responsibility. The pulpit belongs to all. Although we have different roles, we as one have the same goal- to preach Christ. The message above our entryway (We Preach Christ) is to remind us that we are to not only come to learn but to put what we learn into action. The pastor may be the one who gives the message in the church, but we as the body are called to share the message of Christ in our everyday lives to others around us in our words and actions and reactions. I identify with both the pulpit and the message as I believe they both go hand in hand. Together they both remind me that I have my responsibility in my church as well as in my life as an ambassador to Christ- that I mustn't keep what I learn of Him to myself but to share Him with others. WE preach Christ!	4/13/2013 8:08 PM

Week #1 Questions - Control Group

#	Responses	Date
14	The message above the entry way of "We Preach Christ"..... I identify with, since I would not attend a church that does not preach the gospel of Christ death, resurrection and forgiveness. However, understanding that the pulpit is not only for the preacher, but also for the congregants is important as well and a point well taken.	4/13/2013 7:03 PM
15	I identified with both symbols, but greater with the symbol above the entrance. We preach Christ, Crucified, Risen, and Coming Again. As in the ancient story and now, WE are commissioned to preach the gospel where ever we are. Pastor Mike's message reminded me what that symbol represents and the verses of scripture mentioned earlier in the sermon (Acts 1:6-8) show us what our mission is as a church and as individuals.	4/13/2013 1:43 PM
16	It reiterated what I believe.	4/13/2013 11:12 AM
17	The recent story reminds me to take full advantage of (those) symbols past believers created to spur us on in Gospel proclamation.	4/13/2013 11:04 AM
18	I identified with the pulpit-- as a symbol, we as Christians should not lose sight of what the pulpit stands for. The location of the pulpit is not what gives it its purpose; we must be willing to minister to others regardless of location.	4/13/2013 12:33 AM
19	The inscription on the doorway of CBC "We preach Christ... crucified, risen, and coming again." is a powerful message that proclaims what the church's mission is. Anybody, including myself who sees that, can confidently ascribe that what CBC teaches is the word of God. The foundation of its teachings is based on what Christ has instructed His disciples which has been carried out up to the present times - Christ's crucifixion, resurrection, and His second coming.	4/12/2013 11:09 PM
20	Yes I realize how important it is to present Christ well everywhere I go.	4/12/2013 6:26 AM
21	The pulpit, because I never thought about how we actually should be carrying ourselves as though we had the pulpit with us at all times. What we say as Christians, should reflect what we believe..	4/11/2013 11:42 PM
22	Yes, I was challenged to be more mindful of both and take that responsibility with more conviction	4/11/2013 5:08 PM
23	The message above our entryway because that is the Christ that I know and the one that I should talk about to others.	4/10/2013 10:59 PM
24	Both -- the "teaching" about them made me pay more attention to them rather than just fail to see them because they are always there. The fancy pulpit, for me, is just trappings of worship, although the concept of "taking my personal pulpit" with me wherever I go is a useful mental picture of what I should be doing with my life. The words above the entryway are a reminder of what the content of the message from my personal pulpit should be.	4/10/2013 8:57 PM
25	Yes. Especially the pulpit because we carry this everywhere, including work and travel.	4/10/2013 7:44 PM
26	When I was told why the Pastor choose to have "We preach Christ Crucified, Risen, and Coming Again" on the door it made me think of how political religion can be in our time. So many times we talk politics about religion where people state laws and rules of what you can and cannot do, and forget that what we are called to do is Love and tell others of Christ's love for us on the cross.	4/10/2013 7:00 PM
27	I can identify with both now. I always "thought" that this was an interesting pulpit, when I came to Calvary. It just always stood out to me. I definitely noticed the oranteness of it, as well as its antique quality. Now that it's been explained, all the symbols mean more to me. The message over the entryway's stood out because it's an announcement to the world (who passes by it) that Christ's preached here. Knowing the history behind it, makes it more meaningful to me.	4/10/2013 6:29 PM
28	Yes, I identified with Christ crucified, that is at the core of Christian theology, and I need to witness about CHRIST, and it reminds me of truth. I always look at it when I passby.	4/10/2013 3:53 PM
29	The pulpit, of course! You were so demonstrative of all the symbols. I look at it every Sunday and have not fully understood the meaning and purpose of preaching the Word. Moving around, pointing to the symbols, and explaining them - especially as they related to CBC's Biblical history - was very meaningful. Great job!	4/10/2013 1:45 PM

Week #1 Questions - Control Group

Q3 What was your reaction to the “current story”—i.e., the video of the pulpit throughout the city with our congregants in their spheres of influence?

Answered: 29 Skipped: 0

#	Responses	Date
1	This was veru interesting. Not what I was expecting. I thought it might be something related to street preachers. As I think about it now, it is about people who are to preach/share what the Lord has done for them and what He wants to do for others. I was getting hung up on my thoughts about people who scream and shout at people on subways and street corners. The reality is that we're all called to be witnesses in our own way, with our own voices	5/16/2013 2:13 PM
2	There are two sides to it...seeing the pulpit being carried through the city - while I was able to connect with it, it also reminded me of the people who set up booths, etc and are typically ignored/ridiculed. So having a physical object didn't resonate with me as much because I believe people would be more likely to avoid the conversation. On the other hand, for those of us who are actually called to spread the message, the pulpit was a very real reminder of our calling. It not only motivates us to talk to others but also makes us more aware of our own actions - realizing who we represent. The concept of spreading the message through the city, regardless of where you are and to your spheres of influence is exactly what we are called to do. We will be more likely to if we have that image of the pulpit and the responsibility that goes with it, with us.	4/17/2013 7:09 PM
3	to witness to someone we should do it, may be its the first time that person may hear about the Lord	4/16/2013 10:07 PM
4	It emphasized the need for all of us to evangelize even though we are vulnerable to our human weakness.	4/16/2013 9:47 PM
5	The idea of carrying the actual pulpit around on the streets of New York, into the Subway, etc., by various congregants is first, a brave and courageous thing to do. Second, bringing the Word to the people, instead of bringing the people to the "Church", is the way the gospel was first spread in the first century and beyond. Third, those who are obedient to Christ's command in Matthew 28: 19-20, are thinking and acting "outside the box".	4/15/2013 9:31 PM
6	It's a great story that we all have to remember to do with the people around us.	4/14/2013 9:36 AM
7	I could relate to Sabrina's account of always praying for the "right words" or the "right time" to witness to others, but then getting stuck when the moment actually arises.	4/14/2013 9:30 AM
8	Amazement	4/14/2013 12:00 AM
9	I thought it was an awesome visual image to bring home the point of what all of Christ's children should be doing when ever and wherever they are.	4/13/2013 11:56 PM
10	My reaction was how the symbol is received by the general public. There were many comments made in the video about the stereotyping of "preaching", and the probability that a message is received differently sans the pulpit was one that I contemplated during the video.	4/13/2013 10:10 PM
11	Ridiculous, as it is only for the drama effect. The preacher should have used his time in the pulpit much more wisely by simply unfolding the gospel of Christ in a expository way and allowing the inerrant Word of God work thru the hearts of the congregants.	4/13/2013 9:46 PM
12	Seeing the pulpit marching around town was a crack up. Certainly the encouragement to bring the message of the gospel into our spheres of influence came through loud and clear. I found myself picturing the pulpit in my place of work.	4/13/2013 9:00 PM
13	Like the woman in the video said, I think many of us, myself included, leave it to those who go to school for it to preach Christ. But in actuality, WE are to preach Christ! Seminary or no seminary, those who put their faith in Christ are called to share Christ. I am called to share Him in my everyday life. In my job, in my home, in my community- wherever I am I am, to be the light on the hill, to shine His Love. In order for me to do this I need to fill my heart with the fruits of the Spirit, for is it said, "For out of the overflow of the heart the mouth speaks." What goes in will come out. What I choose to watch and to read and what to study will be filled inside me and will shine on others. So the question is, what am I filling myself with? I am called to fill myself with Jesus, and therefore Jesus will spill out. This is my calling. This is OUR calling, WHEREVER we are.	4/13/2013 8:21 PM

Week #1 Questions - Control Group

#	Responses	Date
14	The video drove the point home that we as individuals are our own pulpit and that we can take the gospel of Christ everywhere we go, it is not only regulated to a preacher, but we are each our own pulpit to carry with us everyday. The video was very cool.	4/13/2013 7:05 PM
15	It is a story we all are a part of. I can relate with the lady talking about having the words and hearing the voice to preach, but not having the faith to do it. It was an encouraging video because it showed were we can be influential in sharing the gospel. We can be on the train, walking down the street, at Macy's, and in the office. Being challenged like this really wakes you up to all the places where you are able to spread the gospel and even be an encouragement for others.	4/13/2013 1:55 PM
16	I could relate to the responses of the young lady who sat behind the desk; they were honest and similar to situations I have encountered when applying Jesus would be my reaction to the video. I found the current story commentative.	4/13/2013 11:28 AM
17	It reminds me that the "pulpit" is wherever I am.	4/13/2013 11:05 AM
18	The image of the pulpit on the subway was very powerful. Initially, I thought that it was a bit sacrilegious for the pulpit to be outside of the sanctuary. I then remembered remembered the importance of the symbolism of the pulpit and how it represents the ministry. When Jesus ultimately instructed His disciples to minister, He didn't specify which areas they should or shouldn't go. This made me more aware of where it is that I leave the pulpit behind and lose sight of ministry.	4/13/2013 12:39 AM
19	The video made a lot of impact on me. During the initial survey, when it was asked if the pulpit was appropriate inside the car in the subway, I think I answered that it was inappropriate. But after seeing the video, it opened up a whole lot of perspective. It's true that if you carry that pulpit with you literally, it becomes a symbol that you are about to preach the gospel. On the other hand, if you carry that pulpit in your heart wherever you go, your life becomes the testimony of the word of God. You're putting yourself on the spot to proclaim the word of God by your deeds and your words. The literal carrying of the pulpit once translated into a pulpit in one's heart will exude a life that is a living testament of God's word.	4/12/2013 11:17 PM
20	Wonderful we need to see this over and over.	4/12/2013 6:27 AM
21	It was very meaningful. If we believe that Christ lives in us then what we say and do should be an example of his message.	4/11/2013 11:44 PM
22	I loved it and the relevance it showed to us spreading the gospel in the different settings!	4/11/2013 5:09 PM
23	It was great. It represents what we are to do when it comes to talking to others about Christ in our everyday life. We should always be ready with a message to others as the Lord leads.	4/10/2013 11:00 PM
24	Really well done! I loved it. I need to take my personal pulpit with me wherever I am. It was a great reminder for me that my work, studies, etc. are just forums where God provides opportunities for me to share the gospel.	4/10/2013 8:58 PM
25	It influenced me to be an example of Jesus everywhere. It doesn't just stay in the church.	4/10/2013 7:45 PM
26	I thought the video was awesome! I loved seeing some of the different men and women of Calvary Baptist Church talking about the struggles to remember that in all circumstances of life whether it be at work, on the train, or even in Times Square we are to be witnesses for Christ.	4/10/2013 7:04 PM
27	It's very demonstrative, having the pulpit carried around Manhattan like that.; it surely makes one think about one's witness & claim to be an ambassador of Christ. I liked the truthfulness/honesty of the answers.	4/10/2013 6:32 PM
28	I liked it because if we carried the pulpit with us, our attitudes would be different, and it we be a constant reminder of who we are.	4/10/2013 3:54 PM
29	I was spellbound by every part of it! I imagined what it would be like carrying a pulpit and then how I can preach the Word through my love in action and verbally sharing the gospel. I loved hearing from our people of all ages, talking about how they can preach the gospel of love in their workplace. Great job, Mike! I loved it!	4/10/2013 1:48 PM

Week #1 Questions - Control Group

Q4 Where is your pulpit?

Answered: 29 Skipped: 0

#	Responses	Date
1	1. My family life. 2. My neighborhood 3. My job. 4. My daily interactions with those around me	5/16/2013 2:14 PM
2	My pulpit typically is present only when I feel that people are open to listening and I have at least somewhat of a guarantee that they will not shut me off. The situations are usually with other believers, nonbelievers who are interested, or people who are going through struggles because they are more apt to be responsive.	4/17/2013 7:10 PM
3	Any place, when talking to friends or other people most of the times God name is mentioned, I use the occasion to talk bout Him , what He has done for me , as simple as it may be I'm spreading His message	4/16/2013 10:33 PM
4	To live in Christ & for Christ we must carry His pulpit everywhere we go.	4/16/2013 9:50 PM
5	My pulpit has been - initially with my children - teaching and training them to follow Christ. Also, through my training as a musician - bringing the message of Christ in song to audiences and congregations in various locations and venues from early in my life to the present. Additionally, through a desire to work with missionaries around the world, having connected with many in the field, being an advocate, an encourager and a mediator with the home church.	4/15/2013 9:39 PM
6	My pulpit would be my family and friends. I also like to pray with the homeless around the city. Once in a while I stop and get food for a homeless person and ask if I can pray for them. I learned that technique in "Don't Walk By" outreach.	4/14/2013 9:38 AM
7	The NYC public schools, my home, the homes of my family members.	4/14/2013 9:30 AM
8	Wherever I go.	4/14/2013 12:00 AM
9	As a result of the video I keep it on my back everywhere I go ready to set it up in an instant, like a superman outfit in a time of trouble!	4/13/2013 11:58 PM
10	In the conference room at my job. In front of my students. And at home with my family.	4/13/2013 10:11 PM
11	In my everyday life, I speak to people about Jesus, forgiveness of sins and repentance. I ask The Lord to use me as His ambassador with each person that I am blessed to come into contact with.	4/13/2013 9:48 PM
12	I have opportunities to preach Christ by my living testimony in my profession and with my family. I have several levels of interaction with folks, some intimately on a daily basis and others only occasionally but over the course of many years.	4/13/2013 9:04 PM
13	Wherever I am. My community, my home, my commute, and my in career as a Personal Fitness Trainer in New York City or wherever I am.	4/13/2013 8:22 PM
14	My pulpit is everywhere - at the gym, work, my activities, with family and friends	4/13/2013 7:06 PM
15	Everywhere I go. It's at home now, it's at work now, it's in various locations where ever I go. Even when I don't open my mouth, my actions and character should also serve as a reflection of Christ when I'm on the train and walking down the block.	4/13/2013 1:58 PM
16	One on One encounters with people and their situations which allow me to advise by Jesus.	4/13/2013 11:31 AM
17	It is wherever I am (currently Google maps 32.794174,-86.430371).	4/13/2013 11:10 AM
18	I've only had it with me to minister to close friends and family. It should be with me at all times.	4/13/2013 12:40 AM
19	This survey lead me into a self-introspection of where my pulpit is - I would say in my heart. I will put the pulpit in my heart so that I carry it with me where ever I go and I pray that my life would a living testament of the word of God, despite of the everyday struggles and battles, may His word continue to guide me so that my life will exude God's love.	4/12/2013 11:20 PM
20	On campus	4/12/2013 6:27 AM
21	Mostly at home with my family and also my friends.	4/11/2013 11:45 PM
22	My home and at work and as the video showed, makes me think of everywhere I go really!	4/11/2013 5:14 PM
23	My pulpit is everywhere I go - I do not have a specific place, and I believe Christians shouldn't either.	4/10/2013 11:01 PM

Week #1 Questions - Control Group

#	Responses	Date
24	At work, in class, and at home	4/10/2013 8:59 PM
25	Likely I'm the workplace and in my social activities too.	4/10/2013 7:46 PM
26	My pulpit is where ever I am. Even if I'm not preaching, others are watching me. Watching how I handle situations. In my job I'm constantly in different locations surrounded by different people everyday which makes it tough to truly nurture individual relationships, but I am constantly reminded that I must let Christ's light shine through me and take advantage of the opportunities to share whenever I can. Which can be a struggle for me to talk to and encourage people that I don't know.	4/10/2013 7:10 PM
27	I carry inside of me. I've identified a congregant on the video that said that she knows that opportunities've been there for her to witness, but she's basically talked herself out of it. So, I know that I should exhibit my pulpit more, & I plan to dos so, even more than I've done.	4/10/2013 6:35 PM
28	Good question.	4/10/2013 3:58 PM
29	My pulpit is traveling back and forth on the subway trains, being gracious and kind to people, thinking how I can help and care. My pulpit is also with hurting clients, as I listen, let them know I really hear them, and connect with the gospel when appropriate. My pulpit is also with my family, my mother who is elderly and all alone in her apartment, my nieces who are all struggling emotionally and physically. Of course, with my daughter's family, especially my granddaughter and soon to be grandson. Then especially to care and love my husband, to pray together about ministry and have fun together while working in demanding professions.	4/10/2013 1:53 PM

APPENDIX M

WEEK 1 SURVEY – OPEN GROUP PARTICIPANTS

Week #1 Questions - Open Group

Q1 In the “ancient story” from Acts 1:6-8, what aspect - if any - stood out to you and why?

Answered: 8 Skipped: 0

#	Responses	Date
1	I find it funny that this passage highlights our impatience. We know that the Lord has prepared great things for us in His kingdom, but we have yet to traverse the journey to that kingdom! We want to jump right to the end of the “ancient” story, and forget that there is a journey that has been prepared for us, work that needs to be done along the way. Not only that, I find it amazing that we are just plain-old curious of the events which lay ahead of us, and forget that we are needed and currently live in the present.	5/21/2013 3:39 PM
2	1. The disciples had their minds set on perhaps a self-serving agenda. But Christ had THE agenda, empowered witnesses to preach Christ's Kingdom to the ends of the earth. We must exchange our agendas, desires, and wishes (often self-serving) for HIS agenda- nothing else really matters. 2. That commission requires HIS empowerment. It is not accomplished by even our best efforts. It's his plan, provision, and power that we need. Even so we ought not to say "I can't" but "I can" as HE is doing the sending.	5/16/2013 11:15 AM
3	"None of your business." Very accurate and succinct.	5/16/2013 11:08 AM
4	No comment	5/16/2013 10:59 AM
5	The history of the church	5/16/2013 10:56 AM
6	"You will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you and you will be my witnesses..." Christ has called us all epistles, living letters of the righteousness and mercy of God to all people. I ask myself, am I being a letter of hope for a dying world or a letter offering nothing but words that may or may not reflect Christ.	5/16/2013 10:49 AM
7	God the Father is in control of all things. Only he knows the outcome, and when things will happen. We only receive power through the Holy Spirit.	5/16/2013 10:31 AM
8	1. it is VERY hard for me to stay, to remain, to wait for all things. I could fully relate to the disciples if in fact they were thinking "more waiting? are you serious?" 2. Jesus has given us a lot of responsibility! More than I would give someone like me :) To proclaim His Gospel, he has entrusted us in sharing the Word with everyone we meet. I'm glad it's not up to us to save people (that's God's job), but only to spread the message of salvation.	4/22/2013 6:31 PM

Week #1 Questions - Open Group

Q2 As you heard the “recent story” of Calvary Baptist Church and its two primary symbols—the pulpit and the message above our entryway—did you identify with either in a greater way as a result? If yes, which one (or both) and how?

Answered: 8 Skipped: 0

#	Responses	Date
1	2) I identified a lot with the inscription on the entryway, as it really is a continuing effort for me to be that representative of Christ in this city, as well as wherever my travels take me. To be able to preach Christ crucified, risen, and coming again is also a challenge to understand what that means in our individual lives, and how the Lord has equipped us to do so. The inscription is a continual reminder that even in the midst of my studies, my words, even in my casual humor that I share with friends, I want my actions to point to Christ. To be part of the body of Christ which challenges you to do so is a special opportunity that I love to be a part of. Even so, though, I realize that the “we” aspect may change as my life changes, and I find myself in ideal, “ok”, or perhaps not-so-ideal situation in my life. However, even in the midst of those situations, I should look to my fellow brothers and sisters to preach Christ crucified, risen, and coming again despite the situations which I find myself in.	5/21/2013 3:45 PM
2	Both- we need the balance. The word can become a rhetorical exercise. We need to preach the word but remember that it is Christ we preach- crucified, risen, and coming again- never ourselves. He has accomplished, is accomplishing, and will accomplish his salvific plan.	5/16/2013 11:17 AM
3	The message above our entryway, because I already knew it.	5/16/2013 11:08 AM
4	No comment	5/16/2013 11:04 AM
5	Yes, I remember a lot of people telling me and just the urgency to tell others about Jesus no matter where I am.	5/16/2013 10:57 AM
6	I identified with both symbols. I love how the symbols of the pulpit were given with the cherubim proclaiming Good news. How the pulpit stood for so long being a symbol of God's mercy to a lost world. The symbol above the door is one that I identify with because God has been speaking to my heart lately and asking me to be a faithful witness to him by sharing Him with those around me.	5/16/2013 10:52 AM
7	I know how old the pulpit was, but never knew the meaning behind the wheat, fruit, cherubs, and inscription. It's wonderful that “preach the word” is not written for the ordained preacher to read, but it faces the congregation so that they will see it. The video was wonderful to drive home the mental image/point of our call to share Christ everywhere we go. For me, it makes me think of the lives of strangers around me. Are they hurting? Do they know that Jesus loves them? Do they know he wants a relationship with them? It also focuses my relationship with God. Am I trusting him to guide me and give me the words and strength by his spirit? or am I letting others get in the way of my calling to live by faith? If I am then, then I shy away from God, and step away from my pulpit.	5/16/2013 10:42 AM
8	Definitely identified with the symbolism of the pulpit, something I have always attributed only to those called to lead churches. In fact, we are always to be preaching to others, Christians and non-Christians, and not just through our words. There should be something so clearly visible about our persona (i.e. carrying around a pulpit) that people know we are Christians, whether it's by our love, or by our actions, or by our words, etc.	4/22/2013 6:34 PM

Week #1 Questions - Open Group

Q3 What was your reaction to the “current story”—i.e., the video of the pulpit throughout the city with our congregants in their spheres of influence?

Answered: 8 Skipped: 0

#	Responses	Date
1	3) It was a powerful analogy that our pulpit is not necessarily a physical one, but one that is provided for us in unique settings. Just as churches are erected in various settings around to world to reach the ends of the earth, we are placed in unique settings to share the message of Christ through the testimony which he has given us. The pulpit itself provides a vivid example of how "sharing" ones faith has been something that we've become hesitant to do, due to it's "weight" and negative connotations and history that is associated with it.	5/21/2013 3:53 PM
2	I liked the message we take the pulpit with us wherever we go. We are Christ's Ambassadors.	5/16/2013 11:18 AM
3	I thought it was interesting.	5/16/2013 11:09 AM
4	No comment	5/16/2013 11:04 AM
5	I thought it was well put together. It was subtle but meaningful.	5/16/2013 10:58 AM
6	I wanted to clap when it finished. It was truly inspiring and I'd like to see more videos of inspirational messages as this one. The video was a great medium to portray us taking the pulpit wherever we go.	5/16/2013 10:54 AM
7	uh, see question #2 :)	5/16/2013 10:43 AM
8	takes the idea of preaching and living for Christ to a whole new level. how different would i act if i were forced to have a pulpit with me wherever i went, and would i change my actions and behaviors when i thought there were no christians around me to see whether or not i was living for Christ?	4/22/2013 6:35 PM

Week #1 Questions - Open Group

Q4 Where is your pulpit?

Answered: 8 Skipped: 0

#	Responses	Date
1	New York University Langone Medical Center	5/21/2013 3:54 PM
2	My job in the Catholic Guardian. My home and with my grandchildren, children, and even my wife.	5/16/2013 11:21 AM
3	Hmmm... I guess for now it is at my workplace.	5/16/2013 11:09 AM
4	Kendall, My pulpit is wherever I go to take every opportunity to discuss the Goodness of God. My favorite scripture in Psalm 18 is God is good and His mercy endures forever. This statement starts and sparks the conversation to speak about God and/or the Holy Spirit. God is my witness.	5/16/2013 11:07 AM
5	Among my friend group	5/16/2013 10:58 AM
6	My pulpit is in the Bronx where I live and at the Long Island Railroad in the Hudson Yards in Midtown and wherever else I go. May God grant me power in speech and deed to share Him, crucified, risen, and coming again faithfully.	5/16/2013 10:55 AM
7	My pulpit has been in church. But it needs to be everywhere that I am. Preaching to my family, and showing/telling them what God has done for me. My pulpit should be with every relationship. I have strangers, friends, and family. But I have to remember that when I stand with my pulpit, that I should be taking on the identity of Jesus through the Holy Spirit. In a total surrender and trust in God to work in/through me.	5/16/2013 10:46 AM
8	It's in a pocket that I don't always open up, or am often afraid to :) I am not actively looking for ways to preach to others or share Christ on a regular basis.	4/22/2013 6:37 PM

APPENDIX N

WEEK 2 SURVEY – CONTROL GROUP PARTICIPANTS

Week #2 Questions - Control Group

Q1 In the “ancient story” from Luke 23, what aspect - if any - stood out to you and why?

Answered: 28 Skipped: 0

#	Responses	Date
1	There were a couple of points that stood out to me in this chapter that details Jesus' crucifixion. First was Jesus' refusal to provide any rebuttal to the false accusations brought forth by the Council and secondly the irony of Jesus, the King of Kings having to be subject to humiliation from worldly figures of authority such as Herod and his soldiers. However the main highlights of this chapter that I had not really noted in the many times I have read this was the three different responses of the people who were around Jesus at that time. The parallels of these responses to how people respond to the message today is noteworthy. The three distinct responses were that of the criminal on the cross who asked Jesus to remember him, the weeping women, and the silent onlookers. These responses were in stark contrast to the mockery and jeering of the Jewish leaders, soldiers, and one of the criminals on the cross.	5/21/2013 12:37 PM
2	The Lord's saying they should cry for themselves. Given what he's about to go through that makes you wonder about their hate before God. It makes me think about my state apart from Christ. Surely I am to be pitied but for his grace and mercy.	5/16/2013 2:18 PM
3	Pastor Luciano did a good job of bringing attention to the "silent majority", the crowd that watched, but didn't respond. They are important to me because the situation is the same today. We often focus on the few who actively respond in acceptance or rejection, but ignore the large number who watch us in apparent silence. How we stand up under suffering may influence them in ways we never know.	5/4/2013 6:54 PM
4	sdf	4/30/2013 3:56 PM
5	The entire opposing response of the two criminals on the cross beside Jesus	4/27/2013 12:29 PM
6	The Beauty of Jesus Christ's sacrifice on the Cross in the midst of false accusers and loved ones is a poignant display of innocence. The response of silence to His accusers, the warning to those who cried for Him and the ability for the thief on the cross to know he was next to God is an amazing confirmation when read of Salvation.	4/27/2013 10:50 AM
7	The inactive watchers, like they did with Pastor Luciano. A lot of people out here today like this.	4/25/2013 1:14 PM
8	In many cultures throughout history political power is always threatened by spiritual power.	4/24/2013 11:40 PM
9	TheThe aspect from Luke 23 that struck me the most was the interaction between Jesus and the two criminals during the Crucifixion.I began to picture myself ministering to the unbelieving criminal, sharing my testimony and praying for his salvation.	4/24/2013 10:58 PM
10	Even on His final day, Jesus was steady and focused on accomplishing His work on the cross. With all of the distractions from the emotions and responses from others, Jesus remained faithful as the Son of Man and said "...do not weep for me..." and "Father, forgive them...".	4/23/2013 9:21 PM
11	What stands out is the Lord stopping to say that the women should pray for themselves. Given the state he was in makes this striking. To know that he had been badly beaten and was on his way to the cross really catches my attention. If he pities the women, what is their fate? What is their standing if the Lord pities them? What is my standing today without Christ?	4/23/2013 3:59 PM
12	I found it strange that the crowd willing to kill him without reason.	4/21/2013 11:15 PM
13	Jesus' trial before Pilate and accusations made against Him by the Jewish leaders were contrived and manipulated to achieve their own selfish ends. Pilate, not understanding the true nature of Jesus mission, and seeing nothing threatening in Jesus was willing to release Him. But the religious leaders, wanting to keep the peace with Rome did not want anything or anyone to cause trouble with Rome.	4/21/2013 7:40 PM
14	I was impressed by the fact that in the midst of his suffering, Jesus was moved by compassion and tried to comfort the women that were weeping for him. In addition, at his last hour Jesus made a miracle by redeeming the thief that confess that he was the Messiah and ask him to remember him in paradise.	4/21/2013 6:20 PM

Week #2 Questions - Control Group

#	Responses	Date
15	What stood out to me in the ancient story from Luke 23 were the different reactions to the cross. Pastor Mike brought out some very interesting points about the many different reactions. What really stood out was that we should not despair, we should not mock, and we should not just stand idle at the sight of the cross, but instead we should have faith and gain hope from it. What Jesus did on the cross should be our source of hope and during times of pain/hardship we should find comfort in what was accomplished on the cross.	4/21/2013 1:05 AM
16	Jesus's instant forgiveness to one of the criminals. To me, it confirms that grace and mercy is a free gift giving to all who ask for forgiveness.	4/20/2013 11:53 PM
17	In Luke 23:28 when Jesus told the women to stop weeping for him. It stood out for me because letting pain consume you is not the proper response.	4/20/2013 11:15 PM
18	The most noticeable aspect of this story for me was the disconnect between the witnesses and Jesus' fulfillment of the prophecy of the Messiah. It is expected that those who didn't believe in His proclamation as the Messiah to mock his calling, but I was taken back by the response by those who were considered to be his followers. I think the juxtaposition of all of these responses (all of which are in a way missing some aspect of Jesus' calling) emphasized the need for Christ to be crucified for us to realize the seriousness of sin.	4/20/2013 10:41 PM
19	Despair is not for the righteous but for those who do not know Christ. To know Christ, and to live for Him and to die for Him is the best thing we can acquire for being with Christ and striving to live like Him - humble, forgiving, and righteous- is the most righteous we can be for it is the salvation of our souls. Anything else is unsatisfactory. Despair is for those who do not put their faith in Christ because a life without Christ is a life without hope.	4/20/2013 10:01 PM
20	It was interesting to consider the various responses to Christ while on the cross—despair, mocking, watching, faith, and lack of response. Some of the same ones we get today when we share our faith!	4/20/2013 5:08 PM
21	The part that stood for me was, the criminal who puts his faith in Jesus at that last moment of his life. Many times we don't consistently trust God and we run to him only when things have become dire. It is so so comforting to know that God understands our human weakness and still loves us in such a way that his compassion and mercy He pours out on us even when we don't deserve it or haven't and can't do anything to earn it.	4/20/2013 4:25 PM
22	Simon the Cyrene carrying Jesus' cross	4/20/2013 3:28 PM
23	The part where the criminal who asked Jesus to remember him and Jesus said to him that this day he would be with him in paradise. This helps to demonstrate that although the man was not baptised, he was with God. There are sometimes disputes regarding if a person is not baptized, will they still go to heaven. I'm not disputing baptism, but there are members of my family who are old school and I am concerned for them, but I hold on to the story of the criminal on the cross.	4/19/2013 11:12 PM
24	About Jesus' crucifixion. This includes the type of responses (wailing / despair, mocking, or just staring) and the suffering that Jesus endured, yet he was innocent and selfless. This ties into this message that was preached (we preach Christ crucified). We all have faced challenges and weakness, and how we deal with it is to think about what Jesus endured. .	4/19/2013 9:48 PM
25	What most stood out to me in the verses from Luke 23 would be the 4 examples of how people reacted to the crucifixion. That I could put my finger on different aspects of my life that I've seen myself react to struggles in all four of those ways, and then I asked myself 'why have I not reacted in Faith all of the time?'	4/19/2013 2:51 PM
26	The ones who just stood there with inaction and no response. Felt conviction in my own life that I am called to respond, particularly to a current situation in my own life.	4/19/2013 12:27 PM
27	Of the three groups that Pastor Luciano identify--- those who wept, those who mocked, and those who passively observed--- the group who passively observed stood out to me the most. This reminded me of the notion of a "lukewarm Christian" and how, as Christians, our faith and conviction should not take a passive stance as others mock the Word.	4/18/2013 9:36 AM
28	There were varied responses to Jesus' pain, including despair, mocking, mere watching, and faith. The watching without personal response is equivalent to doing nothing. Sometimes I feel I am most at risk of having this type of response to what Jesus did for me.	4/17/2013 9:50 PM

Week #2 Questions - Control Group

Q2 This week, how can you minister to those going through experiences of weakness/pain/trials?

Answered: 28 Skipped: 0

#	Responses	Date
1	Having gone through struggles on my own but ultimately putting my faith and trust in God will help me minister to others who are going through similar challenges and need to find that hope. In fact, more than the struggles I have gone through myself, I am inspired by those who I have seen endure trials but are able to get through because of their trust and reliance on God. In the midst of the pain they are able to thank and praise God and rely on his goodness and mercy, knowing that He will not allow them to endure beyond what they can bear.	5/21/2013 12:37 PM
2	Listening, Praying, Sharing. I think I'm called to be patient and as tender as I can be when dealing with others. I can be honest about my own issues as a way of showing solidarity. This also gives you the chance to talk about the ways God helps me. Paul does that when he acknowledges his thorn.	5/16/2013 2:20 PM
3	We can: pray faithfully (so they know someone is interceding), expose our own weakness (so they know they're not alone), communicate God's power in our weakness.	5/4/2013 6:58 PM
4	sdf	4/30/2013 3:56 PM
5	I have to remind them of the grace of Jesus Christ, that He is with them through the trials, through the weakness, and through the pain.	4/27/2013 12:38 PM
6	. I can minister with prayer to listen and empathize, so I respond with God's love and grace through Jesus Christ for healing.	4/27/2013 11:00 AM
7	Share this sermon with them.	4/25/2013 1:15 PM
8	Making a connection with those in need and encouraging them to lean on Jesus while they suffer.	4/24/2013 11:42 PM
9	in my conversation	4/24/2013 10:59 PM
10	When I minister to those that are hurting or facing various trials, I always detail the tremendous sacrifice of Christ on the Cross. For by His stripes we are healed, rescued, transformed, reestablished, sanctified, justified and are given hope If we only believe!!!	4/23/2013 9:27 PM
11	I can minister by listening, praying, and sharing my own experiences with pain. I think the Lord helps us through things so that we can in turn offer help to others in similar situations.	4/23/2013 4:01 PM
12	I would listen to them pray for them. try to meet their needs if possible.	4/21/2013 11:17 PM
13	A number of people from the Calvary congregation, including a couple of our missionaries, in particular, who are going through health issues and are in situations of risk, I have determined to either give a call of encouragement, send an e-mail or visit in the hospital and continue to pray for.	4/21/2013 7:40 PM
14	I took time to pay more attention to people around me. I was able to share with one of my friend the fact that Jesus makes us stronger trough our weaknesses.	4/21/2013 6:23 PM
15	This week I can minister to those going through weakness/pain/trails by sharing my very own weaknesses/pains/trails with those going through them. I can actively search and wait for opportunities. By embracing my weakness, I can use it as a strength through God to help someone who might be going through the same thing. Our testimonies and life lessons/stories are a very useful tool in preaching the power of Jesus in peoples lives.	4/21/2013 1:10 AM
16	I would minister by trying to sympathize and explaining to them that it's ok to be weak because that is when through God we can put our faith in him and we are strong.	4/21/2013 12:07 AM
17	By helping them get hope through Christ and his sacrifice for us.	4/20/2013 11:16 PM
18	Fist and foremost, I can offer an ear. With a spirit of understanding and compassion, I will increase the likelihood of speaking through the Spirit as opposed to speaking from myself. Sharing the story of Christ's suffering, both its cause and effect, is a way to provide perspective to the reality of our weakness as man.	4/20/2013 10:45 PM
19	Share my life with them, including my own weaknesses,pains, and trials. But also share with them my savior for these areas- THE SAVIOR! Share with them Christ and The Cross.	4/20/2013 10:02 PM

Week #2 Questions - Control Group

#	Responses	Date
20	This week perhaps I can try to identify with my wife as she struggles with trying to get everything done. I can reach out to my colleagues who are feeling oppressed due to things not going their way. I can be a listening ear and hold up in prayer those in our fellowship that are suffering all manner of trials.	4/20/2013 5:11 PM
21	Though we all would like our trials to be over and done with, the timing of these things is not ours to decide. But how much we trust God to go through it with us and bring us through it in His strength is up to us. It is a difficult thing to understand and do but we'll not find peace any other way. It is His strength we need to use, not our own.	4/20/2013 4:30 PM
22	Letting them know I am praying for them and God will answer. Also, just to be there for them by hearing them out and/or helping them with things that they need (ie errands, cooking, etc)	4/20/2013 3:29 PM
23	By sharing with them the message of the cross and encouraging them by talking about Christ and his love for them.	4/19/2013 11:13 PM
24	Pray for them and we also endure some suffering too. We walk in faith and look to the cross, and encourage them to do the same. Be an emotional support for them, and be selfless. Also think about the level of suffering that Jesus endured which was so much greater, however those who are suffering may not know Jesus. We also don't want to mock, wail, or just not respond (or be insensitive). We need to be an example of Christ to them.	4/19/2013 10:08 PM
25	I always struggle with relating to others weaknesses/pains/trials because I never want someone to think in their time of suffering I'm trying to "one up" them with my weaknesses/pains/trials and how I overcame them, but this week I should look to the cross. I should embrace my weaknesses and not try to suppress them and not just observe, but personally respond of how I overcame my weaknesses by God's grace.	4/19/2013 3:00 PM
26	Be real with my current suffering and weakness. To offer hope of Jesus being my strength in weakness in hopes it would encourage them in their own trials.	4/19/2013 12:29 PM
27	Lead people to Christ being crucified -- which is the greatest display of weakness and suffering in the history of the world-- and finding hope.	4/18/2013 9:39 AM
28	I don't have to be Wonder Woman. Going through hard times with grace and faith shows people what God working in and through a life can look like. But I need to be careful to go through my own trial/weakness with faith in what God can and will do or I have no testimony.	4/17/2013 9:52 PM

Week #2 Questions - Control Group

Q3 What was your reaction to this week's video?

Answered: 27 Skipped: 1

#	Responses	Date
1	The video highlighted two individuals who overcame the weakness in their lives which were highlighted either through others or what they realized themselves in reflecting back. What was key was they both acknowledged their areas of weakness and were willing to allow God to work through them and truly allow "His grace to be sufficient" in the midst of their frailty.	5/21/2013 12:37 PM
2	I kept thinking about my own emotional pains and how the Lord uses that to draw me closer to himself. Though their circumstances aren't mine I felt kinship with them. I felt like my life/feelings were on display.	5/16/2013 2:23 PM
3	It was touching and communicated truth, but did not communicate the Christ crucified theme.	5/4/2013 7:00 PM
4	sdf	4/30/2013 3:56 PM
5	I am moved.	4/27/2013 12:52 PM
6	I was encouraged to examine myself more by Mik's wife conviction and humility when their children pointed out what they saw and felt in her. Also, Deborah's inspiring testimony of abuse and how God gave her new a beginning and can do it for us all.	4/27/2013 11:13 AM
7	Very powerful; as it touched areas of our lives that we keep protected, which need to be healed.	4/25/2013 1:16 PM
8	We must carry the cross of Jesus every where we go and in all of our thought life.	4/24/2013 11:44 PM
9	The video was poignant! It revealed our "transformed" responses to weakness and affliction as described by the two ladies, as well as, identified the environments where we should minister to the loss ie: schoolyards, ghetto, playgrounds etc. Overall, this weeks video presentation was fantastic !	4/23/2013 9:34 PM
10	I kept thinking about my own emotional pains and how the Lord uses that to draw me closer to himself. Was thinking of the pain I've felt since my fiancee suddenly rejected me in 2011. I still don't understand the sudden change (got home that day and had her card on my mantle telling me that she was in love and how our relationship was a blessing. She'd sent that to me about 4 weeks or so prior to dumping me.) Though the folks circumstances were different than mine I felt a real kinship with them. I felt like my feelings were on display.	4/23/2013 4:05 PM
11	It was fine.	4/21/2013 11:18 PM
12	I have appreciation for those who are willing to be vulnerable and share the trials they have faced and are experiencing. We can be encouraged in our own walk, through these hardships, burdens and ordeals acknowledging that God is there for us giving grace to handle the pain or frustration and strength to overcome and learn from these difficulties how to grow and move on.	4/21/2013 7:40 PM
13	I don't think I fully understand this video. I noticed that a lady was crying but I don't know why? I have the feeling that she was trying to correct her kids that point out her own mistakes.	4/21/2013 6:26 PM
14	I thought it was very touching and was a great way to show how just sharing experiences and weaknesses can be encouraging to those who have gone to similar experiences and even to those who haven't gone to similar experiences. If you've been through a similar experience, it can help give you hope and strength seeing someone who has been through what you are currently going through, and it can give you hope in what Jesus can do in your life. If you haven't been through a similar experience, it can still give you encouragement seeing and listening to someone who's life has been strengthened through God. This video was very good at showing how weaknesses can be turned into victories through our loving God.	4/21/2013 1:20 AM
15	I didn't have a strong reaction, it was sad to hear that one of our church member was abused as a child and inspiring knowing what a strong woman she is.	4/21/2013 12:13 AM
16	I was a bit confused with the connection that was used between our reaction to pain in our lives and the examples that were provided with the soldiers--they were not experiencing pain.	4/20/2013 11:18 PM
17	I thought that the video did a good job of keeping the theme while looking at a specific example of how trials can be approached from a uniquely Christian perspective, and how Christ's death can be applied to everyday situations.	4/20/2013 10:47 PM

Week #2 Questions - Control Group

#	Responses	Date
18	As I sat in the pews, listening to Pastor Luciano speak this week's message, I began crying. Having just returned from The Philippines 2 days before where I said goodbye to my Grandma who recently passed, in the first few minutes of the sermon I couldn't help but think of her. My tears flowed so much that I contemplated leaving before the sermon was finished. But The Lord gave me strength to stay. Then suddenly Pastor Luciano shared a story Meeting Committee Minutes - written in 1945 by missionaries in The Philippines during WWII. Well, my Grandma, one of the most humble and faithful servants of Christ throughout her entire 92 years of life, was a WWII Veteran in The Philippines, serving as a nurse. Her time served was one of her most shared stories to her family and friends, an opportunity she used to share Christ's love and honor to her country. Pastor Luciano's sermon touched me more than he could know at that time, because during this time I was broken I was also reassured by Jesus Himself through Pastor Luciano's words that my beloved Grandma, my Lola, was at Christ's feet in Heaven, sharing her favorite stories with Him! Thank you Pastor Luciano for preaching Christ. Thank you, Lola, for your service, your faith, your legacy, and your love! And, Thank YOU, Lord, for Your Son Jesus Christ!!	4/20/2013 10:17 PM
19	I enjoyed the video and appreciated the heartfelt expression given by those sharing. However, I did not relate as well to at least one of the stories, perhaps because it was a bit out of my current experience.	4/20/2013 5:13 PM
20	It was again very touching. I definitely identify with both the women and what they spoke about. I have a lot from my kids about trust. I always picture how I could go up to them when they were very young and just put something in their mouths like their vitamin, they wouldn't even ask what it was just took it trusting that I know what I'm doing. I always felt that must be the kind of trust God wants from us to just open our hand or lives to whatever he has for us knowing that he knows what He is doing.	4/20/2013 4:34 PM
21	I was sad at what each of the women went through, and encouraged at the end. God taught a lesson to the first one through her Son. The second woman was able to see God's hand of restoration in her life after all the pain she had gone through in her past.	4/20/2013 3:31 PM
22	The one about the sons I didn't quite get, but to hear Debra's story and how God helped her to heal was very moving.	4/19/2013 11:14 PM
23	It showed me that we all have areas of weakness and God will reveal it and allow us to examine ourselves. Others may see it and may possibly reveal it to us (God could be using them). When we are weak, God is strong.	4/19/2013 10:15 PM
24	I thought this weeks video was very neat that women in our church would open up and tell us their struggles without being ashamed of them, but with a sense of embracing them for what they were and how they have shaped their everyday lives now.	4/19/2013 3:02 PM
25	Humbled by the message and encouraged to admit my weaknesses and struggles. Encouraged to action and a response to what I am going through.	4/19/2013 12:29 PM
26	It was interesting to see the man stand in the playground with the altar. The man seemed to be out of place, per se, when it came to the neighborhood that he stood in. This speaks to ministering and outreaching to all, not just those in our inner circles/ closed-off communities.	4/18/2013 9:42 AM
27	First response: not as good as week 1's video! Further reflection: a reminder that God can use whatever we go through to teach us and to help us draw closer to Him, lean on Him, and grow more into who He wants us to be.	4/17/2013 9:54 PM

Week #2 Questions - Control Group

Q4 If weakness is your pulpit, what has God taught you through this calling?

Answered: 27 Skipped: 1

#	Responses	Date
1	God has shown me that apart from Him, I am nothing even as far as sharing the message with others. In realizing my own frailty, I put complete trust/faith in God to present me with the right opportunities and the right words. It removes a lot of the pressure of being the ideal person to share the message. It only serves to emphasize God's grace and love and that it is available for anyone and everyone.	5/21/2013 12:37 PM
2	- That I need Him above all things. -That he is close to me when things get tough like the story in Matthew chapter 8.	5/16/2013 2:24 PM
3	Don't hide weakness, but learn to let the message of the crucified Christ shine through it	5/4/2013 7:02 PM
4	xcv	4/30/2013 3:56 PM
5	God taught me to work through my weaknesses by leaning on Him and trusting in Him to bring me through.	4/27/2013 1:07 PM
6	My flesh and my heart faileth: but God is the strength of my heart, and my portion for ever. Psalms 73:26	4/27/2013 11:22 AM
7	Trust him, even in the midst of our weakness, & trials. Focus on him.	4/25/2013 1:16 PM
8	If we are to be spirit led through Christ, we must allow Him to precede our every action.	4/24/2013 11:47 PM
9	That thru Christ, ALL things are possible because He is able. No matter, the circumstance in ones life, nothing is impossible for God!	4/23/2013 9:36 PM
10	One thing he's taught me is that I need to need him above anyone or anything else. One of the visting pastors in the summer of 2011 gave a sermon entitled "When Life Hurts" that was a real blessing to me. He's been in severe pain for years, and said that the Lord had been teaching him this truth over the years. I've said this before but I know he wants me to encourage someone else and that we all suffer in some way or another...that I should be sensitive and caring of those around me. We are all alike in this.	4/23/2013 4:08 PM
11	Sorry I am not sure.	4/21/2013 11:18 PM
12	In life, everyone has times of weakness, pain and suffering. Having matured and been through various life challenges, I have learned that, exercising faith in God through prayer, the Word, and wise counselors, my walk with God has become more focused with a greater reliance on Him. Patience and perseverance are attributes that are learned through experience and make the journey more stable and less explosive and tense. This brings greater inner joy and contentment, in spite of weakness, pain or suffering that comes our way.	4/21/2013 7:40 PM
13	God taught me that not such person too damage to be used for his glory. Weakness should be an opportunity to see him work on our life .	4/21/2013 6:27 PM
14	God has used me and called me to use my weaknesses struggles to encourage other believers and non-believers. God has taught me that on my own, I am not a great person, but with God, I can be stronger than I have ever been in my entire life. He uses my weaknesses and turns them to power, for His glory. He has taught me that, my weaknesses are here to give Him the glory. And for this, I am so thankful.	4/21/2013 1:24 AM
15	To have more faith that only through him we are strong.	4/21/2013 12:13 AM
16	You have to seek hope in Jesus Christ	4/20/2013 11:19 PM
17	The only way to overcome this weakness is to draw on God's strength, the source of which begins with the pain suffered by Christ on the cross. I can refer back to that event in any situation, large or small, that brings into question my own strength. And as a result, be affirmed in the concept that my own strength will never be sufficient, but that God's strength will always be sufficient.	4/20/2013 10:49 PM
18	For when I am weak, then I am strong. Vulnerability, humility, and meekness are seen as bad in today's society. But we are called to Preach Christ, not US. When we put Christ first we take care of ourselves better, because when He is our foundation our soul and spirit are strengthened. It is then we are capable to accomplish what He calls us towards.	4/20/2013 10:19 PM

Week #2 Questions - Control Group

#	Responses	Date
19	Even as a leader, I have found that God uses my weakness to His benefit. When I am open and honest and express that I really have no solution, those around me are more engaged in the struggle to find one. When I am at the end of my wits and my emotional composure, that is just the time that He delivers.	4/20/2013 5:15 PM
20	I've never thought of my weakness as my pulpit before, but He has taught me to trust Him more and to speak of his faithfulness and the strength he has blessed me with when I do share things with my friends or family.	4/20/2013 4:39 PM
21	That I need to depend on Him to pick me up and carry my cross.	4/20/2013 3:31 PM
22	That in weakness, the best and only place to turn to is to Christ and to the cross. Only God can bring one through the weakness and give strength.	4/19/2013 11:17 PM
23	God will show is strength and power through my weakness, it would not be by my own strength, but through God's. It will teach me to turn my weakness over to him. God will also reveal himself through this weakness whenever I am out there on the streets, at work, in church, etc.	4/19/2013 10:17 PM
24	He has taught me that through my weaknesses I have found strength, and that I am called to share my struggles and how Christ has helped me overcome my struggles through faith in Him. Plus knowledge that life isn't supposed to be easy because even Christ had struggles and overcame them on the cross. Which helps me see that living a Christlike life will bring struggles but I must embrace them.	4/19/2013 3:10 PM
25	To not hide from it or suppress it or try to deny it, but embrace it and cling to Jesus and His strength and the cross to carry me through. And to rise to the calling with a response.	4/19/2013 12:30 PM
26	When we are weak, He is strong!	4/18/2013 9:46 AM
27	When I am weak, then I am strong. What I show through how I live my life needs to be how God works in me and gives me strength, not how great I am in myself (which is really nothing but I am tempted to think it is)	4/17/2013 9:56 PM

APPENDIX O

WEEK 2 SURVEY – OPEN GROUP PARTICIPANTS

Week #2 Questions - Open Group

Q1 In the “ancient story” from Luke 23, what aspect - if any - stood out to you and why?

Answered: 7 Skipped: 0

#	Responses	Date
1	It is striking how Christ, even in the midst of physical pain and anguish on his road to crucifixion, is able to look to others to address needs they had. This first happened with the women in which he addressed to be weary of the times to come, and then to the criminals on the cross while he was crucified. This act truly requires a perspective of things to come, and not the occupation of the current trial that he was being faced with, being nailed and left on a cross to die. I feel like these examples would be enough for readers to see this ancient story as a remarkable one!	5/21/2013 2:34 PM
2	Jesus was able to tell the one crucified sinner that he would be in heaven with him, simply because of this one moment if faith	5/16/2013 11:51 AM
3	The repentant thief because I was thinking about his faith in the face of Jesus imminent death.	5/16/2013 11:49 AM
4	The fact that on His way to be executed, Jesus stopped to preach a mini-sermon that demonstrated not his fear of pain and death for Himself, but His agony for the pain , suffering, and death of others. He had battled His own fears in Gethsemane, and all that was left now was for Him to obey. What an awesome God!	5/16/2013 11:32 AM
5	Verse 43 when he said to one of the thieves that "today you will be with me in paradise." It stood out because it was instant, considering he is a thief who has faith in him and believes that he is "God." Note: I appreciate if you can part the chapters and verses applicable to the preaching. I am hard of hearing, it helps when I can follow the topic by chapters and verses, as occasionally your voice gets low, whether for emphasis or not I don't know.	5/16/2013 11:27 AM
6	1. Christ Crucified demands a response. whether we want to or not, we must either say "Jesus was crucified for our sins, and His shed blood is the only means of our forgiveness of sin" or we mock him as a fraud (or as CS Lewis posits, a mad man) as the guards did. 2. the Cross is not just a detail of salvation. we need to look to it constantly, to find hope amidst pain and suffering. with the cross, we look at our own problems and sufferings differently. Jesus identifies with our sorrows.	4/22/2013 12:38 PM
7	Luke 23:22-25 just has me thinking how the people wanted to free Barabbas who committed a crime while Jesus never sin but claim to be the son of God and I can understand why the people spirit were dead no one is merciful and has compassion for Jesus during that time.	4/18/2013 1:42 AM

Week #2 Questions - Open Group

Q2 This week, how can you minister to those going through experiences of weakness/pain/trials?

Answered: 7 Skipped: 0

#	Responses	Date
1	Even in the midst of my own trials and life events, I would love to be able to continue to put my wants second in order to address the needs of others. This would require to be able to distinguish the two... so I would love to be more aware of these situations as they arise, and to continually pray for the eyes to distinguish the two.	5/21/2013 2:38 PM
2	By connecting how God has used my pains to grow my relationship with him. And to tell others that we are called to lay our burdens at his feet because he suffered on our behalf.	5/16/2013 11:53 AM
3	mourn with those who mourn?	5/16/2013 11:49 AM
4	I believe what the Holy Spirit has said to me through the message this week is that my weaknesses should not be cause for consternation, but should push me even closer to the cross, for only the One who gave His life on the cross can rescue me from my weaknesses. Therefore I will boast in Him, for in my weakness, His strength is revealed. I will not be afraid of my weaknesses; instead, I will trust Him to use my weaknesses to glorify Himself. I believe that by working this out in my own life, I can be a blessing to others.	5/16/2013 11:36 AM
5	No comment	5/16/2013 11:28 AM
6	1. listen, encourage, come along side in prayer and take time to help, even on the cross, Jesus invested in the lives of those around him - the thief on the cross, his mother, his family. 2. share in their suffering, Jesus relates to our struggles, I can help by sharing my own weaknesses and how I've seen Jesus work in my life or how he has led me through in the past.	4/22/2013 12:44 PM
7	By testing the every spirit and planting a seed by spreading the gospel love thy neighbor like you love yourself.	4/18/2013 1:45 AM

Week #2 Questions - Open Group

Q3 What was your reaction to this week's video?

Answered: 7 Skipped: 0

#	Responses	Date
1	3) I think the video really showed how being weak allows us to experience Gods grace in a very authentic way. As one of the video participators mentioned, "sometimes, we will be confronted with a problem that you've never experienced before", and often times that presents us difficulties, often which were are unable to overcome on our own understanding. It was moving to see people display areas of life in which they are weak...made we want to do the same in order to show others how Christ is working in my own life.	5/21/2013 2:45 PM
2	Suffering and pain- though not fun- will help us to grow. It is important for us to understand pain, because of the pain and suffering Jesus paid.	5/16/2013 11:54 AM
3	I found it thought provoking unto itself but did not immediately see the connection to the rest of the sermon	5/16/2013 11:50 AM
4	I thought it was beautifully done and very moving. I learned something from both of the women. The first woman said God gave children to parents to help them grow, and that her weaknesses as a parent helped her to grow as a person and as a follower of Christ. The second woman talked about how her experience of childhood sexual abuse had broken her, to how she had only found strength in Christ. Both testimonies were powerful and beautiful.	5/16/2013 11:45 AM
5	The video is very effective- seeing a man carrying a pulpit publically to a public place- to be used to preach the "Word"- POWERFUL! First time I saw such a video. Love it. Great Job. Great research.	5/16/2013 11:30 AM
6	powerful. how often do i expect answers from those around me and get angry when they do not live up to my expectations? without any expectations, Jesus met (and meets) people where they were/are. because things are going well in my life does not mean i should assume it is the same in others. there's a level of grace that God gives us that i will never be able to truly replicate in my relationships, but until we meet with him in heaven, i will continue to try my best to do so.	4/22/2013 12:49 PM
7	I still havent seen it yet but from I remember the sermon was good	4/18/2013 1:45 AM

Week #2 Questions - Open Group

Q4 If weakness is your pulpit, what has God taught you through this calling?

Answered: 7 Skipped: 0

#	Responses	Date
1	4) Weakness isn't necessarily my "pulpit", as in it is not a means for which I preach Christ crucified, risen, and coming again, but there are moments in my life where I am able to share some of the more vulnerable experiences in my life, it has put a tangible "healing" quality to the relationship that I have with Christ.	5/21/2013 2:53 PM
2	To seek strength through Him.	5/16/2013 11:54 AM
3	I do not know if weakness is my pulpit.	5/16/2013 11:50 AM
4	That my weaknesses are permitted in my life so that the strength of Christ living in me can be visible to others. When those who do not know Christ see me struggle with the same things they struggle with, but see me handle them through the power of Christ and not my own strength, Christ is glorified. My life is not my own; it is meant to glorify Him. I am encouraged.	5/16/2013 11:48 AM
5	No comment	5/16/2013 11:30 AM
6	no matter what i have been through (or am going through), Jesus has been there. my problems, my pains, my struggles will never match what Jesus bore on the Cross. in that, i can have hope. and i can share that hope with others who are going through difficult circumstances.	4/22/2013 12:51 PM
7	To remain faithful to him and stay bold and charismatic with the truth and thats the Word of God	4/18/2013 1:46 AM

APPENDIX P

WEEK 3 SURVEY – CONTROL GROUP PARTICIPANTS

Week #3 Questions - Control Group

Q1 In the “ancient story” from John 11, what aspect - if any - stood out to you and why?

Answered: 26 Skipped: 0

#	Responses	Date
1	God raised Lazarus after being dead for 4 days. It reflected His power of being the resurrection and the life...	5/22/2013 12:23 AM
2	It was interesting to contrast Lazarus being raised from the dead with Jesus' resurrection and ascension. In fact, the miracle with Lazarus only served to highlight the greater significance of the resurrection. It was interesting to learn about the historical significance in waiting 4 days. Martha's faith was beautiful to see and Jesus' response that he was the resurrection and the life could not have been highlighted at a better moment. The whole passage underlines hope in the midst of uncertainty and trials.	5/21/2013 12:34 PM
3	a	5/17/2013 6:01 PM
4	I'm stuck by the fact that Jesus waited four days before traveling to see Mary and Martha. Everything seemed hopeless, but Jesus steps in and does what no one else can. It reminds me of Gabriel's comments to his mother when she learned that she would be the Lord's mother. Luke 1:37 is posted in my room at home. He truly gives hope to the hopeless. I need to know this truth because I am weak and fearful.	5/16/2013 2:27 PM
5	The aspect of John 11 which stood out was the timing of Lazarus' resurrection; it was done on the fourth day after the superstition: three days for the spirit to re-enter the body after death, to prove Jesus' miracle of life in Christ against mortal boundaries.	5/5/2013 2:38 PM
6	The necessity of death for revealing Christ's power to grant life. It reminds me that I often overlook the necessity of brokenness in the process of restoration.	5/4/2013 9:18 PM
7	The fact that even though the women knew who Jesus was and saw his miracles up close, they still doubted him when he showed up four days later.	5/1/2013 10:41 PM
8	Martha's answer of faith when she said to Jesus, "but I know that even now God will give you whatever you ask." This response shows me that Martha knew and trusted God and knew who Jesus was and the relationship between him and God.	5/1/2013 8:21 PM
9	powerful message	5/1/2013 7:22 PM
10	The age old story and comparison of the two sisters always stands out to me. Pastor Mike, stated that "belief" means complete trust and reliance upon Jesus, however, in John 11, Martha exhibited anxiety while Mary displayed total trust and confidence by "remaining seated in the house"	5/1/2013 4:44 PM
11	The death and resurrection of Lazarus. I read John 11 for the first time about 2 years ago. Since understanding this passage I have incorporated Lazarus' death and experience with Jesus in my testimony as an example of my rebellious, non repentant life without salvation, and my resurrected life as a result of the Lord's grace.	5/1/2013 3:29 PM
12	Martha's faith	4/30/2013 4:15 PM
13	When Jesus was told about Lazarus, He immediately knew that Lazarus' sickness was for the glory of God. Jesus also knew that Lazarus' death was for the glory of God also. When Lazarus was resurrected by Jesus, there was no doubt that only the Son of God could perform the miracle of resurrection. When Jesus decided to return to Judea, He disregarded His own safety because He knew he had to perform the miracle of resurrection.	4/29/2013 10:25 PM
14	What stood out to me from the ancient story was the point that our identity needs to be changed in order for new life to be experienced. The total surrender to God; the laying down our lives for Him so that He can raise us up with Him is a powerful truth. From death and surrender come new life and a resurrection. These points stood out to me because in my own life, as well as in many others, surrendering myself to God completely was a difficult thing to do (and is a continuing everyday battle). But it is the only way to be given a new life. I lived most of my life with "one foot in the door and one foot out", basically surrendering some parts of my life, but not my entire life. But Jesus wants all of us, because He loves us and sacrificed it all for us.	4/29/2013 1:36 AM

Week #3 Questions - Control Group

#	Responses	Date
15	Mary and Martha were in mourning, suffering the loss of their brother Lazarus. They felt Jesus had let them down by not coming sooner to heal Lazarus. What they did not know was that Jesus would perform a miracle by raising Lazarus from the dead to demonstrate the Power of God resulting in many present coming to belief in Christ as the Son of God. Part of the story reveals the human side of Christ, in that when he saw Mary and others weeping and mourning for Lazarus, He also wept. When Christ heard the people saying "Could not this Man, who opened the eyes of the blind, also have kept this man from dying?" He groaned.	4/28/2013 9:00 PM
16	How Jesus, weeps and is deeply moved at Lazarus death that show his great love for us.	4/27/2013 11:57 PM
17	The most interesting part of this story comes from Jesus' statement in verse 4 that Lazarus "perceived" death would be used to glorify God. It sets the tone for the rest of the story as Jesus performs arguably his most impressive and telling feat for last.	4/27/2013 11:53 PM
18	None	4/27/2013 11:26 PM
19	God's promise for those who believe in Him shall never die. This reassures me that while this life on earth sees much much distress, it is not eternal. Life on earth for those who believe is the beforelife. Heaven is THE life.	4/27/2013 7:06 PM
20	I was very pleased to apply aspects of the story to my own life. Previously I had mostly looked at this parable as one of the great miracles and demonstration of Christ's power over death. However now I see that it has meaning for me, and I really like the part about becoming "unbound".	4/26/2013 9:38 PM
21	The need for Martha to understand that the future, resurrection life, could happen now. In essence, a "new spirit" can become part of our current existence.	4/26/2013 9:37 PM
22	John 11:25 My identity in Christ and my dying to self	4/26/2013 1:31 PM
23	That this time, Martha's portrayed as a misguided, carnally thinking Christian (as a lot of preachers bring out of this passage). Plus, what stood out's that the old can be replaced, then rewarded, by the new.	4/25/2013 2:03 PM
24	Vs. 17-27: Jesus brought Lazarus back to life....Lazarus' sister had faith that he would come back to life. This demonstrated faith and that God can perform a major miracle (brining the dead back to life). Also, the other part that I got was that all who believe and accept Jesus will have eternal life and will never die. The dead will live with God and the living will never die. Death to self (surrendering fleshly or selfish needs) will lead to eternal life.	4/25/2013 9:28 AM
25	When Martha says that if Jesus had been there earlier then Lazarus wouldn't have died. Sometimes we blame God for things that happen or didn't happen like we would like without trusting what the ending to His plan for our lives in that particular situation is.	4/24/2013 3:52 PM
26	What stands out the most to me from John 11 is the faith of Martha. The courage of Martha to say in front of her Jewish friends and family that she believed Jesus to be the Messiah. Her faith to believe.	4/24/2013 12:40 PM

Week #3 Questions - Control Group

Q2 In the Video, Cherelle honestly shares how God has brought New Life to her. If you identified with any aspect of her story, what was it and how did you identify with it?

Answered: 26 Skipped: 0

#	Responses	Date
1	She was laid off from her job but it called for her to have faith because God will meet her needs. I have also been faced with some personal struggles and it prompted me to hold on to His promises that He will never leave me nor forsake me, and that He will always be with me.	5/22/2013 12:26 AM
2	I needed to review the video but couldn't find it. If you can tell me what time it comes in the replay, I can watch it and respond to this question. I remember it but it would be better for me to see it again before I respond.	5/21/2013 12:35 PM
3	d	5/17/2013 6:02 PM
4	I identified with her questioning why her mom and her had to suffer as they did. I really understand that. It made me think of my own pain from 2011, as well as my mother's struggles. I also appreciated her help from scriptures. I was helped a lot by pastors and their sermons as well as the world. I really identified with the struggle to understand why things were the way that they were. The day I got dumped was so painful and confusing. I had just spent a week rooming with the pastor who was to marry us and being encouraged by him. I also had a wonderful card from her on my mantle that said she was in love with me and that our relationship was a blessing. Without one outward hint that there were any problems, suddenly I'm dumped, she's saying she's very angry, says I don't love her, and that there would be no reconciliation. I still struggle with this because I do love her, but it has drawn me closer to the Lord. Sorry to run on but you asked. :)	5/16/2013 2:35 PM
5	Cherelle's beautiful and inspirational testimony was relative to the loneliness and disappointment sometimes experienced in Christian life. But, when we look at the big picture and see what God is teaching you in the situation, you find peace. Also, extending grace and mercy to others as He has done to us is a important to show God's love.	5/5/2013 2:49 PM
6	We all have "unattractive" secrets and/or overwhelming problems that God uses to reveal Himself to and through us.	5/4/2013 9:20 PM
7	I identify with the need to wait on God. I need to do better with waiting on God and listening to what He is telling me to do.	5/1/2013 10:50 PM
8	When we face uncertain times, we need to know absolutely that God certainly knows the situation and his provision is will also be given to us in his time. Not knowing what tomorrow brings, is a little less scary when we believe that God is already there and has a plan for us.	5/1/2013 8:25 PM
9	being born again surpasses anything and everything	5/1/2013 7:23 PM
10	As humans, we are all broken and have experienced hurt as a result of our sin nature. However, since God has rescued us and transformed our lives, we must reach out to others in our sphere of influence and offer them Christlike hope and strength in the face of adversity and trials.	5/1/2013 4:48 PM
11	In 2006, I concluded that the only solution to end the unbearable and unending pain of my dissapointing life was to end it by my own hand. I was not successful in my attempt but, I did get a chance to spend some time in a psych hospital. While I was there I felt the Lords presence. Through prayer and conversation I stated my belief in him and asked the Lord to order my steps and show me the path to salvation. The Lord heard my prayers. I am alive and healthier today because Christ lives within me.	5/1/2013 3:46 PM
12	Reflection and change.	4/30/2013 4:16 PM
13	Many of us can identify with the issues in our families that Cherelle spoke of. There is hope in our families today only because of the love of Christ in my heart. Only Christ empowers me to forgive and love unconditionally. Our human dilemma causes us to stand our ground and hold on to our pride. As Jesus is reflected in our lives, we are spirit led in all of our relationships.	4/29/2013 10:33 PM

Week #3 Questions - Control Group

#	Responses	Date
14	I can identify with her learning from past experiences. She was able to use the experiences of having a schizophrenic mother to make her a better teacher. The profession I am currently in now is allowing me to learn and develop skills communication skills that will be useful in whatever ministry God calls me into. I know that the trials and seemingly defeats will strengthen me and empower me later on in my life.	4/29/2013 1:46 AM
15	When upsetting things happen in our lives which cause pain or confusion, that we seem not to have control of, initially, there is fear and sometimes lack of discernment and misguided actions. But, realizing that the human approach is not the ultimate answer, with the Holy Spirit's guidance, and reliance and trust in God through prayer, and searching the scriptures, the true solution reveals itself.	4/28/2013 9:13 PM
16	I can identify with Charelle that God has giving me a new life. Before I became a believer I thought I knew God but I've felt his mercy and feel like he has given me a second chance.	4/28/2013 12:04 AM
17	She mentions that trials are an opportunity for listening, although our timing and understanding may be unclear at the time. Scripture tells us that we are to renew our minds daily. The recognition of this idea and acceptance of opportunities for revelation is something that we should not take for granted. This is a concept that I have consistently tried to assimilate as new challenges arise.	4/27/2013 11:58 PM
18	When Charelle spoke about being patient with her students because God is patient with her.	4/27/2013 11:34 PM
19	Rough times in life are times that are most important for me to find the things in my life to find gratitude in. Rough times are what tests our character. They are what build our character. Rough times are opportunities for us to practice being Christ-like.	4/27/2013 7:23 PM
20	I certainly identified in a general sense with learning from my trials and difficulties, and those experiences becoming a platform for me to reach out to others. My own struggles with trials and tribulations in my family have shaped me and God's work in me to overcome them have equipped me for ministry today.	4/26/2013 9:41 PM
21	2. The need to trust God when circumstances don't go as we think they should or when we don't understand why things are happening the way they are. If we surrender, we can learn and grow from what God is doing in our lives and He can use it to bless others.	4/26/2013 9:40 PM
22	Being private with family issues and how God is now using that to mold me and it being a part now of ministering to others like she does with her students	4/26/2013 1:34 PM
23	One way that I can identify with Charelle's story- that there're things we'd like to keep hidden, for various reasons. Then, I can identify with the fact that God has a mission field for me, when I teach those who're experiencing the great challenges of daily life, before they even enter my class. And that by being patient, understanding & compassionate with them, it's a reminder to me of how loving, compassionate, understanding & patient God's with me always. This reminds, & humbles me.	4/25/2013 2:13 PM
24	I too was laid off from a job back in 2011 and remember experiencing a similar feeling. I also remember relying on God and having faith in getting another opportunity and it paid off well. I also had great support from the church during that time.	4/25/2013 9:39 AM
25	I think the fact that she was able to use her experience with her Mom to treat her students, who are in the same situation, with patience and care. The way I can identify with this is that I've had experiences in the past that now I see happening to other people. I take a step back and treat them the way I was or would've liked to have been treated in that same situation.	4/24/2013 3:55 PM
26	I've been there. I've not known what my future holds for me and I've been in a place of panic and completely distraught and then finally heard the Lord's voice say "listen, I am trying to tell you something...listen." It's not always what I want to hear, but it's what I need to hear.	4/24/2013 12:46 PM

Week #3 Questions - Control Group

Q3 If New Life is your pulpit, where and how has God called you to proclaim it?

Answered: 26 Skipped: 0

#	Responses	Date
1	Being alone with my family away from me, it's hard... everyday is just a new day, a new life. And facing that challenge with joy and faith, it reflects towards the people I encounter... it becomes a testament of God's never failing faithfulness unto my life.	5/22/2013 12:30 AM
2	In the past couple of years living in the city and attending Calvary, I have really come to embrace the calling on my life and the change that took place when I accepted Jesus. Being in the city has forced me to be solid in my foundational beliefs whereas until this point, I lived in a comfort zone of attending church with my parents, living in the Bible belt, and having values being consistently emphasized and reinforced around me. For me personally, I feel like God has called me to live out my life as an example wherever I am - regardless of whether it is at church, home, work or in doing any of my extracurricular activities. I am constantly convicted by the influence and impact of those around me - seeing my shortcomings and really seeing God purifying me and using me to be a blessing in whatever way I can to others by His Spirit at work within me.	5/21/2013 12:35 PM
3	S	5/17/2013 6:02 PM
4	I don't know if this is what you are looking for, but I think the calling is to be available for service. I don't have/feel a call to be a pastor, but do have a growing desire to serve in some way. It could mean being part of a missions trip, visiting someone who is sick, or praying regularly for someone. Using some of my time for things of God is how I can proclaim.	5/16/2013 2:38 PM
5	Although outreach is the first thought to proclamation, I am currently being taught to proclaim it in my weaknesses which easily beset me.	5/5/2013 2:58 PM
6	The short answer is everywhere and all the time. The long answer involves listing specific situations in my workplace, marriage and church.	5/4/2013 9:22 PM
7	God calls me to proclaim my New Life in all that I do and to all who I encounter. I can't keep it to myself. I am to tell the world that I'm a Christian and to not be ashamed of the Gospel of Christ.	5/1/2013 10:51 PM
8	The faith I had to have in times of uncertainty, has definitely taught and prepared me for future times where difficult situations will come. He has always shown me that I am in his care and that he will do what is best for me.. I have taken many opportunities to tell my kids of times when I prayed for situations and how God's faithfulness had seen me through it. I am always trying to teach them that God's power and wisdom and love for them is what they should trust in to guide them. Especially to pray for even what they may think are little things.	5/1/2013 8:38 PM
9	continue to witness wherever I am placed....	5/1/2013 7:23 PM
10	In all aspects of my daily life, I am privileged to share the knowledge of Christ and to encourage those around me to just simply "get to know Him". For there is no one else like Him.	5/1/2013 4:50 PM
11	God has called me to proclaim New Life where ever and with whom ever I encounter in my living journey. I can truly preach Christ Risen because he bought me from the brink of death.	5/1/2013 3:53 PM
12	I believe it is in small group bible study and in my writings.	4/30/2013 4:17 PM
13	My challenge is to allow God to precede both my thoughts and my behavior. At a very young age I was called into music ministry. Many years later I can say that God has empowered me to hold on to that calling. I have been blessed with the opportunity to express that calling all over the world. The Lord continues to give me opportunities to live for Him and through Him.	4/29/2013 10:40 PM
14	With New Life as my pulpit, God has called me to proclaim it to my friends and family. My family and friends know the kind of person I used to be and by showing them and telling them what God has done in my life, I know that I can reach many loved ones through God. God has also called me to proclaim New Life to total strangers. By sharing stories of my past and how God has shaped the defeats and turned them into present day victories, I can touch the lives of many people willing to listen.	4/29/2013 1:53 AM

Week #3 Questions - Control Group

#	Responses	Date
15	As a follower of Christ, many opportunities for leadership have been presented to me throughout my life. As a mother, one of the most important responsibilities has been to teach my children about Christ and His gift of salvation. Earlier in my life, as a Sunday School teacher, I worked with children; a junior church program was initiated with my assistance; participated in VBS programs; initially, as a member of Christian Business Women organization, I ultimately became Chair of the New York chapter; my musical talents and training have been utilized to share the gospel message in many venues over many years; first as a member and then in leadership positions, I have worked in Missions programs for many years as an advocate for missionaries locally and globally; in recent years, I have taken advantage of several opportunities to serve in short term missions programs in the US and in other countries. All of which, I consider it a great privilege to have been a part.	4/28/2013 10:19 PM
16	I feel he has called me to proclaim it with my family and friends that don't know Jesus personally. That can take a lifetime to accomplish.	4/28/2013 12:07 AM
17	Much like Cherele, I feel called to represent Christ in a mission field that consists of the adolescents I interact with on a daily basis. I want to be recognized as counter-cultural, and when questioned about this "new life", be given the strength and spirit to give credit to the appropriate source - Jesus.	4/28/2013 12:00 AM
18	With the people around you.	4/27/2013 11:42 PM
19	I believe God wants me to use my time, resources, talents, abilities, and opportunities to proclaim His love. In my job, in my neighborhood, with my family, with my friends, and even just the ways I choose to spend my time during each moment, during each day, each hour, each minute. Especially with the people who seem hardest to love. These are the people He wants Christians to love on the most. Anyone, Christians or not, can love those who are easy to love. But those who are hard to love is Christ-like love. I believe this is where He wants me to take my pulpit.	4/27/2013 7:27 PM
20	3. While I am looking to see what God may have for me to do in the future, I need to trust that, right now, I am where He wants me to be. The people who are right now in my sphere of influence are exactly the people He wants me to be manifesting Christ to, just by how I live my life and conduct myself at work, home, and everywhere else.	4/26/2013 9:43 PM
21	God has called me to preach New Life everywhere I go. Work, with family, at church—everywhere. Sometimes I forget or I become depressed or filled with self-pity—that very much gets in the way of my testimony. When I remember who I am in Christ—a new creature, that is when I can “preach” his resurrection.	4/26/2013 9:43 PM
22	My workplace, my home, everywhere I go	4/26/2013 1:35 PM
23	In His truth, wherever I happen to be (to strangers in the grocery store, train, or even with a relative on the phone. This' a call to me, to not shirk from doing His work, but be diligent & consistent	4/25/2013 2:17 PM
24	Being a Godly example to others and reaching out to help those who may be in need. Also, using the gifts that God gave me and putting them to use within the church where ever there is a need.	4/25/2013 10:00 AM
25	Just by my actions in my everyday life.	4/24/2013 3:57 PM
26	If new life is my pulpit then I am a fresh walking example everyday and should share of God's grace and mercy everyday. Although I try to live a Christ like life I struggle everyday, but know that by faith I will have a new life through Christ.	4/24/2013 12:49 PM

APPENDIX Q

WEEK 3 SURVEY – OPEN GROUP PARTICIPANTS

Week #3 Questions - Open Group

Q1 In the “ancient story” from John 11, what aspect - if any - stood out to you and why?

Answered: 16 Skipped: 0

#	Responses	Date
1	Martha's reckless faith in Jesus is quite striking. To blatantly state that "if you were here, my brother would not have died" is the type of faith that I think we would all like to exhibit. If we knew that we were always in complete companionship with Christ, our current circumstances, even in the midst of a death in the family, would be something we could overcome, or even avoid if we have faith!	5/21/2013 2:59 PM
2	The resurrection is the ultimate display of God's power. Nothing is impossible with God. If He can create something out of nothing, Giving back life is easier. It says to all believers that there is hope bigger than any problem. Like a pearl that consumed its irritant. Life swallow/death. The triumph of Life.	5/16/2013 1:16 PM
3	The only way to experience the resurrection of Jesus is to go through the pain of His (and our) death	5/16/2013 1:08 PM
4	In order to live for Christ, you must die to yourself.	5/16/2013 1:06 PM
5	Verses 25-26. Jesus statement that He is the resurrection and the life. I know that whatever happens in this life- Jesus is with me. I know that when I leave here, I will be present with the Lord because I believe in Him. Verse 35 Jesus wept. I know that Jesus was fully God and fully man and that being so- He identifies with human sufferings and grief. He knows our sorrow and our pain therefore He is able to help us, comfort us, and protect us. I think why He is always with us through His Holy Spirit- to counsel and comfort, give us hope, and a future to look ahead to identify with Him. This sermon confirmation/reinforcement of sermon I heard this morning at another church- based on Ps 23, John 10:25-27, and Rev. 7:16-17	5/16/2013 1:03 PM
6	The fact that Mary believed that Lazarus would be resurrected at the last day, my faith is similar. I believe in this life there is to be trials and tribulation as the day to day experience of this life. It was interesting as to live in the promise of our resurrection as the way of proclaiming the gospel to others.	5/16/2013 12:57 PM
7	Very good. Ties in with the last two weeks. It is a challenge for me. I am better one on one. I also read Phillipians chapter one. selfish or good deed... as long as Christ is preached!	5/16/2013 12:54 PM
8	Hearing the story of Lazarus's resurrection again. Reading it for the first time. The faith of the two sisters. The love Jesus had for Lazarus. How Jesus was moved by Mary's sorrow. Jesus saying that it is those who walk in the dark who love their way. The disciples willingness to die with Jesus. Jesus willingness to go back to a town where he was hated/detested.	5/16/2013 12:42 PM
9	1. The illustration of how we must die or surrender in order to live in newness of life. 2. Martha's faith in believing that Christ could do all things. 3. The illustration at the end about "loosing" the linens from Lazarus so that he could be free to experience new life.	5/16/2013 12:37 PM
10	Jesus calling Lazarus by name is awesome to me, because it shows that no matter how many of us there are he calls us all by name.	5/16/2013 12:35 PM
11	No comment	5/16/2013 12:32 PM
12	The resurrection of Lazarus was very powerfull	5/16/2013 12:31 PM
13	When Jesus said, "I am the resurrection and the life. Do you believe this?" it stood out to me because it reminds me that Jesus is all powerful. It amazes me how Jesus was able to bring Lazarus back from the dead. Also how Martha was so faithful and strong to Christ.	5/16/2013 12:25 PM
14	I wondered, and wonder still, about the conversation between Martha and Jesus. Early in the conversation Martha says that she knows that even now (after her brother is dead but before he is resurrected) that God will give Jesus anything he wants. However, when asked if she believes Lazarus will live again, she says he will live again at the last day. So what was she willing to believe God would give Jesus that day if he asked? What was her expectation at Jesus having finally arrived...?	5/6/2013 11:44 AM
15	I loved the insight and the highlighting of important information. I would never have known the three day superstition story and how relevant it would be to Jesus's miracle had it not been pointed out to me. Also, when Lazarus's sister told Jesus I know God will grant you whatever you ask for, it showed that faith in the one who rose again can ignite miracles.	4/23/2013 12:03 AM

Week #3 Questions - Open Group

#	Responses	Date
16	1. I find it hard to understand Jesus' dual nature as being 100% man and 100% God sometimes, how he could show such emotion at Lazarus' grave when Jesus knew even before Lazarus died what would happen. 2. when we believe in Jesus, we take on his identity and his resurrection, his story, becomes ours, that is unbelievable! and definitely something that is not acquired immediately upon salvation, but something that's rather grown into and developed.	4/22/2013 6:44 PM

Week #3 Questions - Open Group

Q2 In the Video, Cherelle honestly shares how God has brought New Life to her. If you identified with any aspect of her story, what was it and how did you identify with it?

Answered: 16 Skipped: 0

#	Responses	Date
1	God isn't leaving us "hanging" when he allows difficult circumstances into our lives. Instead, it is a way in which he can allow us to trust him!	5/21/2013 3:02 PM
2	Life experience- where the only hope left is God's mercy and favor and guidance.	5/16/2013 1:17 PM
3	She said something about not knowing what to expect, and in that moment I realized that a lot of my life revolves around knowing what to expect, and that God wants me to expect nothing but Him.	5/16/2013 1:09 PM
4	No comment	5/16/2013 1:06 PM
5	I believe that God brings new life to every believer- hence: born again.	5/16/2013 1:04 PM
6	I identify with the quietness of childhood trauma.	5/16/2013 12:57 PM
7	No comment	5/16/2013 12:55 PM
8	I thought Cherelle found new life in her faith in God. I felt the video was a little disjointed telling two different stories- the story of her losing her job and keeping her faith in Christ that he would help her through and the story of growing up with a schizophrenic mom and how that made her more patient. Disjointedness made it difficult to follow. However, I identified with her losing her job, and having faith- being like a tree with roots in the river.	5/16/2013 12:46 PM
9	No comment	5/16/2013 12:37 PM
10	Her openness to speak about God	5/16/2013 12:35 PM
11	No comment	5/16/2013 12:33 PM
12	I identified with trusting in God. God asks us to have faith.	5/16/2013 12:32 PM
13	Oh! So MANY! I myself am a singer and I was in a situation similar to her. I was unemployed and the entire summer was living penny to penny. This trial brought a new life to me because I became closer to Christ. I always quoted Matthew 6: 25-27 and Proverbs 3:5-6. As an outcome, not only did God give me a job in music, but a ministry. I love children and I now work with both. From being unemployed to being employed and serving the Lord, God gave me a stronger new life.	5/16/2013 12:29 PM
14	Yes. In particular, looking at one's job as one's mission field and trying to conduct myself in a way that reflects how God conducts himself with me. Also, discovering more about God and deepening my understanding of God through that process.	5/6/2013 11:47 AM
15	I identified with having anxiety and turning to scripture to find help.	4/23/2013 12:04 AM
16	I relate so well to her recognizing God's patience in developing us to be more like him, to be rooted in Christ's identity. We must always be thankful for what God has already done in our lives, but must also always be looking for where He can work next in our lives.	4/22/2013 6:46 PM

Week #3 Questions - Open Group

Q3 If New Life is your pulpit, where and how has God called you to proclaim it?

Answered: 16 Skipped: 0

#	Responses	Date
1	've turned a new page in my life by coming into NYC, and it was perhaps one of the most challenging things I've ever committed to. The new life that began here was a clean slate in which I wanted to make sure I was received well by my new peers and colleagues. I found myself challenged to say that we don't need these drastic new life circumstances to begin a new life, but it indeed is a choice that we can make on any given day! Sometimes we wait for the "slap-in-the-face" wake-up call to start a new life, or be recommitted to old values that we have forgotten. Instead, I'd like to think (and hope I live out) this message: that we are malleable and dynamic creations of God that are prone to change. This change shouldn't be only due to the new situations which present themselves to us in the form of life events, but change should also be catalyzed by the knowledge of who God is, and how he is trying to speak to us through the seemingly mundane events of our lives.	5/21/2013 3:09 PM
2	I was convicted to die daily to my old life and to let God use my life to display His heart of kindness and compassion. Not easy but Christ inside of us- the only Hope of Glory and Victory.	5/16/2013 1:18 PM
3	Oh Facebook!! At my job!! IN my family!! Amongst my friends!! Amongst the body of Christ!!	5/16/2013 1:10 PM
4	Daily life.	5/16/2013 1:07 PM
5	Through the fruit of His Holy Spirit- especially to love.	5/16/2013 1:04 PM
6	No comment	5/16/2013 12:57 PM
7	No comment	5/16/2013 12:55 PM
8	Cherelle felt her job as a teacher was her mission. I feel my job as a physician can help me touch the lives of patients and coworkers.	5/16/2013 12:47 PM
9	To my friends and those around me.	5/16/2013 12:37 PM
10	No comment	5/16/2013 12:35 PM
11	Everywhere... in corporate life, my family, and my neighborhood.	5/16/2013 12:33 PM
12	everywhere	5/16/2013 12:32 PM
13	In my job, but also in the ministry I work in. On Sundays, I teach music about Jesus to children in the projects of the Bronx. Right now I am able to proclaim the gospel to children, but I hope I am able to reach out to their parents as well.	5/16/2013 12:31 PM
14	I try to live my life generally as having a responsibility to preach that in my spheres of influence. I think the two largest spheres I have are my job and my relationships at church as I try to mentor some of the younger men I encounter.	5/6/2013 11:50 AM
15	One of Pastor Mike's earlier sermons really answered this for me. As Christians we can and should find our identity through Christ. This is a calling and a blessing.	4/23/2013 12:05 AM
16	with my friends, especially friends i have not seen in awhile, or don't know where i am at with the Lord right now. i think it's the hardest area to preach and to live for God, where you know others already have a perception of who you are and what you believe.	4/22/2013 6:48 PM

APPENDIX R

WEEK 4 SURVEY – CONTROL GROUP PARTICIPANTS

Week #4 Questions - Control Group

Q1 In the “ancient story” from John 14, what aspect - if any - stood out to you and why?

Answered: 24 Skipped: 0

#	Responses	Date
1	Jesus comforts His disciples and uttered numerous promises by telling them..."Let not your heart be troubled, you believe in God, believe also in me." He also talked about the mansions that He's preparing and declared that He is the truth and the life... In this passages, he brought out hope though the promises he gave.	5/22/2013 1:08 AM
2	This passage highlighted the part about Jesus' coming again and what to place our hope in until his second coming. It's interesting that it brings as much comfort and hope to us now as it did to his disciples then. In fact, we probably understand it better now than they did then - at least at the time that Jesus was telling them this, before his death and resurrection. It also beautifully presents the distinct yet related aspects of each person of the Trinity - the Father, Son, and the Holy Spirit and their intricate functioning in our lives. This passage answers many of the questions that we may face as to the reason in whom we place our trust and hope in.	5/20/2013 4:23 PM
3	The aspect of this story that stood to me is the fact that God told why he need to go away but of the fact that we need to have the assurance and the garentie that we will spend eternity in his presence. I also love the intimacy between the father and the Som which describe what our personal relationship with Christ should look like.	5/16/2013 5:27 AM
4	It is humbling to consider the fact that Jesus has Himself prepared a place in heaven especially for me when I take into account my sinful nature and consequential actions. What's more, He promises to dwell with me in that place. Jesus is imploring us to not lose hope by recognizing that such a future lies ahead for those who believe in Him.	5/12/2013 9:46 AM
5	Jesus promising that he is making a place for us in His father's house is very comforting to me. Sometimes even as Christians we can get doubtful an wonder what things will be like for us. The hope and promise is reinforcing our beliefs especially in things we cannot yet see.	5/10/2013 7:48 PM
6	Our eternal dwelling - what a promise to look forward to	5/9/2013 9:31 PM
7	When Jesus said let not your heart be troubled, meaning don't be in distress regardless of the situation that one has , because Christ is the only solution to our problem he's our hope and helper during these situations	5/9/2013 2:56 PM
8	In the ancient story, what stood out the most to me was Jesus' encouragement for us. Jesus went to the cross and also prepared a dwelling place for us in Him. This is an amazing hope that we have in Jesus Christ! His words of encouragement and hope were awesome. Pastor Mike pointed out that Jesus says "Do not let your heart be troubled" or distressed and so often we do let our hearts distress. But through our hope in Jesus, we should be able to overcome all troubles through our faith in Jesus.	5/8/2013 11:54 PM
9	A great comfort comes over me as I read John 14, as Jesus tells us that he has prepares a place for us. The only way to get there is by believing in Him. We have to tell this great news to as many that will hear us but that is also one of the hardest things to do as the "world" does not want to hear what we want to tell them.	5/8/2013 11:36 PM
10	Verse 1: Do not let your hearts be troubled. You believe in God; believe also in me. This stood out to me because often times I feel anxious or depressed about things that happen in my everyday life, but according to this verse, if I believe in Jesus then I should not have a troubled heart.	5/8/2013 11:13 PM
11	The fact that Jesus lets us know that He will be coming back to receive us one day.	5/6/2013 10:56 PM
12	The explanation of how Christ is our dwelling place was a fresh look at John 14 instead seeing it as a place of residence.	5/5/2013 11:00 PM
13	John 14 is packed with many concepts of truth and hope, but the most significant one for me is the trinity. Knowing without a doubt that Jesus himself left us the spirit of truth I can only be the greatest hope I could ever expect.	5/5/2013 6:44 PM
14	Jesus offers His followers a hope that transcends this world by encouraging them not to be troubled in heart. He tells us that His Father's house has many dwelling places where He is going to prepare for each one, and promises that He will come again to receive us to Himself, welcoming us to His eternal home.	5/5/2013 5:10 PM

Week #4 Questions - Control Group

#	Responses	Date
15	Jesus is my mansion, my dwelling place. I always assumed this passage talked about Jesus going to heaven so I could ultimately go there too, but now I understand that it also talks about the present, that my dwelling place is Jesus. Kind of like where in Psalms it talks about God having been our dwelling place through all generations, Jesus is our dwelling place from eternity past through the present and on into eternity future.	5/5/2013 4:41 PM
16	I had not thought previously about the "rooms" that Christ was preparing was really just him preparing Himself, and that these rooms represented access to God and the dwelling of divinity. I was encouraged that Christ (the hope of glory) is in me, and that this hope is another example of Jesus' story becoming my story.	5/5/2013 4:39 PM
17	Equating God's House with Christ. It moves the "many mansion" concept from simple, spacial residence to a relational position in God and Christ, which is consistent with the remainder of the Upper Room discourse.	5/4/2013 10:01 PM
18	Jesus begins John 14 saying, "Do not let your hearts be troubled." This verse alone stands out to me because we tend to rely so much on our hearts and feelings. However it is also said that our hearts can be deceived. So when we are feeling feelings such as anxiety, worry, stress, bitterness, we have to remember Jesus telling us not to LET our hearts be troubled, as in we have the choice for our hearts to be in trouble or to be in trust. He reminds me again today to choose trust, for it is the antithesis of a troubled, anxious heart.	5/4/2013 7:14 PM
19	I guess what stands out to me is trust. Why do I worry and why do I ever question the paths that I am supposed to travel upon when Jesus says "Trust in God, trust also in me."	5/3/2013 8:57 PM
20	The first four verses of the story. Because right now He is preparing a place for me up in heaven as long as I live according to His word.	5/2/2013 6:07 PM
21	Verse 3 as it speaks of our hope being in the person of Jesus...that is distinctive to us, or "Christian hope" which is so different than worldly hope.	5/2/2013 10:52 AM
22	I think I am most impressed by the Lord's effort to assure us that he and God the father are the same. I love that he wants us to be certain of what we have in knowing/trusting him. He's saying this as a heavy storm is approaching. Dark evil clouds are on the horizon and he's saying that his people can be at peace because they know the way to God and eternal life with him. Given the stormy nature of life in this fallen world that is great comfort indeed. Praise God for removing the scales from my eyes and unstopping my ears so that I can hear truth.	5/1/2013 11:09 PM
23	Jesus saying, "The temple His Father's house", and in His Father's house are many dwellings.	5/1/2013 6:06 PM
24	Not to let our hearts to be distressed and lose hope. God is our father. If we believe in God, we believe in Jesus. He will make a place for us and he will return. We have hope as God's children.	5/1/2013 3:32 PM

Week #4 Questions - Control Group

Q2 How can Calvary Baptist Church continue proclaiming Hope in our City, Nation and World?

Answered: 24 Skipped: 0

#	Responses	Date
1	By reaching outside of the four corners of Calvary by outreaches and community involvement. Also by equipping its constituents/member to share the good news of salvation not just by words but also by the lives of each and every member.	5/22/2013 1:11 AM
2	Through the various ministries and worship services that cater to individuals in their different walks of life. By constantly reinforcing the gospel in messages and group discussion, paying special attention that everything that is preached comes directly from the Bible and through Godly, divine inspiration. Also by challenging congregants to continually renew and develop themselves, not becoming too comfortable. I have noticed that the church leaders identify ways to challenge people to expand outside of their comfort zones by taking additional responsibility in different areas. This has personally made a huge impact in my life and I know in others' as well.	5/20/2013 4:23 PM
3	By serving God people and be willing to step out of our confort Zone.	5/16/2013 5:28 AM
4	Our church has a solid foundation in it's central message and articles of faith. I feel that in abiding by these core beliefs throughout the church's ministries, we will continue to provide hope to the city, nation, and world. Every decision must come back to these core beliefs regardless of the changes that take place in our society.	5/12/2013 9:56 AM
5	Proclaiming God's word and his promises gives people hope in their time of confusion and despair.	5/10/2013 7:49 PM
6	Calvary has been excellent in its evangelical outreaches.	5/9/2013 9:32 PM
7	Christ has commanded us to preach the gospel throughout the world, so that every one may know about God love for us, and what Jesus dis for us to be save	5/9/2013 3:04 PM
8	Calvary Baptist Church can continue to proclaim hope by staying true to our calling: to preach Christ crucified, risen, and coming again. This is to be done by spreading the word in all our spheres of influence; sure as at work, at home with our families, and with our friends. We can also do this by spreading the Gospel to those in need, by being observant, and praying for opportunities to share the Gospel.	5/8/2013 11:58 PM
9	Calvary needs to be an example of Hope by always showing the truth in LOVE. We have to love our neighbors, our enemies as Christ has shown us.	5/8/2013 11:38 PM
10	Sharing the gospel with those in our sphere's of influence. Turning to God in every decision that we make as a church and letting the Spirit lead us. We can lead our lives by making sure that those around us know that we are putting our hope in Jesus Christ.	5/8/2013 11:15 PM
11	Keep preaching the Word of God to all peoples, wherever they are. Not just the preachers, but all of the members and visitors. Live a life for Christ so that others may see Him in us.	5/6/2013 10:58 PM
12	Calvary's continued unashamed commitment to the Gospel and being led by the Holy Spirit will ever proclaim the Hope in Christ.	5/5/2013 11:09 PM
13	By each member living for Christ in there everyday walk preaching Christ crucified and risen again in our sphere of influence.	5/5/2013 6:50 PM
14	By making Jesus' story our story, we, by association, must proclaim the gospel message. By seriously accepting the challenge that the "Pulpit" is not only the place of proclamation for the "professional preacher" but for every member of the church body, we have a responsibility to share this message of hope, in our work place, in our homes, in our Nation (through our outreaches to such places as Detroit, Mississippi, Brazil, etc.) and in countries around the globe where those whom we have sent to preach the gospel are our voices in the spiritually dark places in the world.	5/5/2013 5:25 PM
15	The obvious answer, to me, is through its many ministries. Some of those ministries are directed toward those who currently have no hope but others are directed to those of us who DO have hope, so that we are better equipped to take that hope into our day to day activities, wherever they are. We need to be sure that our ministries don't just talk platitudes or give theoretical knowledge but that they touch people in the heart and make them/us really encounter and experience God and His grace and mercy.	5/5/2013 4:45 PM

Week #4 Questions - Control Group

#	Responses	Date
16	Calvary can continue to preach God's word not only through the pulpit, but through the lives of its people out in the community, sharing with others that are desperate for such a wonderful hope as we have.	5/5/2013 4:40 PM
17	By proclaiming that His return is as real as His life, death and resurrection.	5/4/2013 10:03 PM
18	By continuing to encourage the body of the church not to be in despair, for the countdown to Christ's coming again continues everyday. With this knowledge, we as the body are trained to bring our pulpit everywhere we go, in our city, our nation, and our world. With the sermon studies, small group studies, and fellowship opportunities can we as the Church come together to strengthen our walk so we are encouraged to stay faithful to our walk outside the church- in our homes, workplace, neighborhood... everywhere we go. I also pray for the CBC ushers. As the "workers" of the church they hold a place to make an impact on the people of the church, members, new people, and especially visitors. At times I find that they (ushers) have very serious looks (no smile). I believe a smile is one of the most welcoming and giving features a person can offer someone, especially a stranger. I pray for our deacons and ushers, that they will offer a genuine smile more often!	5/4/2013 7:22 PM
19	Calvary can continue proclaiming Hope in our city by continuing to share our faith in our Savior, Jesus Christ.	5/3/2013 9:05 PM
20	I think individually, as we each go out on our own way and throughout our daily living we can be able to do that through examples of our lives and our relationships with people.	5/2/2013 6:08 PM
21	By each one of us taking the pulpit wherever we go, using each opportunity the Lord gives us each day to proclaim Him as our hope.	5/2/2013 10:53 AM
22	I think we are doing many things to make this so. It would be great to see more small groups in various neighborhoods that can be outposts for members to come together for prayer and study of the word. Also need to keep up support for Alphonse and street evangelism. Since I am doing this online, I believe we also need to keep up with technology and the way it can be used to reach the lost.	5/1/2013 11:12 PM
23	By taking the gospel and continuing to relate the gospel of Jesus Christ to their lives. People don't think they need God, they are self-sufficient.	5/1/2013 6:08 PM
24	Continue teaching these practical messages to us and also evangelism and ministry is very important to all of us, the city, USA, and rest of the world.	5/1/2013 3:33 PM

Week #4 Questions - Control Group

Q3 Where has God uniquely entrusted you to proclaim Hope? AND... What does hope look like in that setting?

Answered: 24 Skipped: 0

#	Responses	Date
1	In my work place. I work in a geriatric setting as a healthcare provider. I encounter a lot of old people who are nearing the dawning of their lives. You can see different phases of their situation. Some has lost hope and some are just enjoying the last moments of their lives. I give hope by making them comfortable and making them happy with the the hums of tunes and words of encouragement to stay strong. Hope in this setting is looking forward to the last breath of their lives.	5/22/2013 1:16 AM
2	I have lately been presented with opportunities in my family and with certain close friends that I've made either at work or through church/Crossroads. God has challenged me to specifically develop certain relationships with these individuals where I am able to relate to them in the struggles that they're facing and share in their moments of weakness/trials and encourage them through my own experiences. And throughout this process, God has placed other individuals in my life to strengthen me and build me up as well.	5/20/2013 4:23 PM
3	I have the opportunity to share Christ on campus. In that setting proclaim hope mean helping out as much as I can student or just listening and showing Christ love on display on a daily basic.	5/16/2013 5:31 AM
4	I have been entrusted to proclaim hope in the lives of the young people I interact with on a daily basis. These adolescents are trying to paint a picture of the world they live in, and in most cases are doing so with brushes provided to them by society that are filled with an idea of hope disguised as the "American Dream". I have been called to provide them with an alternative notion of hope, one filled with love and compassion and derived from the only source of true love: Jesus.	5/12/2013 10:00 AM
5	Sometimes when my kids or friends are questioning why things are the way they are or why terrible things are going on, it comforts even me while I tell them that we live in a fallen world and because of our sin, this is the way things are. God still has a better place in store for us that we can't even imagine. That what this world has to offer is nothing in comparison.	5/10/2013 7:53 PM
6	my job ... a lot of hurting people	5/9/2013 9:32 PM
7	I looked to God where I find hope through Jesus I fellowship and communicate with him , because Christ is in us the hope of glory coming again	5/9/2013 3:24 PM
8	God has uniquely entrusted me to proclaim Hope at my work place, with my family, and with my non-Christian friends/acquaintances. I feel that through praying for the opportunities and the ways God has prepared me, I am able to now have more conversations about Jesus and the Gospel. Now, in these settings, through my faith in Jesus, I am what hope looks like in these settings.	5/9/2013 12:03 AM
9	I feel God calls me to do ministry of Hope in the homeless people that I've encountered. I try to reach them by giving them something to eat and then asking them if I can pray for them in the moment.	5/8/2013 11:42 PM
10	In NYC public schools. I can show hope by making sure that I am always patient in difficult circumstances and showing the fruits of the spirit (love, kindness, peace, and self-control.) Hope is shown when we let others know that we turn to God in difficult times, times of need, or when seeking direction.	5/8/2013 11:18 PM
11	Everywhere. We as believers in Christ have been called to deliver His Hope to Judea, Samaria, and to the ends of the Earth. Hope is when we know that Christ loves us and wants us to spend eternity with Him.	5/6/2013 11:02 PM
12	. God has recently entrusted me to have hope in my weaknesses and trust His mercy and grace abounds to prove His strength. I am growing to see Hope as a future of being "more than a conquer" in Jesus!	5/5/2013 11:20 PM
13	Through the power of the Holy Spirit I want my walk and my testimony to point the unbeliever to Christ and encourage those who believe in Him. The Lord has blessed me with great opportunities to serve Him in and out of the church. Of course being a witness to my immediate family takes priority over all else.	5/5/2013 7:00 PM

Week #4 Questions - Control Group

#	Responses	Date
14	Opportunities with friends are always presenting themselves, through sharing various aspects of my personal testimony, through prayer, through encouragement, through offering help to those in need, and through advice. Additionally, connecting with missionaries working the field, with messages of affirmation for what they are doing, by praying for them, offering assistance when requested and providing housing when needed. What does hope look like in these settings? - Words of gratitude, thankfulness and sometimes desire to reciprocate. Courage to take a stand for what is right and move on in their lives. Being refreshed and revitalized knowing that someone is aware of their needs and offering up prayers to God for them.	5/5/2013 6:01 PM
15	I have many spheres of influence, at home and with my neighbors, at work, in class, at church. In these spheres, hope looks like me trusting God through the circumstances, through the dailies (which are sometimes like drudgery or same old same old). Hope is looking for opportunities to point others to the reality of God in Jesus, sometimes just through my being faithful to my responsibilities, rather than blowing up in frustration, yelling at others, having unrealistic expectations, dealing with situations just like everyone else does rather than as Jesus would.	5/5/2013 4:50 PM
16	Quite a few people at Calvary actually are looking to me to encourage them in their hope, and I have a responsibility to encourage them to share their hope with others. However, I also am charged to bring hope to my family, friends, workmates, colleagues, and others in my sphere of influence. Some of these are daily opportunities, others are special. One guy we had over for Thanksgiving lives in Japan, was born and raised in a Buddhist temple, and his brother died in the nuclear bomb at Hiroshima. He's a bit of an intellectual and closed to many who would share the Gospel- I doubt he has encountered many others besides me that have shared such a hope with him!	5/5/2013 4:48 PM
17	God entrusts us to proclaim Hope where we live. The easy answer to how is by showing Hope in our lives, the correct (difficult) answer encompasses the specifics of my life.	5/4/2013 10:06 PM
18	In my workplace. I believe He is reminding me that I first serve Him, but that I also must serve (respect) my bosses and colleagues by humbling myself before them. The Lord is teaching me the BALANCE of empowerment WITH submission as a Christ ambassador as a working-professional woman. I also believe He is calling me to instill Hope in the industry I work in- fitness- especially during this time in this world where outward appearance is judged first. He wants me to stay humble and grounded and remember that inward- soul and spirit- are more important than image, and that training our body shouldn't be for vain reasons but for reasons for serving Him and glorifying Him with our health and being. Please pray for my career as a fitness trainer that I may be a light to many of my clients and others in this city so in need of Christ's hope, the only hope.	5/4/2013 7:29 PM
19	God has uniquely entrusted me to proclaim Hope in the entertainment industry. I feel like Hope would look beautiful in that setting but right now it's not pretty out there. I meet so many interesting people every time I'm working and I just listen to their stories and try my best to share my story of Christ's love for me. I can only imagine what the world would look like if more Christians were in the entertainment industry...what shows would be on tv, movies in the theater, and plays/musicals on the stage. It would be amazing!	5/3/2013 9:11 PM
20	In my neighborhood. Just being myself and shining out the light he has put in me. In this setting hope looks approachable and believable.	5/2/2013 6:09 PM
21	At work on the airplane with so many lost around me, coworkers and passengers. Use every opportunity, especially the trials of delays and so forth to be first a godly example and then also to share my Hope and story when opportunity presents itself.	5/2/2013 10:57 AM
22	Currently that would be my job I suppose I guess that's an obvious thing to say. At work I think hope looks like someone who is patient, willing to take on different tasks, and maintains a helpful posture. When the time is right it also looks like someone who gives God credit for their blessings, who doesn't shy away from saying that or speaking words of praise for the father. As the series has progressed I have also thought about being an elder. One way hope can look like is being available to serve in different ways, whether that be teaching sunday school or visiting someone who is ill and in the hospital. I always hated it when my folks would visit people after church and offer to help them with various things. As a kid I just wanted to go home, change my clothes and play. It is very interesting to me to see that God has layed it on my heart to be available to visit those who are sick/hurting in some way. I can share the Lord's love for them by listening, and praying with them.	5/1/2013 11:21 PM
23	I haven't really did a lot or a little proclaiming, however it has been on my mind to proclaim Jesus Christ wherever I am. Hope would look like me, spreading the gospel. I have hope in the promises of our God. I'd like others to have that too.	5/1/2013 6:13 PM
24	Message of Christ and his coming again. Right now things seem a bit depressed (just based on where we are as a world and the lack of values, morals, etc.). I know that there is hope: God is with us and will continue to guide us, and he will return. I have to reach out to those who need to hear this message. share this.	5/1/2013 3:38 PM

Week #4 Questions - Control Group

Q4 Are there any general observations you would like to make about this sermon series? If so, please do so here.

Answered: 24 Skipped: 0

#	Responses	Date
1	I just would like to say that I like the progression of the sermon from the beginning to the end.	5/22/2013 1:17 AM
2	This was an excellent and challenging sermon series. I love how it connected with the mission statement of our church or rather the phrase that frames our doorway - to preach Christ Crucified, Risen, and Coming Again. It provided new perspective to principles that you tend to just accept and overlook but tend to gloss over after your initial conversion experience.	5/20/2013 4:23 PM
3	The video was very educative and this serie reinforce the fact that we are to take the pulpit wherever we go .	5/16/2013 5:32 AM
4	I think the implementation of the videos in each sermon was excellent. It was clear that each video was not attempting to introduce or even expound upon an idea from the sermon, but rather provide evidence of application in our everyday lives. I believe this is a great way to bridge the sometimes overwhelming gap between Biblical language and modern application.	5/12/2013 10:03 AM
5	This sermon series was very direct in getting the message across about who we are in Christ and what we should be like when speaking about our faith. And also, that our pulpit can be anywhere. The messages were simple but had the power to make you think about what we believe and preach to others. These are things we don't think about often enough to make a difference.	5/10/2013 7:59 PM
6	very practical, very well preached	5/9/2013 9:33 PM
7	This sermon has make me realized as s follower of Christ is to continue help spread the word of God around the world as he has commanded us to do, through those I come in contact with , or by helping missionaries in other countries as they labor for Christ	5/9/2013 3:46 PM
8	I felt that the 4 week series was well done. After attending this series, I will never see the pulpit and the sign outside the front door the same again. Rather than just passing them by, I will now look at them as symbols for my life's calling. These are now symbols for my mission as a follower of Christ to preach the Gospel where ever I am. I also enjoyed the weekly videos and how they incorporated NYC and the members of the church.	5/9/2013 12:07 AM
9	I feel that the last series out of the 3 part was the strongest. I had some trouble remembering what the 2nd series was about. I enjoyed the video clips and appreciated the honesty of the people being interviewed. The Pulpit being carried around the city is a strong symbol that feels that it really works to what Paster Mike was preaching.	5/8/2013 11:46 PM
10	I was hoping that the series would have been more in-depth. I was confused by the second sermon in the series. I enjoyed the mini videos of congregants reflecting on the concepts.	5/8/2013 11:19 PM
11	I notice the significance of us as believers being called to preach the Gospel wherever we are.	5/6/2013 11:03 PM
12	I observed through the series a consistency of reference to the Bible and explanations to provide full meaning and contextual conception of Scripture. Also, this dedicated approach gave definition and understanding to Jesus Crucified, Risen, and Coming Again inscription above Calvary Baptist Church doors.	5/5/2013 11:44 PM
13	Personally I have been encouraged to keep my eyes on the prize, who is JESUS.	5/5/2013 7:03 PM
14	This sermon series "Pulpit Parable" has helped to make me more aware of my own responsibility in proclaiming the gospel of Jesus Christ through all aspects of my life. Watching the videos where the wooden pulpit was being carried around through the streets of New York City, accentuates the fact that we who sit in the pews should get away from the idea that the "professional preachers" have the prime responsibility of sharing this gospel of hope and salvation. Hopefully, others who heard this series of messages have been awakened as well. The personal testimonies of several church members in the videos was very impactful and offers encouragement to others.	5/5/2013 6:16 PM

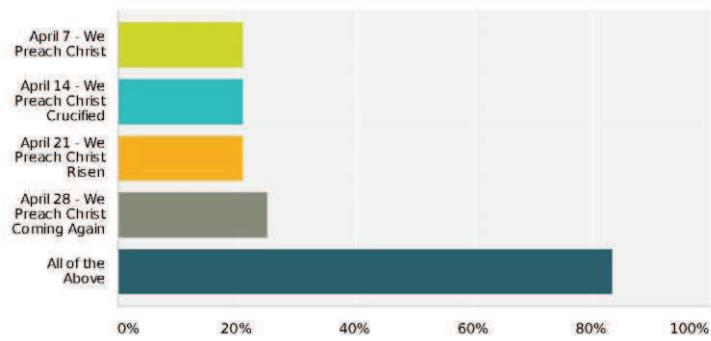
Week #4 Questions - Control Group

#	Responses	Date
15	The general theme of the series, that we each have a pulpit that we take everywhere we go and use to preach hope in Jesus in spite of or in the midst of our weaknesses, was an excellent reminder. The videos did a nice job of showing what that might look like in practice rather than merely talking about it in a theoretical way.	5/5/2013 4:54 PM
16	This was a very enlightening series, taking a phrase so familiar and bringing new light to it and providing me with a challenge to step up my witness. Loved it! There was one young man that I spoke to after the first message. He was rather discouraged about it and didn't seem to understand it fully. However, he also seemed to be having trouble with the concept of sharing one's faith, and perhaps needed to be challenged on this issue. So I was rather impressed at the effect the sermon had—though he was discouraged, it was in a good way tasking him to get straight what we as Christians are called to do! I hope the guy saw the other sermons (actually I'm pretty sure he did) but I haven't spoken to him about it further just thought I'd share that bit.	5/5/2013 4:52 PM
17	It is a good reminder so we don't lose sight of the awesome magnitude of the Hope we have in Christ, and the importance of communicating it.	5/4/2013 10:09 PM
18	This is the first time I heard that WE, the Church, are also called to be at the Pulpit. That WE preach Christ, not just our Pastor, but WE the Church. Pastor Luciano is a blessed speaker, with stories that relate to the series, and most importantly reads the Word of God as all Churches need more of. This is a reminder that church may be on Sunday, but I am called to seek, praise, trust, thank, glorify, and testify Christ EVERYday. It is a reminder that my pulpit should be taken everywhere I go. Thank you, for the reminder. Praise God!	5/4/2013 7:33 PM
19	I really enjoyed this sermon series! I especially enjoyed the multimedia use. I loved that it used actual members from CBC including some elders and deacons. I watched two sermons in person and 2 online and I personally enjoyed watching them in person better. I liked that Pastor Mike has challenged us as a church to always carry our pulpit, and also to remember that even if it isn't in our hands it is still in our hearts.	5/3/2013 9:20 PM
20	I really liked the series. It taught me that any place can be my pulpit and my "sermon" is the way I live and act each and everyday.	5/2/2013 6:10 PM
21	Very thankful to be reminded that we all have a responsibility to Calvary and ultimately to our Lord to proclaim Him and what that hope looks like.	5/2/2013 10:58 AM
22	I appreciate the focus on the individual as a carrier of the good news. We are a priesthood of believers as Paul would say, and one thing that means is that each of us has a responsibility to help spread the good news.	5/1/2013 11:24 PM
23	There was an opportunity for introspection and reflection into ones life and relationship with God. I believe that sermons should do that. Sermons should help you in your walk with the Lord.	5/1/2013 6:20 PM
24	I think the sermon series was very thorough, to the point, and I particularly appreciated the videos. These videos shared some personal things that each of us can relate to. It is crucial to share a practical message to all of us to understand and apply to our daily christian lives. These sermons with the videos did just that.	5/1/2013 3:39 PM

Week #4 Questions - Control Group

Q5 Which Sermons in April's "A Pulpit Parable" series did you see? Please, select each one or "All of the Above."

Answered: 24 Skipped: 0

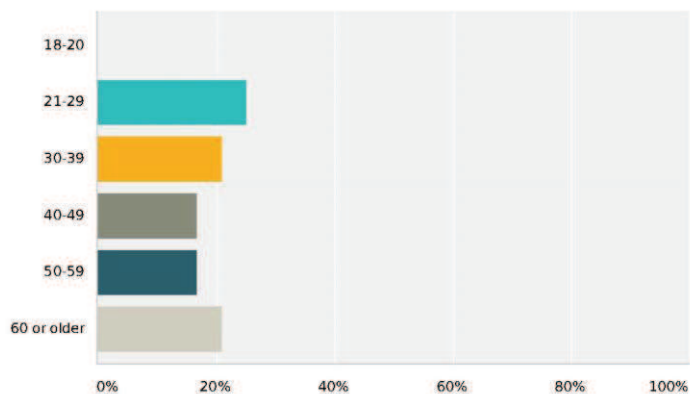


Answer Choices	Responses
April 7 - We Preach Christ	20.83% 5
April 14 - We Preach Christ Crucified	20.83% 5
April 21 - We Preach Christ Risen	20.83% 5
April 28 - We Preach Christ Coming Again	25% 6
All of the Above	83.33% 20
Total Respondents: 24	

Week #4 Questions - Control Group

Q6 Which category below includes your age?

Answered: 24 Skipped: 0

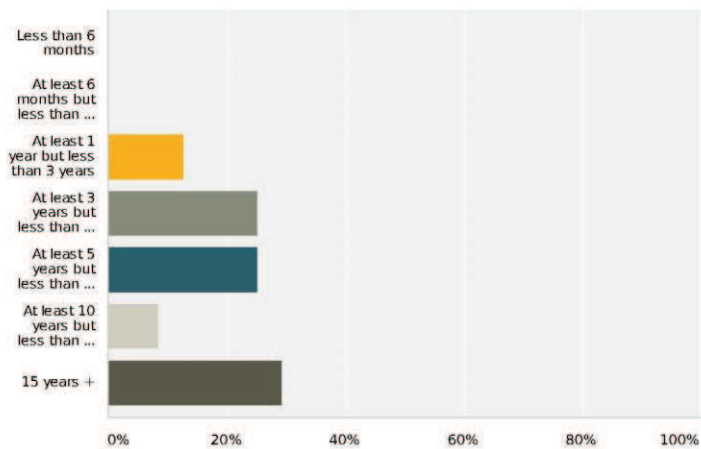


Answer Choices	Responses	
18-20	0%	0
21-29	25%	6
30-39	20.83%	5
40-49	16.67%	4
50-59	16.67%	4
60 or older	20.83%	5
Total		24

Week #4 Questions - Control Group

Q7 How long have you been attending Calvary Baptist Church, NYC? (Hereafter, CBC)

Answered: 24 Skipped: 0

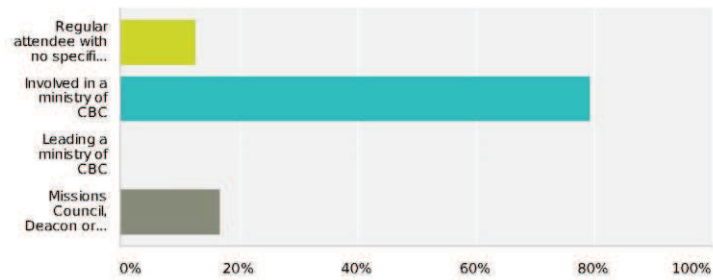


Answer Choices	Responses
Less than 6 months	0% 0
At least 6 months but less than 1 year	0% 0
At least 1 year but less than 3 years	12.50% 3
At least 3 years but less than 5 years	25% 6
At least 5 years but less than 10 years	25% 6
At least 10 years but less than 15 years	8.33% 2
15 years +	29.17% 7
Total	24

Week #4 Questions - Control Group

Q8 What is your level of involvement at CBC?

Answered: 24 Skipped: 0



Answer Choices	Responses
Regular attendee with no specific role	12.50% 3
Involved in a ministry of CBC	79.17% 19
Leading a ministry of CBC	0% 0
Missions Council, Deacon or Elder Board Member	16.67% 4
Total Respondents: 24	

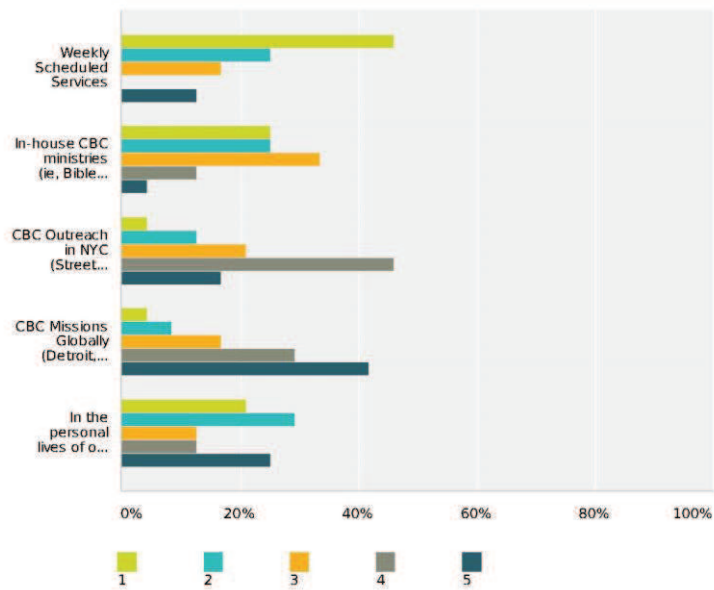
Other (please specify) (2)

#	Other (please specify)	Date
1	led ministries in the past but not currently	5/5/2013 4:56 PM
2	Handbell choir, sunday school for kids.	5/1/2013 11:26 PM

Week #4 Questions - Control Group

Q9 In order of importance, rate the following ways in which CBC preaches. (most important (1) to least important (5))

Answered: 24 Skipped: 0



	1	2	3	4	5	Total	Average Ranking
Weekly Scheduled Services	45.83% 11	25% 6	16.67% 4	0% 0	12.50% 3	24	3.92
In-house CBC ministries (ie, Bible studies, Sunday school, etc.)	25% 6	25% 6	33.33% 8	12.50% 3	4.17% 1	24	3.54
CBC Outreach in NYC (Street Evangelism, The Bowery Mission, Etc.)	4.17% 1	12.50% 3	20.83% 5	45.83% 11	16.67% 4	24	2.42
CBC Missions Globally (Detroit, Mississippi, International, etc.)	4.17% 1	8.33% 2	16.67% 4	29.17% 7	41.67% 10	24	2.04

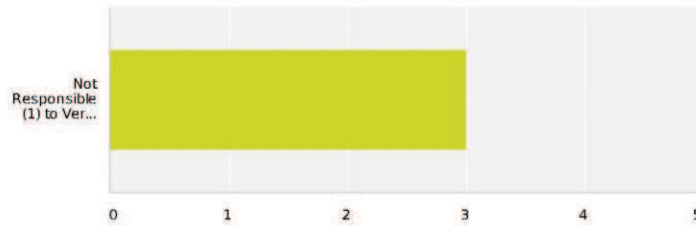
Week #4 Questions - Control Group

In the personal lives of our congregants	20.83% 5	29.17% 7	12.50% 3	12.50% 3	25% 6	24	3.08

Week #4 Questions - Control Group

Q10 When looking at the literal pulpit each week during our worship services, how personally responsible does it make you feel to participate in the pulpit ministry of CBC?

Answered: 24 Skipped: 0



	1	2	3	4	Total	Average Rating
Not Responsible (1) to Very Responsible (4)	12.50% 3	12.50% 3	37.50% 9	37.50% 9	24	3.00

Week #4 Questions - Control Group

**Q11 How appropriate does the CBC
pulpit look in the setting below?**

Answered: 24 Skipped: 0

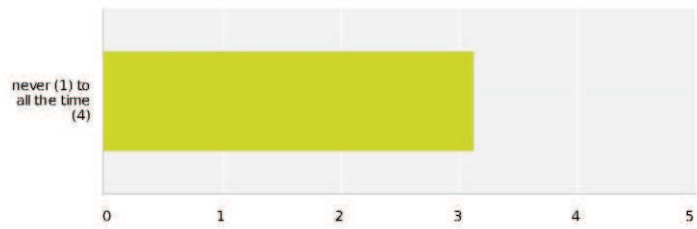


	1	2	3	4	Total	Average Rating
very inappropriate (1) to completely appropriate (4)	8.33% 2	8.33% 2	33.33% 8	50% 12	24	3.25

Week #4 Questions - Control Group

Q12 How often does the slogan “We preach Christ crucified, risen and coming again” above our entryway on 57th street evoke personal responsibility for you?

Answered: 24 Skipped: 0

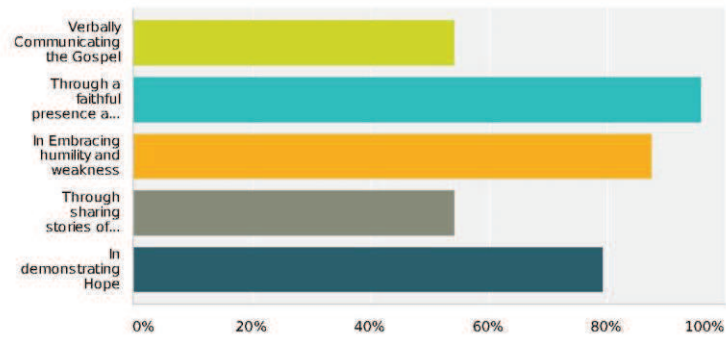


	1	2	3	4	Total	Average Rating
never (1) to all the time (4)	4.17% 1	29.17% 7	16.67% 4	50% 12	24	3.13

Week #4 Questions - Control Group

Q13 Currently, how do you participate in CBC's value of proclamation? (You can choose more than 1)

Answered: 24 Skipped: 0



Answer Choices	Responses
Verbally Communicating the Gospel	54.17% 13
Through a faithful presence at work and home	95.83% 23
In Embracing humility and weakness	87.50% 21
Through sharing stories of New Life	54.17% 13
In demonstrating Hope	79.17% 19
Total Respondents: 24	
Other (please specify) (3)	

#	Other (please specify)	Date
1	Serving others	5/16/2013 5:38 AM
2	Studying the Word, and other Christian related resources (books and blogs and worship)	5/4/2013 7:37 PM
3	Application. I participate in bible classes and I try my best to apply the teachings of Christ. I don't always succeed, but I keep God's principles in the forefront of my mind, and at times my actions.	5/1/2013 6:26 PM

APPENDIX S

WEEK 4 SURVEY – OPEN GROUP PARTICIPANTS

Week #4 Questions - Open Group

Q1 In the “ancient story” from John 14, what aspect - if any - stood out to you and why?

Answered: 10 Skipped: 0

#	Responses	Date
1	The dwelling place, our temple, which we will reside in and have communion in, is in Jesus himself. This is an interesting concept, as I have definitely thought of a concrete tangible object as a residing place that the Lord has prepared for us in His kingdom. I also thought it was quite interesting the this passage is one of the few which explicitly states that those who have seen the Son have seen the Father as well. I'd love to see this ancient story at play in this age, as we, including myself, will forget about preparing our “tangible” place which is our due reward, and instead look to that communion we all can have in Christ Jesus, to have our relationship with Him (along with all nations) be our sole purpose.	5/21/2013 12:26 PM
2	That our place is ultimately with Jesus	5/16/2013 1:50 PM
3	The fact that if we trust in the Lord, and we are not troubled, He takes care of us. What a wonderful promise that is!	5/16/2013 1:42 PM
4	Jesus reminds his disciples to trust in the Lord our God. He speaks with the Holy Spirit that God our Father guides us.	5/16/2013 1:35 PM
5	Jesus is coming again	5/16/2013 1:31 PM
6	The promise made to us from the Lord Himself- "If it were not so, I would not have told you." That's all I need to hear. It "backed" what He promised in the beginning- "In my Father's house, there are many..."	5/16/2013 1:21 PM
7	1. Had never heard the true translation of "Mansions" before :) 2. The connection between the Father's House, The Temple and Jesus' Body! This was very cool to think about on a number of levels, that Jesus is now our Temple, our access to the Father. Jesus went to the cross to prepare in Himself a place for us to go to and dwell before the Father. The cross and it's significance took on a whole new meaning for me upon hearing that. 3. The Temple is more important than I often treat it. We have hope and are looking forward to Jesus, the Temple, coming back to dwell on earth.	5/6/2013 12:22 PM
8	I think the idea living life without being distressed because Jesus is coming back interesting. It's freeing, not only in the sense that you don't have to worry about the things that currently surround you, but also be willing to take risks because you know ultimately how the story ends.	5/6/2013 11:54 AM
9	"Thomas said to him, 'Lord, we do not know where you are going. How can we know the way?' Jesus said to him, 'I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.'"	5/5/2013 10:27 PM
10	I loved the verse and the aspect that Jesus does not abandon us. He is faithful in preparing a place. He is with us always, until the end, and He will come and take us. This is a great comfort and helps me put my trust fully in Him and not in this life. I do believe He is preparing good things for us here, but it is a shadow of what is to come.	5/5/2013 10:50 AM

Week #4 Questions - Open Group

Q2 How can Calvary Baptist Church continue proclaiming Hope in our City, Nation and World?

Answered: 10 Skipped: 0

#	Responses	Date
1	Due to it's extreme diversity in age, race and ethnic groups, we have the cultural riches to reach a large demographic of people on a relational level. Often times we struggle to think how we individually may relate to the diversity here in NYC, but the answer may be answered in that our congregation is just as diverse as the city! To find a common platform for which the people of CBC can rally behind would be a beautiful thing to witness, and an amazing effort to partner in. What exactly that platform/purpose is may be difficult to find, but as long as it is rooted in Christ, it is sure to persevere.	5/21/2013 12:31 PM
2	By building from the Grassroots level. Small groups should be a MAJOR focus of ministry, and leadership should be organically grown from within the congregation. The kingdom model should form the basis for church structure. Cell groups should form, and ultimately split so that ministry is personal, and we are challenged to bring new people into them.	5/16/2013 1:56 PM
3	I think what they are doing is great, but maybe more evangelism outside in the subways with music and tracks?	5/16/2013 1:44 PM
4	By all of the members from church or non-members uniting together and evangelism throughout the city every single day. Creating new program and event that our brothers and sisters can participate.	5/16/2013 1:36 PM
5	By staying true to the Word of God and making it the "Main Thing."	5/16/2013 1:31 PM
6	Staying consistent in God's truth. Fearless and full of love as you've always been.	5/16/2013 1:22 PM
7	1. Open up our doors to non-christians, have events that bring people to church and show them Christ's love through fellowship in a musical guest, or a dinner, or an event that's church-related but proclaims our Hope through loving others, and spreading God's love. 2. Continue to support missionaries across the world financially and through prayer. set up designated times or groups to pray for those ministries. 3. Encourage members of the church to be involved in ministries outside the church, and provide resources for them to do so (plugging short-term mission's efforts, ministries in NYC, etc. which Calvary is already doing)	5/6/2013 12:35 PM
8	I do not have a greater vision of how to go about that task.	5/6/2013 11:55 AM
9	It can continue to reach out to the community. As we have discussed, the church is not the only place where a pulpit belongs. The Gospel needs to be heard out there.	5/5/2013 10:29 PM
10	I truly believe with all of my heart that as a church the most important thing is to not compromise or water-down the Gospel. I also don't believe it is necessary to become more relevant and seeker-friendly. I believe a Christian's job is to love the Lord, and develop their relationship, and as they do, they will be a light to those around them without having to put on a show for Christ, or sell His message for free packs of gum on a street corner. I think offering programs like Perspectives, continuing efforts like NY School of the Bible, presenting solid teaching and powerful messages, and allowing those who come to get involved in a service capacity is important. I also think addressing current issues like porn addiction, same-sex marriage, abortion, etc., in a way that is Biblical and yet loving is very important.	5/5/2013 10:55 AM

Week #4 Questions - Open Group

Q3 Where has God uniquely entrusted you to proclaim Hope? AND... What does hope look like in that setting?

Answered: 10 Skipped: 0

#	Responses	Date
1	I've been placed in midtown Manhattan at the NYU Medical center to work/learn here during my doctoral studies, and the opportunities for proclaiming peace in Christ from our daily struggles is a message that is very relevant for the stressed colleagues of mine! On a daily basis, it may be having a light attitude, sharing lunch with a coworker, or perhaps just assisting them in their personal project/workload. It is uncommon to do so in the research community (helping others) due to the business of our OWN schedule, which is why it is that much more appreciated when you do find time to look to the needs of others in the midst of the crazy schedule NYC and NYU has to offer.	5/21/2013 12:35 PM
2	In the music world. Through music itself, and my ministry on a daily basis with the people I work with. Also to Jewish people. In both settings hope looks like setting one's eyes on the gospel and not false gods.	5/16/2013 1:57 PM
3	The ministry I work in with children, I proclaim hope to them. Also the personal testimonies in my life. I have been able to proclaim hope to my friends and unsaved family members.	5/16/2013 1:47 PM
4	Hope is something that can't be lost. God has shown me the light and truth from reading the Word. Hope is an everlasting promise words just can't explain.	5/16/2013 1:38 PM
5	IN the unique settings in which He has placed me- home, work, neighborhood, and church.	5/16/2013 1:32 PM
6	In "tiny" ways, in my workplace (Verizon), but after night, during the sermon, my heart and focus (and responsibility) was changing. I'm determined by God's grace to be/live different before my co-workers. I KNOW how to talk sports, and even though most know I'm a Christian, in my own heart it's far from "displaying" my calling and election sure.	5/16/2013 1:26 PM
7	Where I work. I am one of the few people in my office who are good-natured, easy-going, happy more often than mad / tired of work, and have been asked why I am so energetic or optimistic, and my answer is Christ, and being a Christian, and my relationship with God. Hope in that setting means that, no matter how tough a project can be, or how important it seems at the times, I have a God who loves and watches over me both now and for all eternity. I have hope that, when work is hard, I know God is teaching me, training me, developing my patience or perseverance, and that's when I start to see joy grow in my life.	5/6/2013 12:39 PM
8	I think God has positioned me currently at my job and at Calvary Baptist Church to proclaim hope. At my job, I think that hope looks like performing your job with excellence and love for the person next to you. At my church, I think it looks like coming along side someone and living life together.	5/6/2013 11:58 AM
9	Not quite sure where God wants me to proclaim. If an opportunity arises where I can proclaim Hope, I ask God to use me.	5/5/2013 10:36 PM
10	Well, I work with international students through I.S.I., and it is our job to communicate the Gospel to these students while loving and serving them while they are here in the USA. They are curious about American culture and want experience practicing English, so this allows me a unique opportunity to be involved in their life, extending kindness and friendship, and they are more than open to hearing about the Bible. On Friday night we had a baptism and a young woman from China chose to obey this command. Several other Chinese Visiting Scholars were so moved by the experience that they were overwhelmed with emotion. One man said he felt 'electricity go through his head' when the woman came up out of the water. He said one day he hopes to do what she did. To do this work is amazing... and it gives these students hope in ways that they haven't be exposed to in their culture.	5/5/2013 11:00 AM

Week #4 Questions - Open Group

Q4 Are there any general observations you would like to make about this sermon series? If so, please do so here.

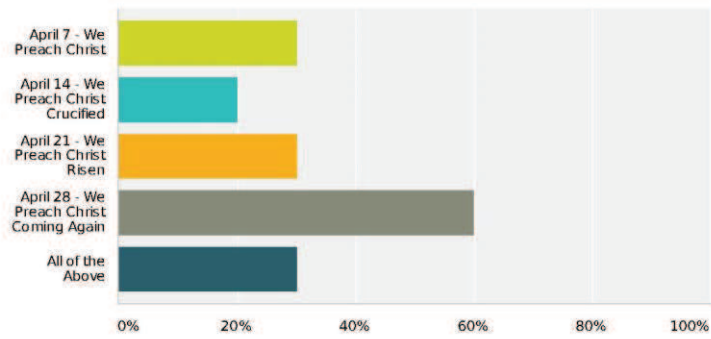
Answered: 10 Skipped: 0

#	Responses	Date
1	4) This sermon series has provided a tangible link between the stories of old, the stories of Jesus, and how people live out His mission in the present day...a link which many think is broken! I'd love for future sermons to continue to stress present day application of the ancient texts, as this is often the hardest thing to do (to draw conclusions which are relevant for the people listening). Having a tangible take-away message at the end of each sermon is something which should be stressed, and something which Luciano did a great job of during this sermon series.	5/21/2013 12:37 PM
2	Not printed	5/16/2013 1:58 PM
3	Not printed	5/16/2013 1:47 PM
4	Not printed	5/16/2013 1:38 PM
5	Not Printed	5/16/2013 1:32 PM
6	I'm a visitor tonight. I just felt strongly the latter part of my day to come here and of course, it would be my FAVORITE subject in the Christian walk.	5/16/2013 1:29 PM
7	1. HUGE thanks and appreciation for the connection between the 4 sermons (biblically, the videos, the themes, etc.). Not only is this helpful for forgetful people such as myself, but it helps to enrich the concepts from all 4 sermons when I can look back over my notes and see the connections. 2. Excellent work on the videos. I really think that video/multimedia/etc. are critical in reaching my demographic (young career-oriented tech-savvy individuals). Through no one's fault but out own, we're supersaturated by advertisements, talking heads, newsfeeds - basically multiple streams of data coming in and going out of our brains every second. It's harder and harder to retain information, and I think we're wired to remember more of what we've seen in a video than what we've heard someone say in a sermon/lecture. 3. Symbolism has taken on a new meaning for me after this series. I discounted the importance of what the pulpit looks like, or what's written over our church doors in the past because I only really saw it as an aesthetic of the church. I really appreciated the point that symbols are only useful/powerful when they are noticed and reflected upon. 4. I always appreciate the ties between historical examples and modern day examples (biblical stories - church history - our story). Again this goes back to reflecting on the past, reflecting on symbols we've established to remind us of God's love and his perfect plan for our salvation, and how we should always look to him.	5/6/2013 12:53 PM
8	-	5/6/2013 11:58 AM
9	I haven't heard all of the sermons but I like the teachings of the Pulpit Parable.	5/5/2013 10:37 PM
10	Overall, I felt it was a powerful series. The idea of taking the Gospel with us is obvious, and yet so many times we can be afraid of doing it. It can be scary to share in our work place, or social settings. However, to be encouraged to do so, and having the videos of everyday people sharing their experiences was awesome. It gave me hope to see that we are all in this together and God is working through each of us in our individual lives and circumstances. I do believe the programs offered at CBC help to further equip us to share with boldness and empower us to be effective in reaching the world with the Gospel.	5/5/2013 11:03 AM

Week #4 Questions - Open Group

Q5 Which Sermons in April's "A Pulpit Parable" series did you see? Please, select each one or "All of the Above."

Answered: 10 Skipped: 0

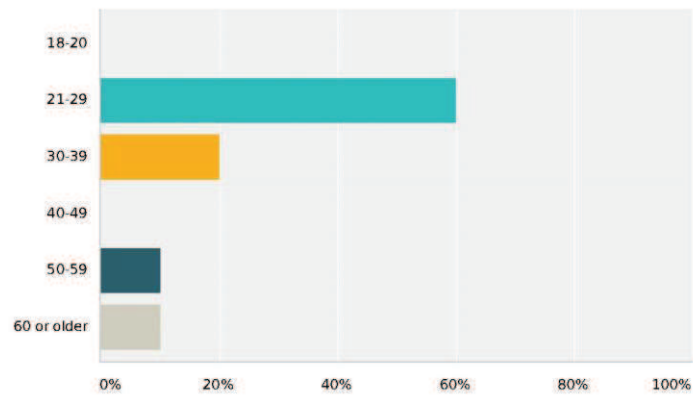


Answer Choices	Responses
April 7 - We Preach Christ	30% 3
April 14 - We Preach Christ Crucified	20% 2
April 21 - We Preach Christ Risen	30% 3
April 28 - We Preach Christ Coming Again	60% 6
All of the Above	30% 3
Total Respondents: 10	

Week #4 Questions - Open Group

Q6 Which category below includes your age?

Answered: 10 Skipped: 0

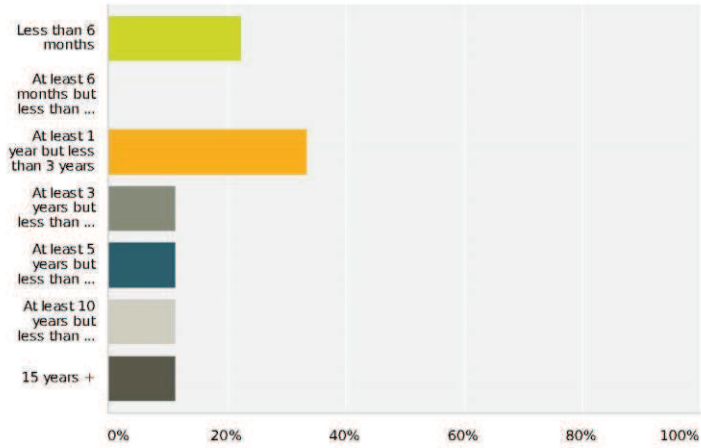


Answer Choices	Responses	
18-20	0%	0
21-29	60%	6
30-39	20%	2
40-49	0%	0
50-59	10%	1
60 or older	10%	1
Total		10

Week #4 Questions - Open Group

Q7 How long have you been attending Calvary Baptist Church, NYC? (Hereafter, CBC)

Answered: 9 Skipped: 1

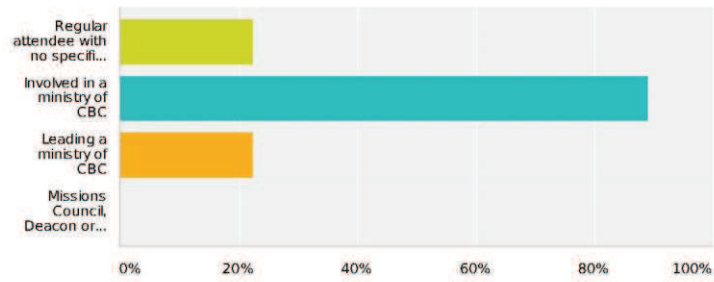


Answer Choices	Responses
Less than 6 months	22.22% 2
At least 6 months but less than 1 year	0% 0
At least 1 year but less than 3 years	33.33% 3
At least 3 years but less than 5 years	11.11% 1
At least 5 years but less than 10 years	11.11% 1
At least 10 years but less than 15 years	11.11% 1
15 years +	11.11% 1
Total	9

Week #4 Questions - Open Group

Q8 What is your level of involvement at CBC?

Answered: 9 Skipped: 1

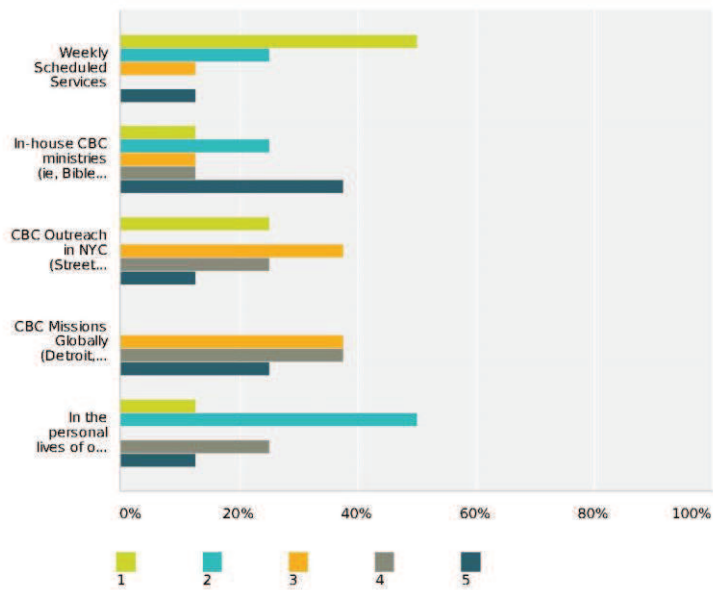


Answer Choices	Responses	
Regular attendee with no specific role	22.22% 2	
Involved in a ministry of CBC	88.89% 8	
Leading a ministry of CBC	22.22% 2	
Missions Council, Deacon or Elder Board Member	0% 0	
Total Respondents: 9		
Other (please specify) (1)		
#	Other (please specify)	Date
1	Helping with music ministry at this point. Also work for I.S.I. (International Students Inc.) with several other members of Calvary.	5/5/2013 11:05 AM

Week #4 Questions - Open Group

Q9 In order of importance, rate the following ways in which CBC preaches. (most important (1) to least important (5))

Answered: 8 Skipped: 2



	1	2	3	4	5	Total	Average Ranking
Weekly Scheduled Services	50% 4	25% 2	12.50% 1	0% 0	12.50% 1	8	4.00
In-house CBC ministries (ie, Bible studies, Sunday school, etc.)	12.50% 1	25% 2	12.50% 1	12.50% 1	37.50% 3	8	2.63
CBC Outreach in NYC (Street Evangelism, The Bowery Mission, Etc.)	25% 2	0% 0	37.50% 3	25% 2	12.50% 1	8	3.00
CBC Missions Globally (Detroit, Mississippi, International, etc.)	0% 0	0% 0	37.50% 3	37.50% 3	25% 2	8	2.13

Week #4 Questions - Open Group

In the personal lives of our congregants	12.50% 1	50% 4	0% 0	25% 2	12.50% 1	8	3.25

Week #4 Questions - Open Group

Q10 When looking at the literal pulpit each week during our worship services, how personally responsible does it make you feel to participate in the pulpit ministry of CBC?

Answered: 9 Skipped: 1



	1	2	3	4	Total	Average Rating
Not Responsible (1) to Very Responsible (4)	22.22% 2	22.22% 2	11.11% 1	44.44% 4	9	2.78

Week #4 Questions - Open Group

Q11 How appropriate does the CBC pulpit look in the setting below?

Answered: 9 Skipped: 1

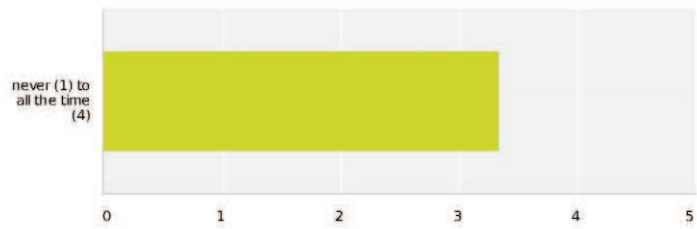


	1	2	3	4	Total	Average Rating
very inappropriate (1) to completely appropriate (4)	22.22% 2	11.11% 1	11.11% 1	55.56% 5	9	3.00

Week #4 Questions - Open Group

Q12 How often does the slogan “We preach Christ crucified, risen and coming again” above our entryway on 57th street evoke personal responsibility for you?

Answered: 9 Skipped: 1

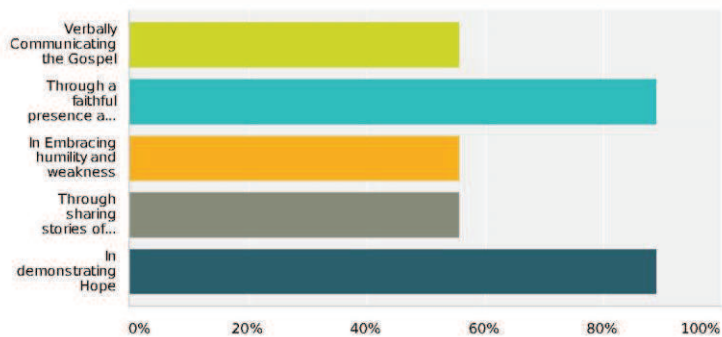


	1	2	3	4	Total	Average Rating
never (1) to all the time (4)	0% 0	33.33% 3	0% 0	66.67% 6	9	3.33

Week #4 Questions - Open Group

Q13 Currently, how do you participate in CBC's value of proclamation? (You can choose more than 1)

Answered: 9 Skipped: 1



Answer Choices	Responses
Verbally Communicating the Gospel	55.56% 5
Through a faithful presence at work and home	88.89% 8
In Embracing humility and weakness	55.56% 5
Through sharing stories of New Life	55.56% 5
In demonstrating Hope	88.89% 8
Total Respondents: 9	
Other (please specify) (1)	

#	Other (please specify)	Date
1	In striving to die to myself and live in Christ daily	5/21/2013 12:40 PM

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