

LIBERTY THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

STUDY TO SHOW THYSELF APPROVED:
THE CASE FOR CLERGY CONTINUING EDUCATION

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DOCTOR OF MINISTRY

By

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LIBERTY THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

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ABSTRACT

STUDY TO SHOW THYSELF APPROVED: THE CASE FOR CONTINUING
CLERGY EDUCATION

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There has been little study focused upon the role of the pastor's personal growth and how it may relate to growth or the lack thereof in the local church. Although the problem of ministerial competence as a whole can not be fully addressed in the limited scope of this project, it is this writer's contention that much of the plateau in church growth experienced in Southern Baptist Churches today may be predicated by the lack of ministerial training in the churches of the Southern Baptist Convention as a whole. It is the intent of this project to determine if there is the probability of a causal link between a pastor's personal growth through study and how this impacts growth in the local church he serves. This project demonstrates that relationship by results of ACP reports from churches served by fifty-one pastors in the West Virginia Convention of Southern Baptists, serving their churches for a two or more year period, who responded to the initial survey presented herein. The results provide evidence that pastors pursuing further educational opportunities were more likely to be serving in churches that were growing, even in areas where there was a population decline.

Abstract Length: 160 words

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Almost seventy percent of the churches in the Southern Baptist Convention are either plateaued or declining, according to Russ Rankin of LifeWay Christian Resources.¹ This alarming statistic demonstrates that there is an unhappy horizon looming for the convention, unless research reveals the avenues successful churches and their leadership are following.

Much has been studied about the thirty percent of SBC churches that are growing in areas such as evangelism strategies and leadership styles of the pastors in those growing churches. Nevertheless, one area that has not been seriously considered to date is the possibility of congruence between pastors who are experiencing personal growth in ministerial competence and the churches they serve.

The autonomy of the churches comprising the Southern Baptist Convention allows individual churches to make sole determination of what degree of educational background and continuing education is expected of its pastor. This means that many churches will be led by pastors with no ministerial training or plans to continue the pursuit of growth in ministerial competence.

¹Russ Rankin, *2006 ACP: Growth seen in attendance, number of churches, but SBC baptisms down nearly 2 percent*, Facts & Trends, Volume 53, Number 4, July/August 2007, 20.

There has been little study focused upon the role of the pastor's personal growth and how it may relate to growth or the lack thereof in the local church. Although the problem of ministerial competence as a whole cannot be fully addressed in the limited scope of this project, it is the contention of this writer that much of the plateau in church growth that is experienced in Southern Baptist Churches today may, in fact, be predicated by the lack of ministerial training in the churches of the Southern Baptist Convention as a whole.

If there is a verifiably demonstrable congruence between pastoral growth and church growth, this would serve as tremendous impetus for those pastoring plateaued or declining churches to return to serious and systematic study programs. Degree programs and courses of study being offered at institutions such as Liberty Baptist Theological Seminary and other seminaries and Bible colleges, are now more available than ever through online programs that are easily accessible to almost anyone with access to a computer.

The purpose of this project is to determine if there is any correlation between the growth patterns of local churches and the pastorate of those who have been, or are currently involved in a degree or certification program, or any other personal plan of study by those who pastor those local churches. This project will use a particular pool of churches and pastors as a subset within the Southern Baptist Convention to determine if there is the probability of a causal link between a pastor's personal growth through study and how this impacts growth in the local church he serves.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

In his sermon at the 2007 Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) in San Antonio, Rob Zinn underscored the lack of growth among Southern Baptists by stating statistics obtained from LifeWay Christian Resources. He reported that ten thousand, four-hundred, eighty-one SBC churches baptized no more than one person and over sixty-eight percent of SBC churches baptized ten persons or less in the year 2006.²

Recent studies have increased the urgency with which Southern Baptists need to sound the alarm about the lack of growing churches in the denomination.

From 1978 to 1983, the Sunday School Board (now LifeWay Christian Resources) found that 30.5 percent of churches were growing, 51.9 percent were plateaued and 17.6 were in decline. In the years studied by the Leavell Center, 1998-2003, 30.3 percent of churches were growing. And though that statistic has remained basically unchanged for 20 years, the number of declining Southern Baptist churches has increased by 6 percent from 17.6 percent to 23.9 percent. Plateaued churches now comprise 45.8 percent of all Southern Baptist Churches.³

At the 2008 meeting of the Southern Baptist Convention in Indianapolis, the statistics sounded even more dour. Speaking at the Pastor's Conference, Johnny Hunt cited an article in the June first edition of the Dallas Morning News that reported ninety percent of the Southern Baptist Churches are not just plateaued, but actually declining.⁴

The study of church growth has been addressed from many different angles. The rate of baptisms and total memberships reported among Southern Baptist Churches are

²Rob Zinn, *The Task of the Church*, quoted from the 2007 Annual Meeting of the Southern Baptist Convention, San Antonio, Texas, June 13, 2007, 102.

³Russ Rankin, 20.

⁴Johnny Hunt, *Prayer for Revival: Let it Rain*, sermon delivered at the Pastor's Conference of the Southern Baptist Convention, Indianapolis, Indiana, June 8, 2008.

only two such quantifiers of growth or the lack thereof. Nevertheless, this writer has not seen adequate inquiry into the question of whether this lack of church growth may in some way be a consequent result of the lack of the pastor's personal growth in ministerial competence. Therefore, we will seek to determine if, in fact, such a correlation exists.

If there is a causal link discovered between pastoral growth through study and church growth as a consequent norm, this project must also seek to identify whether there are existing churches in the study group where these factors do not coexist. This will help to identify not only if there is demonstrative church growth resultant to pastoral growth in most cases, but also the extent to which these quotients coincide as opposed to the percentage in which there is no resultant church growth demonstrated, in order to verify the findings.

STATEMENT OF LIMITATIONS

Due to the sheer number of the forty-four thousand, two-hundred and twenty three churches that comprise the Southern Baptist Convention⁵, for the purposes of this project, the figures, surveys and interviews will all be limited to the two-hundred and five Southern Baptist Churches that comprise the West Virginia Convention of Southern Baptists (WVCSB), an entity of which this writer and the church he serves are a part. Other factors, such as the declining population of the state of West Virginia, are certainly of tremendous importance. Therefore, although the growth or decline of each individual community in which a Southern Baptist Church may be present cannot be adequately addressed, I will, nevertheless, include the growth statistics of the county in which individual churches that are demonstrating growth are contained.

The primary means for securing information concerning the individual churches whose pastors respond to the initial survey and/or are contacted for interview will be the results of the findings of the Annual Church Profiles of the churches of the West Virginia Convention of Southern Baptists. The source of information for the growth of the counties in which any churches demonstrating growth are resident will be the United States Census Bureau.

Although other areas of pastoral influence that affect church growth may include such factors as congregational congeniality, hospitality and fellowship, and these may, indeed, be outgrowths of the pastor's personal course of study and growth in ministerial

⁵Ibid.

competence, these will not be considered in this study, since they are not determinable quantitatively. Therefore, I will limit my research of the WVCSB churches to three obtainable and verifiable measures of church growth. These will consist of three of those statistics that are available from the Annual Church Profiles of WVCSB churches, namely: baptisms, total membership, and missions expenditures.

It is also worthy of note that there may be other factors increasing the level of ministerial effectiveness, including life lessons, previous pastorates and issues including personal temperament and upbringing. Neither are these factors available for the purposes of our present research. Therefore, I will limit the investigation of ministerial training and competency development into three distinct categories, namely: past and present degree programs; attendance at certified training events and seminars; and/or the pastor's own personal program of independent study through books not related to his weekly task of sermon preparation.

BIBLICAL/THEOLOGICAL BASIS FOR THE PROJECT

Scripture strongly admonishes those who handle the Word of God to be disciplined in their habits of study.

Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.⁶

By demonstrating that there is, indeed, a correlation between the pastor's own personal growth in ministerial competence through the pursuit of educational endeavor, this project seeks to encourage pastors to continue personal and professional growth for the purpose of impacting their own congregations. It is believed this can best be accomplished through the application of acquired competencies and the modeling of a continuing lifestyle that fosters creditable growth and adaptation in the private life of the pastor, thereby impacting the corporate life of the congregation he leads.

Given the fact that in Matthew 28:19-20, Jesus clearly commissioned His church for the task of disciple-making, the pastor's growth in ministerial competency should be demonstrated in the church he serves by impacting the church in ways that indicate real growth. These will not be measured simply by overall congregational size, but also in conversion growth through baptisms and in consistent mission expenditures which reflect a greater missionary concern by the congregation as a whole.

Since the Lord gave such importance to the growth imperative, those involved in leading His churches must therefore by all means seek to continue growth and development that will further the church's ability to grow and reach out beyond itself in

⁶2 Timothy 2:16, NKJV.

service to the Kingdom. This means intensive work that will result in churches that understand the need to stretch and grow past the former things that may no longer be effective to meet the needs of growing organisms.

It is the contention of this writer that if a pastor is modeling the ideals of facing challenges, growing in consistency that initiates needed change, and personal incentive for the purpose of positively impacting the Kingdom community in which he serves, growth will be the result. Thus, growth will again become the norm, rather than the exception in the convention and the larger Christian community of faith in the United States of America.

And whatever you do, do it heartily, as to the Lord and not to men, knowing that from the Lord you will receive the reward of the inheritance; for you serve the Lord Christ.⁷

But you be watchful in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry.⁸

Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your labor is not in vain in the Lord.⁹

⁷Colossians 3:23-24, NKJV.

⁸2 Timothy 4:5, NKJV.

⁹1 Corinthians 15:58, NKJV.

STATEMENT OF METHODOLOGY

Our initial assessment of whether or not WVCSB pastors themselves are growing will be determined by the responses of surveys that will be mailed to all those pastors serving WVCSB churches. I will present the areas where those pastors responding to the survey report that they are annually involved in either a program of study through a Bible college or seminary; attendance at certified classes or seminars; or a personal annual program listing two or more professional books being read that exclude commentaries or other volumes utilized in normal sermon preparation. It is hoped this will provide a response pool that will present general information regarding the typical professional studies of Southern Baptist pastors in the West Virginia Convention.

Next, the study will observe growth statistics from the Annual Church Profiles of the West Virginia Convention of Southern Baptists from the five reports filed in years 2004-2008. We will focus our attention on churches reporting growth in the areas of baptisms, total membership, and total missions expenditures. These three categories will be the focus of our study, since they are chosen as indicators of real growth that involves actual evangelistic growth, rather than merely using total membership, which may be nothing more than transfer growth if baptismal figures are not scrutinized. To use that statistic without utilizing the actual baptismal figures would be negating a major aspect of the initially stated problem of plateaued or declining churches that Zinn's convention sermon addressed.

Whenever a church is listed as growing in the areas of baptisms, total membership, and total mission expenditures, we will then determine whether that growth is consistent with or in opposition to the growth statistics of the county wherein that church is located, since it would be expected that normal church growth or decline would simply mirror the patterns of growth or decline in the area of its location. Those churches experiencing growth consistent with area population growth will be noted, but those churches that are growing in areas where there is little or no area-wide growth will be especially note-worthy.

As reported previously, the project will use not only baptisms and total membership as measurements by which to ascertain church growth. We also will include the third element of missions expenditures, thereby including the one element that will demonstrate a congregation's willingness to grow in several and various ways that, of necessity, extend beyond the boundaries and benefit of its own sphere of influence. By such means the project will be able to utilize information that is quantifiable, yet obtainable through the West Virginia Convention's database of Annual Church Profiles (ACP's).

Finally, we will compare these findings with a follow up interview of each pastor of those churches that have demonstrated growth in the areas studied. Those interviews will question the individual pastors to determine what competencies they have acquired by any of the afore-mentioned means of study and directly applied to the church field during the years of the Annual Church Profiles obtained. Thus we can demonstrate that growth in ministerial competency can therefore be directly related to the growth of the church in the areas of quantifiable church growth presented above.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Most of the church growth material since the early years of the church growth movement has centered upon the aspects of church growth that are dependent upon strategies of outreach and evangelism that can be replicated and applied from various church fields. Nevertheless, the majority of the emphasis and study focusing upon church growth primarily stresses only aspects of numerical growth. This can, of course, be deceptive if the growth of a church does not take baptismal growth rate into account.

The concept of church growth dare not become a process of reaching only the reached or robbing another's flock. If there is not a total growth among churches in an area it is likely individual congregational growth is only transfer growth between churches. That is not really church growth!¹⁰

This is particularly true in cases where the emphasis upon numbers for numbers sake is the primary goal. When attendance becomes the primary concern of church growth, worship may degenerate into nothing more than experiences to promote the comfort of the congregants, rather than promoting the Kingdom of God.

Growth is not always measured simply by size. To grow a church that's a mile wide and a quarter of an inch deep is to create a dangerous anomaly. Persons who are added to a church that doesn't have a commitment to thorough and accurate theological training may confuse church membership with authentic conversion. Could it be that many church members don't give or serve simply because they haven't been born again and therefore have no commitment to the King?¹¹

¹⁰Larry L. McSwain, *A Critical Appraisal of the Church Growth Movement*, Review and Expositor, Vol. 77(4), 1980, 526.

¹¹Ken Hemphill, *Eternal Impact* (Nashville: B&H Publishing Group, 2008), 91-92.

For church growth to be meaningful, it must be purposeful. Growth must be reckoned with the end goal of the Kingdom of God in mind. Otherwise, the church becomes just another program, growth becomes a statistic and worship may degenerate into a show with churches vying for attendees based upon style and personal preference.

Churches should be much more than Sunday morning “entertainment centers” for lukewarm saints. They should be “training centers” where people learn how to win the lost for Christ. They should be growing by adding souls to the Kingdom. But statistics show that only 20 percent of our churches are growing at all, and less than 5 percent are growing by conversion rather than transfer.¹²

This is of special importance to Southern Baptist life today, in light of a recent Baptist Press article by Ron Phillips, director of communications for LifeWay Christian Resources. That article reports that the number of SBC churches grew by 1.1 percent to 44,696, primary worship attendance increased slightly to 6.15 million and missions expenditures topped \$1.3 billion in 2007, while baptisms in the same period dropped nearly 5.5 percent.¹³

Total membership showed a slight decline. Baptisms have now declined for three consecutive years and for seven of the last eight years, and are at their lowest level since 1987. Indeed, the total baptisms are among the lowest reported since 1970.¹⁴

In his sermon presented at the 2008 Pastor’s Conference in Indianapolis, Johnny Hunt made reference to an article by Christine Wicker in the Dallas Morning News of June 1, 2008, which gives even more drastic data.¹⁵

¹²Stan Toler and Larry Gilbert, *The Pastor’s Playbook* (Kansas City: Beacon Hill Press of Kansas City, 2000), 11.

¹³Ron Phillips, “SBC baptisms: Lowest since ‘87”, [article on-line] (accessed April 23, 2008); available at <http://www.bpnews.net/printerfriendly.asp?ID=27890>.

¹⁴Thom Rainer. Quoted in Ron Phillips, “SBC baptisms: Lowest since ‘87”, [article on-line] (accessed April 23, 2008); available at <http://www.bpnews.net/printerfriendly.asp?ID=27890>.

What Baptist leaders have known for years is finally public: The Southern Baptist Convention is a denomination in decline. Half of the SBC's 43,000 churches will have shut their doors by 2030 if current trends continue.

And unless God provides a miracle, the trends *will* continue. They are longstanding and deeply rooted. The denomination's growth rate has been declining since the 1950's. The conservative/fundamentalist takeover 30 years ago was supposed to turn the trend around; it didn't make a bit of difference.¹⁶

The evidence is clearly before us. The Church in America is declining, and the churches that make up The Southern Baptist Convention are a large part of that statistic. This brings us to the critical question to be addressed, namely: what impact does the pastor actually have in church growth and conversely, in the conspicuous absence of church growth that is being observed in Southern Baptist life?

After fifteen years of diligent digging into the world around me, I have reached several conclusions about the future of the Christian church in America. The central conclusion is that the American church is dying due to lack of strong spiritual leadership. In this time of unprecedented opportunity and plentiful resources, the church is actually losing influence. The primary reason is the lack of leadership. Nothing is more important than leadership.¹⁷

No one can dispute the importance of pastoral leadership for a church to accomplish any priority. If there is a singular dimension to church growth, this one is probably most important at the congregational level.¹⁸

The truth is that nearly anyone can steer the ship, but it takes a leader to chart the course.¹⁹

¹⁵Johnny Hunt, *Prayer for Revival: Let it Rain*, sermon delivered at the 2008 Pastor's Conference of the Southern Baptist Convention, Indianapolis, Indiana, June 8, 2008.

¹⁶Christine Wicker, "Christine Wicker: The great evangelical decline" [article on-line] (accessed June 16, 2008); available at http://www.dallasnews.com/sharedcontent/dws/dn/opinion/points/stories/DN-wicker_01ed.

¹⁷George Barna, *Leaders on Leadership* (Ventura, CA: Regal Books, 1984), 18.

¹⁸Larry L. McSwain, *A Critical Appraisal of the Church Growth Movement*, Review and Expositor, Vol. 77(4), 1980. 533.

As we can see, pastoral leadership is of utmost importance. This has tremendous importance in light of the fact that in their book, *Essential Church*, Rainer and Rainer report that one of the most significant populations the church is losing are those in their late teens to early twenties.

Students are dropping out of churches at an alarming rate. Of those that will drop out of church, 70 percent do so between the ages of eighteen and twenty-two. We are losing an entire generation at one of the most critical junctions in their lives. They leave because of life changes. They leave because of poor leadership in the church. They leave because the church has not reached out to them and their peers. They leave because the church has nothing for them at their particular life stage.²⁰

When the Rainers talk about church leadership as a factor in why young people are leaving the church, they are speaking specifically about the pastor. Pastoral leadership is one of the most significant factors in why young people who should comprise the greatest percentage of church growth end up comprising the greatest percentage of church exodus. “The buck stops with the pastor. He holds the primary shepherding responsibility in the church.”²¹

These researchers have demonstrated the importance of pastoral leadership in the area of church growth. However, their primary concern has been in the style or type of pastoral leadership demonstrated in growing churches.

A critical issue for us to discern is *how* these leaders of churches that are reaching the unchurched lead. The level of consistency in our survey responses told us that certain leadership styles are more effective

¹⁹John Maxwell, *The 21 Irrefutable Laws of Leadership* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1998), 36.

²⁰Thom S. Rainer and Sam S. Rainer III, *Essential Church* (Nashville: B&H Publishing, 2008), 132.

²¹*Ibid.*, 116.

in reaching the unchurched than others.²²

In a *Home Missions* study of laity in growing churches, the five characteristics describing their pastors were: Bible-believing, evangelistic (97.8%); strong counselor “pastor” type (78.8%); strong leader (77.9%); accessible and warmly human (74.5%); and delegates authority and responsibility (57.1%). Only 19.5 percent viewed their pastor as authoritarian.²³

Another aspect of pastoral leadership that has been addressed is the pastor’s preaching style. Rainer has shown how this impacts church growth.

The leaders whose churches are reaching the unchurched are passionate about preaching. Most of them, when asked about the call of God in their lives, refer to it as a “call to preach.” For them, preaching is their primary activity and calling.²⁴

The contrast between the pastors of the effective churches and the pastors of the comparison churches is stark. Ninety-three percent of the pastors of the effective churches named preaching as one of their most exciting tasks compared to 70 percent of the pastors of the comparison churches.²⁵

Is preaching still important? Yes! Even in today’s hyper-techno-driven conversational-wiki-culture, preaching is of the utmost importance. Of the several church-related or pastor-related issues noted by dropouts, preaching came up several times as a critical issue in retaining college students and young adults.²⁶

Preaching is such a significant part of what the preacher does, that pastors recognize the need to continue to grow and develop the skill. It is the primary weekly connection that the pastor has with the congregation, and it is crucial to his ministry that he delivers his message as faithfully as possible. The pastor must make it a priority

²²Thom S. Rainer, *Surprising Insights from the Unchurched and Proven Ways to Reach Them* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2001), 181.

²³*Home Missions* 48 (Winter 1977), 43, quoted in McSwain, 533.

²⁴Rainer, 211.

²⁵Ibid, 211.

²⁶Rainer and Rainer, 127.

to continually evaluate his preaching and seek to improve it. Even the most experienced preacher likely has room for improvement and development.²⁷

Since researchers have been addressing areas of pastoral influence on church growth, this project seeks to assess what may prove to be another critical aspect of pastoral involvement influencing church growth, which has not heretofore been adequately addressed. We believe this little reported aspect of pastoral influence on church growth is nevertheless, of major importance. That aspect is the responsibility of the pastor to maintain a consistent pattern of personal growth in ministerial competence that will appropriately influence and encourage a pattern of growth in his field of service.

We are God's field. Fields do not bear fruit or crops on command. They blossom in process, and to do so properly, they need the right environment and the right nutrients.²⁸

That right environment may well be the pastor's own attitude toward personal growth and the pursuit of ever increasing competence in ministry. By having an attitude that fosters education and training events and opportunities, the pastor serves as *the* model and encourager of growth. He demonstrates this as normative to the Christian experience.

I love the fact that the Bible – much to the surprise, perhaps, of those who would characterize Christianity as an idiotic, unlearned religion that disdains intellectual exercise and excellence – repeatedly calls for God's people to seek Him in study.²⁹

Bisagno states it clearly. One is not to take the call to preach lightly. It is the

²⁷Seth Polk, "The Twenty First Century Pastor," D.Min. thesis, Liberty Theological Seminary, 2007, 121.

²⁸Thom S. Rainer and Eric Geiger, *Simple Church* (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 2006), 59.

²⁹Hemphill, 89-90.

clarion call of God to involve oneself in serious, ongoing study and educational endeavor.

A call to preach is a call to preparation. A call to serve is a call to prepare to serve.³⁰

In fact, modern missiologists like Malik, now posit that the church in the modern context must, of necessity, make higher education the point of impact for lasting evangelization to take place. If the church does not adequately educate as well as evangelize, the long-term effect will be a net loss for the gospel. This sometimes happens, due to the attrition rate that will occur when those who have been won are unable to adequately defend their faith in the face of the hostilities of modern scholarship.

The problem is not only to win souls but to save minds. If you win the whole world and lose the mind of the world, you will soon discover that you have not won the world. Indeed it may turn out that you have actually lost the world.³¹

This is of even greater importance when looking at mission efforts, beyond the local church's immediate sphere of influence. For example, the pastor who is involved in planning for outreach in foreign cultures must be aware of foreign context. McQuilkin powerfully demonstrates this by the need for anthropological insights to encourage more effective evangelism efforts that cross cultural boundaries.³² Thus, the pastor who is seeking church growth must be seeking personal growth in many diverse disciplines if he is to be an effective instrument.

³⁰John R. Bisagno, *Letters to Timothy* (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 2001), 39.

³¹Malik spoke at the Dedication Ceremony of the Billy Graham Center at Wheaton College, Illinois. Charles Malik, *The Two Tasks* (Westchester, Ill.: Cornerstone, 1980), 32; and *A Christian Critique of the University* (Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press, 1982). Quoted in Martin I. Klauber and Scott M. Manetsch, eds., *The Great Commission* (Nashville: B&H Publishing Group, 2008), 130.

³²Robert McQuilkin, *The Five Smooth Stones: Essential Principles for Biblical Ministry* (Nashville: B&H Publishing Group, 2007), 212-215.

Through study, the pastor gains further confidence in his own gifts and abilities, so he can foster an attitude toward educational growth that can become infectious in the congregation. Thus, as both are enriched, pastor and congregation gain a sense of mutual confidence in each other, as successes are achieved.

John Maxwell in his book, *The 21 Irrefutable Laws of Leadership*, sums up this idea well. He states, “Strong leaders understand that to change direction, you first have to create forward progress.” He states later that, “With enough momentum, nearly any kind of change is possible.”³³ But he makes it clear that momentum must start with the leader. Once the leader has momentum, the followers can catch it and move forward with the leader.³⁴

Whether or not pastors are engaged in the pursuit of increasing ministerial competence through a program of study through a Bible college or seminary, there is no lack of other educational opportunities provided for those serving in Southern Baptist Churches to avail themselves of in gaining praxis for outreach and growth. This makes it untenable for pastors to refuse those opportunities and thereby stunt their own congregations.

State conventions regularly conduct institutes, seminars, and conferences on church growth. So the conclusion is readily drawn that Southern Baptists are no newcomers to either the concept or the practice of outreach theology.³⁵

³³John Maxwell, *The 21 Irrefutable Laws of Leadership* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1998), 165, 173. Quoted in Brian Miller, “Pastoral Leadership Problems in Small, Established Churches of Under 100 People,” D.Min. thesis, Liberty Theological Seminary, 2006.

³⁴Brian Miller, “Pastoral Leadership Problems in Small, Established Churches of Under 100 People,” D.Min. thesis, Liberty Theological Seminary, 2006, 92-93.

³⁵James E. Carter, “Outreach Theology: A Comparison of Southern Baptist Thought and the Church Growth Movement,” presentation to Historical Commission, SBC, and Southern Baptist Historical Society, Louisville, Kentucky, April 1980.

Even in cases when conferences and seminars are too costly or too distant for accessibility, any pastor can and must persistently consume books and resource materials that are within his grasp. This is especially necessary for those pastors without the privilege of seminary training.

The private study of the right books can make accessible to you much of the information you will find in the classroom. Good preparation does not ensure great usability. But the chances of great usability are severely limited when formal education is lacking.³⁶

Making study a priority will, of course, require time and discipline. These two things are often in short supply in the lives of already overly hurried, busy pastors. Nevertheless, without planning for the time and being disciplined to use it in pursuit of growth, both pastor and congregation will suffer.

The moment you stop learning, you cease to grow. The greatest service that leaders can offer the people they lead is to learn. Business challenges, methods, and technology continue to develop at a staggering pace. Anyone who took a new job three years ago and has not kept abreast of the trends in their industry is seriously out-of-date.

As critical as professional development is, spiritual growth is far more important.³⁷

Fortunately for those in ministry, professional and spiritual development overlap. This makes it even more critical for the pastor to be engaged in some plan of action to consistently pursue further educational advancement to some degree.

We are bewildered by pastors and businesspeople who bemoan their lack of time for reading Christian literature, but they can analyze the Monday night football game in minute detail or enthusiastically discuss the latest movies and TV shows. Spiritual growth occurs when it is a priority. Otherwise, almost anything will take its place in our busy lives. Clearly, there is not enough time to do *everything* you would like

³⁶Bisagno, 40-41.

³⁷Henry Blackaby and Richard Blackaby, *God In The Market Place* (Nashville: B&H Publishing Group, 2008), 25.

to do each week, so you must make hard choices with your schedule.³⁸

You don't have time *not* to read. Readers are leaders and leaders are readers. It will prove beneficial to pay attention to the books and resources used by comeback leaders. If they discovered principles that helped in their churches' revitalizations, you'll find help in those resources as well.³⁹

As we have seen, church growth specialists like those cited previously have demonstrated a correlation between such aspects of pastoral leadership as preaching and leadership styles being of seminal importance in church growth. When coupled with the opportunities for pastors to gain new expertise in church growth methodologies, it follows that it should be of paramount importance for pastors to avail themselves of such opportunities for growth. Rainer's research showed that when a pastor had a relationship with a mentor, this had a positive impact on their leadership style. Likewise, the attendance at conferences and seminars were very important, as well.

We were surprised when the leaders of the effective churches told us that participation in a conference or seminar was a highly influential factor in their leadership development.⁴⁰

Since the opportunities for gaining ministerial competencies are being provided, the question becomes whether or not ministers are availing themselves of those opportunities. Accordingly, since there are no requirements for ministerial training to qualify as the pastor of a Southern Baptist Church other than those expected by the individual churches themselves, it remains to be seen whether or not ministers are actively pursuing those educational opportunities that are afforded.

³⁸Ibid., 26.

³⁹Ed Stetzer and Mike Dodson, *Comeback Churches* (Nashville: B&H Publishing Group, 2007), 174.

⁴⁰Rainer, 179.

In his book, *Uprising: A Revolution of the Soul*, Erwin McManus contends that the parable of the talents in Matthew 25:14-30, Jesus provides the key to gaining wisdom. He contends that this involves a consistent human effort to learn and gain competence as one is engaged in a consistent pursuit of all that God would have us to become.

In this parable and its parallel story found in Luke 19, we find the answer: The great things that we long for and search for are found among the small things we may ignore or even discard. The quest for enlightenment begins in what may appear as the mundane. The journey toward wisdom passes through perseverance but begins with faithfulness. Both parables end with the same spiritual principle emphatically declared, “For everyone who has will be given more, and he will have an abundance” (Matth. 25:2, cp. Luke 19:26).

...In both the parable of the talents and the parable of the minas this truth is central. God entrusts us with His resources, and then holds us accountable for what we do with them.⁴¹

Thus, this project is involved with determining what level of individual study through programs, seminaries or other courses of study are actually being utilized by Southern Baptist pastors. It is the belief of this writer that such endeavors would have a significant impact upon those ministers engaged in such pursuits and that this would be an important factor in church growth or the lack thereof.

It is our contention that while we may discover growing churches that are making gains under the leadership of capable pastors that are not involved in the active pursuit of increasing ministerial competency through study, this will be the exception, rather than the norm. Stetzer and Dodson state it this way:

It is possible to lead a turnaround church as an established pastor, but it is more challenging. It means changing yourself while you transform the congregation.⁴²

⁴¹Erwin McManus, *Uprising: A Revolution of the Soul* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, Inc., 2003), 179-180.

⁴²Stetzer and Dodson, 178.

Nevertheless, ministerial training has not heretofore been given much consideration by writers of church growth literature. Rainer does provide only slight mention of such pursuits, but without any initially positive effect.

Though I am not pleased with the responses regarding another factor in leadership development, integrity demands that I report it. Only three out of ten of those we interviewed indicated that college or seminary training positively impacted their leadership development. And four out of ten told us the influence was slight or not a factor at all.⁴³

And yet, even Rainer makes mention of the fact that seminary and Bible college programs of study will strongly impact a pastor's preaching style. This is extremely important, since as previously noted, pastors of effective, growing churches are passionate about being effective in their preaching.

We were surprised, however, to hear that college or seminary training was almost as influential in preaching as a mentor or experiences. These results are significantly different than the results of the question that asked the importance of seminary or college influence on leadership. According to the leaders of the effective churches, seminary and/or college made a significant contribution in training for the preaching task, but higher education woefully prepared these leaders for the day-to-day functions of leadership and the longer-term function of vision casting.⁴⁴

Therefore, we have not limited our scope of observation of pastoral growth through endeavoring to obtain expanding ministerial competence to programs of study through Bible colleges or seminaries alone. However, it should be noted that those availing themselves of such programs of study would be expected to avail themselves of other educational opportunities, such as conferences and seminars, as well.

⁴³Rainer, 180.

⁴⁴Ibid, 216-217.

Stetzer and Dodson note that there is a relationship between pastoral education and church growth. That relationship exists, even in churches that have been previously plateaued or in decline.

In this area, a positive correlation existed between a pastor having more education and being the leaders of a comeback church. Ninety-five percent of those surveyed had more than a high school education. Seventy-nine percent had at least a college degree, and fifty-one percent had more than a college degree. While it was evident that pastors with less than a high school education were comeback leaders, over three-quarters of the comeback churches surveyed had pastors with at least a college degree. Thus, a majority of the churches surveyed had pastors that moved beyond a college degree in the area of education.⁴⁵

There is no reason for pastors to believe that one's ministerial training and education are completed once one is firmly seated in the leadership position of a church. In fact, the truth is to the contrary. Polk notes that growth and development should be continuing throughout one's years of service.

It is also important that men continue education beyond their foundational studies in order to grow and develop in the ministry. Surveyed pastors of middle sized churches responded in a way that reflects an emphasis on continuing education. More than 80% have participated in continuing education in preaching. More than 70% have participated in continuing education in pastoral care. Nearly 56% have participated in continuing education in church administration.⁴⁶

Even so, it must be understood that pastors can be involved in seeking growth in their local congregation without spurring the membership to grow beyond themselves. Church growth cannot simply be measured by how well the local congregation is doing at winning converts and gaining transfer growth within their own locale. As Carter puts it:

But care must be taken that church growth is not too narrowly

⁴⁵Stetzer and Dodson, 188.

⁴⁶Polk, 57.

defined. Increasing the count is not the only way to grow. By planting churches and spinning off missions, the home church may actually decrease in count and still have growth.⁴⁷

Thus, it is imperative that the church's missionary endeavors be included in our definition of churches as "growing." These would be expected to include local missions, specifically the desire for a much broader sweep of growth than in a single church, alone. Carter contends that church growth is recorded in the local context, but is not to be seen as a kind of competition for individual congregational size. Rather, it should be recognized as local congregations reach out to encourage the planting of other, new congregations.

Church growth comes back to the local church. Church growth exists where local churches are growing and extending.⁴⁸

Growing the church internally and planting mission churches in nearby areas are certainly commendable and indicative of a church whose pastor is actively seeking church growth. Nevertheless, there is still another indicator of growth in the local church a pastor serves and that is the mission imperative that goes well beyond church growth in the local context.

Growth that looks beyond the local context is a must in the current day and age the church now inhabits. If the call of God is to make disciples of all nations, as Matthew 28:19 states, then neglecting such is not an option.

The twenty-first century is now the century of global Christianity, a world-wide faith without a single geographical center. The American evangelical contribution to this expansion has been, and continues to be,

⁴⁷James E. Carter, "Outreach Theology: A Comparison of Southern Baptist Thought and the Church Growth Movement," presentation to Historical Commission, SBC, and Southern Baptist Historical Society, Louisville, Kentucky, April 1980.

⁴⁸Ibid.

profound. It developed the model for the church growth movement in the modern world, for the explosive increase of Christianity in the Two-Thirds World continues the earlier American pattern, where political disestablishment and the voluntary principle led to the development of indigenous churches, which were incarnated in local cultures. While by no means exclusive, the global expansion of evangelical Christianity is in large part an expression of American Christian influence.⁴⁹

That is why this project has chosen to monitor the growth of total mission expenditures in the local church. This writer believes total mission expenditures is a better indicator of a pastor who is growing in ministerial competence that provides the imperative for the church to reach out further than it can through its own efforts, alone.

The healthiest churches have a working strategy for reaching out into their surrounding regions as well as a commitment to maintaining a welcoming environment in the setting of the church community itself. Both are essential, and when the two methods come together, there is a tremendous synergy that results in life change for all involved.⁵⁰

If we are serious about kingdom advance, churches must work cooperatively with other churches of like faith to accomplish common goals. The church growth movement of the past decades has had a positive impact in revitalizing many American churches. But the emphasis on church growth has had a downside, as well. It has inadvertently created a spirit of *competition* rather than a spirit of *cooperation*. We behave as if a few “superstar” churches alone can advance the kingdom.

Truth is, God has designed every church – whatever its size or location – to work in cooperation with other churches for kingdom expansion. All are equal partners.

No single church working alone can reach its own community, much less advance the kingdom to the ends of the earth. When churches work cooperatively, their strength is multiplied and magnified.⁵¹

Further, it must be noted that churches can and should be growing in localities that are experiencing population growth. For that reason, this project will cite the

⁴⁹Martin I. Klauber and Scott M. Manetsch, eds., *The Great Commission* (Nashville: B&H Publishing Group, 2008), 132.

⁵⁰David Putman, *Breaking the discipleship Code* (Nashville: B&H Publishing Group, 2008), 106.

⁵¹Hemphill, 131-132.

statistics on church growth in the West Virginia counties that are reporting population growth as a basis for determining whether or not a church that is growing might happen to be located in a growing area (see Figure 1, page 28). For a church to be growing in a growing area should be expected. For a church to be growing in an area where population is declining should be an indication that the pastor of that church is actively involved in the pursuit of church growth. Therefore, we would expect that pastors in both of the afore-mentioned circumstances would be availing themselves of several means of gaining the competencies necessary to facilitate growth in their congregations.

Almost 92 percent of all the church leaders surveyed listed books or resources that had been helpful to them in ministry. These leaders didn't just rely on what they already knew. They continued to learn, read, study, and grow. Effective leaders make the commitment to be lifelong learners.

We also found that *comeback leaders practically applied* insights from books and resources strategically in the ministries of their churches. What they learned from reading, they applied in their ministry contexts. They were not interested in learning without purpose.⁵²

⁵²Stetzer and Dodson, 170.

Figure 1. West Virginia Population Growth/Loss, by County.

West Virginia**Population change, 2000 to 2003**

County	2000 pop	2003 pop	Change	State rank
<u>Berkeley</u>	75,905	85,272	12.3%	1
<u>Jefferson</u>	42,190	46,270	9.7%	2
<u>Summers</u>	12,999	13,917	7.1%	3
<u>Hampshire</u>	20,203	21,247	5.2%	4
<u>Morgan</u>	14,943	15,514	3.8%	5
<u>Monongalia</u>	81,866	84,370	3.1%	6
<u>Putnam</u>	51,589	53,035	2.8%	7
<u>Hardy</u>	12,669	12,990	2.5%	8
<u>Ritchie</u>	10,343	10,515	1.7%	9
<u>Lewis</u>	16,919	17,148	1.4%	10
<u>Preston</u>	29,334	29,705	1.3%	11
<u>Grant</u>	11,299	11,434	1.2%	12
<u>Doddridge</u>	7,403	7,491	1.2%	13
<u>Upshur</u>	23,404	23,668	1.1%	14
<u>Jackson</u>	28,000	28,285	1.0%	15
<u>Boone</u>	25,535	25,785	1.0%	16
<u>Webster</u>	9,719	9,790	0.7%	17
<u>Lincoln</u>	22,108	22,251	0.6%	18
<u>Barbour</u>	15,557	15,653	0.6%	19
<u>Greenbrier</u>	34,453	34,656	0.6%	20
<u>Mason</u>	25,957	26,079	0.5%	21
<u>Braxton</u>	14,702	14,771	0.5%	22
<u>Mineral</u>	27,078	27,147	0.3%	23
<u>Taylor</u>	16,089	16,127	0.2%	24
<u>Clay</u>	10,330	10,352	0.2%	25
<u>Pleasants</u>	7,514	7,521	0.1%	26
<u>Raleigh</u>	79,220	79,254	0.0%	27
<u>Randolph</u>	28,262	28,254	0.0%	28
<u>Marion</u>	56,598	56,484	-0.2%	29
<u>Roane</u>	15,446	15,362	-0.5%	30
<u>Fayette</u>	47,579	47,270	-0.6%	31
<u>Wood</u>	87,986	87,336	-0.7%	32
<u>Harrison</u>	68,652	68,032	-0.9%	33
<u>Wayne</u>	42,903	42,418	-1.1%	34
<u>Nicholas</u>	26,562	26,243	-1.2%	35
<u>Mercer</u>	62,980	62,113	-1.4%	36
<u>Wirt</u>	5,873	5,790	-1.4%	37
<u>Tyler</u>	9,592	9,439	-1.6%	38
<u>Gilmer</u>	7,160	7,037	-1.7%	39
<u>Marshall</u>	35,519	34,897	-1.8%	40
<u>Cabell</u>	96,784	95,043	-1.8%	41
<u>Brooke</u>	25,447	24,939	-2.0%	42
<u>Pocahontas</u>	9,131	8,944	-2.0%	43
<u>Tucker</u>	7,321	7,162	-2.2%	44
<u>Kanawha</u>	200,073	195,413	-2.3%	45
<u>Mingo</u>	28,253	27,585	-2.4%	46
<u>Logan</u>	37,710	36,745	-2.6%	47
<u>Hancock</u>	32,667	31,742	-2.8%	48
<u>Wetzel</u>	17,693	17,160	-3.0%	49
<u>Ohio</u>	47,427	45,828	-3.4%	50
<u>Wyoming</u>	25,708	24,830	-3.4%	51
<u>Pendleton</u>	8,196	7,896	-3.7%	52
<u>Calhoun</u>	7,582	7,294	-3.8%	53
<u>McDowell</u>	27,329	25,348	-7.2%	54
<u>Monroe</u>	14,583	13,503	-7.4%	55

Sources: U.S. Census Bureau, ePodunk

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⁵³EPodunk, "Population Growth of Counties, West Virginia, Population change, 2000-2003", [online] (accessed September 18, 2007); available at <http://www.epodunk.com/top10/countyPop49.html>.

Nevertheless, in a Baptist Press story reported in 2004, the findings of total SBC church profiles clearly demonstrate that most churches in the convention are not growing. This is evidenced by a study of Southern Baptist Churches conducted by Bill Day, associate director of New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary's Leavell Center for Evangelism and Church Health.

According to the SBC's website, there are more than 42,000 Southern Baptist churches in the United States. Using the Leavell Center's findings, fewer than 13,000 of them are growing churches. In other words, 70 percent of Southern Baptist churches are still plateaued or declining.⁵⁴

The study also looked at church size, church age, church location and pastor tenure to identify any effects they might have on church growth. Only 7.3 percent of churches with 100 members or less qualified as growing. However, of churches with between 101 and 5,000 members, between 13 and 14 percent were growing. As for church age, approximately 30 percent of SBC churches 10 years old or less are experiencing healthy church growth. This percentage declines steadily with increasing age until only 9.1 percent of churches over 50 years old are in this category.⁵⁵

These findings bring us back to our initial question about ministerial competence. Since the vast majority of Southern Baptist churches are not growing, and leadership factors such as leadership style and passionate preaching have been demonstrated to have a strong influence upon churches that are experiencing growth, it follows that other factors relating to pastoral influence require further consideration. It remains to be seen whether or not another key element for church growth is to be found in a pastor's ability

⁵⁴Michael McCormack, *Study updates stats on health of Southern Baptist Churches*, Baptist Press, November 15, 2004.

⁵⁵Ibid.

to induce growth in the local church he serves by modeling a positive attitude toward and propensity for a continuing pursuit of ministerial competence through study.

We cannot do service to God by giving less than our best. That means a constant striving for excellence. Zigarelli writes:

How is mediocrity ever an option for a believer?...Love God enough to work for him in all things, excelling at everything to which you put your hand. When we follow God this way, people naturally follow us.⁵⁶

The pursuit of excellence is certainly something that anyone involved in leading a Christian organization ought to be about. The Scriptures exhort the church in numerous places to do whatever it does to *the glory of God*...⁵⁷

God himself models what he intends for his people to be and to do. In fact, revelation is, above all else, the disclosure of God himself. Both the written revelation and the living revelation in the person of Jesus Christ are the models for our individual behavior and for church doctrine and life.

In the same way, the responsibility of the leader in Christian ministry is to set the example. The idea of making oneself an adequate model is not an instantaneous decision or experience but a continuing activity.⁵⁸

Perhaps the problem with plateaued churches is the fact that pastors are plateaued by their own refusal to accept final responsibility for the churches they lead. If the pastor is not willing to step up to the plate, roll up his sleeves and do the hard work of becoming a disciplined learner throughout his ministry years, there can be no expectation that the congregation he serves will do so, either.

As a pastor or church leaders, you are and will always be-

⁵⁶Michael Ziarelli, *Influencing Like Jesus: 15 Biblical Principles of Persuasion* (Nashville: B&H Publishing Group, 2008), 27.

⁵⁷Hans Finzel, *The Top Ten Mistakes Leaders Make* (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1994), 140.

⁵⁸McQuilkin, 182.

under the headship of Jesus – the key to the church. You are the primary shaper of your church’s values, beliefs, strategy, and direction. You set the direction for your people. God calls you to focus on both quality and quantity; not just “how many” but also “how well.”⁵⁹

This element of “how well” the pastor is leading requires a continuing process. It demands constant redevelopment and re-evaluation. In essence, our initial question about whether or not some of the present lack of church growth is a result of the failure of pastors to avail themselves of personal study for growth in ministry competency comes to the fore when it is recognized that a pastor cannot expect his congregation to be growing if, in fact, he is not growing as a pastor and leader.

Leaders are *always* teachers. To be an effective long-range leader, you must teach with authority. You must be prepared. You must know what you are talking about. Remember, Jesus prepared for more than thirty years.

Be prepared.

But as important as it is to know what you’re talking about, it is perhaps even more important to *be* what you’re talking about.⁶⁰

Of course the pursuit of educational goals and the continuing quest for gaining ministerial competencies requires time. No doubt any endeavor that requires more time and discipline sounds an alarm bell in the minds of pastors who very often are already busy, already overburdened, and overwhelmed with feelings of incompetence. This is all the more reason for such pastors to engage in the pursuit. The question is whether or not the pastor will value his own personal growth enough to make the commitment of time for further ministerial study.

Values show up on our calendars and our daily appointment

⁵⁹Stetzer and Dodson, 14.

⁶⁰Bob Briner and Ray Pritchard, *The Leadership Lessons of Jesus* (Nashville: B&H Publishing Group, 1998), 12-13.

schedule. How we spend our days is how we spend our lives. Our values influence that expenditure. Why we spend more time on certain projects and with particular people can be explained often by our values.⁶¹

The pastor must value his own personal growth enough to warrant the kind of investment that continuing education will merit. However, nothing less than the Kingdom of God is at stake. Therefore, the pastor must be intentional about continuing his own path to greater ministerial competence. In so doing, he is placing even greater value upon those he serves in the church.

This proves even more critical when we recognize that pastors are not the only leaders on the team that direct and influence the growth of the church. Nevertheless, we have already clearly seen from the research that the pastor is the catalyst for change. He is the growth agent. He is the team captain and his influence characterizes the rest of those in leadership. In congregational life, the pastor is *the* leader, he is the leader of the leaders.

If leadership development matters, we need to know what it is. According to Malphurs and Mancini, it is “the intentional process of helping established and emerging leaders at every level of ministry to assess and develop their Christian character and skills.”⁶²

Stetzer and Dodson contend that the difference between pastors of plateaued churches and those pastoring what they refer to as “comeback churches,” is once again the recognition of the pastor as the model of leadership at every level of church life.

Comeback leaders were not just leaders – they were developers and leaders of leaders.⁶³

⁶¹Reggie McNeal, *Get A Life* (Nashville: B&H Publishing Group, 2007), 48.

⁶²Aubrey Malphurs and Will Mancini, *Building Leaders* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2004), 23. Quoted in Stetzer and Dodson, 51.

⁶³Stetzer and Dodson, 51.

This study will contend that in order to move a church toward growth, the pastor must be able to cast the vision that others will grasp. In essence, he must be a leader that transforms others into leadership. This requires the pastor to be in the process of transformation that begins with himself, first and foremost.

One of the fundamental traits of a transformational leader is a clear sense of self-identity and worth. The transformational leader has enjoyed the emancipatory knowledge that has caused him or her to challenge old assumptions and view the world through a new set of lenses. Having been transformed, the transformational leader is open to risk-taking and improving what he or she does. This person is not stuck in a paradigm that has lost its functional meaning and is not afraid to seek renewal, whether related to personal, church, or community issues. In addition to having been transformed, the transformational leader has the ability to inspire others to take on a challenge.⁶⁴

Thus, this project will determine that a correlation does exist between the pastor's pursuit of ministerial competencies through further educational endeavors and the growth of the church he serves. Furthermore, it will show that this correlation manifests itself in a manner that may be quantitatively discerned and verified.

⁶⁴Bruce P. Powers, ed. *Church Administration Handbook* (Nashville: B&H Publishing Group, 2008), 18-19.

SURVEY REQUEST

Dear Fellow Pastor:

Like you, I am the pastor of a church within the West Virginia Convention of Southern Baptists. I am currently working on a thesis project for use in completing the Doctor of Ministry degree from Liberty Theological Seminary. I am requesting your help by asking you to fill out the questions listed on the enclosed survey and return mailing this in the self-addressed, stamped envelope provided.

In order to speed up the process of my research, please fill out the questions and return the questionnaire by September 15th. The data collected will be available upon request to those responding to this survey. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at any of the addresses or links listed. Thank you for answering this request and God bless you as we serve the Lord together in the West Virginia Convention and as co-laborers together in the Southern Baptist Convention.

Sincerely,

Dan R. Jividen, pastor
Immanuel Baptist Church
264 New Hope Road
Princeton, West Virginia 24740
(304) 425-0651
www.immanuelbaptistwv.com
pastordan@citlink.net

Name _____ Church _____
County _____

SURVEY QUESTIONS

What diplomas, degrees or certificates of study do you currently hold? Please list years completed in each category or degree earned, with dates achieved.

High School or grade _____ Certificate or Correspondence Course _____

Technical School _____ College or Bachelor's Degree _____

Master's Degree _____ Doctoral Degree _____

Are there programs or courses of study in which you are presently engaged? Please list, including any DLP courses, correspondence courses or certification programs.

Do you have a plan of study for personal and ministerial growth each year? Please describe.

If answering no to the previous questions, please describe the obstacles you have encountered that prevented further educational endeavors.

Does your church provide any encouragement and/or assistance for further ministerial training? Yes _____ No _____ If yes, please describe type or amount of assistance provided.

Please list length of time serving in this current pastorate. _____ years _____ months.

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Name _____

Church _____

What types of personal study are you engaged in on a regular (daily, weekly, monthly, or annual) basis? Please describe.

Are you presently engaged in a degree or certification program of any kind? If so, please indicate which type of degree you are pursuing and the length of time you have been involved in this endeavor.

If answering yes to either of the questions above, please indicate which changes have been implemented in your church as a result of those studies that have impacted the growth of your church and in which of the areas of baptisms, total membership, and missions giving that growth has resulted.

If answering no to the previous questions about the pursuit of continuing education, please provide what you believe are the methods, programs and/or techniques that have produced growth in the areas of baptisms, total membership and missions giving that are occurring in your congregation.

Where did you learn these methods, programs or techniques?

Comments:

CHAPTER TWO
SURVEY RESULTS OF RESPONDENTS
RESULTS OF SURVEYS

In August, 2008, one-hundred, ninety-seven copies of the survey included in chapter one, page 33, were mailed out to the senior pastors of every Southern Baptist Church in the WVCSB that currently had pastors, according to the latest information provided. Surveys were not sent to pastorless churches. In addition, an inserted copy of the survey was also sent out via e-mail to the seventy-seven of those one-hundred, ninety-seven pastors who had listed e-mail addresses in the WVCSB records. The pastors receiving the survey in both forms were instructed to return the answers in whichever form that was preferable to them, in hopes of allowing for the greatest number of returned surveys possible.

A return was requested by September 15th, to expedite a rapid return of the surveys, but all surveys received during the month of September have been included in the results presented in this project. Twelve survey responses were returned by e-mail and fifty-eight responses were returned in hard copy form, for a total of seventy surveys returned, out of the one-hundred, ninety-seven requested. This is a 35.71 percent return.

The returned surveys represented pastors of churches in thirty-three of the fifty-five counties that make up the state of West Virginia. The county with the largest number of respondents was Mercer County, which includes the areas of Bluefield and Princeton,

where Immanuel Baptist Church and this writer are located. Mercer County was represented by twelve responding pastors. The next largest number of respondents in a single county were located in Cabell County, which had five responding pastors. Eighteen of the thirty-three counties in which pastors responded were represented by a single respondent.

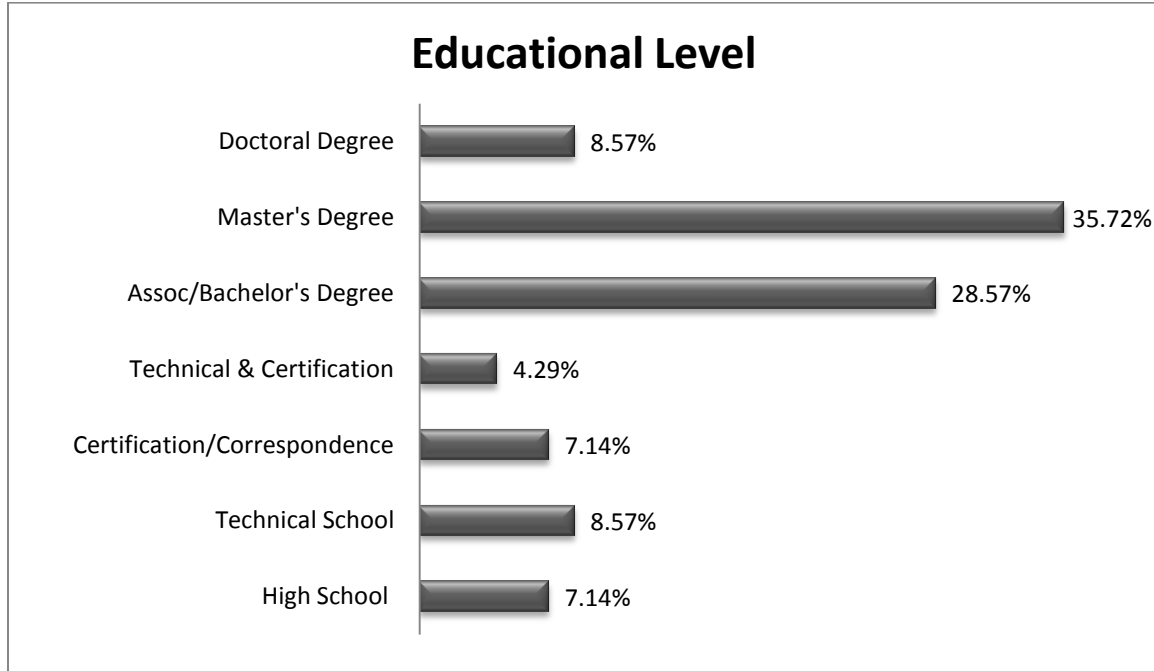
Counties with responding pastors included: Brooke, Marshall, Ohio, and Hancock in the northern panhandle; Jefferson, Berkeley, Morgan, Hampshire and Mineral in the eastern panhandle; Monongalia, Marion, Barbour, Harrison, and Lewis in the northeastern portion of the state; Wood County, to the northwest; Putnam, Wayne, Mason, and Cabell in the west; Braxton, Wirt, Calhoun, Roane, Kanawha, Fayette, and Nicholas in the middle portion; Pocahontas, and Greenbrier to the southeast; and Raleigh, Summers, Mercer, McDowell, and Mingo in the south. These pastors in the counties they represented were from all ten of the Associations making up the WVCSB.

The associational affiliations of the counties represented were as follows: Braxton, Greenbrier, Nicholas, Pocahontas and Fayette Counties in the Allegheny Association; Cabell and Wayne Counties in the Greater Huntington Association; Marion Barbour, Harrison, and Monongalia Counties in the Monongahela Association; Putnam and Kanawha Counties in the Pioneer Association; Berkeley, Jefferson and Morgan Counties in the Tri-County Association; McDowell and Mingo Counties in the Coalfields Association; Mason, Calhoun, Wirt, Roane, Lewis and Wood Counties in the Immanuel Association; Raleigh, Summers, and Mercer Counties in the Mountain State Association; Hampshire and Mineral Counties in the Potomac Highlands Association; and Brooke, Marshall, Hancock and Ohio Counties in the Upper Ohio Valley Association. Although

there are some counties that overlap into other associational territories, the counties in the preceding paragraph fall mainly into the areas of the associations as listed by the WVCSB.

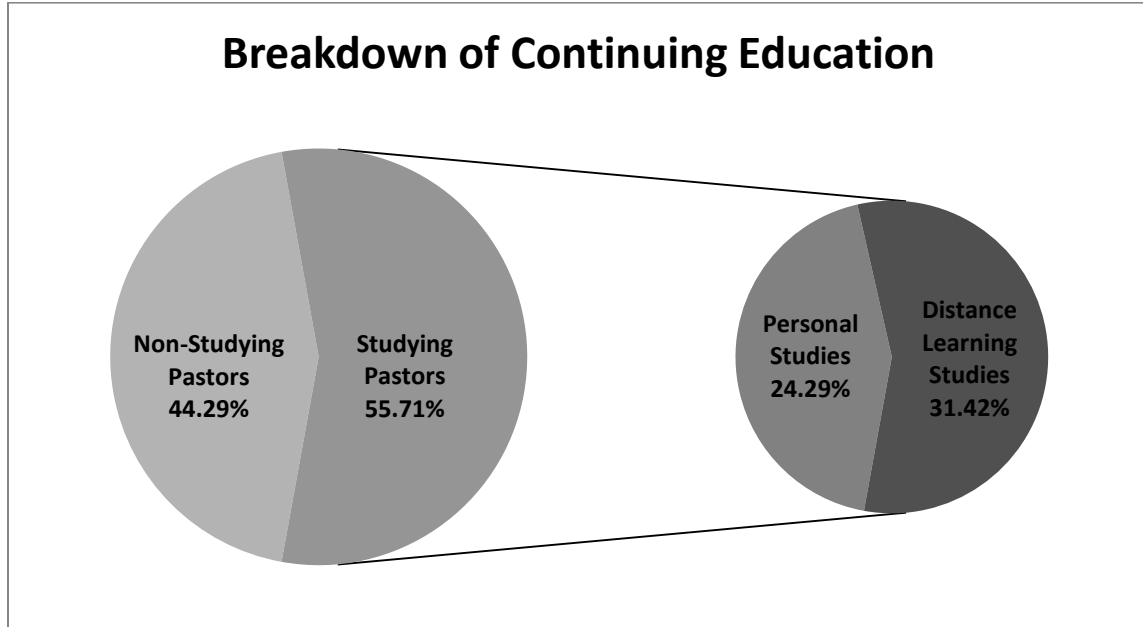
All seventy pastors responding to the survey indicated they had completed all twelve grades of their secondary school education. Six (8.57 percent) reported having received some other kind of technical school training beyond high school. Five of those (7.14 percent) had received other certifications or completed correspondence courses of some kind. Three others (4.29 percent) had received both completed certifications and technical training beyond high school. Twenty of the seventy pastors responding (28.57 percent) hold either associate or bachelor's degrees and twenty-five (35.72 percent) have a master's degree. Six of the seventy pastors (8.57 percent) responding to the survey hold some kind of doctoral degree. Altogether, sixty-five of the seventy pastors responding (92.85 percent) have some kind of certification, technical school or college beyond their secondary school education. (See figure 2, below).

Figure 2. Educational Level of Pastors Responding to Survey.



Twenty-two of the pastors (31.42 percent) reported that they were actively engaged in some kind of distance learning program, with fifteen of those twenty-two (68.18 percent) in distance learning directly mentioning involvement through the Distance Learning Program at Liberty Bible Institute, Liberty University or Liberty Baptist Theological Seminary. A total of thirty-nine of the seventy pastors (55.71 percent) reported ongoing studies. Other than the twenty-two in distance learning, another seventeen (24.29 percent) reported involvement in other individual plans of either personally selected readings, or attendance at conferences and seminars. (See figure 2, below).

Figure 3. Breakdown of Continuing Education of Responding Pastors.



Nevertheless, forty-eight pastors (68.57 percent) out of the seventy responding reported that they are not currently engaged in a formal distance learning program. Of these forty-eight, thirteen (27.08 percent) gave no reason for not pursuing any continuing education. Fourteen of the forty-eight pastors (29.16 percent) reported time constraints as their main obstacle to continuing educational endeavors. Four (8.33 percent) reported that the cost of continuing education was prohibitive. Five (10.41 percent) reported that it was both the lack of time and money that kept them from further educational pursuits. Eight (16.66 percent) reported they simply lacked the desire to pursue education further. Three (6.25 percent) reported the lack of both time and desire to continue, and one pastor (2.08 percent) listed all three obstacles, namely: lack of time; lack of money; and lack of desire; that were preventing further formal studies.

This means that out of the forty-eight pastors responding that they were not involved in a formal program of continuing education, thirteen (27.08 percent) gave no reason for not continuing, and another twelve (25 percent) gave the lack of desire to continue educational efforts as part of their decision not to carry on. Five of those twelve (41.66 percent) reporting no desire for further education stated the reason they had no desire was that they were either serving as pastors in their retirement, or they were approaching retirement age. One noteworthy respondent said that he was not seeking further engagement in educational pursuits due to his advanced age and poor eyesight. He reported that he is ninety years old and has been pastoring his current church for eight years, now. One respondent said that his limited educational background precluded any continuing education. Nevertheless, his survey indicated that he was a high school graduate, as were all the others.

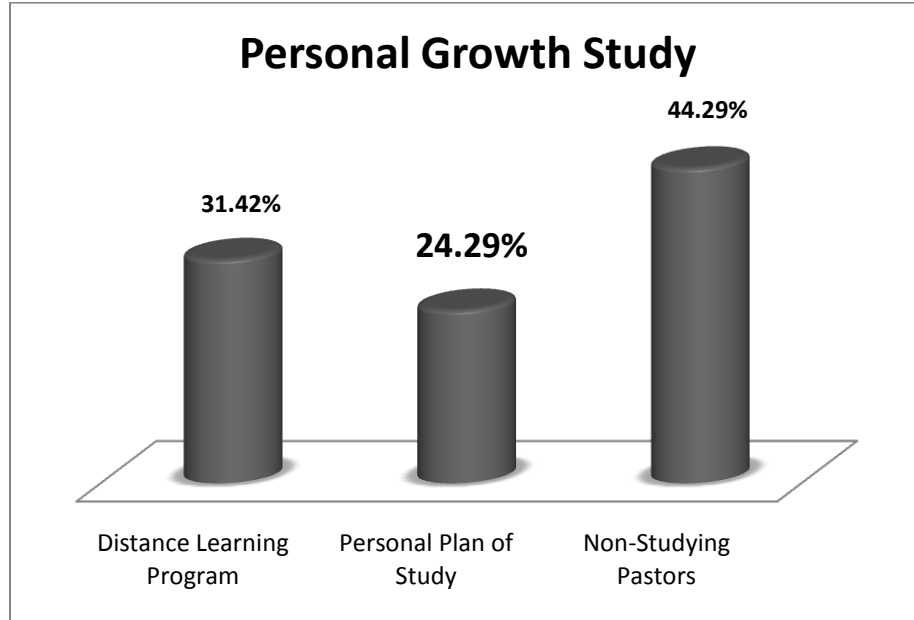
Based on our findings in Chapter One, it would be expected that those who have chosen to pursue education as a normal part of their ministry experience would continue to be so involved, even after obtaining at least one college degree. Accordingly, fifteen of the twenty-two respondents (68.18 percent) who are pursuing distance learning as a way of continuing their educational involvement already have at least one college degree. And although we have already presented the findings given for why forty-eight of the pastors responding (68.57 percent) are not pursuing a formal program of distance learning at present, the responses of the twenty-two (31.42 percent) who are involved in distance learning are equally worth noting. Of those twenty-two responding pastors currently involved in distance learning, fifteen (68.18 percent) reported no obstacles to their involvement. In fact, four of these twenty-two respondents (18.18 percent) reported that

they were doing distance learning despite the lack of time as their greatest obstacle to continuing. One (4.54 percent) reported that he was pursuing distance learning despite a lack of money for the endeavors, and two (9.09 percent) reported that they were doing distance learning despite a lack of time and money.

It was most telling to learn from these responding pastors that forty-six of the seventy respondents (65.71 percent) receive no financial incentive, inducement or reimbursement for continuing to pursue their ministerial education. Only nine of the twenty-two pastors (40.90 percent) who are involved in distance learning receive any kind of financial aid from their churches to help in their pursuits. Three of these twenty-two (13.63 percent) reported that they were encouraged to continue their educational endeavors, but this encouragement did not include any financial help. This means that twelve of the twenty-two pastors (54.54 percent) doing distance learning to continue their education are doing so without any assistance from their church.

While twenty-two of the pastors (31.42 percent) are currently involved in a formal distance learning program to continue their education, another seventeen (24.28 percent) report that they are, nevertheless, involved in some form of personal plan for continuing their ministerial studies outside of normal sermon preparation. This leaves the thirty-one responding pastors (44.28 percent) who reported that they are involved in neither a formal plan of continuing education nor a personal plan of continuing ministerial study.

Figure 4. Breakdown of Pastors regarding current study status.



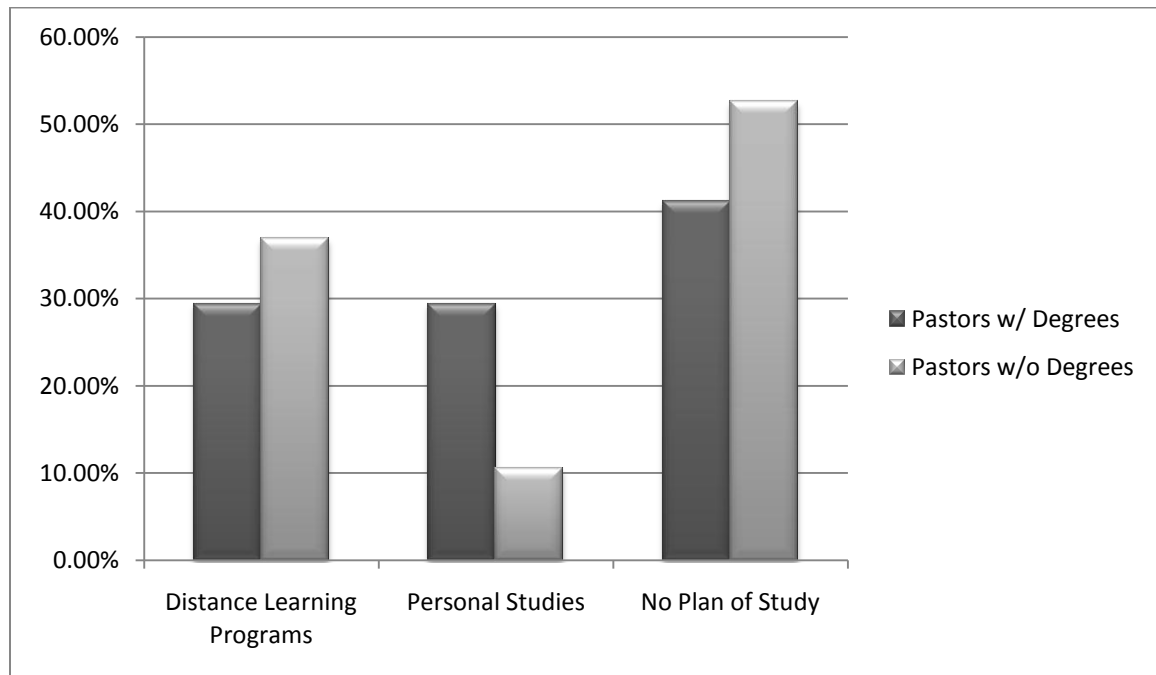
Nine of those seventeen pastors (52.94 percent) who are continuing to pursue some kind of personal plan of study report they are receiving reimbursement or other financial assistance to help facilitate their efforts. Only four of the seventy pastors (5.71 percent) reported that their church would provide financial assistance for such endeavors that they were not currently utilizing.

As referenced above, while twenty-two of the seventy pastors responding said they were engaged in some kind of distance learning program, the other seventeen respondents reported they were not engaged in formal distance learning at present, but were nevertheless engaging themselves regularly in some kind of personal plan of study. These personal plans were reported as sets of books they designed to study in the course of a year outside of their normal sermon preparations, or a plan to attend certain seminars or conferences throughout the year. One pastor said his plan included meeting regularly with other pastors to discuss issues pertinent to his ministerial development.

The actual breakdown of those pastors responding concerning their continuing education was as follows: Of the fifty-one pastors responding to the survey who already have at least one college degree, fifteen (29.41 percent) reported they are currently engaged in a distance learning program. Another fifteen of those fifty-one pastors with degrees (29.41 percent) are not currently involved in a formal distance learning program, but are nevertheless engaged in some kind of personal plan of ministerial development involving readings, attendance at seminars and/or conferences, or some other regular plan of ministerial development, as reported above. That makes a total of 58.82 percent of the fifty-one pastors holding at least one college degree who are involving themselves in some form of continuing ministerial education, whether formal or informal. The remaining twenty-one pastors who hold at least one college degree (41.17 percent) report that they are neither involved in distance learning or any other plan of continuing educational pursuit.

Of the nineteen other pastors responding who do not hold any formal college degree, seven (36.84 percent) reported that they are currently involved in a distance learning program of some kind and two others (10.52 percent) reported that they do, nevertheless, involve themselves in some kind of personal plan of educational endeavor. That leaves another ten of those nineteen pastors without degrees (52.63 percent) who are not presently engaging themselves in any kind of further educational endeavor. (See figure 5, page 46).

Figure 5. Pastors with/without degrees regarding current study status.



Thus, we can see that over half of those reporting that they are currently involved in either a formal or informal plan of study either through distance learning, or other personal plans of study, already have a college education that includes holding at least one degree. This is opposed to under thirty-seven percent of those without previously earned degrees who are pursuing some form of continuing education. This agrees with the research reported in Chapter One of this project.

On the other hand, the survey results also point out that while thirty-nine of the seventy pastors are engaged in either a formal or informal plan of continuing education, thirty-one out of the seventy pastors responding are not currently involved in any plan of distance learning or other educational pursuit. This is 44.28 percent of the responding pastors who are not engaged in any current educational endeavor. That means that just

under half of those pastors responding to the survey report they are not currently seeking any kind of continuing education.

Surprisingly, of these thirty-one pastors who are not currently engaged in continuing education, twenty-one (67.74 percent) of the responding pastors, report already having at least one college degree, while only ten (32.25 percent) have no degrees. That means that over two-thirds of the pastors who are not currently involving themselves in any further educational pursuit are college graduates, while only one third of those without degrees are not engaging themselves in any kind of educational pursuit. From the previous research, this writer expected these numbers to have been reversed.

To put it another way, twenty-one of the fifty-one pastors (41.17 percent) with some kind of previously obtained college education are not involving themselves in any kind of continuing education. This is in contrast to only ten of the nineteen pastors (52.63 percent) who are not so engaged. Although, as expected, a lower percentage of pastors with greater educational background are not pursuing any further educational opportunities than those not so well educated, it would have been expected that the contrast between these two groups would have been far more disproportionate.

BREAKDOWN OF SURVEY RESPONDENTS FOR PURPOSES OF STUDY

For the purposes of this project, the study will break down the survey respondents into three categories. These will be listed in terms consistent with their current status as either students involved in some kind of formal distance learning program, those who are involved in a personal plan of study as opposed to a formal course of study through a Bible institute, college or seminary, and those who reported that they are not currently involving themselves in any kind of continuing educational plan.

The three categories mentioned above will be designated as follows: those pastors who are involved in a formal distance learning curriculum through some kind of educational institution mentioned above will be referred to as “distance learning program” pastors (DLP); those pastors who are not involved in a recognized distance learning program, but who do report involving themselves in a regular personal plan of ministerial study outside of normal sermon preparation will be listed as “personal plan of study” pastors (PPS); those pastors who reported that they are not engaged in any kind of program or plan of study will simply be referred to as “non-studying pastors” (NSP). We will use these designations, independent of any previous degrees or certifications previously achieved, due to the fact that the intent of this project is to find out what, if any, difference a pastor’s current quest for ministerial competencies through continuing education has, in fact, made in attaining any demonstrable impact on the growth of the congregation he is serving. Further, these designations are being made irrespective of any

previously held degrees or certifications, since it has already been shown that this does not always reflect whether or not a pastor will be involving himself in a formal or informal plan of study in the present. Thus, the study will now break down the seventy pastors responding to the survey in terms of the three previously stated categories for the purposes of reporting the rest of the research.

As mentioned earlier in this chapter, thirty-one (44.28 percent) of the seventy pastors responding to the survey indicated that they were not involved in any kind of continuing education, either through formal studies, or informal personal plans of study. These non-studying pastors (NSP) will serve as the test or control group for the project. Given that they have not demonstrated a desire to continue studying for the purpose of gaining ministerial competence, it would be expected that the reports of the churches these pastors serve will consistently demonstrate no appreciable growth in the Annual Church Profiles (ACP's) turned in to the West Virginia Convention of Southern Baptists (WVCSB) during the years 2004-2008. This would be expected, especially in light of the findings of Stetzer and Dodson⁶⁵ and Polk⁶⁶, cited earlier pointing out that the pastors of growing churches are seeking to gain ministerial competencies through formal programs of study or involvement in seminars and conferences facilitating church growth strategies (see page 23).

Seventeen of the pastors (24.28 percent) reported that they were involving themselves in some type of personal plan for ministerial educational growth through readings, attendance at seminars and/or conferences, or some other stratagem. These pastors will make up the personal plan of study (PPS) group. According to the literature

⁶⁵Stetzer and Dodson, 188.

⁶⁶Polk, 57.

research, the writer would expect that there will be some kind of appreciable growth attributable to them. This is due to the fact that Rainer's research, cited earlier, indicated that those pastors of growing churches found that conferences and seminars provided the most usable information obtainable for facilitating growth in their local churches.⁶⁷

Nevertheless, those reporting involvement in some kind of personal plan of study do not necessarily have the impetus to complete plans of study they begin, since their studies are completely left up to the pastor's own initiative. Therefore, this study will be seeking to find out if, in fact, this group of pastors does prove to be making an appreciable and verifiable impact for growth in the churches they serve and if their growth statistics match up with those involved in some kind of formal distance learning program. If so, this would be of special notice, since this would be in spite of the fact that this is the smallest of the three groups being studied.

The third group of pastors is comprised of the twenty-two out of seventy pastors (31.42 percent) who reported that they were currently involved in some kind of formal distance learning program through a Bible institute, college or seminary. This group of pastors will be designated as Distance Learning Pastors (DLP). They will also be expected to include those who are serving in churches that are reporting some kind of verifiable church growth through their ACP reports. Therefore, the study is dealing with questions not only of whether or not involvement in continuing education is congruent to church growth, but also whether formal continuing education or simply continuing self-study plans make any difference in growth statistics, as well.

It will also be of interest to find out if those pastors that are pursuing formal education as a vehicle of enhancing ministerial growth and competence can serve to

⁶⁷Rainer, 180.

demonstrate the viability and effectiveness of continuing ministerial education. After all, if indeed those pastors who are pursuing formal educational pursuits via DLP programs are found to be serving churches that are demonstrating verifiable growth statistics as measured by the ACP's of the churches they serve, this should encourage other pastors to follow suit. These findings may argue for those committed to evangelism that results in church growth to pursue formal education, recognizing that it is conducive, rather than detrimental, to their effectiveness. After all, Dockery reports that sometimes an anti-intellectual bias exists between those committed to evangelism and church growth and those with an equally strong commitment to pursuing excellence through education.

The first of these challenges is the emphasis on localism, populism, and voluntarism, all of which have frequently acted to spur renewal and mobilization for ministry, but often carry with them a lack of appreciation for formal intellectual life.

Second, the stress on conversion and piety has sometimes stood in the way of sanctified intellectual development and cultural engagement.⁶⁸

Through the results of the ACP's of the churches of the responding pastors, this paper will attempt to show which, if any, of the three groups of pastors are producing any actual growth statistics reflected in the ACP's of the churches they serve. Once again, the research presented previously leads one to expect that any churches producing growth statistics will be served by those in the last two groups of reporting pastors. These pastors will be in the DLP and PPS groups. It will not be expected that the churches served by the pastors in the non-studying pastors NSP group will produce any growth statistics. If, in fact, there is demonstrable growth reported in the ACP's of the churches pastored by

⁶⁸David S. Dockery, *Southern Baptist Consensus and Renewal* (Nashville: B&H Publishing Group, 2008), 141.

those in the first two groups, we may then go further to see if there is any discernable difference in the statistics between those two groups.

Nevertheless, this study will go further than reporting the data from these statistics alone, as if church growth or the lack thereof, happens within a geographical vacuum. In Chapter Four the study will compare these statistics with the growth statistics of the counties in which the churches reporting growth are located, according to the U.S. Census, as reported on the ePodunk website results from figure 1 on page 28. In this way, it can be demonstrated whether or not any church growth reported is the result of increasing ministerial competence by the pastor over the years investigated, or whether any church growth reported is merely incidental, or more probably consequent to the population growth of the county of the church's location.

CHAPTER THREE

RESULTS OF ACP REPORTS AND CONSEQUENT FINDINGS

RESULTS OF ACP REPORTS OF CHURCHES SERVED BY RESPONDING PASTORS

The stated purpose of this project is to discover what, if any, positive difference in the growth statistics reported in the ACP's of the churches that comprise the WVCSB can be attributed to pastors who are pursuing continuing education for their personal growth in ministerial competence. Thus, I will begin by studying the results of the 2004-2008 ACP's of the churches served by those seventy pastors responding to the survey of pastors of all WVCSB churches.

Nevertheless, in order to show any growth statistics are actually attributable to those seventy responding pastors, I have, of necessity, limited the study of those reports to the years those pastors were actually serving their particular church. This meant that those pastors who have served their church less than two years, or under the time necessary for the church to present two consecutive ACP's, must be disqualified from the study. Similarly, the pastors of other churches that simply failed to provide at least two consecutive ACP's during the tenure of its responding pastor must also be excluded. I will also disqualify those who are not serving as senior pastor of their church.

Thus, it is necessary to disqualify the reports of nineteen of those seventy initially responding pastors. Four of these were the only pastors responding from the respective

county in which their church is located. This means that not only is the field of study now limited to fifty-one out of seventy (72.85 percent) of the responding pastors, but the field of counties representing the state of West Virginia has been decreased from thirty-three to twenty-nine. The four counties eliminated were: Jefferson and Ohio, in the northern panhandle; Barbour, in the eastern panhandle; and Nicholas, in the mid section of the state. However, it is believed that the elimination of these counties will not take away from the areas in which they are found, since they were not the only representative counties in their respective areas. Thus, I still have respondents from twenty-nine of the fifty-five counties in the state. This is 52.72 percent of the area of the state and is therefore still a good representative sampling.

The counties with the greatest number of disqualified reports due to the lack of at least two consecutive ACP's during the pastor's tenure were the counties of: Mercer, with four churches disqualified; Berkeley, with three churches disqualified, and Wayne, with two churches disqualified by a lack of consecutive ACP reports. Braxton, Barbour, Cabell, Jefferson, Marshall, Mason, Nicholas, Ohio, Raleigh and Wood counties comprised the rest of the counties with only one disqualified church, apiece. Nevertheless, I have already reported that Barbour, Jefferson, Nicholas and Ohio counties had been dismissed, previously.

Thus, I may now begin to present the findings of the reports concerning the growth status of churches in relation to the growth of ministerial competences through programs or plans of study. As mentioned previously, I have narrowed the scope of research from the original seventy responding pastors down to fifty-one, due to the

requirement of this study for at least two consecutive ACP reports from the church the pastor is serving.

In order to ensure that any reported growth was not merely attributable to an anomaly year occurring at the end point of the time frame studied, this project will report on the average of the statistics from the three areas of study during the years reported after the initial year of service begun by the responding pastor at the reporting church. Therefore, if a pastor has served in his church more than two years, the number of years following the initial year of reporting will be averaged and compared to the initial year reported. Thus, for the pastor who has served in his church for three years of the reported ACP's, the final two years will be averaged and compared to the initial year's report; the pastor who has served in his church four years of the reported ACP's will have the last three years averaged and compared to the initial year's report; and the pastor who has served five or more years in which ACP's were provided will have the final four ACP's averaged and compared to the initial year's report. In this way the study seeks to minimize the occurrence of a pastor serving several years and ACP's reporting that his number of baptisms, membership and mission giving was increasing, only to have those results cancelled out by an anomalous year occurring at the end of the reporting period. Those pastors serving in their current church only two years that ACP's have been provided will, of course, be limited to those two years in which ACP's have been posted. Nevertheless, it is believed that due to the "honeymoon" period experienced by new pastors arriving on the field, it would be expected that if there is not increased growth during those first two years reported, there will be no further growth forthcoming.

*BREAKDOWN OF ACP RESULTS ACCORDING TO THREE AREAS OF
GROWTH STATISTICS*

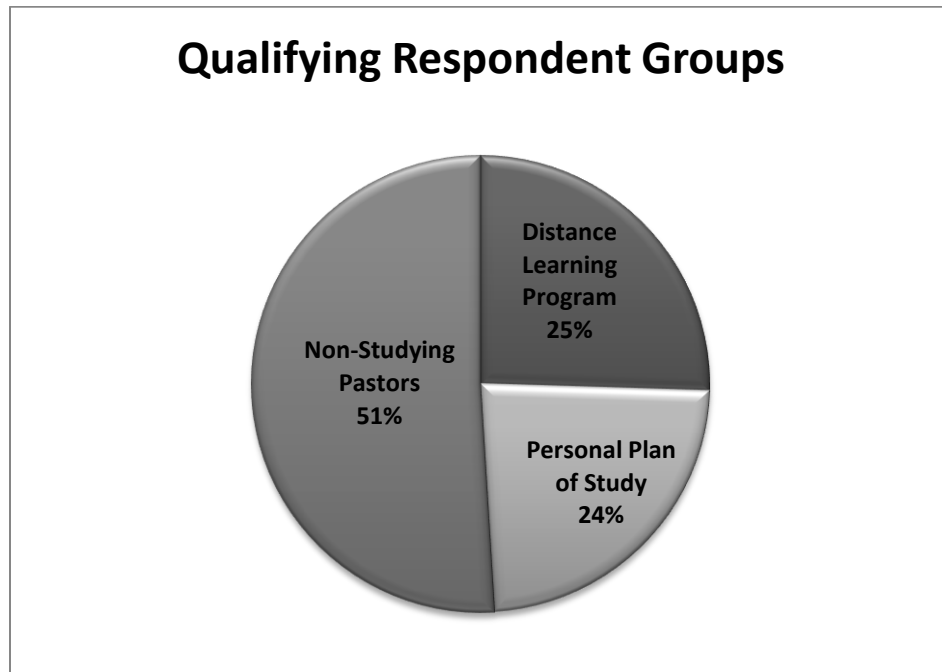
For the purposes of this study, I have determined that there will be three areas of the ACP reports that will be noted in order to ascertain if church growth is actually taking place that can be authentically verified. Those areas, as indicated in Chapter One, page 10, will include baptisms, total membership and missions expenditures. The reasons for using these results have been explained previously, and fit neatly into our purpose for this study, since these results are included in the ACP's of all Southern Baptist Churches.

Therefore, I will provide data on four distinct possibilities being presented by the ACP reports of the churches served by the responding pastors who have served two or more years and whose churches have provided their respective ACP's. Those categories will be melded into a single reporting statistic, so that it can be ascertained how many areas of church growth are being presented. In other words, whether or not a church is growing in baptisms as opposed to mission expenditures will not be included in this project. What will be noted is not which, but how many of the three categories have demonstrated growth, according to the ACP's during the years reported. In this way, I will present simply whether or not a church is showing demonstrable growth in one, two, or three of the categories previously selected as indicative of growing churches. Churches reporting no growth in any of those areas will also be noted by this project, especially if

those churches are located in counties that are reporting population growth. These statistics will be of special interest when compared to the U.S. Census reports. Those findings will be presented in Chapter Four of this study.

First of all, the study will present the findings of the number of churches served by the responding pastors who have been qualified by at least two consecutive ACP's during their years of tenure. As stated earlier, only fifty-one churches provided ACP's of two or more consecutive years by the pastor responding to our survey. Thus, the results are limited to the ACP's to those responding pastors. Of those fifty-one pastors: twenty-six (50.98 percent) report being in the NSP group; twelve (23.52 percent) report being in the PPS group; and thirteen (25.49 percent) report being in the DLP group. (See figure 6, below).

Figure 6. Breakdown of study status for the fifty-one qualifying pastoral respondents.



The findings showed that five of the qualifying churches served by one of the fifty-one pastors remaining showed no growth in any of the three areas studied. These five churches make up 9.80 percent, less than ten percent of the fifty-one qualifying churches served by one of the fifty-one remaining pastors being used in this study. This is surprising, given the fact that out of these fifty-one pastors, twenty-six (50.98 percent) are in the NSP group. That means that while over fifty percent of WVCSB pastors are not involving themselves in any kind of formal or informal plan of study to gain ministerial competencies, less than ten percent of WVCSB churches are not experiencing any kind of church growth, whatsoever. According to the previous research, it would be expected that these two numbers would more closely correspond.

Nevertheless, of the five churches experiencing no demonstrable growth in the three categories studied: three were served by pastors in the Non-Studying Pastors (NSP) group; one was in the Personal Plan of Study (PPS) group; and one was in the Distance Learning Program (DLP) group, as categorized earlier, according to the reports of the pastors surveyed. This means that three out of the five churches, or 60 percent, of the churches that are experiencing no church growth whatsoever, are being served by pastors in the NSP group who have no particular plan of study. As stated previously, all of these pastors are serving churches located in counties that are showing losses in population. These findings do, in fact, correspond to the previously reported research. It would, therefore, be expected that the preponderance of those churches experiencing no church growth would be served by pastors in the NSP group.

Only one of the churches served by a pastor in the PPS group was experiencing no growth statistic, whatsoever. The same was true of churches served by a pastor in the

DLP group. Thus, both the PPS and DLP groups made up only twenty percent of the no growth category, as opposed to the sixty percent of no growth churches served by NSP pastors.

There were thirteen churches reporting growth in just one of the three areas being used as qualifiers of growth. Of those thirteen churches, eight (61.54 percent) of the churches were served by pastors in the NSP group; two (15.38 percent) were served by pastors in the PPS group; and three (23.08 percent) were served by pastors in the DLP group. Again, according to the research in Chapter One, it would be expected that the largest number of churches experiencing verifiable growth in only one of the three categories would be served by pastors in the NSP group.

Thus far, there is ample evidence that those churches showing little or no growth are being served predominantly by pastors who are not pursuing any kind of continuing pastoral education. Eleven of the eighteen churches that are either experiencing no growth at all, or a single growth statistic in only one category, are served by NSP pastors. This is opposed to seven of the churches producing the same results that are served by pastors in the PPS and DLP groups, combined. This means 61.11 percent of the little or no growth churches have pastors in the NSP group.

At this point in the research, an interesting statistic emerged. Nineteen churches reported growth in two of the three areas being used as qualifiers of growth. Of these churches, eleven (57.89 percent) were churches served by NSP pastors; five (26.32 percent) were served by PPS pastors; and three (15.79 percent) were served by DLP pastors. This is surprising, since as the quantifying growth factors begin to emerge, it would be expected that the number of churches served by NSP pastors would definitely

begin to decrease, and the number of churches served by the PPS and DLP pastors would increase, dramatically. Nevertheless, we saw that the number of churches served by NSP pastors continued to be greater than the number of churches served by PPS and DLP pastors, combined. Of course, we must remember that the number of NSP pastors is greater overall than the numbers of PPS and DLP pastors, since over fifty percent of all of the churches that were qualified by at least two consecutive ACP's were served by NSP pastors.

However, as stated in Chapter One, churches will not be considered to be growing, unless they present growth statistics in all three of the areas listed, namely: membership, baptisms and missions expenditures. Thus, to this point in the study, this writer can say conclusively that of all the fifty-one churches that were qualified by two or more consecutive ACP's during the current tenure of a pastor who responded to the survey, thirty-seven (72.55 percent) could not report growth statistics in the three designated areas deemed necessary to qualify a church as a growing congregation.

Of these thirty-seven churches, twenty-two (59.46 percent) were served by NSP pastors; eight (21.62 percent) were served by PPS pastors; and seven (18.92 percent) were served by DLP pastors. This means that non-growing churches were more likely to be served by non-studying pastors by a margin of over two-to-one. And if we break that down further to the actual statistics previously stated, it means that non-growing churches are more likely to be served by non-studying pastors as opposed to those involved in DLP studies by a margin of three-to-one.

However, when it comes to those churches that provided statistics indicating growth in all three categories, the numbers actually evened out. Fourteen (27.45 percent)

churches of the fifty-one churches that submitted qualifying ACP's for the pastors responding to our survey, reported growth in all three of the areas this study stated would constitute actual, growing churches.

Four (28.57 percent) of those fourteen churches that constitute growing churches by the criteria of this study were served by NSP pastors. Four (28.57 percent) of the fourteen churches were served by PPS pastors. Six (42.86 percent) of the fourteen growing churches were served by DLP pastors. That means to break the statistics down according to all studying pastors (PPS and DLP), as opposed to NSP pastors, ten of the fourteen (71.43 percent), or well over two-thirds, of the churches that meet the criteria for being actual, growing churches were served by studying pastors while less than one-third (28.57 percent) of the churches that qualified as growing churches were served by non-studying pastors. This would be expected, according to the previously reported research.

It is also worthy of note that the DLP pastors comprised the largest number of pastors serving the congregations designated as growing churches, when compared to the NSP and PPS pastors. The actual breakdown of the fourteen congregations showing growth in all three designated areas were served by pastors responding to the survey as follows: four were NSP pastors (28.57 percent); four were PPS pastors (28.57 percent); and six were DLP pastors (42.86 percent).

Although this is not conclusive evidence that DLP pastors will always comprise the largest number of pastors serving growing churches, the previously stated statistic that DLP and PPS pastors (71.43 percent) will outnumber the NSP pastors in growing churches by a more than two-to-one margin is strong evidence that the initial hypothesis

of this study that studying pastors will be more likely to help churches grow, does appear valid.

To further ascertain that the churches determined to be growing by their reports that growth occurred in all three pre-determined areas of growth, the study will now turn attention to whether such church growth could be considered inconsequential or as a definite consequence of the pastor's growth in continuing educational pursuits. To this end, the next chapter will look further at the counties of location in which these churches are found, and how population growth or loss may be a determining factor in ACP growth statistics as continued in Chapter Four.

CHAPTER FOUR

COMPARISON OF POPULATION GROWTH TO CHURCH GROWTH

BREAKDOWN OF CHURCHES IN COUNTIES OF LOCATION

As previously stated, a major factor in determining whether church growth is a direct result of pastoral influence is whether or not church growth is consequent to, or in direct opposition to growth patterns in the area of the church's location. If a church is located in an area of the state that is experiencing population growth, church growth would normally be expected. In fact, if a church is located in a growing area and church growth is not reported, this would contraindicate positive pastoral influence upon growth. Therefore, for the purposes of this study, I will be looking to determine if church growth is following the normal pattern of population growth, first and foremost.

Although it will be expected that church growth would be coincident to population growth, I will seek to determine if each of the growing churches identified by the research is growing in accordance with normative patterns of population growth, as expected. Nevertheless, an even greater measure of positive pastoral influence upon church growth factors will be evidenced in those churches where church growth is occurring when the location of the church is in a county where population is not increasing incidentally.

First, I will report the counties in which the non-growing churches served by responding pastors were located. Churches which were not reporting growth in the three

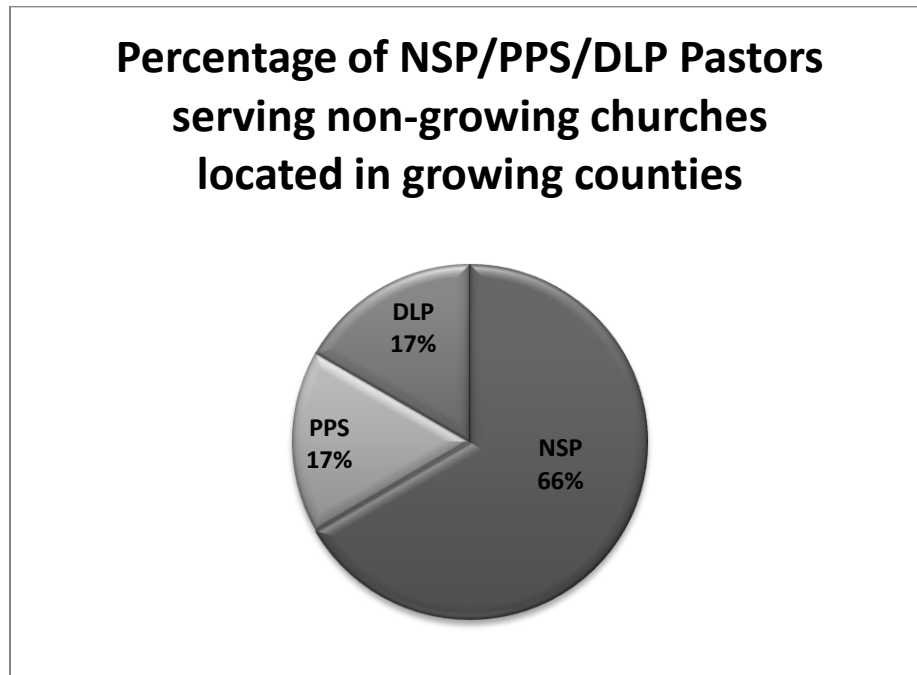
areas of the ACP reports studied include the counties of: Barbour, Calhoun, Fayette, Greenbrier, Hampshire, Harrison, Hancock, Lewis, Mason, McDowell, Morgan, Mineral, Mingo, Monongalia, Nicholas, Pocahontas, Putnam, Roane, Summers, Wirt, Wood and Jefferson. However, the counties of Barbour, Nicholas, Jefferson and Ohio were all previously excluded from study due to the fact that none of the churches located in these four counties reported at least two consequent ACP reports for comparison. That leaves the other eighteen counties where only non-growing churches were located.

Despite the fact that although the thirty-seven churches not reporting growth are located in eighteen of the thirty counties included in this study, I found that the populations of nine of those eighteen counties were growing, according to the U.S. Census reports shown on Figure 1, page 28. As stated previously, this statistic contraindicates positive pastoral influence on church growth. Conversely, twelve of the fourteen churches that are growing in all three categories that determined they would qualify as growing congregations, were located in nine of the twenty counties that are showing either no growth or negative growth in population.

It is also noteworthy that of the churches in those counties where growth is occurring while the churches located there did not post growth statistics in the three areas determining growing churches, NSP pastors comprised the total who served eight of those twelve churches. This means that NSP pastors were serving 66.66 percent of those non-growth churches in growing areas. PPS pastors comprised the total number who served in two of those churches (16.66 percent). DLP pastors also comprised the total number who served in two of those churches (16.66 percent). This means that when the numbers were broken down according to the comparison of non-studying pastors to

pastors in either of the PPS or DLP categories, NSP pastors were over two-to-one more likely to be serving the non-growing churches located in growing areas (See figure 7).

Figure 7. Study Status of Pastors serving non-growing Churches in growing locations.



Conversely, twelve of the fourteen churches that are growing in all three categories that would qualify a congregation as growing, were located in ten of the twenty counties that are showing either no growth or negative growth in population. There were only two growing churches with pastors who participated in the survey that were located in growing counties. Given that the counties of their location were growing, this would be expected. Those pastors serving growing churches located in growing areas were located in the counties of Braxton and Berkeley counties. This would especially be expected as the norm in the case of Berkeley County, which is listed as the number one county in population growth for the entire state. According to Table 1, page 28, this

county gained 12.3 percent in population. Braxton County, however, was listed twenty-second in overall population growth in the state, with only a 0.5 percent population growth. It is of note that the church in Berkeley County, which is the number one county in population growth in the state, is served by a NSP pastor. The church located in Braxton County, the lowest among those counties with actual population growth (0.5%), is served by a PPS pastor.

The areas where the other growing churches are located may be found in the counties of: Brooke, Cabell, Kanawha, Marion, Marshall, Mercer, Pocahontas, Raleigh, and Wayne. All but two of these counties were represented by only one growing church, according to the determination of the three categories of growth that comprise actual, growing churches. There were two churches showing themselves as growing in all three categories of church growth that were located in Kanawha County. This was also the case in Mercer County. Earlier in this study we found that Mercer County was also the location of the greatest number of respondents to the survey, so this may factor into the reason for the extra number in that county.

Nevertheless, it is surprising to find that there was at least one growing church in nine of the twenty counties that are not experiencing population growth. This indicates a positive pastoral influence upon growth in these churches. The study will now break down the numbers of pastors in each of the three categories, according to their response to the survey as NSP, PPS, or DLP.

*BREAKDOWN OF PASTORS OF GROWING CHURCHES ACCORDING TO THEIR
CONTINUING EDUCATION STATUS*

Of those pastors serving churches that reported growth in all three areas of the ACP's of their churches, demonstrating themselves as actual, growing churches, four were NSP pastors, four were PPS pastors, and six were DLP pastors, as reported previously in this study. It is these pastors who will present us with the most cogent figures for determining whether or not growth is coincident to, or irrespective of their involvement in continuing ministerial educational growth.

It has already been reported that two of these pastors were serving in churches where population growth was occurring, and therefore it would be expected that church growth should be occurring consequently. One of those pastors was a NSP pastor and one was a PPS pastor. That leaves us to consider the other twelve remaining pastors who are serving in actual, growing churches that are located in counties that are actually losing population.

The pastors serving actual, growing churches that were located in counties that were losing population break down as follows: three were NSP pastors (25 percent); three were PPS pastors (25 percent); and six were DLP pastors (50 percent). Once again this affirms that the number of growing churches with pastors who are studying pastors in both PPS and DLP categories outnumber the churches with pastors who are NSP pastors

by 75 percent to 25 percent, or three-to-one. Also, DLP pastors serving growing churches in non-growing areas outnumber NSP pastors by a two-to-one margin.

When looking at the statistics of population loss in the counties where the growing churches were located, in conjunction with their continuing education status or lack thereof, of the three NSP pastors serving growing churches in counties losing population, two of the three are found in counties losing over two percent of their populations or more. This is significant, given the fact that these counties of Pocahontas (-2.0 percent) and Kanawha (-2.3 percent), are rated as forty-third and forty-fifth, in rank, respectively, according to growth statistics in this fifty-five county state. This is a strong indication that positive pastoral influence is involved in these growing churches.

The three PPS pastors serving actual, growing churches in counties that are losing population are located in Mercer (-1.4 percent), Cabell (-1.8 percent), and Kanawha (-2.3 percent) Counties, which are rated thirty-sixth, forty-first, and forty-fifth in population growth, or loss, respectively. Here again, these are churches that are growing in spite of some of the higher amounts of population loss in the state. These findings indicate that one can serve a growing church that is located in areas that are experiencing population loss.

The DLP pastors who are serving churches that are growing despite negative population growth in their counties of location are in churches located in Wayne (-1.1 percent), Mercer (-1.4 percent), Marshall (-1.8 percent) and Brooke (-2.0 percent) Counties. These counties are rated thirty-fourth, thirty-sixth, fortieth and forty-second in the state's rate of growth, or loss, respectively. There were also two DLP pastors serving growing churches in Raleigh County (rated twenty-seventh), which was the only county

in the state that posted a zero net gain or loss, where pastors responded to the survey. These churches are still experiencing positive growth in an area that is not gaining in population and are, therefore, still pertinent to our investigation.

All of these statistics are shown in Figure 8, page 70. In this table, the counties with pastors responding to the survey are ranked in order of descending population growth, according to Figure 1, page 28. In Figure 8, the name of each county with one or more responding pastors is listed. Each county is arranged in descending order by its percentage of population growth or loss. Column 3 gives the number of pastors responding in that county. Column 4 gives the number of responding pastors disqualified, due to lack of two consecutive ACP's, or for other reasons listed earlier in the study. The next three columns show the number of qualified NSP, PPS or DLP pastors in churches showing no growth, or growth in either one or two of the three categories researched. The last column gives the number of qualifying pastors in the county in churches showing growth in all three categories, thus qualifying as actual, growing churches.

Attention now turns to the results of the interviews conducted with the pastors of growing churches. In this section of our study, the pastors themselves will describe what they believe has figured into their growth statistics.

Figure 8. Totals.

County	Rank	PG% +/-	#Pastors	Dis	Categories of Non-Growth\Growth			
					O	I	II	III
Berkley	1	12.30%	4	1PPS, 1NSP, 1DLP				1NSP
Jefferson	2	9.70%	1	1PPS				
Summers	3	7.10%	1			1NSP		
Hampshire	4	5.20%	1				1NSP	
Morgan	5	3.80%	1			1PPS		
Monongalia	6	3.10%	1				1NSP	
Putnam	7	2.80%	2			1NSP	1DLP	
Lewis	8	1.40%	1			1NSP		
Barbour	T9	0.60%	1	1DLP				
Greenbrier	T9	0.60%	1				1PPS	
Braxton	T11	0.50%	2	1PPS				1PPS
Mason	T11	0.50%	2	1DLP			1NSP	
Mineral	13	0.30%	3			1DLP, 1NSP	1NSP	
Raleigh	14	0.00%	4	1DLP			1PPS	2DLP
Marion	15	-0.20%	1					1NSP
Roane	16	-0.50%	1				1PPS	
Fayette	17	-0.60%	1			1NSP		
Wood	18	-0.70%	2	1PPS		1NSP		
Harrison	19	-0.90%	1			1DLP		
Wayne	20	-1.10%	4	1PPS, 1DLP	1PPS			1DLP
Nicholas	21	-1.20%	1	1NSP				
Mercer	T22	-1.40%	12	1PPS, 2DLP, 1NSP	1DLP	1PPS, 1DLP	1DLP, 2NSP	1PPS, 1DLP
Wirt	T22	-1.40%	1				1NSP	
Cabell	T24	-1.80%	5	1DLP	1NSP		2PPS	1PPS
Marshall	T24	-1.80%	2	1DLP				1DLP
Brooke	T26	-2.00%	2				1NSP	1DLP
Pocahontas	T26	-2.00%	1					1NSP
Kanawha	28	-2.30%	4				2NSP	1PPS, 1NSP
Mingo	29	-2.40%	2		1NSP	1NSP		
Hancock	30	-2.80%	1				1NSP	
Ohio	31	-3.40%	1	1NSP				
Calhoun	32	-3.80%	1				1DLP	
McDowell	33	-7.20%	2		1NSP	1NSP		

DLP = Distance Learning Pastor PPS = Personal Plan of Study Pastor
NSP = Non-Studying Pastor

CHAPTER FIVE
INTERVIEWS WITH PASTORS OF THE FOURTEEN CHURCHES SHOWING
GROWTH

*INTERVIEWS WITH PASTORS OF THE FOURTEEN CHURCHES SHOWING
GROWTH IN BAPTISMS, TOTAL MEMBERSHIP AND MISSIONS GIVING*

First consideration will be given the two pastors serving in growing churches that are located in growing areas. These two churches are led by a NSP pastor and the other by a PPS pastor, respectively. The NSP pastor serves a church in Berkeley County, which is the county with the greatest percentage of population gain at 12.3 percent. The PPS pastor serves a church in Braxton County, which had a population gain of only 0.5 percent.

It should not be surprising to find church growth occurring in areas of population growth. Nevertheless, this is not always the case. In fact, another twelve of the fifty-one pastors responding to the survey, qualified by churches presenting at least two consecutive ACP's during their tenure of service, were located in ten of the eleven counties included in this study that did have population growth. This is not to say that these churches did not experience some growth; the study merely presents the fact that in their ACP's, these other churches did not present an average of increasing growth in all three of the critical areas which we are using in this project as our criteria for actual church growth.

Of those twelve non-growing churches located in growing areas, eight are pastored by NSP pastors, two are pastored by PPS pastors, and the other two are pastored by DLP pastors. From this, it is apparent that non-growing churches that are located in growing areas are twice as likely to be served by NSP pastors.

*INTERVIEWS WITH THE TWO PASTORS OF GROWING CHURCHES
LOCATED IN AREAS OF POPULATION GROWTH*

Don Chandler, Pastor of South Berkeley Baptist Church, Inwood (NSP Pastor)

Don Chandler serves the South Berkeley Baptist Church, a one-hundred, eight-member congregation with an average of sixty to seventy in attendance. Berkeley County, where the church is located, is the number one county in the state in order of population growth, with a 12.3 percent increase in population. Chandler readily admits he is part of the NSP group of pastors responding to our survey. When asked about methodologies or techniques that have encouraged growth in the three areas studied, he credited South Berkeley's WMU ladies as the primary reason for the growth in missions and missions giving in his church.

We have a very active WMU that is constantly challenging our congregation in missions giving and local missions endeavors. They always challenge our small church to go beyond our means in giving to meet impossible goals. We exceeded every challenge goal set in 2008. We always highlight the Missionary Moments in our weekly bulletin and prayer meetings.⁶⁹

Beyond that, Chandler says South Berkeley has a reputation as a friendly church; a perception that has permeated the community and results in a steady continuum of visitors from outside the congregation. The church took out a mortgage to build a fellowship hall that is attached to the church, and this new structure is being used by many community groups outside the church to conduct business or fellowships.

⁶⁹ Don Chandler, Interview conducted January 29, 2009.

We not only encourage them to use our facilities, but we actually invite them to come in and take advantage of our buildings. They will meet here to do their business meetings and we also have dinners for retirement groups and others to provide opportunities to fellowship with our congregation.⁷⁰

Chandler stated that from books he has read and conferences attended in the regular course of Southern Baptist life he has learned that, “the key to a successful church is right in the pew.” He said he consistently encourages parishioners to personally welcome visitors, to foster the idea that South Berkeley is a friendly church. Along with that, he sends a personal letter thanking them for their visit and inviting them to come back. It is this idea of being a friendly church that Chandler says has been the key to success at South Berkeley.

William Marshall, Pastor of Little Birch Baptist Church, Braxton County (PPS Pastor)

Little Birch Baptist is a small church of about forty in attendance, located in Braxton County, which is twenty-second in population in the state, with a 0.5 percent increase in population. Pastor William Marshall’s survey placed him as a PPS pastor. Initially, he was a bi-vocational pastor when coming to Little Birch, but is now on disability, thus allowing him to serve the church on a full-time basis. When interviewed, he said growth was not difficult, since when he first came, the congregation was comprised of only three people.

Marshall said his formal education beyond high school was limited to a short time in college, but he has augmented his training with sixty hours of courses through Liberty University’s certification programs. Although he is not currently involved in any formal educational program, he continues self-study through reading commentaries and other

⁷⁰Ibid.

books that help him to answer questions of theology and doctrine posed by those in the community where he ministers, and attending seminars and conferences when available.

The ministries that have helped facilitate the growth at Little Birch Baptist include the opening of a feeding ministry that currently provides food to five-hundred, fifty families in the community. This and the clothing ministry, also begun since his arrival four years ago, along with twice monthly bluegrass gospel music concert and dinners, have provided the church with a reputation as a loving and out-going congregation. Marshall said the most significant help that impacts his ministry comes from his attendance at the seminars and training conferences offered by the WVCSB.

Going to the conferences and training seminars that are offered keeps me from feeling so much like I'm out there all alone. Everybody needs a moment to stop and rest, and the preaching and training is uplifting. Those are the kinds of things that give you a renewed fire.⁷¹

Thus, from the responses to our interviews with the two pastors of growing congregations in growing areas of the state, education has played a significant role in helping to shape or encourage the growth of the pastors involved. The PPS pastor reported that his former studies in certification programs through Liberty University, along with his attendance at conferences and training seminars are responsible for giving him the revitalization needed to continue trying new ministry approaches that are obtaining results. Even the NSP pastor also reported that he had gained much of the information he was utilizing from reading books and attending seminars.

These two pastors in growing areas seem to validate the results of this study, as well as the research presented by Rainer, reported earlier in this project.⁷² Now that the

⁷¹William Marshall, Interview conducted February 18, 2009.

⁷²Rainer, 179.

interviews of these pastors serving growing churches in areas of population growth have been considered, attention will now turn to the interviews that most interest this project.

*INTERVIEWS WITH PASTORS OF GROWING CHURCHES
LOCATED IN AREAS OF POPULATION STAGNATION AND DECLINE*

Following are the interviews conducted with the pastors of churches that are growing in the three areas of growth deemed necessary to classify a church as growing. Furthermore, these churches are also located in areas of the state with no population growth, or where there is actually a loss of population taking place. These interviews, like those reported previously, will be presented county by county, in the order of ever increasing population loss. In each county where growing churches are represented, if more than one church is located within that particular county, the interviews will be reported in the order NSP, PPS and DLP, respectively. Again, this is not saying that the other churches in these areas may not be experiencing some demonstrable church growth. Instead, the churches represented below are presented because they are experiencing growth in all three of the categories previously determined for the purposes of this project.

David Trump, Pastor of Freedom Baptist Church, Raleigh County (DLP Pastor)

Freedom Baptist Church is located in Beckley, in Raleigh County (0.0 percent population growth). Freedom was birthed initially as a split from an Independent Baptist Church in 1993. It constituted as another Independent Baptist Church, but during the tenure of current Pastor David Trump, the congregation came to terms with the initial situation that caused the split and asked for forgiveness from the mother church and reconciliation of fellowship was restored. The church has faced other internal difficulties that caused the loss of other members afterwards. It became Southern Baptist in 2007, reporting ACP statistics that were available for this study from 2007-2008. The church now averages about forty in attendance.

Since we became Southern Baptist, that was a real turnaround for our church. It's a friendly Church. They're active. They are willing to work. They are real service minded, too. I think that's why they have a heart for outreach, because there is a real servant mentality about them. And although there is a servant mentality, there is not a lot of leadership gifts that I have seen. I don't know if that is going to happen later and start blossoming out, but maybe that's because we are coming from a background of Independent Baptist. For them, it's kind of a whole different ballgame.⁷³

Trump received a distance learning degree from Luther Rice Seminary and is currently taking six classes a year, working toward a M.Div. from Liberty Baptist Theological Seminary. He stated that it was because of his studies at Luther Rice that he began reading books from Southern Baptist pastors and eventually began moving the church toward becoming affiliated with the SBC. According to Trump, he would not have made the change if not for his studies at Luther Rice.

⁷³David Trump, Interview conducted April 3, 2009.

He credited his continuing course work in evangelism classes with giving him the plans for outreach strategies the church is now implementing. Beyond this, he stated that his continuing studies in how to present the message through preaching is what has had the greatest impact on the ministry of Freedom Baptist.

Just learning how to preach expositionally has probably had more of an impact than anything. Learning how to go line by line and verse by verse and teach, has helped me reach the people. And I've seen growth in them, whereby they try to go out and reach their friends, which leads to the kinds of growth you have seen in our reports.⁷⁴

Brian Harmon, Pastor of Nehemiah Baptist Church, Raleigh County (DLP Pastor)

Nehemiah Baptist Church is also located in Raleigh County. The Church has been in existence only seven and a half years. Brian Harmon has been the pastor from its inception, planting the church and building a building that has now been in use by the congregation only four years. The church is located nearly fifteen miles outside of Beckley, in the community of Cool Ridge. While the town has only twenty-nine hundred inhabitants, Harmon says the church now ministers to about one hundred people per week in the communities ranging from Beaver to Flat Top, which have a combined residence of fifteen thousand people. Harmon says he began the church using principals gained directly from his studies in course work as a DLP student at Liberty Baptist Theological Seminary, where he began his studies in 2002. Harmon just completed his Master's program in Pastoral Counseling and plans to begin studying for his Doctorate in Education by the end of this year. In between he has a goal of reading twelve books that offer personal edification as a minister.

⁷⁴Ibid.

I try to take what I have learned in each class in my studies and implement that in my teaching, preaching and leadership of the Church. The Church takes on the personality of its pastor, so I would say that the Church has been heavily influenced by my education.⁷⁵

Harmon said he literally began the Church after taking a Church Planting class, only the second one in his studies.

That was where I learned the fundamentals of Church Growth. So I have used that from the beginning and had that filtered through the DNA of the Church from inception... So it's been a straight conduit between education and application in the Church... What we've seen is that the people have taken on the ownership and the vision of the Church. Because we share these same vision and goals and express them over and over again, it becomes ingrained in their thinking.⁷⁶

David Mellquist, Pastor of First Southern Baptist Church, Marion County (NSP Pastor)

First Southern Baptist Church is located in the city of Fairmont, in Marion County, which has experienced a slight (-0.2 percent) population loss. Mellquist is now serving in his tenth year as Pastor and related that initially, there were times when he and his wife were the only ones in attendance. The church is now averaging attendance figures in the twenties. Mellquist is a NSP pastor, having served bi-vocationally until his retirement from secular work in February of 2009. His initial survey indicated lack of time and desire as the major factors hindering further educational endeavors.

Since his recent retirement, he said he was currently awaiting the arrival of a study in the Henry Blackaby series, having already completed *Experiencing God* previously. He also credited Max Lucado's *John 3:16* study and *When God's People Pray*, with heavily influencing what he has been doing at the church.

⁷⁵Brian Harmon, Interview conducted April 4, 2009.

⁷⁶Ibid.

These are things that have spilled over into prayer meetings and other things. Whenever I learn something, I can't help but share it.⁷⁷

Other factors that he said contributed to the growth in ACP statistics include his heart for missions giving. While also serving bi-vocationally as the Associate Pastor of a church in Virginia, missions giving was far down on the priority list of the church, and this was a source of frustration. Since spending the last three years of his tenure at First Southern emphasizing the need, and leading the church to tithe to missions, he reports that there is now money in the budget for areas that previously were not available. Another area of emphasis during his ministry has been Sunday School.

As a church, we did the *Interstate 6* (study on six topics that can help Sunday School grow) booklet and had Greg Wrigley (WVCSB Sunday School specialist) come and lead several sessions for us. We decided on five areas where we needed to work to improve our church. It was especially the renewed emphasis we've had on prayer and missions that has really changed the church. I always tell people that we may not be very big, and we don't have a lot of numbers, but we'll love you to death.⁷⁸

Randall Robertson, Pastor of Locust Grove Baptist Church, Wayne County (DLP Pastor)

Although located in Huntington, Locust Grove Baptist Church is not part of the primary portion of the city. Instead, the Church is located southwest of the city proper, in an area that is part of Wayne County. The county has experienced a 1.1 percent population loss.

Robertson is a DLP pastor, currently working on a Master's of Science and Bible through Philadelphia University in Langhorn, Pennsylvania. He has also taken courses at Liberty University and Luther Rice Seminary, as well as receiving a Counselor's

⁷⁷David Mellquist, Interview conducted April 7, 2009.

⁷⁸Ibid.

Diploma from Light University last year. Robertson said his studies have helped in preparing sermons, mainly, but other classes have proven valuable, as well.

I have been able to implement other studies that I have had in Church Growth by departmentalizing the classes and helping the larger classes break up into smaller classes. Making room for new classes, and placing emphasis on the Sunday School is one of the key evangelistic areas of the Church. My training has not only been in Biblical studies, but also in Church Growth and Church Administration. This has helped, because although Wayne County has declined numerically, the immediate area around our Church continues to grow.⁷⁹

Robertson says he has focused on presenting the gospel clearly, making it understandable, leaving room for the spontaneity of the Holy Spirit, and trusting God to work through his program directors and administrators. He has also provided training classes for deacons and Sunday School teachers, along with continuing door-to-door evangelistic efforts. Nevertheless, Robertson points to learning new ways of utilizing Church space as a major factor in the growth of Locust Grove.

Our Church had become overcrowded in the main sanctuary. Through the use of new technologies, we were able to install an overflow area in our fellowship building, which allows us to seat people comfortably, and that has allowed us to grow, as well. Most of what I have implemented as far as Christian Education and Church Growth and empowerment and Pastoral Counseling, I would attribute to my becoming better skilled to do the work of ministry in the Church where I serve.⁸⁰

Jim Drake, Pastor of Brushfork Baptist Church, Mercer County (PPS Pastor)

⁷⁹Randall Robertson, Interview conducted April 4, 2009.

⁸⁰Ibid.

Brushfork Baptist Church is located in a community just north of Bluefield, off of State Route 52. It is in Mercer County, which had a 1.4 percent population loss. The church has a total membership of two-hundred, ninety-eight and averages one-hundred, six in Sunday School. Pastor Jim Drake has been there during the last two ACP reports to the WVCSB. Mercer County ranks thirty-sixth overall in population in the state.

A PPS pastor, Drake explains his personal plan of study as a variety of books on topics ranging from current events, theology, and history to biography. Last year he completed sixty-five books and this year his goal is to read two books per week, beyond his personal devotionals and weekly sermon studies. In addition, Drake said he tries to read something from Jonathon Edwards or other puritan writers, John Calvin, or the martyrs at least once a week. He reported his plan also includes attempts to do some writing each day, along with personal journaling.

When asked which changes he has implemented in the Church as a result of these studies, Drake said it would be the special emphasis on prayer. Last year, he called the Church to hold a solemn assembly, along with seasons of prayer and fasting. As a result of his studies, he refocused the Wednesday evening Bible study to a prayer meeting. He reports his belief that there have been tangible results in the harmony, fellowship and evangelism from within the congregation. He said rather than implementing a new program, the Wednesday evening Prayer meeting has become a time of meeting for praise, recognition of who God is, with time for prayer and repentance. All of this takes place before any prayer requests are shared.

Asked where he learned the things he is implementing at Brushfork, Drake said he met Greg Frizzell at a state evangelism conference and bought many of his books, along with many others specifically on prayer.

Readings of the historical revivals such as the first and second Great Awakenings and the Welsh revival have led me to conclude that the forerunner of revival was corporate prayer and whole-hearted submission to God, which primarily takes hold first among the youth. Only then does it spread to the adults.⁸¹

Dan Jividen, Pastor of Immanuel Baptist Church, Mercer County (DLP Pastor)

Jividen authored this study. Therefore, Jividen's interview will be excluded to obviate reporter bias.

Cledith Campbell, Pastor of Altizer Baptist Church, Cabell County (PPS Pastor)

Altizer Baptist Church is located in the east end of Huntington, in Cabell County (-1.8 percent population loss). Despite this statistic, Altizer is averaging about one-hundred, twenty in worship, according to Campbell. He reports that Altizer is a transitioning church. The church is currently reaching persons of other ethnic and cultural backgrounds, specifically Chinese and African American. These connections have occurred as the church members met families that have themselves reached out to other families within the area. Campbell reports that this was not something programmed, but rather a natural occurrence as the church sought to develop new ways of reaching people.

While not engaged in a degree program, Campbell is a veteran pastor, having served this congregation since coming as pastor in 1974. He stated that he purposefully reads from a variety of writers, not simply Southern Baptists, for inspiration and personal

⁸¹Jim Drake, Interview conducted January 30, 2009.

development. He said he seeks to be open to learn even from those with whom he does not agree, theologically. The most significant writers, for Campbell, are Oswald Chambers, E.M. Bounds, and Andrew Murray. “It seems to me, that some of those old guys had something that we lost,” he said.

As expected, Campbell’s attention is drawn to prayer ministry. This is what he believes has significantly impacted the direction he has been leading Altizer.

What we try to teach our people to do, is not to come to church to sing, but to worship the Lord. We are trying to teach our people about worship; to have a personal experience with the Lord. We are a praying church, and I think our people are learning about prayer. We really pray for one another. And I think that has been the thing that has impacted our church. We’ve tried to implement a lot of programs that other churches have done and been successful with, and they’ve just not worked, here. So we’ve just come to the point of just asking the Lord what He wants us to do, and teaching our folks to have a disciplined walk with the Lord, so that whatever He asks, we will be willing to do.⁸²

Ron McCoy, Cameron Baptist Church, Marshall County (DLP Pastor)

Cameron is in Marshall County, which has also experienced a population loss of 1.8 percent. Pastor Ron McCoy says it is a bedroom community for the nearby cities of Moundsville and Wheeling. The city has twelve-hundred inhabitants, and Cameron Baptist Church averages one-hundred, eight in attendance. McCoy studied for and received a Bachelor’s of Religion degree from Liberty University and continues annual studies through the Stephen Olford School of Expository Preaching. Despite losing a year of study time and a year of preaching at Cameron due to a battle with cancer, his goal is to become a fellow of the Stephen Olford School. Along with his personal study, he says

⁸²Cledith Campbell, Interview conducted April 17, 2009.

of Cameron Baptist, “We still haven’t hit our stride,” since his return to the pulpit in January of 2008.

He said during the time he was absent, he met with four men of the church who rotated the responsibility to preach and serve in his place. The church never before had deacons up until the time he returned to the preaching duties and installed them. McCoy said implementing the deacon ministry program was a direct result of his studies and said their ministry has greatly helped the congregation grow.

McCoy described the city of Cameron as a small town, that is, “kind of wilting on the vine.” It is twenty miles to the nearest Wal-Mart. The town is losing population due to the fact that the coal company and the gas company are buying up properties all around where the church is located. Many of the local people are selling their property and moving out of the area. Although this has not yet affected the membership of Cameron Baptist, McCoy expressed his concerns that eventually this might take place.

Not only has the deacon ministry grown out of McCoy’s studies, but he maintained that his preaching has continued to improve and he believes this, too, has been an incentive for church growth. He also has determined to make Vacation Bible School a major emphasis of the church. McCoy said the church consistently seeks to be involved in the community spirit that is part of life in a small town, according to McCoy.

It seems like, if they (the community) are in a situation where they need anything or want something done, if it is something that requires any church help or interest, we are the first one they will call.⁸³

Despite the downturn in population and the problems of small town life,

⁸³Ron McCoy, Interview conducted April 18, 2009.

McCoy's optimism about the church and the community comes through to as he speaks about the possibilities that lie ahead. He points to statistics gained from the WVCSB, Cameron sees good things ahead for the church.

There are twelve hundred people in Cameron. According to what they are telling us out of the West Virginia Convention, seven out of ten people are un-churched. That means in Cameron there are eight-hundred and forty people without a church home. I see a lot of opportunity here.⁸⁴

Larry Garrison, Pastor of Open Door Baptist Church, Brooke County (DLP Pastor)

Open Door Baptist Church is located in Colliers, which is a suburb of Weirton. Located in the Northern Panhandle, Open Door is a Church of one-hundred, forty-eight members, located near the line of Brooke County. Surprisingly, the Church is averaging one-hundred, forty to one-hundred, fifty in attendance in a county that has experienced a 2.0 percent loss in population. Garrison has been the pastor since January 1, 2005, after serving the Church as a member, youth pastor and interim pastor, successively.

Garrison had no previous educational experience beyond high school when called as pastor of this same Church in which he was saved. Now a DLP pastor, he has completed two years in the Distance Learning Program at Liberty University and is currently pursuing a Bachelor's Degree in Religious Studies. During this period, he has led the Church through a successful building program to add a new sanctuary to the Church's property.

As a result of his studies in the DLP program, he became convinced that many of the people at Open Door were coming to services and serving in ministry capacities without a thorough understanding of why they were about what they were doing. A good

⁸⁴Ibid.

example of this was the youth ministry. Garrison said that while many perceived youth ministry as glorified “baby sitting,” he has made providing the building blocks for Christian living the focus of the Church’s ministry to youth. As a result, the Church has witnessed the conversion of many young people in the thirteen to fourteen year age group. This, he said, has revitalized the congregation, as a whole.

Garrison said he had been praying that whatever area of ministry God opened up for him would force him to further the disciplines of reading and study. After being called as pastor, he started DLP studies.

Discipleship and mentoring has become the focus of my ministry. I am not a reader by nature. It doesn’t come naturally for me. One of the first books I read was *Simple Church*.⁸⁵ I came to realize that sometimes we make Church so fat, that we miss the basic purpose of why we’re there. So one of the first things I did in the Church was to streamline it; to make it easier for the soccer mom’s to take part.

Being forced into reading more, I implemented several things. One of the basic things is a better understanding of scripture. By becoming better educated myself, I have been able to educate others that I thought already knew these things, but didn’t.⁸⁶

Jerry Moore, Pastor of First Baptist Church, Pocahontas County (NSP Pastor)

Huntersville is located in Pocahontas County, which has also had a -2.0 population loss. Moore is a NSP pastor. Moore says Huntersville, where First Baptist is located, is, “nothing more than a whistle-stop in Pocahontas County.” The county, although geographically large, has only eighty-five hundred residents. One thousand of them are in Huntersville.

⁸⁵Reiner and Geiger, *Simple Church* (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, publishers, 2006).

⁸⁶Larry Garrison, Interview conducted January 31, 2009.

When Moore became pastor, the church was running an attendance of around thirty. He says the church now averages one-hundred, twenty to one-hundred, twenty-five and is the biggest church in Pocahontas County. Although he is not involved in any formal plan of study, he said he regularly listens to tapes of Dr. Chuck Missler, the founder of Koinonia House Online. Going on 65 years of age, Moore nevertheless said he tries hard to learn something every day, or at least every week.

When asked what he believes has most contributed to the growth that has occurred at First Baptist, Moore points to the many different areas of hands on missions and ministry available to church members on a continuing basis.

I've always been big on serving. There are plenty of churches full of what I call "pew potatoes." That's my own private term. They go to worship and just to be there and that's all they do. We lovingly call them "pew potatoes." I am hard on that. I tell people that if you are uncomfortable serving God, then you are going to be very uncomfortable in this church, because we have a lot of ongoing ministries. It's like old Mister Geiger who is ninety years old. Whenever we are together, he will always ask someone, "Are you saved?" And if they say yes, then he says, "Well what are you doing with it?"...I try to work them to death. Like an old preacher told me, if you keep them busy, they won't fight.⁸⁷

Moore said many people want to be part of the church specifically because they know there will be something for them to do. Others visit and then decide this is not the kind of church they want, because it is too busy. The church typically hosts approximately twenty-two different mission teams from around the country who come to help work alongside church members in ministries that range from hospital, prison and nursing home ministries, and ministries to unwed mothers, to youth ministries and local

⁸⁷Jerry Moore, Interview conducted April 18, 2009.

construction opportunities. According to Moore, evangelism is the primary impetus for everything in which the church is involved.

It is sad, but I live in an area where churches are not too interested in reaching out. Then they wonder why they are not growing. I just look them in the eye and say, “Well, you’ve got to get off your duff and get to work. Get busy working for the Lord, and He will bless that.”...People are amazed that we are always in the top ten churches in baptisms in West Virginia. And we’re out here in the middle of nowhere, so it just has to be a God thing. But like I tell my church, on planet earth, a quarter of a million people will die, and many of them are going to split hell wide open, and that bothers me. So we do what we can; we use what we can, and we utilize every resource we can.⁸⁸

Norman Canada, Pastor of West Charleston Baptist Church, Kanawha County (NSP Pastor)

Although the state capitol, Charleston is located in Kanawha County, which overall has experienced a -2.3 percent population loss. West Charleston Baptist is an inner-city Church. Canada said that in a recent, informal survey he took of those in his congregation, he discovered that almost two-thirds of the Church had not ever received a high school diploma. Although he holds a Master of Divinity degree, Canada reported that he is not in any formal educational program and is classified as a NSP pastor from the initial survey.

Canada said that a lack of time was the primary difficulty in continuing any further formal educational program. He nevertheless responded to our initial interview question by saying that beyond his first hour of the day spent in personal devotion, Bible study and journaling, he is currently involved in a program of reading through the New Testament in 30 days, a challenge he is planning to give his congregation, as well. He

⁸⁸Ibid.

also reports regularly involving himself in “constantly reading other fiction and non-fiction books.”

Although not a certification program, he is also involved in teaching the *Celebrate Recovery* program, authored by Rick Warren of Saddleback Community Church. Canada said he sees this as a way of involving his congregation in basic Christian growth principles that are applicable to not only those recovering from addictions.

When asked about what changes have impacted his Church in the areas of baptism, total membership and missions that were studied for the definition of church growth by this study, Canada reported ideas gleaned from several books. These included the *Celebrate Recovery* book mentioned previously, as well as *Fresh Wind, Fresh Fire*, by Jim Cymbala, *Conspiracy of Kindness*, by Steve Sjogran, and *The Purpose Driven Life*, by Warren.

The Sjogren book, Canada said, was what he considered the first book to focus on servant evangelism. This book was the impetus for him to implement missions activities and create outreach opportunities in his Church’s local area, as well as enlarging the focus to encourage parishioners to become engaged in personal mission trips and involve themselves in mission churches that West Charleston Baptist has sponsored.

I was frustrated with the outreach events that focused on getting people to merely answer the question, “If you died tonight, do you think you would go to heaven or hell,” and getting them to simply repeat the sinners prayer. Each time we used that and then went back to invite them to be part of a local Church, they seemed surprised, since they thought we had already given them their fire insurance. Beyond that, they simply didn’t see the need for anything else.⁸⁹

⁸⁹Norman Canada, Interview conducted January 29, 2009.

It was this frustration that Canada said caused him to write out his own eight-page document. This serves as a less structured plan encouraging his congregants to actively share their own stories of their personal faith with others, rather than a pre-structured evangelism strategy. The goal is sending members out of the congregation to share, in hope of leading others to an understanding that God created people for a relationship with Him that involves fellowship in the community of faith.

Seth Polk, Pastor of Cross Lanes Baptist Church, Kanawha County (PPS Pastor)

Cross Lanes Baptist Church is in one of the suburbs of the capitol city of Charleston. Although situated near an area of the state which has experienced an influx of business and industry, Cross Lanes is also in Kanawha County, a county which has suffered a net loss of -2.3 percent in population, as mentioned previously. Polk is a PPS pastor.

Polk said that due to the transient nature of the area, seventy-five percent of the parishioners of Cross Lanes Baptist have been there less than six years. Nevertheless, the Church has experienced a growth in Sunday School attendance of three-hundred percent over the last several years, with a corresponding three-hundred percent growth in giving during that same time period.

When asked what kinds of personal study plan or goals in which he is regularly engaged, Polk said that besides attending the regularly scheduled conferences offered by the convention, he makes it his goal to attend at least one other outside conference for personal and professional development. In addition, he said he has made it his personal goal to read one book each week and post his personal review of the book in an on-line

blog. Having recently completed a Doctor of Ministry degree from Liberty Baptist Theological Seminary, he is currently involved in the pursuit of studies to further sharpen his skills in preaching style and communication from the pulpit.

As a result of his own studies in the ministry, Polk reported his conviction to make small group Bible study the focus of attention at Cross Lanes. He attributed the growth of Sunday School as the springboard for all the other growth patterns shown in the Church. Polk said he believes it is no coincidence that the Church's missions giving has directly corresponded to the growth in small group Bible study attendance. As evidence, he pointed out that on a normal Sunday with no special emphasis on the January 25 service preceding this interview, the Church hosted four-hundred and eighty in Sunday School attendance.

Polk said his own personal studies in prayer and spiritual development have been his pattern for growth in the body life of the Church. He emphasized personal discipleship as his impetus for growth.

From a personal standpoint, I think a lot of pastors are looking for an outside fix when they are sensing stagnation in the Church. I know what that feels like. I've been there and I didn't like it. I didn't like it in myself, and I know God did like it in me. I think a lot of times we need to look at ourselves and see if we may be the ones in need of growth.⁹⁰

⁹⁰Seth Polk, Interview conducted January 29, 2009.

CHAPTER SIX

CONCLUSIONS OF STUDY

First of all, this writer acknowledges that this project has been somewhat hampered by the exclusion of nineteen of the pastors responding to the survey. This was due to the pastor not having a long enough tenure to record two consecutive ACP's, or due to the church not presenting two consecutive ACP's during the responding pastor's tenure, or because the pastor was not the senior pastor of the church. Nevertheless, the project has proven beneficial in the quest to determine if continuing pastoral education plays a demonstrable part in church growth.

Perhaps the project could have been more fruitful if it would have been possible to obtain the results of those nineteen disqualified churches that had pastors responding to the survey. This loss of data was particularly acute, since the nineteen disqualified pastors were mainly in the DLP (nine) and PPS (six) categories. Only three of the disqualified pastors were NSP pastors. Furthermore, seven of the nineteen disqualified pastors serve churches located among the thirteen counties out of the thirty-three included in the responses that have growing populations.

It is also pertinent to this project to provide the other totals of the research that was not previously presented in earlier chapters. For example, as reported, there are other churches that have demonstrated growth in their ACP's that were not presented as growing. This was due to the fact that for the purposes of this project, it was determined

that a church categorized as “growing,” would have to post growth statistics in all three of the predetermined areas of growth, namely: baptisms, total membership, and missions giving.

Nevertheless, there were churches that did post growth statistics in their ACP’s in either one or two of the categories, without presenting growth in all three. Therefore, I will now give the synopsis of growth, or lack of growth, in all categories, according to county, as seen in Figure 8, page 70.

Berkeley County, with 12.30 percent population growth, had four churches with responding pastors. Unfortunately, three of the four were disqualified. The only qualifying church is served by an NSP pastor, but it showed growth in all three qualifying categories. Jefferson County, which has the second highest population growth in the state (9.70 percent) was disqualified altogether, due to the fact that only one pastor in the county responded, and his data could not be included for reasons listed above.

Summers County ranks third in population growth with 7.10 percent. Only one NSP pastor responded to the survey, and his church showed growth in only one of the three categories studied. Hampshire County has 5.20 percent population growth, but the only pastor responding is a NSP pastor who is serving a church that is growing in only two of the three categories. The same is true of Morgan County, which has 3.80 percent population growth, but the PPS pastor responding, serves a church that is growing in only one of the three areas.

Monongalia County has 3.10 percent population growth, but the church where the NSP pastor is serving has growth in only two of the three necessary categories. Putnam County has two churches with responding pastors. The NSP pastor serves a church with

growth in only one category, while the DLP pastor serves a church with growth in two of the three areas.

Lewis County had 1.40 percent population growth, and the NSP pastor serves a church with growth in only one category. Barbour County (population growth of .60 percent) was disqualified altogether, having only one DLP pastor responding, who was one of the nineteen disqualified churches. Greenbrier County also has a population growth of .60 percent, and has only one responding pastor (PPS), whose church showed growth in two categories.

Braxton County had .50 percent population growth, and both of the responding pastors are in the PPS group. One was from a church that was disqualified, the other was in a church showing the necessary growth in all three categories. Mason County also had .50 percent population growth, and had two responding pastors. The DLP pastor's church was disqualified, but the NSP pastor served a church that had growth in two categories.

Mineral County had .30 percent population growth, with three pastors, all of whom served qualifying churches. Nevertheless, one NSP pastor serves a church growing in two categories, and the other NSP and DLP pastors are serving churches that showed growth in only one area, each. This concludes all of the data from the churches located in counties with population growth.

Raleigh County had zero population growth or loss. Four responding pastors served churches in this county. One DLP pastor's church was disqualified. One PPS pastor's church showed growth in two categories, but both of the DLP pastors in qualifying churches showed the necessary growth in all three categories to be deemed actual, growing churches.

Marion County lost .20 percent of its population, but the only responding pastor is an NSP pastor serving a church that is growing in all three categories. Roane County is losing .50 percent of its population and the lone responding pastor is a PPS pastor, with a church that is growing in two categories. Fayette County only had one responding pastor. The county is losing .60 percent of its population and the NSP pastor there serves a church that is showing growth in only one category.

Wood County is losing .70 percent in population. Two pastors from there responded to the survey. The PPS pastor's church was disqualified, and the NSP pastor is serving a church that is growing in only one category. Harrison County, with a .90 percent population loss, had one responding DLP pastor, serving a church that had growth in only one category.

Wayne County lost 1.10 percent in population. Four pastors responded to the survey. One PPS pastor and one DLP pastor were disqualified. The PPS pastor's church showed no growth in any of the three categories, but the DLP pastor's church showed growth in all three pre-determined categories. Nicholas County, with a population loss of 1.20 percent, was disqualified, altogether, due to the disqualification of the one NSP pastor responding to the survey.

Mercer County, with a 1.40 percent population loss, was the most represented county in the survey, with twelve responding pastors. One NSP pastor, One PPS pastor, and two DLP pastors were disqualified. One DLP pastor was serving a church that showed no growth in any of the three categories. One PPS pastor and One DLP pastor, serve churches with growth in only one of the three areas. Two NSP pastors, and one DLP pastor, serve churches showing growth in two of the three areas required. One PPS

pastor and one DLP pastor serve churches showing growth in all three designated areas determining actual, growing churches.

Wirt County also has a 1.40 percent population loss. The one responding pastor is in the NSP category and his church showed growth in two of the three areas. Cabell County was the second most represented county in this study, with five responding pastors. The county lost 1.80 percent in population. One DLP pastor was disqualified from this county. One NSP pastor serves a church showing no growth in any category. Two PPS pastors serve churches with growth in two of the three categories. One PPS pastor serves a church that is growing in all three of the designated categories.

Marshall County also has a 1.80 percent population loss. Both responding pastors are in the DLP group. One was disqualified, but the other serves a church that is growing in all three categories. Brooke County is losing 2.0 percent in population. Of the two responding pastors, one NSP pastor serves a church growing in two categories. The other is a DLP pastor, serving a church that is growing in all three categories.

Kanawha County had four responding pastors. The county lost 2.30 percent in population. Two of the NSP pastors are serving churches that had growth in two categories. One NSP pastor is serving a church showing growth in all three categories, along with one PPS pastor that is also serving a church that qualifies as growing in all three.

Mingo County lost 2.40 percent in population. Two NSP pastors responded to our survey. One is serving a church that showed no growth in any of the three categories, the other serves a church that is growing in only one category. Hancock County lost 2.80 percent in population. The only responding pastor is an NSP pastor, serving a church that

is growing in two of the three categories. Ohio County lost 3.40 percent in population. The one NSP pastor who responded to our survey was disqualified, since he is serving as a part-time, associate, but is not the actual pastor of the church.

Calhoun County lost 3.8 percent in population. The one DLP pastor responding is serving a church that showed growth in two of the three categories. McDowell County lost 7.20 percent in population. This is the greatest percentage of population loss of all counties represented in the survey. Both of the responding pastors are NSP pastors. One serves a church that had no growth in any of three categories. The other serves a church showing growth in only one of the three categories necessary.

Thus, the full results can now be presented. Of the nineteen disqualified survey responses: four were NSP pastors (21 percent); six were PPS pastors (32 percent); and nine were DLP pastors (47 percent). Of those pastors serving the five churches that qualified, but showed no growth in any of the three categories: three were NSP pastors (60 percent); one was a PPS pastor (20 percent); and one was a DLP pastor (20 percent). Of those pastors serving the thirteen churches that showed growth in only one of the three categories: eight were NSP pastors (62 percent); two were PPS pastors (15 percent); and three were DLP pastors (23 percent). Of those pastors serving churches that showed growth in two of the three categories: eleven were NSP pastors (58 percent); five were PPS pastors (26 percent); and three were DLP pastors (16 percent).

When you put these figures together, it is clear that of the thirty-seven pastors in the churches that made up all three of the non-growth categories: twenty-two were NSP pastors (59 percent); eight were PPS pastors (22 percent); and seven were DLP pastors

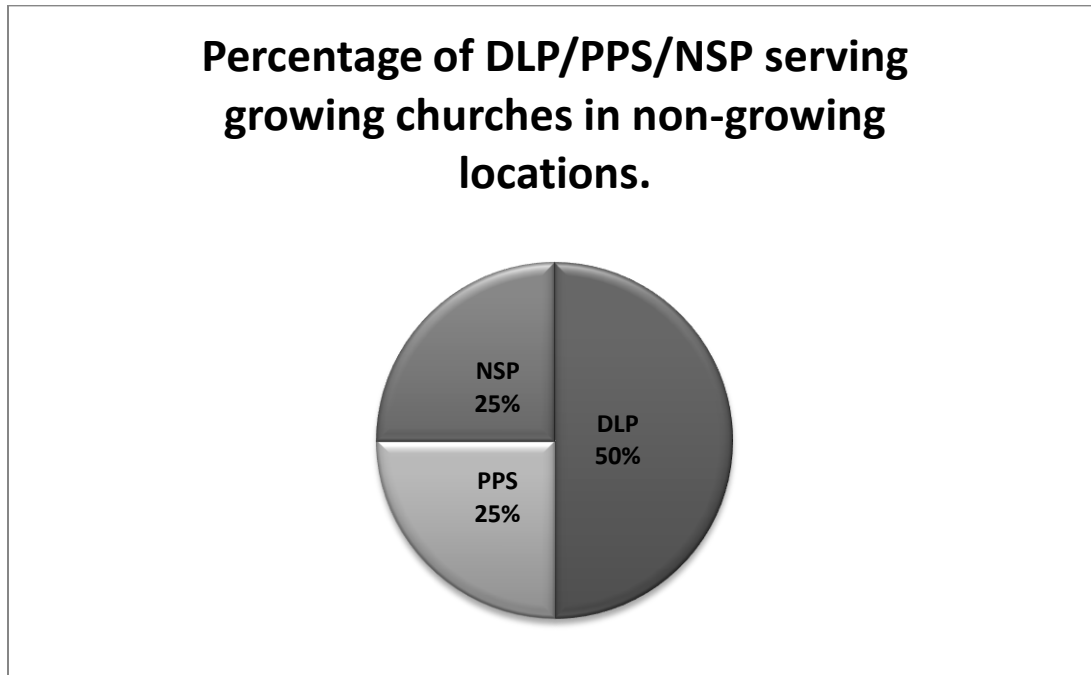
(19 percent). Thus, non-studying pastors (NSP) outnumber all studying pastors (PPS and DLP) in non-growing churches by a 59 to 39 percent margin.

As reported earlier in this study, when it came to the qualifying pastors serving in the fourteen churches that showed growth in all three of the pre-determined categories necessary to qualify as actual, growing churches: four were NSP pastors (28.57 percent); four were PPS pastors (28.57 percent); and six were DLP pastors (42.86 percent). Therefore, it can be concluded that studying pastors (PPS and DLP), outnumber NSP pastors in growing churches in all locations by a more than two-to-one margin (71 percent to 29 percent). Furthermore, DLP pastors outnumber both PPS and NSP pastors in growing churches in all locations (43 percent to 29 percent, each).

These figures become more acute when considering growing churches in non-growing locations. For growing churches in non-growing locations, DLP pastors make up the highest percentage, with six (50 percent), compared to the three PPS (25 percent) and three NSP (25 percent), respectively. Thus, the number of DLP pastors serving growing churches in non-growing counties equals the number of PPS and NSP pastors, put together. As anticipated, studying pastors (DLP and PPS) together, outnumbered non-studying pastors (NSP) in non-growing locations, three to one. Furthermore, those pastors in formal educational programs (DLP) outnumbered pastors in personal plans of study (PPS) and non-studying pastors (NSP), by two to one margins, respectively, as shown in figure 9, page 101.

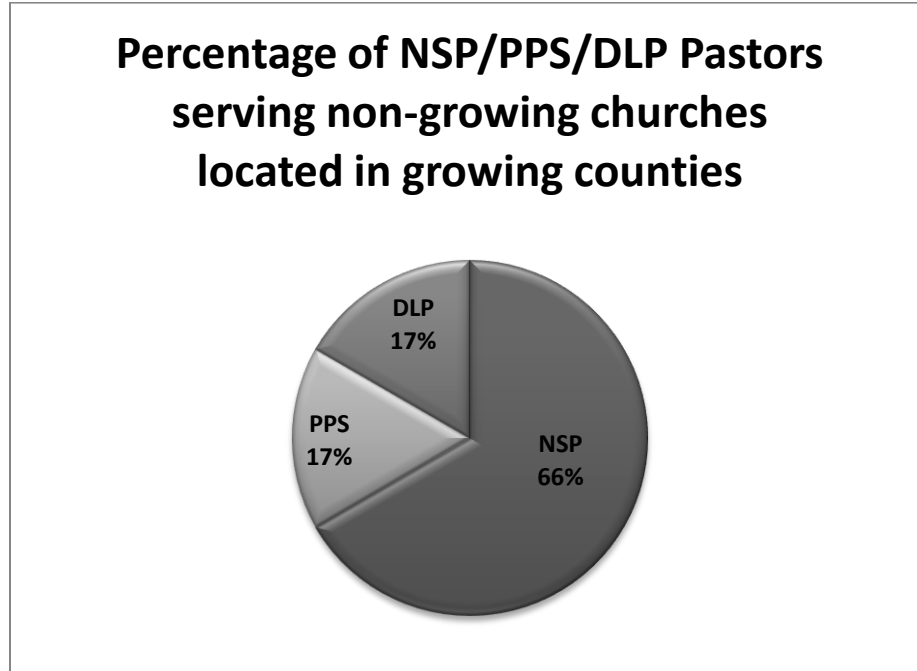
This verifies our initial inquiry and confirms this writer's original belief that there is a causal link between the pastor's personal growth through study that impacts growth in the local church he serves. (See figure 9).

Figure 9. Percentage of DLP/PPS/NSP pastors serving growing churches in non-growing locations.



This is all the more striking when compared with the number of non-growing churches located in growing locations. There the disparity between NSP pastors and PPS and DLP pastors is even more acute. The NSP pastors were serving in over 66 percent of those churches as opposed to the PPS and DLP pastors, who were serving in 17 percent of those churches, respectively. Once again it is clear that those pastors pursuing continuing education are less likely to be serving those non-growing churches, even in locations where populations growth is occurring. Below is the reprint of figure 7, page 65. In that graph it is clear to see that disparity in closer proximity to figure 9, where DLP pastors are serving growing churches in areas where there is population stagnation or population loss. (See page 102).

Figure 10. (reprinted from Figure 7, page 65).



So the difference is demonstrated that while studying pastors (DLP and PPS) outnumber non-studying pastors three to one, and DLP pastors alone outnumber NSP pastors by a margin of two to one in growing churches in non-growing locations; Non-studying pastors (NSP) outnumber studying pastors (DLP and PPS) by a margin of two to one, and NSP pastors outnumber DLP pastors, or PPS pastors, respectively, by a margin of four to one, in non-growing churches in growing locations.

This is clear evidence that studying pastors, and specifically DLP pastors (who are involved in formal plans of study), are several times more likely to help churches grow, even when located in non-growing areas, while NSP pastors are several times more likely than either DLP or PPS pastors to be serving churches that are not growing, despite being located in areas of population growth.

Thus, our initial hypothesis has been validated. Whether or not a pastor chooses to involve himself in continuing study has a high probability for determining whether or not he will be able to facilitate church growth, even in areas where the population is not growing.

Despite all these statistics, there is yet another factor this writer discovered during his research, which could not be analyzed or documented by a reportable statistic. In the course of interviewing all of the pastors of the growing churches that were qualified by this research, a definite sense of purpose was evidenced. All the pastors of the growing churches, regardless of their status as studying or non-studying pastors, were involved in a quest to grow the churches they serve. Even the NSP pastors stated that there were some conferences, tape series, books and other references they relied upon to prompt personal growth in ministerial competence. That is, there were outside resources that they were utilizing in their quest to learn how to grow their churches for the glory of God and His Kingdom. All of these pastors were involved in some type of search for ways of reaching the unreached. All expressed a desire to win people to Christ and to focus their churches upon evangelism and growth.

That being said, perhaps the unquantifiable factor that is just as important for a church to determine when seeking a pastor, is the motivation by a deeply held desire to grow and a just as deeply rooted belief that churches are ordained and commissioned for growth. As evidenced from the initial research conducted in this project, it is clear that the pastor is the key ingredient to church growth. Therefore, the pastor must study to show himself approved.

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EDUCATIONAL

B.A., Marshall University, 1980.

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MINISTERIAL

License: January 3, 1983, First Baptist Church, Ceredo, West Virginia.

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PROFESSIONAL

Associate Pastor, First Baptist Church, Ceredo, West Virginia, 1980-1983.

Intern Associate Pastor, First Baptist Church, Milton, West Virginia, 1983.

Campus Minister (Mission Service Corps), Concord College, Athens,
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Pastor, Saltville Baptist Church, Saltville, Virginia, 1992-2000.

Pastor, Immanuel Baptist Church, Princeton, West Virginia, 2000-present.