

LIBERTY UNIVERSITY BAPTIST THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

A MODEL FOR REVITALIZING AND
RESTRUCTURING PETER'S TABERNACLE MISSIONARY BAPTIST CHURCH

A Thesis Project Submitted to
Liberty University Baptist Theological Seminary
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree

DOCTOR OF MINISTRY

By

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Lynchburg, Virginia

November, 2012

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LIBERTY UNIVERSITY BAPTIST THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

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ABSTRACT

A MODEL FOR REVITALIZING AND RESTRUCTURING PETER'S TABERNACLE MISSIONARY BAPTIST CHURCH

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Liberty University Baptist Theological Seminary, 2012

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The purpose of this project is to develop a model of ministry that will revitalize Peter's Tabernacle Missionary Baptist Church, which over the past 102 years, has been characterized by stagnate membership, diminishing evangelistic efforts and a declining spiritual impact. This project will detail a model that allows for a restructuring of Peter's Tabernacle that neither denigrates its traditional approach to congregational life nor disrupts its standard hierarchy. Presented will be an implementable approach to developing small groups of congregants trained to evangelize those communities surrounding Peter's Tabernacle while maintaining the administrative structure of its congregational leadership.

Abstract length: 97 words.

DEDICATION

I am blessed to have professors, colleagues, parishioners and a loving family, whose diligence, sacrifice and understanding have made the completion of this project possible.

To my mentor, Dr. Rodney W. Dempsey; thank you for reshaping and strengthening my studies and ministry by encouraging me to pursue this thesis. Your lectures, writings and mentoring have helped me understand the dynamic power of small groups in carrying out the Great Commission.

To my reader, Dr. David A. Wheeler; thank you for your prayers and steadfast help understanding the Scriptural foundation of evangelism. Your commitment to teaching the importance of evangelism has informed, empowered and inspired my ministry.

To the Director of the Doctor of Ministry program, Dr. Charles N. Davidson; thank you for your incredible patience and guidance that has made my enrollment at Liberty University one of the most rewarding and fruitful experiences of both my academic career and ministry.

To the faculty of Liberty University Baptist Theological Seminary; thank you for your commitment to excellence, dedicated scholarship and Christian witness, which serves as a clarion call to a world in need of the Gospel.

To my parents, the Reverend James and Shelia Grimes, who went without things they needed that I could have what I needed. For over fifty years, you have stayed together so that I could bear witness to how the Lord keeps the faithful in union with one another. You taught me to pray, to trust Christ in all matters, and if not for the love you have shown me all my life, there are times in which I would have surely been lost. There are no words that fully describe how much I love you, but I pray that the life I live will stand as a testament to my upbringing.

To my brother, Reverend James, Jr. (Jimmy) and my sister Tracey; you both loved me more than any sibling could hope to be loved, and I count myself blessed for your encouragement, protection and nurturing throughout my life.

To my fiancé Tracy; for the past seven years knowing you, loving you and being loved by you has been a blessing beyond description. Having committed ourselves to Christ and one another, I pray that I will be for you the Ephesians 5 husband I promised the Lord, you and our families I would be. I love you unceasingly.

Finally, to my extended family of Peter's Tabernacle Missionary Baptist Church and the Iron Mine community; for the past two years, you have entrusted to me the sacred duty of this pastorate, and for the past two decades we have grown together in love and commitment. I pray that through this project, and for the duration of my ministry, the Lord Jesus Christ would bring us more closely to one another and more faithful to His will with each passing day.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ABC, USA	American Baptist Churches, USA
GBSC-NC	General Baptist State Convention of North Carolina
KJV	King James Version
KEMBA	Kenansville Eastern Missionary Baptist Association
NBC, USA	National Baptist Convention, USA
NBC of America	National Baptist Convention of America
NRSV	New Revised Standard Version
PNBC	Progressive National Baptist Convention
PTMBC	Peter's Tabernacle Missionary Baptist Church
SACS	Southern Association of Colleges and Schools
SBC	Southern Baptist Convention

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Founded in 1870, Peter's Tabernacle Missionary Baptist Church is located in rural Duplin County, North Carolina. A predominantly black American congregation located ten miles east of Wallace, North Carolina on Highway 41 West, the location of the edifice is critical to understanding the community that surrounds the edifice. The membership of Peter's Tabernacle considers their edifice to be located in what is called "the Iron Mine community" rather than the town of Wallace itself. The name "Iron Mine" is partly drawn from Iron Mine road, which is adjacent to the church grounds and joins Highway 41 West, but more importantly, the name reflects the empowerment of persons choosing for themselves the name of their community. While the monumental importance of family tradition reverberates throughout the Iron Mine community, there also exists a great reticence.

The same history that serves as a well-spring of fond memories and Missionary Baptist tradition has also stifled the congregation's growth in past decades. The late nineteenth century approach to ministry steeped in autumn revivalism, board meetings and family-driven church politics continues to characterize congregational life within Peter's Tabernacle. Virtually untouched by the technological innovation of the past two decades, the church's administration and leadership has entered and remained in a prolonged stasis. After 1910, membership of Peter's Tabernacle averaged 62 parishioners having increased steadily from 1870 until that point. It has been neither laxness nor a vapid approach to ministry that has resulted in the stifled growth of Peter's Tabernacle rather than the lack of an implementable model of ministry designed for

church growth. What this author will present in this project is an implementable strategy for congregational growth within a rural, traditional context where the resources for spurring growth are often limited.

Statement of the Problem

This project will outline an implementable strategy through which Peter's Tabernacle Missionary¹ Baptist Church can transition from a traditional, Institutional model of ministry to an evangelistic, Incarnational model of ministry. Using church growth strategies exhibited throughout the New Testament, this model defines church growth by the number of new converts added to the Body rather than the amount of square-footage added to the edifice. Simply stated, the members of Peter's Tabernacle must cease to think of themselves as members of a brick and mortar “church” and instead as members of “the Church.” The separatism, both ethnic and regional, that characterizes so much of the Missionary Baptist denomination in eastern² North Carolina is a direct result of the development of predominantly black Baptist congregations founded in the aftermath of the American Civil War and during the embryonic stages of Reconstruction. Similarly, many Missionary Baptist congregations throughout eastern North Carolina are also known as “Two-Sunday” or “Un-stationed” churches with Sunday morning

¹ Frank S. Mead, Samuel S. Hill and Craig G. Atwood, *Handbook of Denominations in the United States* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon, 2005), 197. “The Missionary Baptist denomination throughout much of eastern North Carolina primarily consists of black Americans and is a constituent of the National Baptist Convention, USA, Inc. and the General Baptist State Convention of North Carolina placing the Missionary Baptists of eastern North Carolina in the General Baptist tradition with the 62 associations of the GBSC-NC functioning as presbyteries.”

² This geographical reference to “eastern” North Carolina characterizes the counties east of Wake County, North Carolina as Raleigh serves as both its county seat and the state capitol. Typically, “eastern” North Carolina is referred to as the Inner Banks and Outer Banks regions of the state located east of the Interstate 95 corridor in Johnston County which also neighbors Wake County. Peter's Tabernacle is located in Duplin County in the southeastern region of the state 42 miles from the Outer Banks. Throughout this project, references to “eastern North Carolina” will refer to the southeastern region of the state comprised of the Inner Banks and Outer Banks.

worship services convening only on the first and third Sundays or second and fourth Sundays of the month.

Peter's Tabernacle has also belonged to the same parent-bodies, the Kenansville Eastern Missionary Baptist Association and the General Baptist State Convention of North Carolina since 1870. The coastal region that lies less than an hour east of Peter's Tabernacle has historically lagged behind the Triangle region (Raleigh, Durham and Chapel Hill) and the Piedmont Triad region (Greensboro, High Point and Winston-Salem) in growth and industry. However, parts of southeastern North Carolina have emerged as economically viable through technological innovation, advancements in educational opportunities and greater access to industry in the past two decades. Unfortunately, this viability has not been reflected in the growth of most Missionary Baptist congregations throughout the region.

Though the residents of Duplin County and neighboring Wayne, Sampson, Brunswick, Pender, Craven, and New Hanover counties are highly transient in their vocations, many Missionary Baptist congregations, including Peter's Tabernacle, have maintained their nineteenth century "Two-Sunday" tradition in a twenty-first century, transient society. It is paradoxical to describe a denomination as being "Missionary" when many of its congregations close their doors two Sundays a month, maintain century-old traditions for tradition's sake, have become far more programmatic than prophetic while minimally engaging the modernization and growth of everything surrounding those congregations. This paradox requires Scriptural reorientation that the missional aspects of Missionary Baptist doctrine will be fully embodied.

Peter's Tabernacle is an administratively-driven church and was founded by a closely-knit community during a unique period in American history. While many aspects of the Iron Mine

community have not changed over the past century and a half, an overwhelming amount has changed since 1870. The congregation need not exist with the self-imposed limits of the nineteenth century that existed before the advent of automation, aviation and the Information Age. However, a majority of the practices, programs, committees and groups that existed two centuries prior exist in very much the same fashion in 2012. Those groups that no longer exist either have deteriorated or given way to newer versions of the same practices, programs, committees or groups.

This project will detail a model of ministry that will revitalize Peter's Tabernacle while leaving its core traditions intact. While the model presented in this project is specific to the context of Peter's Tabernacle, with adjustments, this model *can* be applied to other communities of faith facing similar challenges. Inherent in this model will be an evangelistic practice called Servant Evangelism or servanthood evangelism described by Steve Sjogren as, "Servant Evangelism = deeds of love + words of love + adequate time."³ Accompanying Servant Evangelism will be the development of small groups with group facilitators training each member of that group to make new disciples.⁴ The development of these small groups will begin with an initial small group (sometimes called a parent group) facilitated by the senior pastor. The senior pastor will facilitate the initial small group over the course of one year using a disciple-making process called E.E.E.E detailed in the final chapter. Throughout this thesis, a distinction

³ Steve Sjogren, *Conspiracy of Kindness: A Unique Approach to Sharing the Love of Jesus* (Ventura, CA: Regal, 2003), 23.

⁴ This distinction between small groups and cell groups was made in a lecture presented by Dr. Rodney W. Dempsey in the Doctor of Ministry intensive entitled, EVANGELISM 851: 21st Century Methods for the Revitalization of the Church on Tuesday, August 2, 2011 on the main campus of Liberty University in Lynchburg, Virginia. Dr. Elmer L. Towns served as the professor of this Doctor of Ministry intensive. Dr. Dempsey made further distinctions among various cell groups themselves identifying four major groups of cells as single-cell, stretched-cell, multi-cell and multi-congregational/multi-service cells.

will be made between “Institutional” ministry and “Incarnational” ministry. Institutional ministry in this work describes congregational settings driven by administrative procedures, boards, protocol, centralized worship and a rigid, corporate structure where polity and tradition take precedence over cultural shifts, economic realities and even Scripture itself. Such approaches to ministry give ascent to programs and procedures. Incarnational ministry, in this project, describes very much the opposite of Institutional ministry with the New Testament church, as described in Acts, serving as its definitive archetype. This distinction is made where core tenets of the Institutional tradition (such as pastoral autocracy, voting boards, committees existing *ad nauseam*) have failed to achieve their stated objectives.

This type of approach is based on the philosophy that the edifice itself is “the church” rather than “the Church” being the Body of Christ. Furthermore, a small group approach cultivates disciple-making-disciples who engage their wider communities without being encumbered by an overbearing structure. Incarnational ministry seeks to develop followers of Jesus Christ, who intentionally seek to develop new followers until congregations themselves plant new congregations. Simply stated, disciples within an Incarnational model seek to become “reproducible-producers.”⁵ Developing an actionable plan for transitioning an Institutional congregation, that for over a century has operated within an Institutional framework, into an Incarnational congregation of disciple-making-disciples is the goal of this project.

Statement of the Scope and Limitations

There does not exist an abundance of work positing how a predominantly black denomination

⁵ The term “reproducible-producers” is regularly used by Dr. Rodney W. Dempsey as a means of defining evangelistic disciples capable of discipling new converts to Christ.

mired in traditionalism, can transition into a more Scripturally-astute model of ministry that maintains the best of said traditions while revitalizing that denomination for twenty-first century ministry. For that reason, this work is as theoretical as it is practical. While Peter's Tabernacle serves as a reference point from which the ministry model presented in this project is derived, there exists no aspect of this model so customized within the context of Peter's Tabernacle that this same exact model could not be implemented in a similar context with modifications to this model.

The scope of this project will not singularly address aspects of Peter's Tabernacle Missionary Baptist Church in any matter that would intrusively identify, embarrass, injure or denigrate any member of the congregation or the legacy of the church itself. However, this project will identify and discuss general conditions, which could be made applicable to a substantial number of congregations within the Missionary Baptist tradition and beyond. The reason for anonymity in this respect is twofold. The first fold is the previously stated intent to protect the congregation from injury. As the senior pastor of Peter's Tabernacle, this author has a responsibility to the congregation as its elected leader to protect and honor the integrity of its membership. This in no way compromises the findings of this project as the membership itself is privy to its content.

The second fold speaks to the implementation of the model proposed in this project. If the model for transitioning an Institutional model of ministry into an Incarnational model of ministry were overly customized to Peter's Tabernacle, then the model itself would not prove to be a reproducible New Testament model intended for church growth in general but only a strategic plan for one specific congregation. While geographical, socioeconomic, historical and demographical realities pertinent to Peter's Tabernacle are used to demonstrate how this proposed

model would be implemented at Peter's Tabernacle the model proposed in this project is intended to be both modifiable and adaptable.

Summary Review of Literature

This thesis project will reference a number of relevant and widely known works on the topics of small group formation, Servant Evangelism and congregational revitalization. Accompanying these references will be lesser known but equally relevant works that provide both an historical and sociocultural context in which the reader can most easily understand this author's methodology. Most importantly, Scriptural references that provide a Biblical basis for the formation of small groups and the implementation of Servant Evangelism will provide the operating principles relevant to this project.

Jonathan Falwell, ed., *Innovate Church: Innovative Leadership for the Next Generation Church* (Nashville, TN: B & H Publishing, 2008).

Comprised of some of the most insightful and engaging pastoral voices amongst today's church leaders, *Innovate Church* succinctly covers both broad and particularized topics germane to the challenges of evangelism in a pluralistic society—a society in which competing “truths” and new social phenomena have made even more difficult the rewarding Calling and profession of spreading the Good News. The prevailing message of *Innovate Church* is that the manner and method, but not the essential message of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, must never cease to be creative, engaging and relevant to the hearers of the Word. However, perceived relevance should never be substituted for truth. In developing creative methods for reaching unsaved men, women and children, *Innovate Church* also makes clear that our evangelistic efforts as ministers, whether as senior pastors, church staff members or congregants, are to be based on Scripture and led by

the Holy Spirit. Toward this end, it is Dr. Rodney W. Dempsey, who writes, “*Innovate Church* is about being a passionate follower of Jesus passionately involved in His kingdom.”⁶ As the demands of revitalizing a congregation can be all-consuming, this collective work provides this author both the necessary Scriptural and temporal compass to lead a congregation without losing focus of what is most important—being a follower of Jesus Christ.

Greg Ogden, *The New Reformation: Returning the Ministry to the People of God* (Grand Rapids, MI: Ministry Resources, 1990).

Greg Ogden's *The New Reformation: Returning the Ministry to the People of God* examines the Church not as an organization but an organism crafted to do God's work in the world. Trumpeting the importance of oneness within congregational life, Ogden is interested in equipping every member of the Church to serve as witnesses to lost persons. Long before discussions of the missional church had reached their zenith in recent years, Ogden discusses servant leadership and the implications of what he calls, One People/One Ministry as a means for believers to identify and release their spiritual gifts. By examining the current challenges many congregations encounter while developing new definitions of leadership, Ogden manages to redefine the Church's goal of keeping the Great Commission.

One of the greatest strengths of *The New Reformation* is the book's focus on “releasing” laity to serve more actively and proactively in the congregations as opposed to being reactionary members. This “releasing” of which Ogden speaks will be critical in transitioning Peter's Tabernacle from pastoral autocracy to a decentralized, organic model of ministry. Ogden insists that the senior pastor need not carry the majority of the ministerial duties when there are persons

⁶ Jonathan Falwell, ed., *Innovate Church: Innovative Leadership for the Next Generation Church* (Nashville, TN: B & H Publishing, 2008), 88.

that God has equipped to perform the very same tasks. This work places duties and responsibilities of ministry squarely upon the shoulders of disciples and reminds them that every member of a community of faith has a responsibility to do ministry. The model of ministry proposed in this project is expressly designed to shift those duties thought exclusive to the senior pastor to every member of Peter's Tabernacle.

Elmer Towns, Ed Stetzer and Warren Bird, *11 Innovations in the Local Church: How Today's Leaders Can Learn, Discern and Move into the Future* (Ventura, CA: Gospel Light, 2007).

Amidst the ever-changing ecclesial landscape of the twenty-first century, there exists an increasing need to more deeply examine the unique claims of the Christian faith. This deepening examination is only possible when the fundamental truths of the Gospel of Jesus Christ remain vibrant, innovative and transformative. However, many mainline denominations have wrestled with (rather successfully or unsuccessfully) the complexities of the *methods* and *manner* in which the Good News is conveyed without altering or denigrating the truth of the Gospel itself. Provided by Dr. Elmer Towns, Dr. Ed Stetzer and Dr. Warren Bird is a roadmap for navigating today's ideological terrain, which is rife with moral subjectivism and pluralism.

In their *11 Innovations in the Local Church: How Today's Leaders Can Learn, Discern and Move into the Future*, these three great thinkers not only provide salient points toward the end of reinvigorating the local church in today's intellectual marketplace, but they keep at the forefront of every chapter, our Biblical mandate to bring lost persons to Christ. An inquiry is made of the reader in the book's introduction asking,

If the primary business of the Church is to glorify God by obeying the Great Commandment (Matt. 22:34-40) and carrying out the Great Commission (Matt. 28:19-20), we ask you to evaluate how business is faring.⁷

⁷ Elmer Towns, Ed Stetzer and Warren Bird, *11 Innovations in the Local Church: How Today's Leaders Can Learn, Discern and Move into the Future* (Ventura, CA: Gospel Light, 2007), 18.

Dr. Towns, Dr. Stetzer and Dr. Bird further note that,

. . . innovations have arisen when the Church has failed to reach the lost, failed to teach Christians and failed to be a testimony to God in this dark world. These failures demanded fresh innovations.⁸

From evaluating the effectiveness of Organic House Churches, Recovery Churches, Multi-site churches, Ancient-Future Churches, City-Reaching Churches, Community Transformation Churches, Cyber-Enhanced Churches, Nickelodeon-Style Children-Focused Churches, Intentionally Multicultural Churches, Decision-Journey Churches and Attractional Churches, *11 Innovations in the Local Church* examines how local churches can increase their success in growing the Body of Christ in accordance with the Great Commandment and the Great Commission.

Steve, Sjogren, *Conspiracy of Kindness: A Unique Approach to Sharing the Love of Jesus*, rev. (Ventura, CA: Regal, 2003).

The prevailing message of Steve Sjogren's *Conspiracy of Kindness: A Unique Approach to Sharing the Love of Jesus* seeks to return those of us in ministry to the foundational aspects of evangelism required of us by the Great Commission. Detailed throughout the book are practical strategies to presenting the Good News to nonbelievers in non-combative ways that remind people of God's mercy and gentleness. It is the heavy-handedness and misplaced aggression with which evangelism is sometimes pursued that Sjogren's work seeks to address and adjust. From the outset of his work, Sjogren invites the reader to join with him in his efforts to engender kindness, humility and the grace of God in one's community making the book itself an act of Servant Evangelism. The intentionality which Servant Evangelism requires is vital to repositioning the traditional boards, committees, and "clubs" of Peter's Tabernacle from a

⁸ Ibid, 18.

reactive, administrative congregational structure into a proactive, evangelistic community of believers.

Elmer L. Towns and Ed Stetzer, *Perimeters of Light: Biblical Boundaries for the Emerging Church* (Chicago, IL: Moody, 2004).

With vestigial arguments between liberals and fundamentalists having continued in the past few decades, of primary concern in many of today's faith-communities is not the *what* of ministry, but more importantly, the *how* of ministry. The *how* of Biblical principles, theology and ministry is of primary concern to Dr. Elmer Towns and Dr. Ed Stetzer in their *Perimeters of Light: Biblical Boundaries for the Emerging Church*. The analogy of “light,” “darkness,” “edge” and “boundaries” used in *Perimeters* provides a framework by which comparisons and contrasts of essential Christian beliefs with rivaling “spiritualities,” heresies and divergent claims, propagated by supposedly Christian churches, are made. In this way, *Perimeters* serves as a type of comparative study in what makes Christianity pure within its own context and unique in the context of other belief systems as Dr. Towns and Dr. Stetzer make clear:

If Christianity were a “religion,” it would have boundaries as do other world religions. You would do certain things and that would qualify you as a Christian. But Christianity does not have a fence to keep people in – or keep them out. Although it does have principles by which a person should keep in relationship with God, Christianity is not a set of rules that you have to keep to become or remain a Christian, though it does have principles by which you live for God. Christianity is not about rules; it's about a person. It's about Jesus Christ, and if you are properly related to Him by faith, you're a Christian. The light is Jesus, and the edge determines how close to Jesus you live.⁹

What is provided from this point of the book throughout its conclusion are effective ways, compatible with the Christian tradition, of resisting postmodern efforts to discredit the validity of Biblical truths and foundational Christian beliefs. From delineating the differences between “edges” and “boundaries” to reexamining how the New Testament defines the Church, it is this

⁹ Elmer L. Towns and Ed Stetzer, *Perimeters of Light: Biblical Boundaries for the Emerging Church* (Chicago, IL: Moody, 2004), 22ff.

effective resistance against efforts to dilute the Good News that undergirds the book's thesis. A simple means of describing the aims of the authors is to say that they are expressly concerned with an authentic representation of the Gospel's essential truths in the face of contravening claims. Particularly for the purpose of revitalizing Peter's Tabernacle, it will be critical to introduce, and in some instances, reintroduce the basics of the Christian message to believers as well as lost persons. *Perimeters* serves as a framework for such a introduction or reintroduction.

C. Peter Wagner, *Your Spiritual Gifts Can Help Your Church Grow* (Glendale, CA: Regal, 1979).

Revolutionary at the time of its first printing, Dr. C. Peter Wager freed from the circles of charismatic Protestant traditions serious discussions on the identification and use of spiritual gifts in his *Your Spiritual Gifts Can Help Your Church Grow*. Crafting his descriptions of the spiritual gifts from Pauline language found in 1 Cor. 12:1-12, Dr. Wagner describes the spiritual gifts as “Prophecy, Service, Teaching, Exhortation, Giving, Leadership, Mercy, Wisdom, Knowledge, Faith, Healing, Miracles, Discerning of spirits, Tongues, Interpretation of tongues, Apostle, Helps, Administration, Evangelist, Pastor, Celibacy, Voluntary poverty, Martyrdom, Hospitality, Missionary, Intercession and Exorcism.”¹⁰ Biblically-based and constructed as a type of “user's guide” to identifying one's spiritual gifts, Dr. Wagner never strays from the authority of Scripture with particular attention paid to Eph. 4:23-32, Rom.12:5-21, 1 Cor. 12:1-12, and 1 Pet. 4:10. These four passages of Scripture are also instrumental in the Transitional Ministry proposed in this project.

Ed Stetzer and David Putnam. *Breaking the Missional Code: Your Church Can Become a Missionary in Your Community*. (Nashville, TN: Broadman and Holman, 2006).

The single greatest challenge to disciple-making in a twenty-first century, pluralistic context

¹⁰ C. Peter Wagner, *Your Spiritual Gifts Can Help Your Church Grow* (Glendale, CA: Regal, 1979), 9.

is finding an authentic means of reaching the lost that both speaks to the real-life situations of lost persons without distorting the Christian message. This challenge is laid most heavily upon congregations seeking to not only engage in Incarnational-living but also seeking to plant the Good News in the hearts, minds and souls of lost persons—this is the challenge of the missional church. While evangelism itself is the bringing of the Good News, the Gospel must be transported and planted in a given community—most often described as missions. The development of strategies that meet this challenge is the driving force of Ed Stetzer and David Putman's *Breaking the Missional Code: Your Church Can Become a Missionary in Your Community*.

Toward the end of this insightful and useful work, one task is offered and two questions are asked regarding the planting of a missional church. Dr. Stetzer and Dr. Putman require a church planter in a given context to, “Identify people groups, population segments, or cultural environments in your community that will require a church plant in order to be reached,” then ask, “How can your church participate in planting churches to reach those outside of your direct influence? Where do you already have a ministry presence that could best become a church plant?”¹¹ Answering these questions is the first and foremost step to developing a vision for a congregation, and having these questions so plainly asked in Dr. Stetzer and Dr. Putnam's work will enable the leadership of Peter's Tabernacle to not only develop a new ministry but the model of ministry needed within the Iron Mine community.

¹¹ Ed Stetzer and David Putnam. *Breaking the Missional Code: Your Church Can Become a Missionary in Your Community*. (Nashville, TN: Broadman and Holman, 2006), 169.

Richard F. Lovelace, *Dynamics of Spiritual Life: An Evangelical Theology of Renewal* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1979).

Converging church history with a study of revivals and spirituality, Dr. Richard F. Lovelace's *Dynamics of Spiritual Life: An Evangelical Theology of Renewal* is an enduring classic on many levels. Not only is this work itself a classic, but it is also a *classical* study of the emergence of Protestant denominationalism that has defined the latter half of the nineteenth century—an emergence which continues to influence congregational shifts amongst mainline denominations and the outgrowth of inter-denominational and non-denominational communities of faith. This intense study of denominational growth and congregational trends makes *Dynamics* a type of theological manual for understanding the spiritual heritage of the great revivals and Awakenings of the past century and half.

Dwight L. Moody, *Secret Power or the Secret of Success in Christian Life and Work* (New York: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1881. Kindle edition).

The work of Christ in the lives of His followers is found in the committed lives being lived by His followers; and this is the operating thesis of Dr. Dwight L. Moody's *Secret Power or the Secret of Success in Christian Life and Work*. Dr. Moody's concern is how we as believers experience the miraculous Presence and reality of God—a reality made accessible through the Holy Scriptures, the Holy Spirit and the fulfillment of the Great Commission. Dr. Moody seeks to equip believers with knowledge of who they are in relationship to the triune God and to the world in which we live. The possession of a mind steadfast on Christ and a heart ready for love, forgiveness and commitment to doing God's will are the intended result of this work that takes the reader on a journey through the New Testament towards the end of understanding the power of God to transform our lives and the world around us. Dr. Moody's work serves as an effective

centerpiece for group discussion and would serve as a resource for any group facilitator opening discussions as to how and why the Gospel is relevant to our everyday circumstances.

Neil T. Anderson and Charles Mylander, *Blessed Are the Peacemakers: Finding Peace with God, Yourself and Others* (Ventura, CA: Regal, 2002).

Engaging reconciliation as a ministry in both the supernatural and practical aspects of life, Neil T. Anderson and Charles Mylander provide believers an accessible guide to establishing longstanding peace between dissenting persons in their *Blessed Are the Peacemakers: Finding Peace with God, Yourself and Others*. As the title of their work is itself taken from the Sermon on the Mount, Anderson and Mylander clearly place their emphasis on the perfect example of Christ as the definitive archetype of peacemaking. More importantly, this Biblically-rooted work examines peacemaking as an active ministry and not merely an act of passivity or passive aggressiveness. By dividing their work into two distinct halves; one for a Scriptural and theoretical discussion of the role peacemaking has played in the Christian tradition and the other a practical guide to resolving conflicts in a manner befitting Christ and His commands, Anderson and Mylander provide a work that encourages believers to enact the strategies and approaches discussed in the book's later chapters. The purpose of restructuring the method in which Peter's Tabernacle has done ministry since 1870 will require prayer, guidance and adeptness at peacemaking as described by Anderson and Mylander in this work.

George Barna, *The Power of Vision: Discover and Apply God's Plan for Your Life* rev ed (Ventura, CA: Regal, 2009).

Similar to the exhaustive surveys and data analysis for which Dr. Barna is known, *Power* uses a deductive, categorical approach to demonstrating why one church growth strategy is preferable to another. However, there are a number of distinguishing factors between Barna-the-researcher

and Barna-the-Spirit-led strategist for church growth. It is due in part to Dr. Barna's skills as a researcher that he so ably crafts strategies that clearly work. There is both a spiritual but also a very implementable aspect of the strategies he presents particularly as those strategies relate to marketing, where he advises leaders to, “Collect information, capture the vision, identify and marshal resources, create the plan, implement the plan, gain feedback on the process and revise and implement,”¹² the vision. This seven step process, while having a secular counterpart in the business world, in no way conflicts with Biblical principles and helps provide the type of administrative framework and accountability that prevents many congregations from losing their sense of vision or becoming overburdened by minutia and micromanagement.

Elmer Towns, *Understanding the Deeper Life: A Guide to Christian Experience* (Old Tappan, NJ: Felming H. Revell, 1979).

Symptomatic of our current pluralistic, post-Christendom culture is the neglecting of core Christian practices, disciplines and reflection that are essential to living a life victorious in Christ, and it is within this culture that Dr. Towns challenges the subjectivism and moral relativism of our day in *Understanding the Deeper Life: A Guide to Christian Experience*. One remarkable accomplishment of this book is that the notion of a single “Christian experience” is replaced by the categorization of various Christian experiences along with Christian postconversion experiences. This categorization is particularly helpful for pastors, who often disciple new converts through what are tantamount to phases of the Christian journey, which Dr. Towns' work details as various experiences within the Christian life—all of which stand in opposition to the materialism and shortsightedness of the world.

The dualism of following Christ in a world, where the unfaithful often purvey on the

¹² George Barna, *The Power of Vision: Discover and Apply God's Plan for Your Life* rev ed (Ventura, CA: Regal, 2009), 159.

weaknesses of lost persons, is a subject that demands more discussion, and it is refreshing to have access to a work that examines the intellectual, emotional and spiritual motifs so common in the numerous experiences of one's Christian journey. Not only are categories for these experiences provided in *Understanding the Deeper Life*, but there are also Scriptural guideposts to help leaders shepherd believers, who find themselves in an intransigent stage of their Christian journey, to move into the deeper meaning of life with Christ.

Elmer Towns and Douglas Porter, *The Ten Greatest Revivals Ever: From the Pentecost to Present* (Ann Arbor, MI: Servant, 2000).

As Peter's Tabernacle Missionary Baptist Church is 142 years old, understanding the role of revivals in church history *writ large* is critical to restructuring and revitalizing the congregation. Dr. Elmer Towns and Dr. Douglas Porter provide an invaluable annotation of church history as it relates to revivals in *The Ten Greatest Revivals Ever: From the Pentecost to Present*. Using Dr. Porter's doctoral dissertation as its springboard, this critical, in-depth examination of how the last 2,000 years of Christian history have been spurred by the power of God provides a portrait of how the Holy Spirit binds believers together and brings new converts into the Christian faith.

This work is a grand achievement as there are numerous details provided of smaller revivals, prayer meetings and Communion services that, in many cases, initiated more revivals. Dr. Towns and Dr. Porter ably demonstrate the similarity between Pentecost and the First Great Awakening, for instance, thus illustrating the consistency between the work of God amongst the early Church and the modern Church while assembling a type of ecclesial lineage. It is this detailing of our spiritual lineage, or better yet ecclesial heritage, as believers that makes *The Ten Greatest Revivals Ever* required reading for all believers and not only church historians. In fact, this work will inculcate a greater interest in church history by illustrating the extent to which God is not

confined by the forces of history but is the Shaper of the history, present and future of the Church.

Norma Cook Everest, *Church Conflict: From Contention to Collaboration* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon, 2004).

Upon accepting the Call to Christian ministry, one of this author's deepest apprehensions concerning pastoral leadership involved church conflict. As the grandson, son and brother of longstanding Baptist ministers, this author has witnessed an unfortunate share of church conflict that resulted in ambivalence towards schisms and splits within congregations. However, one of a senior pastor's most important functions aside from pulpit ministry is found in his ability to quell disputes amongst believers. The processes and proven strategies for defusing tension within a congregation is the focus Norma Cook Everest's *Church Conflict: From Contention to Collaboration*. One insightful process Everest presents is the process of selecting one's role in a conflict. Often times, the blurring of barriers and failure of dissenting parties to clearly define their roles and relationships to one another exacerbates roiling tensions. Everest says of role selection,

The process of role selection is not a case of deception but of seeking the truth and being authentic. Too often we allow external circumstances to dictate our own role and we play out the expected and familiar one. Selecting the role one plays within a conflict is an important choice to exercise.¹³

The safest role for a pastor to serve is definitely that of mediator—a mediator who slowly wades into a conflict hearing both sides of the situation and having done his own research. Unfortunately, the pastor or mediator can unwittingly become the target of frustration from both parties and not only fail to resolve a conflict but make matters worse and be dragged into a

¹³ Norma Cook Everest, *Church Conflict: From Contention to Collaboration* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon, 2004), 61.

conflict of which he was not involved. While there is a concern about the possibility of the pastor being viewed as superficial, which Everest addresses, this author agrees that the pastor must adapt from conflict-to-conflict, and through prayer and discernment, find the best approach to resolving a conflict treating each incident uniquely and thus being authentic and contextual as a mediator. One of the greatest means of subverting and averting internecine struggles within Peter's Tabernacle has been anticipatory action. Resistance to change or new strategies is often managed by anticipating criticisms of the proposed change or new strategies then clearly addressing those criticisms before the opposition can define those issues. Everest provides chapters that not only suggest ways of addressing such concerns but provides suggested language to be used in such situations.

Aubrey Malphurs, *Advanced Strategic Planning: A New Model for Church and Ministry Leaders* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1999, 2005).

Aubrey Malphurs is one of the few scholar-ministers to emphasize the importance of the leader-follower relational dynamic in her *Advanced Strategic Planning: A New Model for Church and Ministry Leaders*. Stressing the importance of church analysis, Malphurs simply states, "It is essential to know the people who are in your church."¹⁴ Toward this point, Malphurs urges church leaders to do both a community analysis and church analysis in order to ascertain who lives in the community and of whom is the congregation comprised. However, unlike a social scientist merely collecting data for analysis, Malphurs details how these demographics and surveys help shape the vision and mission of a church. This makes perfect sense as it is difficult for a congregation to serve a community if there is no understanding of the community being

¹⁴ Aubrey Malphurs, *Advanced Strategic Planning: A New Model for Church and Ministry Leaders* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1999, 2005), 182.

served.

Of the many salient points in this book, the focus on developing mature disciples that is most helpful as disciple-making is where most Institutional churches often struggle. It is indeed the most momentous task in congregational life to shepherd the newly converted while preparing those new converts to become leaders themselves. Malphurs offers a series of steps toward this end beginning with the most important focus which is to, “Articulate Christ's Mission for the Church,”¹⁵ then “Identify the Characteristics of a Mature Disciple.”¹⁶ The model of ministry that this author proposes relies heavily upon the development of mature disciples, and toward that end, Malphurs provides what could be a framework for training mature disciples capable of leading their own small groups.

Courtney L. Vien, ed. (2000) “Minutes of the Thirty-Ninth Annual Session of the Kenansville Eastern Missionary Baptist Sunday School Convention, Held with Poplar Grove Missionary Baptist Sunday School, July 18th to 20th, 1919: Electronic Edition, 1 ed,” *University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill: Documenting the American South* available from <http://docsouth.unc.edu/church/kembssc/kenan.html>; Internet; accessed 4 February 2012.

As this thesis project is an original contribution to not only the field of ministry, but particularly, to the work of evangelism in a rural Baptist context, it is critical that this author research various texts, historical archives and databases for information specific to the sociocultural context in which Peter's Tabernacle will be revitalized and restructured. Twelve years ago, the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill began amassing documents and artifacts that serve as a living portrait of the American South during the transition from the nineteenth century to the twentieth century in a project entitled, *Documenting the American South*. Amongst the many documents and archives collected for this project were the minutes of

¹⁵ Ibid., 196.

¹⁶ Ibid.

various sessions of the Kenansville Eastern Missionary Baptist Association to which Peter's Tabernacle belongs.

This collection of minutes is of monumental importance to this research as it stands as one of the few consistently recorded and collected documents from within the association and would also provide this author some much-needed credibility in the Duplin, Wayne, Sampson, Pender, Brunswick, New Hanover areas should this author ever seek to implement the model of ministry proposed in this thesis project beyond Peter's Tabernacle. This author's grandfather, the Reverend Jerry Michael Grimes, was documented as having first become active in KEMBA in 1919 after returning to the United States after World War I. His sixty years of work in the association, provides historical precedent for taking Peter's Tabernacle, and perhaps other churches within KEMBA, in a new ecclesial direction.

Summary Review of Scripture

1 And God spake all these words, saying, 2 I am the LORD thy God, which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. 3 Thou shalt have no other gods before me. 4 Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth: 5 Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them: for I the LORD thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me; 6 And showing mercy unto thousands of them that love me, and keep my commandments. 7 Thou shalt not take the name of the LORD thy God in vain; for the LORD will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain. 8 Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy. 9 Six days shalt thou labour, and do all thy work: 10 But the seventh day is the sabbath of the LORD thy God: in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy manservant, nor thy maidservant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates: 11 For in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day: wherefore the LORD blessed the sabbath day, and hallowed it. 12 Honour thy father and thy mother: that thy days may be long upon the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee. 13 Thou shalt not kill. 14 Thou shalt not commit adultery. 15 Thou shalt not steal. 16 Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour. 17 Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's house, thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's wife, nor his manservant, nor his maidservant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor any thing that is thy neighbour's. Ex. 20:1-17 KJV¹⁷

¹⁷ All Scripture quotations are taken from the 1611 Authorized Version of the Bible also known as the King James Version unless otherwise noted.

So often, when seeking to attract new members to the Christian community, both leaders and longstanding members neglect to inculcate within members the most fundamental tenets of the faith. The Ten Commandments, despite its foundational importance to the Christian faith, is often overlooked. As Christ Himself fulfilled the Mosaic Law, new converts must be able to locate, recite and understand the Ten Commandments that their faith will be fully developed. Though Peter's Tabernacle will embrace a New Testament model for church growth and evangelism, proper interpretation of the New Testament is impossible without a fundamental understanding of the Old Testament. In the same manner, the current and future members of Peter's Tabernacle must understand the New Testament in relationship to the Law of Moses and the Abrahamic Covenant. Dr. Elmer L. Towns says, "A law is an extension of the nature of God, and is the force or energy by which He controls the universe."¹⁸ To this effect, it is critical that every member of Peter's Tabernacle have firmly rooted within their hearts the Law of Moses that they will more fully understand that the incomparable power of Jesus Christ.

4 Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God is one LORD: 5 And thou shalt love the LORD thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might. 6 And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart: 7 And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up. 8 And thou shalt bind them for a sign upon thine hand, and they shall be as frontlets between thine eyes. 9 And thou shalt write them upon the posts of thy house, and on thy gates.
Deut. 6:4-9

Along with the Ten Commandments, the New Commandment and the Great Commission, no discussion of anything related to the Church can proceed without a proper teaching and understanding of the Great Commandment as Christ Himself acknowledged the importance of this commandment in Mk. 12:29-31. Unfortunately, there are many Christians who have gained

¹⁸ This quote is taken from a lecture delivered by Dr. Elmer L. Towns in his Doctor of Ministry intensive entitled, Evangelism 910: Church Growth I: Spiritual Factors of Church Growth on Thursday, November 17, 2011 on the main campus of Liberty University in Lynchburg, Virginia.

entrance into a community of faith without having learned the importance of this commandment, which inhibits new converts from embracing the fullness of our commitment to God. The formation of small groups within Peter's Tabernacle will provide the perfect context for teaching and discussing the Great Commandment particularly, where children are concerned as verse 7 requires such. Any effort to revitalize Peter's Tabernacle must be deeply-rooted in the Great Commandment and accompanied by the Great Commission.

1 And seeing the multitudes, he went up into a mountain: and when he was set, his disciples came unto him: 2 And he opened his mouth, and taught them, saying, 3 Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. 4 Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted. 5 Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth. 6 Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled. 7 Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy. 8 Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God. 9 Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God. 10 Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. 11 Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake. 12 Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you. Matt. 5:1-12

As the Ten Commandments and the Great Commandment are absolutely critical to the foundational development of a new convert and the revitalization of a longstanding member of the faith, the Sermon on the Mount stands as another rudimentary pillar of the Christian faith as Jesus Christ provides for us an understanding of the Kingdom that governs our every thought and deed in His proclamation. Ideally, all new members of Peter's Tabernacle should be capable of reciting the Ten Commandments, the Great Commandment and the Sermon on the Mount as easily and readily as most persons within the faith can recite the Lord's Prayer. Otherwise, any effort to make of Peter's Tabernacle a missional community is nullified by the absence of the Scriptural foundation through which the Good News is conveyed.

9 After this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name. 10 Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven. 11 Give us this day our daily bread. 12 And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. 13 And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil: For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen. Matt. 6:9-13

Complementing a Christian's understanding of the Ten Commandments, the Great Commandment, the New Commandment, the Great Commission and the Sermon on the Mount is the Lord's Prayer. While there exists a general even secular knowledge of this prayer, there rarely exists an in-depth understanding of the various petitions and implications of this definitive archetype of all Christian prayers. So much of this prayer is, in fact, not focused on making requests on our own behalves but rather requests for God's help in being faithful to Him. The focus of the Lord's Prayer is indeed God with only verse 11 requesting a daily provision of resources for ourselves. This prayer is not anthropocentric but theocentric with Christ shifting our focus away from ourselves and toward the Father. Church growth, in the context of Peter's Tabernacle or any other community of faith, will be a byproduct of keeping the aforementioned commandments, living-out the Sermon on the Mount in the context of everyday life and engaging the God-centered focus of the Lord's Prayer. With a substantive and operative understanding of these foundational Christian principles found in Exodus 20:1-17, Deut. 6:4-9, Matt. 5:1-12 and Matt. 6:9-13, a believer possesses the fundamental knowledge-base through which the Great Commission can be obeyed.

19 Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: 20 Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen. Matt. 28:19-20

As Peter's Tabernacle is a Missionary Baptist church, the entire denomination to which it belongs is founded upon the Great Commission as its definitive organizing principle. From the founding of Peter's Tabernacle in 1870 and the founding of the Kenansville Eastern Missionary Baptist Association in 1867, the emphasis of the entire denomination has been missions both home and foreign. The parent-body of the Missionary Baptist denomination is the National Baptist Convention, USA, Inc. through which domestic and foreign missions are directed.

However, like many other mainline denominations, the focus in past decades has shifted from *sending* missionaries to *in-taking* members via transfer growth—essentially a shift from conversion growth to transfer growth for the sake of boasting large memberships.

The very notion of seeking to build larger edifices by enticing members of one congregation to join another congregation as opposed to sending missionaries to evangelize the lost is unbiblical. This is not to cast aspersions on one denomination or another as this type of secularly instituted measuring of church growth by square-footage as opposed to the standards of Christ has permeated and characterized much of the American church for the past five decades. While having a large community of faith is a welcome reality within Christendom, every church is commissioned to plant churches and every disciple commissioned to make disciples. More importantly, Jesus *sends* us and commands us to make disciples, and this author contends that the revitalizing of Peter's Tabernacle Missionary Baptist Church will ultimately result in an evangelistic, missional community capable of planting churches and developing disciples who themselves can develop other disciples in the faith. Another notable aspect of the Great Commission is an emphasis on the word “nations,” which is more specifically a reference to ethnicities. As the Missionary Baptist denomination primarily consist of black Americans as a result of having been founded by emancipated men and women during Reconstruction, the denomination can no longer be so bound by the forces of history that this clear directive by Christ to make disciples of all ethnicities is subverted. To this point, the revitalization of Peter's Tabernacle should include the re-texturing of the congregation's ethnic and racial composition as commanded by Christ.

29 And Jesus answered him, The first of all the commandments is, Hear, O Israel; The Lord our God is one Lord: 30 And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength: this is the first commandment. 31 And the second is like, namely this, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. There is none other commandment greater than these. Mk. 12:29-31

As mentioned earlier in reference to the Great Commandment found in Deut. 6:4-9, when questioned as to which commandment is the greatest, Jesus responds by citing the Great Commandment reiterating the supremacy of this commandment then aligning with it a commandment to, “. . . love thy neighbour as thyself” (Mk. 12:31). Along with the foundational teaching of the Great Commandment, the appropriation of the Great Commandment by Jesus Christ in His encounter with the scribes as described in the Markan account should be taught alongside Deut. 6:4-9 as the supreme example of how the Great Commandment was appropriated by our Lord and Savior. While Matt. 18:15-20 stands as the primary passage to which matters of church conflict are referred, Mk. 12:31 equally points toward to the resolution of conflict in lieu of love and reconciliation.

1 After these things the Lord appointed other seventy also, and sent them two and two before his face into every city and place, whither he himself would come. 2 Therefore said he unto them, The harvest truly is great, but the labourers are few: pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he would send forth labourers into his harvest. Lk. 10:1-2

The matter of *sending* disciples versus *receiving* congregants is the single most dynamic modification to be made to ministry at Peter's Tabernacle and to the Baptist association of which it is a constituent. The appointment and sending of the seventy described in the Lukan account is yet another example of how the Judaic tradition of attracting believers to a particular location, whether a tabernacle, synagogue or the temple in Jerusalem, had dramatically shifted to a decentralized method of ministry. What is made clear in Luke 10:1-2 is that the Church is not an organization constituted by legalism but an organism empowered by the Holy Spirit to keep both

the Great Commandment and the Great Commission. The restructuring of Peter's Tabernacle will have a great deal to do with *sending* versus *receiving* and *decentralization* over *centralization* under the auspices of our Lord and Savior's commandment for His disciples to teach, preach, Baptize and make disciples.

44 And he said unto them, These are the words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled, which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the psalms, concerning me. 45 Then opened he their understanding, that they might understand the scriptures, Lk. 24:44-45

The fact that Christ, before His Ascension, provided the remaining eleven apostles with further Scriptural instruction exemplifies the primacy of Sunday School, Bible Study and Scriptural discussions conducted by small group facilitators. Despite the apostles themselves having witnessed the many signs and wonders Christ performed, they are further developed as disciples conversant in Scripture before proceeding with their mission to grow the Church. Emphasis placed on discipleship via programmatic approaches fails to make foundational the “opening” of a disciple's understanding of Scripture. That the members of Peter's Tabernacle can become reproducible-producers in the Kingdom, it is critical that every member, whether longstanding or new converts, possess a basic understanding of the Law of Moses, the Prophets, the Writings and how these texts point toward and are fulfilled in the Person of Jesus Christ. With a proper orientation to Scripture and sound doctrine, the members of Peter's Tabernacle will be more capable of viewing themselves as members of the entire Body of Christ and not just members of a local congregation.

13 And when they were come in, they went up into an upper room, where abode both Peter, and James, and John, and Andrew, Philip, and Thomas, Bartholomew, and Matthew, James the son of Alphaeus, and Simon Zelotes, and Judas the brother of James. 14 These all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication, with the women, and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with his brethren. 15 And in those days Peter stood up in the midst of the disciples, and said, the number of names together were about an hundred and twenty. Acts 1:13-15

As the Incarnational model that will be fused with the administrative structure of Peter's Tabernacle will result in the growth of small groups, it is important to examine how various small groups functioned in a first century setting. While small groups and cell groups are similar there are differences. In this sense, the opening of the Acts of the Apostles as described by Luke features a type of single cell group—the general difference between a small group and single cell group being that a single cell group is not one of many homogeneous cells within a heterogeneous congregation, but is itself a group of disciples capable of producing new cell groups without the original group leader (or facilitator) having to initiate or lead the latter generation of groups developed from the single cell.¹⁹ The 120 persons gathered in this text become themselves the catalysts for the growth of the Church according to specific tasks, abilities and gifts developed for the purpose of carrying out the Great Commission. Most notable in this text is that prayer characterized and constituted the occasion. While there is a time for the discussion of strategies and procedures in spreading the Gospel, the first century church exemplified how programmatic concerns were secondary to their Calling.

1 And Saul was consenting unto his death. And at that time there was a great persecution against the church which was at Jerusalem; and they were all scattered abroad throughout the regions of Judaea and Samaria, except the apostles. 2 And devout men carried Stephen to his burial, and made great lamentation over him. 3 As for Saul, he made havock of the church, entering into every house, and haling men and women committed them to prison. 4 Therefore they that were scattered abroad went every where preaching the word. 5 Then Philip went down to the city of Samaria, and preached Christ unto them. 6 And the people with one accord gave heed unto those things which Philip spake, hearing and seeing the miracles which he did. 7 For unclean spirits, crying with loud voice, came out of many that were possessed with them: and many taken with palsies, and that were lame, were healed. 8 And there was great joy in that city. Acts 8:1-8

¹⁹ This distinction was made by guest lecturer Dr. Rodney W. Dempsey in the Doctor of Ministry intensive entitled, EVANGELISM 851: 21st Century Methods for the Revitalization of the Church on Tuesday, August 2, 2011 on the main campus of Liberty University in Lynchburg, Virginia. Dr. Elmer L. Towns served as the professor of this Doctor of Ministry intensive. Dr. Dempsey made further distinctions among various cell groups themselves identifying four major groups of cells as single-cell, stretched-cell, multi-cell and multi-congregational/multi-service cells.

Whether managing conflict within or beyond the walls of the sanctuary, church growth can be problematic for a variety of reasons. The stoning of Stephen and further persecution of the early Church described in Acts exemplifies how the Gospel is to spread even amidst problems. There exists this notion that problems need subside before strategic planning, revitalization and growth can occur when quite often it is the insistence of a community to endure complications toward the end of missionizing domestic and foreign communities, evangelizing the lost and nurturing older parishioners that causes complications to dissipate. The proverbial “coast” will never be clear enough for church growth to occur beyond the reach of budgetary conflicts, illness, death, clashes of personality or even public unrest. However, Philip in this text provides for all disciples of Jesus Christ a crucial example of how believers must evangelize amidst problems without evading the reality of those problems. There should be an engagement with the problems of the world as opposed to evasion of those problems that God's love and God's power be manifest in the midst of trouble.

19 For though I be free from all men, yet have I made myself servant unto all, that I might gain the more. 20 And unto the Jews I became as a Jew, that I might gain the Jews; to them that are under the law, as under the law, that I might gain them that are under the law; 21 To them that are without law, as without law, (being not without law to God, but under the law to Christ,) that I might gain them that are without law. 22 To the weak became I as weak, that I might gain the weak: I am made all things to all men, that I might by all means save some. 23 And this I do for the gospel's sake, that I might be partaker thereof with you. 1 Cor. 9:19-23

The Gospel occurs less within the vacuous pull of culture, competing-values, economic realities, public debate and world events than within the context of eternity. Though disciples of Jesus Christ are citizens of the Kingdom, attention should be given to the immediate needs, concerns, questions and objectives of our present reality. By no means are we to compromise our beliefs or denigrate our character as that would be self-defeating towards the end of developing

healthy disciples, but when Paul writes, “For though I be free from all men, yet have I made myself servant unto all, that I might gain the more,” (v. 19) he is addressing the reality that he must avail himself to some of the commonalities of life in order to point the attention of lost persons toward an eternity with Christ. There is a ministerial pliability of which Paul speaks that makes him neither a hypocrite nor an ascetic incapable of relating to common concerns. This ability to preach the Gospel-in-context toward eternal truths is applicable to cultural divides as well. Referring back to the ethnic composition of the Missionary Baptist denomination, there will require a reintroduction of our denomination to other believers and nonbelievers across social, ethnic and cultural lines.

10 For do I now persuade men, or God? or do I seek to please men? for if I yet pleased men, I should not be the servant of Christ. 11 But I certify you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached of me is not after man. 12 For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ. 13 For ye have heard of my conversation in time past in the Jews' religion, how that beyond measure I persecuted the church of God, and wasted it: 14 And profited in the Jews' religion above many my equals in mine own nation, being more exceedingly zealous of the traditions of my fathers. 15 But when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb, and called me by his grace, 16 To reveal his Son in me, that I might preach him among the heathen; immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood: Gal. 1:10-16

Defending the authority by which he preaches and clarifying his past transgressions against the followers of the Way, Paul provides a paradigm for the dualism that accompanies church growth. When introducing the lost to the Christian faith, each follower of Christ must for himself or herself contend with persons, who seek to distract pastors, teachers, evangelists and missionaries from their work via personal attacks or ridiculing the Christian faith itself. Paul's candor concerning his previous persecution of the Church, understanding of his Calling and clear vision for the communities he serves makes him an exemplar of intentional evangelism required of a church such as Peter's Tabernacle should it seek to shift from an Institutional model of ministry to an Incarnational model of ministry. Paul is unquestionably clear as to his Calling

enabling him to address any and all attempts to discredit his Calling according to the Gospel.

Likewise, discipleship requires that the clarity of our Calling be conveyed to the unsaved for the purpose of making new disciples.

11 And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; 12 For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: 13 Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ: 14 That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive. Eph. 4:11-17

Reiterating the importance of simple, sound and foundational doctrine, this admonition to the church in Ephesus makes evidently clear why the Ten Commandments, the Great Commandment, the Great Commission, the Sermon on the Mount and the Lord's Prayer must continually be taught and retaught as to avoid the incursion of false doctrines into the midst of a congregation. A small group is even more subject to such an incursion as clergy, in all likelihood, will not be present amidst every group discussion to serve as an authority on the interpretation or meaning of a text or term. The better equipped each disciple is to articulate sound doctrine, the less-likely a disciple will be susceptible to false and erroneous teaching.

1 If there be therefore any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any bowels and mercies, 2 Fulfil ye my joy, that ye be likeminded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind. 3 Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves. 4 Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others. 5 Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: 7 But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: 8 And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. Phil. 2:1-8

It is incredibly easy, in the midst moving a congregation in a new direction and restructuring the ministry of a community of faith, to overlook the love God has for us and the love we are to exhibit to those we encounter. Otherwise, a particular congregation soon becomes a Christianized corporation devoid of the love of Christ and devoid of humanness. Even amidst the labor of

serving others and bringing the lost into the faith, there must be a shared love, compassion and peace amongst congregants as lost persons witnessing such love, compassion and peace will be further drawn to Christ. There must exist within a community operating under the auspices of Jesus Christ an authentic Christ-mindedness about everything it does, and without this authentic oneness shared with Christ, the Gospel cannot be transmitted as intended. Evangelistic efforts and Servant Evangelism projects cannot be service-oriented *writ large* but must ultimately serve as a means to bring the unsaved to Christ. It will be Christ, who restructures and revitalizes Peter's Tabernacle by each member letting that mind be in them, “. . . which was also in Christ Jesus. . . ,” (v. 5). That a traditional church model in which Peter's Tabernacle operates can be transitioned into a Biblical church model of reproducible-producers, humanistic mindsets that give ascent to buildings, finances, committees and the manner in which things *have been* done must give way to each member of the congregation becoming Christ-minded in word and deed.

Theoretical Basis for the Project

The topic of this project distinctly relates to the fields of Biblical studies, theology, church history, church administration and evangelism. The correspondence of this topic to the field of Biblical studies is found in the necessity of analyzing the practices of the first century Church as a framework for discipleship and church growth in the twenty-first century. Dr. Rodney W. Dempsey refers to “ten different habits”²⁰ exhibited by the early Church as found in Acts 2:42-47, which he describes as,

. . .studying the apostles' teachings, fellowshiping with one another, breaking bread together, praying, finding unity, meeting needs, worshipping in the temple, meeting from 'house to house', praising God and

²⁰ Jonathan Falwell, ed. *Innovate Church: Innovative Leadership for the Next Generation Church*, 106.

having favor with all people. . .²¹

Without a Biblical guide to restructuring and revitalizing Peter's Tabernacle or any community of faith, both the church leaders and parishioners are susceptible to conducting church affairs completely outside of any Scriptural precedent. Incorporated into this project will be the use of New Testament passages as operating procedures for the formation of small groups thus making the Biblical precepts detailed by Dr. Dempsey and other scholars, cited in this project, standards of practice. Using these standards for ministry, created by practitioners and not by councils or committees will better serve Peter's Tabernacle.

This project will craft from its Biblical framework for church growth a theological vision for ministry focused on transitioning Peter's Tabernacle from stagnancy to vibrancy. Theologically, there must be overarching and unifying principles that encourage, inspire, motivate and sustain parishioners willing to do something they have never done. Faith is such a principle. There exist few greater examples of how faith, as a unifying principle, results in church growth than the example set forth by the Reverend Dr. Jerry Falwell in his planting of Thomas Road Baptist Church.²² Dr. Falwell provided critical insights into the type of faith the membership of both Peter's Tabernacle Missionary Baptist Church and the Kenansville Eastern Missionary Baptist Association must possess in order to grow their respective ministries. Elaborating on how the faith of congregants results in visible church growth, Dr. Falwell explained, "All of us have different capacities of faith, and we serve God in different ways, but when we exercise our faith,

²¹ Ibid., 106-107.

²² Ibid, 261-274.

it will show in outward life.”²³ Dr. Falwell then elaborated on the matter of believers encouraging one another and deemphasizing money, materials and mortar and instead focusing on people writing,

First, put your emphasis on people, then trust God to supply buildings, programs, or money. Too often Christians put their emphasis on raising money for a church auditorium or a youth building. Their whole prayer focus is getting property or things. While these things are necessary, they are never primary. Buildings become obsolete and crumble with time, but your ministry invested in people endures forever.²⁴

An enduring faith will most certainly be required by the current and future members of the Peter's Tabernacle as this process of restructuring and revitalization is undertaken.

Accompanying faith as an overarching and unifying theological principle guiding the restructuring and revitalizing of Peter's Tabernacle, there must also exist theological principles that look toward renewal. Richard F. Lovelace says of renewal,

Evangelicals cannot recover their own wholeness and vitality, or prevent the loss of their own offspring to humanism or liberalism until they recover their social dynamic. Christians concerned for social action, both Evangelical and non-Evangelical, cannot reach their goals without general spiritual renewal.²⁵

The wisdom of both Dr. Falwell and Dr. Lovelace give attention to the transcendent purpose of the Church as God's revelation *in* the world though not *of* the world. Through the appropriation of Servant Evangelism there is “wholeness and vitality” which Dr. Lovelace claims can only be recovered by believers who engage the social realities of their immediate community addressed without denigration to the authenticity of the Gospel. This project will also utilize existing demographical, statistical, and historical data for purposes of demonstrating how the proposed model for restructuring and revitalizing Peter's Tabernacle would hypothetically occur.

²³ Jerry Falwell, *Building Dynamic Faith* (Nashville, TN: Nelson, 2005), 155.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 158.

²⁵ Richard F. Lovelace, *Dynamics of Spiritual Life: An Evangelical Theology of Renewal* (Crowners Grove, IL: Inter-Varsity Press, 1979), 400.

Data pertinent to the Iron Mine community has been collected through publicly available sources ranging from the websites of local municipalities, state government agencies, federal agencies such as the United States Bureau of Labor and Statistics and denominational archives maintained both by the Kenansville Eastern Missionary Baptist Association and the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill through its *Documenting the American South* historical project.

This presentation of data provides the required sociohistorical context for this project as Peter's Tabernacle shares an ecclesial legacy with the General Missionary Convention of the Baptist Denomination in the United States of America for Foreign Missions (also known as the Triennial Convention), the Southern Baptist Convention, the American Baptist Convention, the General Baptist State Convention of North Carolina and the National Baptist Convention, USA. Any meaningful effort to revitalize Peter's Tabernacle, must take into account the socioreligious realities and forces of history that brought the congregation into existence. With this said, no definitive account of the founding of Peter's Tabernacle exists, but a composite of reported accounts cross-referenced with the archives of the Kenansville Eastern Missionary Baptist Association provide a fairly reliable account of the congregation's founding.

The inculcating of a new methodology and strategy for ministry requires a substantive understanding of the congregation's ministry from its inception. Actualizing the methodology for church change and growth proposed in this project would involve arguing the case as to why such a change is necessary. A clear vision of where the congregation has been and what the congregation must become is found in its history as much as in its proposed-future.

Administratively, Peter's Tabernacle has maintained, at best, skeletal records of its operations, history and protocol throughout its 142 years with the most significant and available document

being its Constitution and Bylaws. The congregation has just recently, during this author's tenure, began the process of formulating a church roster, establishing a personnel committee, reactivated the church phone lines, began using official church letterhead for all correspondence in addition to establishing and reestablishing an exhaustive number of procedural, denominational and doctrinal practices that were formerly discontinued or never implemented. This is not to say that the congregation was completely deficient during the previous administration as this author assisted the previous pastor from 2003-2010. However, the previous pastor spent much of his sixteen years suppressing congregational skirmishes and resolving disagreements while expanding the square-footage of the edifice and renovating the existing structures. The methodology of this project lays forth a Biblical, theological, theoretical and ministerial “renovation” that extends beyond the walls of the edifice and transcends the history of the congregation eventuating into a Missionary Baptist community of faith that is truly missional.

Statement of Methodology

This project will consist of six chapters culminating in a proposed model of ministry that will unite the Institutional model of ministry practiced at Peter’s Tabernacle with an Incarnational model of ministry centered-around evangelism and small group discipleship. The fusion of these two models will be referred to as the “Hybrid Model.” Various research methods designed to ascertain the feasibility of the Hybrid Model began with this author accessing the available archives of Peter’s Tabernacle, the archives of the Kenansville Eastern Missionary Baptist Association along with local, state and federal government databases. Historical data detailing the congregation’s history, and that of its regional association, was collected from published

works and archives available through KEMBA, the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and the State Archives of North Carolina. This author's coursework, taken at Liberty University Baptist Theological Seminary, was also valuable in this research process. The assigned readings and final projects of EVAN 851: 21st Century Methods for the Revitalization of the Church, EVAN 997: Building a Dynamic Evangelism Strategy and PLED 970: Pastoral Leadership, provided a framework through which the Hybrid Model could be designed in the context of Peter's Tabernacle. Furthermore, the impact these courses have had on the growth of Peter's Tabernacle is illustrated by comparative tables of membership found in the final chapter of this project.

In addition to the collection of historical data cross-referenced with association records, research conducted on the demography of Duplin County was made possible by accessing government databases. The U.S. Bureau of Labor and Statistics and the U.S. Census Bureau provided critical information outlining the socioeconomic realities in Duplin County and the surrounding counties of Sampson, Pender, Wayne, Brunswick and New Hanover. The economic challenges facing southeastern North Carolina heavily impact the capacity and approach to ministry carried out in these areas. As the Incarnational component of the Hybrid Model consists of small groups multiplying themselves across city, county, state, and even national borders, cartographical models that illustrate how the Hybrid Model would function in these areas are found in chapters 5 and 6. As research for this thesis topic required compiling historical trends, socioeconomic figures, church records, association archives and requisite literature on evangelism, the issue of technology also proved critical for developing the Hybrid Model.

During this author's matriculation at Liberty University Baptist Theological Seminary, the seminar entitled DSMN 872: Creative Ministry Uses for the Computer was, at the time, designed toward the end of implementing technology into various facets of congregational life. As Peter's Tabernacle had a number of technological deficiencies upon this author's election as senior pastor, it was not until the June 2011 development of a social media engine called Google+ (Google Plus) that made this author's responsibility of leading a traditional congregation while developing, what in the Hybrid Model is called, the initial small group manageable. Creating a workable technological vision for a rural church in an economically-depressed region brings challenges of distance and implementation. Google+ (for reasons detailed in chapter 6) enables the simultaneous facilitation of both Institutional and Incarnational ministries.

It is implausible that a longstanding, traditional congregation can easily transition into a congregation comprised of small groups within the foreseeable future. For a number of logistical reasons ranging from much-needed technological upgrades within the edifice to a widening generational-gap amongst the membership, the expectation of a technologically proficient congregation in the immediate future is unrealistic—that immediate future being the next decade. However, if the traditional administration were to remain completely intact as the senior pastor formed a self-determinant (as in financially, self-supporting and administratively independent) small group then that existing administration would not be adversely affected. While an incredible amount of pressure and demands would be placed upon the senior pastor (whoever the senior pastor should be) to essentially maintain both an Institutional ministry while birthing an Incarnational ministry, the New Testament provides numerous examples of early church leaders, who maintained multiple congregations throughout, Judea, Samaria and Asia Minor. Pastoring,

by its very nature, is a complicated balancing-act of preaching, teaching, visiting the infirmed, politicking, financing, quelling disputes all while seeking to maintain a high quality of devotional time with God and with one's family. The Hybrid Model shifts this balancing-act from the senior pastor to numerous disciples capable of growing the congregation's ministry.

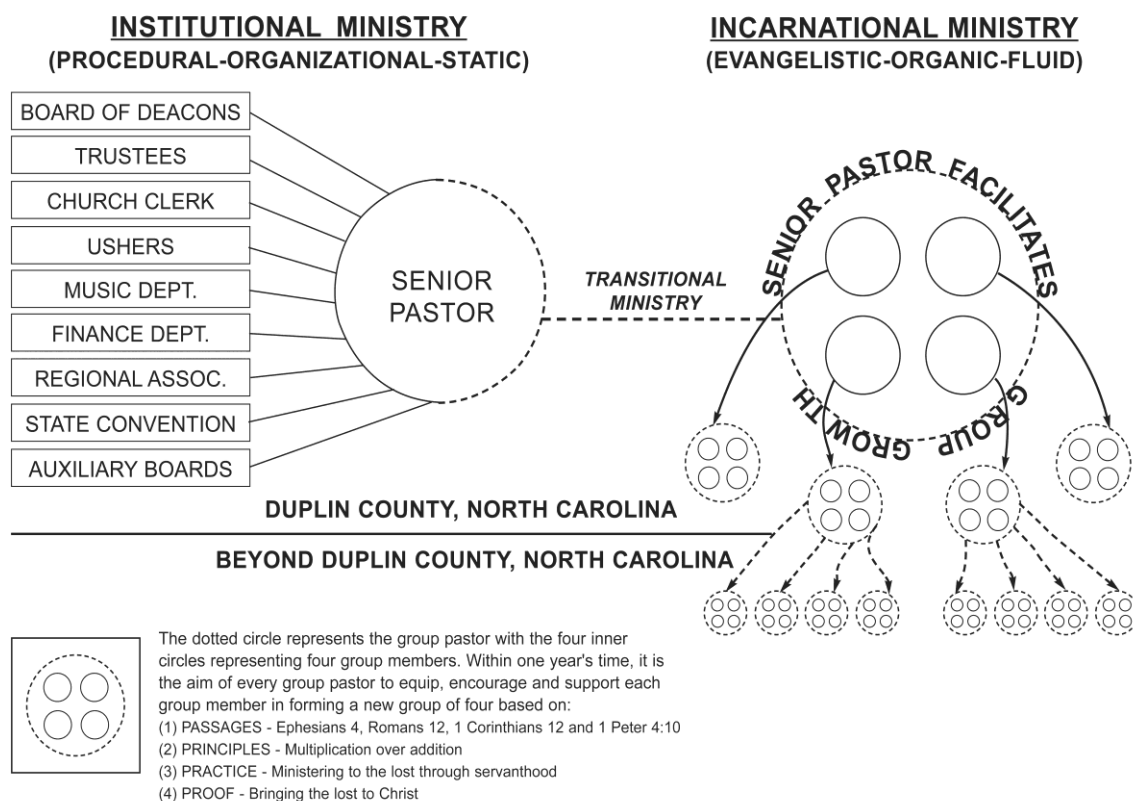


Figure 1.

The Hybrid Model for the restructuring and revitalization of Peter's Tabernacle pictured in Figure 1 requires the senior pastor, over the course of one year, to disciple four new converts. The senior pastor would release those four group members within one year with the plan for each member to lead a new group thus reproducing the model. The senior pastor would have no direct contact with the newly formed small groups as a facilitator. The released members of the initial small group would themselves become group facilitators. While the senior pastor will be tending

to the operational concerns of Peter's Tabernacle i.e. leading worship, visiting the sick, teaching Bible study, serving as *ex officio* member of all committees, moderating quarterly business conferences, representing the congregation at regional association meetings, setting quarterly and annual agendas, coordinating, intra-congregational worship services and establishing new programs—the senior pastor will also implement the Incarnational model of ministry that will be duplicated within one year's time.

This implementation would be defined as the “Transitional Ministry” with the members of the initial small group being developed in a four phase process called E.E.E.E. However, the fluidity of this model is of such that the four members of the initial small group (and subsequent small groups) can meet anywhere to engage in Bible discussions, Servant Evangelism projects, and prayer meetings. This initial small group consisting of four members is essentially a new congregation—free of the immense administrative demands and ready to begin producing new disciples within one year. The four members of this small group are also four leaders-in-training meaning that four new groups will result from the leadership and training of the senior pastor. This exponential group growth exemplifies the Biblical principle of multiplication over addition. One of the primary concerns of the small groups in the Hybrid Model is conversion growth as opposed to transfer growth with the senior pastor, after one year, becoming inoperative within the second generation of small groups but, in turn, begins developing a new group of disciples. The initial small group, now released, begins forming four new small groups.

Figure 1 illustrates how the senior pastor develops the initial small group as it is the aim of the senior pastor and subsequent group pastors to, “...equip, encourage and support each group

member forming a new group,²⁶ based on the following strategy:

- (1) PASSAGES: Eph. 4:23-32, Rom. 12:5-12, 1 Cor. 12:1-12 and 1 Pet. 4:10
- (2) PRINCIPLES: Multiplication over addition
- (3) PRACTICE: Ministering to the lost through servanthood evangelism
- (4) PROOF: Bringing the lost to Christ

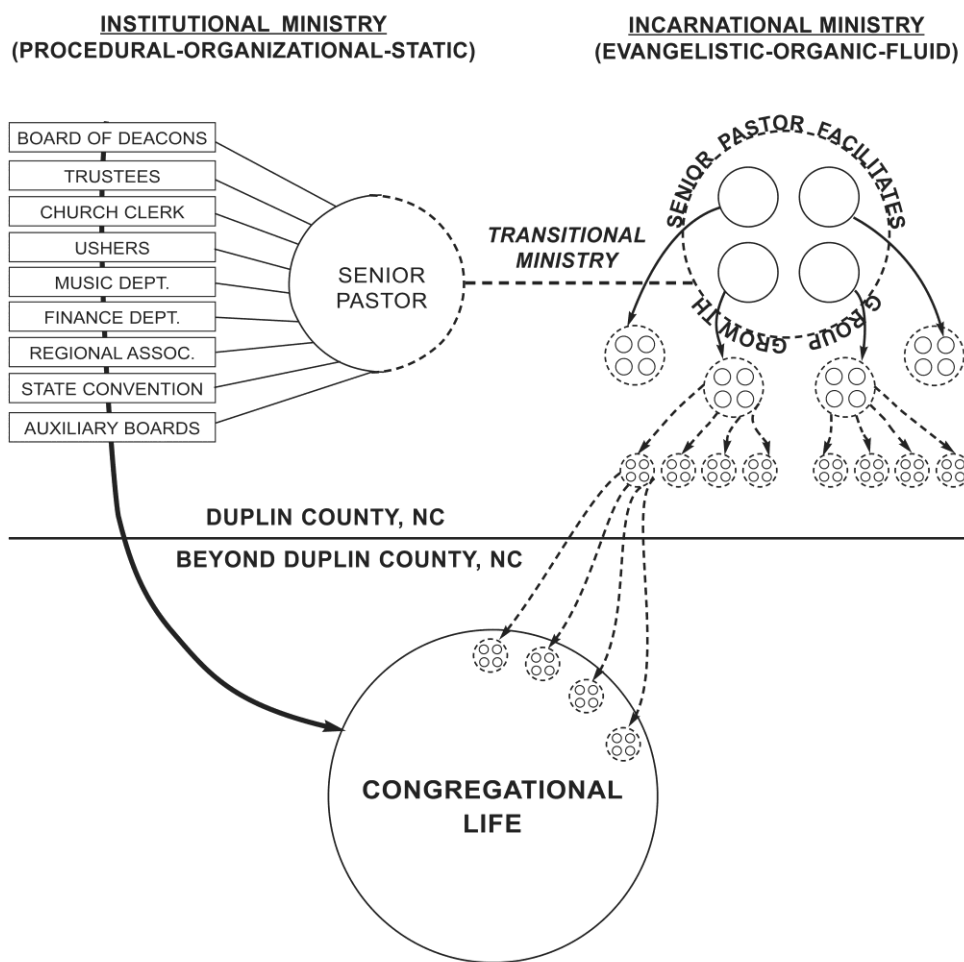


Figure 2.

²⁶ Figure 1 contains four passages of Scripture utilized by Dr. C. Peter Wagner, see C. Peter Wagner, *Your Spiritual Gifts Can Help Your Church Grow* (Glendale, CA: Regal, 1979).

While it may seem as if this proposed bifurcation of the senior pastor's energies could adversely affect the Institutional framework of Peter's Tabernacle or detract from the quality of the facilitation received by the small group members, Figure 2 below illustrates how corporate fellowship prevents the complete distillation of the initial small group members from the traditional congregation which the senior pastor continues to lead.

Figure 2 illustrates what makes this model of ministry a Hybrid Model and also illustrates the means through which traditional Sunday morning worship, and even Bible study, provides a context in which members of the initial small group can participate in the traditional, congregational life of Peter's Tabernacle. It will be critical that the senior pastor maintain this balance. The only foreseeable conflict would emerge in the form of congregants, accustomed to a centralized, departmental structure that gives ascent to councils, officers and committees, being unable or unwilling to embrace a decentralized, discipleship-driven model of ministry. However, this is where solid, Biblical teaching serves to maintain peace between church tradition and church innovation. This project will contain two chapters toward that end further detailing how this hybrid of Institutional ministry and Incarnational ministry can be actualized.

Chapter Two: Defining the Missionary Baptists of North Carolina

As there exists within the Baptist denomination a number of traditions, the second chapter of this project will provide for the reader an operative understanding of the Missionary Baptist tradition in eastern North Carolina. The history of the Missionary Baptists throughout eastern North Carolina is as deeply related to American history as it is church history as many of the founding principles of this denomination, have remained viable within most present day

Missionary Baptist congregations. This, of course, has both advantages and great disadvantages as the newly envisioned small groups would seek to transcend issues of race and ethnicity by carrying out the Great Commission. This in no way indicates that there would be any resistance to the inclusion of all races, ethnicities and nationalities into the Missionary Baptist tradition throughout eastern North Carolina, but it is important to acknowledge how these particular congregations were founded. While the Great Commission has always been the founding principle of the Missionary Baptist tradition, a history of how that principle has been appropriated in eastern North Carolina will better equip disciples of the twenty-first century to enlarge, refocus and intensify the work of making new disciples. The model of ministry proposed for Peter's Tabernacle seeks to accomplish this very goal and exemplifies the principles on which the Kenansville Eastern Missionary Baptist Association was founded. By familiarizing the reader with both the history of KEMBA and the GBSC-NC, the more easily the goal of this project is understood.

Chapter Three: The Past and Unchanged Present of Peter's Tabernacle

Having provided a history of the denomination to which Peter's Tabernacle belongs, this project will transition into examining how the congregation itself fits into the larger history of the Missionary Baptists of eastern North Carolina toward the end of examining what must change in the twenty-first century. Since 1870, an overwhelming number of social, political, economic and ecclesial realities have changed while many of the practices within Peter's Tabernacle, like those of its sister churches, have remained virtually unchanged. This portion of the project will examine statistical data ranging from demographics to geographical information

in order to assess how and why Peter's Tabernacle entered a stage of prolonged stasis—a stasis untouched by burgeoning economic growth and technological innovation over the past decades. Before revitalizing Peter's Tabernacle, there must be a clear understanding of what resulted in its declining membership and impact on its surrounding community.

Chapter Four: Toward a New Future Based on the New Testament

After presenting both a history of eastern North Carolina Missionary Baptist tradition and discussing the contributing factors to the stagnancy of that tradition, this project will present a Biblical structure on which Peter's Tabernacle's future growth should be based. This Biblical foundation will include the development of small groups that eventually grow into new churches. The practice of church planting and the Biblical principle of multiplication will be discussed here as they relate to the Iron Mine community and the greater Duplin County area. Where the history of the Missionary Baptist tradition in eastern North Carolina becomes useful is in understanding the normally unintentional means through which congregations were formed in the past. The notion of an existing church intentionally planting another church would represent the single greatest paradigm shift in the history of KEMBA and its sister associations in the region such as the Middle District Missionary Baptist Association, the Western Union Missionary Baptist Association and the Break Creek Missionary Baptist Association.

The proposed model of ministry presented in this project could be actionable through these associations as the associations themselves could form small groups and plant churches. This portion of the project is dedicated to examining the practicality of implementing an entirely new

ministerial paradigm within Peter's Tabernacle and throughout the region. The spirit of this paradigm shift is found in Acts 1:8 where Luke writes,

But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth. Acts 1:8

Applying this passage in the context of this project, the Iron Mine community is “Jerusalem,” Duplin County would be “Judaea,” eastern North Carolina would be “Samaria.”

Chapter Five: From Delicate Merger to Bold Reemergence

The logistical details for implementing the Hybrid Model is described in this portion of the project. Dr. David A. Wheeler's “Back to Basics” strategy for evangelism is formative in this author’s approach to reaching lost persons. This portion of the project will also stress the Biblical distinction between evangelism and missions as the terms are often conflated. Dr. Wheeler describes missions as, “. . . the process of contextualizing the gospel message into culture.”²⁷ Peter's Tabernacle currently consists of four major departments with a number of undefined and confluent committees. There is unintentional fluidity between departments as the membership consists of relatives, neighbors, longstanding members and leaders who essentially have conducted business in a particular fashion for many years. This departmental approach to ministry is procedural, organizational and static.

There exists within this structure a Board of Deacons, Board of Trustees, the Building Committee, the Church Clerk, Board of Ushers, the Music Department, the Finance Department, Personnel Committee, representatives to the regional association and state convention and a number of auxiliary boards and “clubs” responsible for organizing a particular service or project.

²⁷Jonathan Falwell, ed. *Innovate Church: Innovative Leadership for the Next Generation Church*, 121.

The chairpersons of these respective boards and committees compose what is called the Church Council which meets quarterly in what is called a “pre-conference” followed by a quarterly conference or business meeting. Both the pre-conference and quarterly conferences are governed by executive recommendations from the council to the congregation under a democratic, autonomous polity.

Unfortunately, matters meant to be inspirational are often lost in the minutia of that which is operational making it difficult to attract new disciples because the mechanics of church governance overshadow the greater needs of disciples where as an Incarnational model of ministry that takes the necessary time to address questions about life as answered by God's word, develop meaningful friendships within a closed setting and seeking out intentional ways of serving others, the concern for boards, committees, standards of practice and minutia become secondary to actual growth in the faith. What the Institutional form of ministry, as existent in Peter's Tabernacle and similarly organized congregations, fails to do is produce disciples capable of making-disciples. Plainly stated, every member of a congregation should be capable of making new disciples and every church should be capable of planting new churches.

Chapter Six: Conclusion

The culminating chapter of this project envisions how the Institutional structure of Peter's Tabernacle can simultaneously flourish while later generations of the initial small group eventuate into new small groups. Taking an optimistic approach to this growth, this chapter will lay out how these new small groups can continue to share in the congregational life of Peter's Tabernacle and even refresh that congregational life by sharing in Servant Evangelism projects,

morning worship services, Bible discussions and other forms of fellowship. The hope of such fellowship is that the traditionalists within Peter's Tabernacle, and its sister congregations, would embrace ideas once thought radical such as church planting, small group development, technological innovation as a means of reaching lost persons and growing ministries through greater community involvement.

As various social networking interfaces such as Facebook, Twitter, MySpace and YouTube have reshaped and enlarged the ministerial landscape of the twenty-first century, it is the social networking capabilities afforded through Google Plus (also known as Google+) that are most compatible with the four phase process called E.E.E.E (Edification, Exchange, Extension and Elevation) through which the initial small group is developed. Via the Google+ feature known as a “hangout,” the senior pastor and four group members can video chat, send web links and maintain interaction with one another, where distance and scheduling may prove difficult at times. Such innovation allows the senior pastor a means of more readily carrying out administrative and evangelistic responsibilities.

While the staunch traditionalists of Peter's Tabernacle may approach innovations such as wireless Internet access, small group development, church planting, church parenting, media coverage of Servant Evangelism projects and Google+ with some ambivalence, the continued involvement of new converts in the life of Peter's Tabernacle would gradually open the minds of more traditional members to the necessity of new methodologies for growth. The final chapter of this project would present a strategy for maintaining a negotiable tension between the procedural-organizational-static model of ministry within Peter's Tabernacle and the vitality of the evangelistic-organic-fluid model of ministry that produces new believers via the Biblical

principle of multiplication as opposed to addition. The ongoing result of the implementation of the Hybrid Model within Peter's Tabernacle is that of a congregation capable of facilitating the growth of small, evangelistic groups while maintaining its traditions.

CHAPTER TWO

DEFINING THE MISSIONARY BAPTISTS OF EASTERN NORTH CAROLINA

While the Missionary Baptist denomination has never been categorized as an “African-American” or “black” denomination per se, the nineteenth century context that gave rise to the formation of Missionary Baptist congregations set a precedent for the racial and ethnic demography of twenty-first century Missionary Baptist churches. Any revitalization of a Missionary Baptist congregation such as Peter’s Tabernacle demands that a new precedent for ministry be set. However, the historical realities that birthed the denomination must be tempered with the new social, political, cultural, economic and intellectual realities of the modern (or postmodern) era. A simple albeit controversial question must be posed here which is, “How do church leaders make racially, ethnically and culturally inclusive a denomination founded as a direct result of racial, ethnic, and cultural exclusion?” The first century church, and more importantly, Scripture regularly engaged the issues of racial, religious, political, ethnic and cultural identity. However, before reimagining how a predominantly black denomination, formed in the aftermath of the American Civil War, would reengage New Testament teachings on race, ethnicity and culture, it is worth examining the antecedent variables that fostered the growth of Missionary Baptist churches throughout the American South—especially within eastern North Carolina.

With the Northern victory in the American Civil War came the restructuring of the American sociopolitical landscape in the South. Furthermore, Southern religious life would also undergo a tectonic shift as Reconstruction crafted entirely new roles for both white and black populations in

the Southern United States. The New York-based American Baptist Home Mission Society came to prominence in the aftermath of the war by virtue of a federal government far more comfortable with the Northern evangelization of freedwomen and freedmen than a Southern missionary agenda to evangelize emancipated persons. The American Baptist Home Mission Society wasted little time in exercising its freedom to evangelize the Southern states which led Northern Baptist missionaries into a head-on collision with members of the Southern Baptist Convention, who felt disenfranchised after the war. While there existed some degree of Southern resentment of Northern evangelization efforts during Reconstruction, it is important to note that such resentment dated as early as fifteen years prior to the American Civil War. An examination of the rivalry between Northern and Southern Baptists prior to the American Civil War, particularly the events leading to the 1845 establishment of the Southern Baptist Convention, provides an understanding of how and why the American Baptist Home Mission Society considered the postwar evangelism of freedwomen and freedmen a priority.

The establishment of the American Baptist Home Mission Society was largely atmospheric in that early nineteenth century ecclesiasticism was heavily influenced by the Second Great Awakening. The development of the American Baptist Home Mission Society was also influenced by a growing number of institutions that supported postgraduate theological studies and the convergence of political ideology with doctrine during the mid-nineteenth century. Not only did the 1792 publication of William Carey's *An Enquiry into the Obligations of Christians to Use Means for the Conversion of the Heathens* lay the groundwork for the establishment of the Baptist Mission Society and the London Mission Society, but Adoniram Judson would be influenced by Carey to seek the formation of an American Baptist missionary society capable of

facilitating foreign mission.¹ A Congregationalist missionary with ambitions to join Protestant efforts to evangelize India, Judson would petition the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions² in 1810 to become one of the first American foreign missionaries. Though arriving in India as Congregationalists, Adoniram Judson, Ann Hasseltine Judson, Samuel Nott, Rosanne Peck Nott, Samuel Newell, Harriet Atwood Newell and Luther Rice underwent baptism by immersion in 1812.³ By 1813, failures to establish domestic support and local cooperation amongst complex Indian and British systems of governance⁴ led the Judsons to choose Burma as their mission field while Rice returned to the United States in order to establish a stable support

¹ William Carey, *An Enquiry into the Obligations of Christians to Use Means for the Conversion of the Heathens* (Leicester: Ann Ireland, 1792), 84. Though a Particular Baptist, Carey expressed an openness to ecumenicity in the creation of foreign missionary societies stating, "If there is any reason for me to hope that I shall have any influence upon any of my brethren, and fellow Christians, probably it may be more especially amongst them of my own denomination, I would therefore propose that such a society and committee should be formed amongst the *particular baptist denomination*. I do not mean this, in any wise to confine it to one denomination of Christians." Carey's ecumenical approach underscores his influence upon Rice who later helped found the Triennial Convention which was comprised of General Baptists.

² Accompanying Adoniram Judson was Ann Hasseltine, Samuel Nott, Rosanne Peck Nott, Samuel Newell, Harriet Atwood Newell and Luther Rice. For a more detailed analysis of the role of marriage in nineteenth century mission, and particularly the marriage of Anne Hasseltine to Adoniram Judson see, Dana L. Robert, *American Women in Mission: A Social History of Their Thought and Practice* (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 1997), 1-34. Cf. David W. Kling, "The New Divinity and the Origins of the American Board for Foreign Missions" in William R. Shenk, ed. *North American Foreign Missions, 1810-1914* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 2004), 12-13.

³ O.K. Armstrong and Marjorie Armstrong, *The Baptists in America: A Narrative of Their Role in the Shaping of America* (New York: Double Day-Galilee, 1979), 130-131. Referencing Adoniram Judson's decision to convert, ". . . Adoniram and Ann Judson made a formal request for baptism by immersion. On September 6, 1812, they were immersed in the baptistry of Carey's Calcutta Lal Bazar Chapel with the Reverend William Ward performing the ordinance. Thus the two recruits from America were voted into the fellowship of the Calcutta Baptist Church." Contrary to Armstrong and Armstrong's more traditional view of the Judsons' conversion, Robert questions the extent to which Ann Hasseltine Judson was willing to convert so soon after arriving in India citing her refusal to be re-baptized at one point, *American Women in Mission: A Social History of Their Thought and Practice*, 43.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 131. Officers of the East India company regularly harassed and challenged Carey as well as the Judsons. Furthermore, the conversion of the Judsons limited any support once offered by the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions.

system for the Judsons.⁵

During this time Rice sought to create a national convention of Baptists, as there was only a loose confederation of Baptist churches in the United States who voluntarily convened. The autonomous nature of Baptist polity was not well-suited for the establishment of a nationally unified body, however, there did exist larger confederations of Baptists throughout New England. Rice solicited numerous congregations throughout the Northeast, Southeast and Western frontier to convene on the matter of forming a national Baptist denomination. With the help of Revolutionary War chaplain Richard Furman of South Carolina and William B. Johnson of Georgia, Rice was able to generate interest in the creation of a national Baptist convention. With members of the Philadelphia Baptist Association presiding over the meeting, thirty-three delegates representing eleven states and the District of Columbia convened at the First Baptist Church of Philadelphia on May 18, 1814 .

It is notable that of the thirty-three⁶ delegates in attendance, sixteen of them belonged to churches in Philadelphia. Richard Furman of Charleston, South Carolina was elected as the first president of the General Missionary Convention of the Baptist Denomination in the United

⁵ Ibid., 31. It is also important to note that Rice suffered of chronic stomach ulcerations in addition to liver problems. He not only returned to Philadelphia to establish a support system for the Judsons but also to regain his health.

⁶ There are conflicting claims about the number of delegates present at the First Baptist Church of Philadelphia on May 18, 1814 when the General Missionary Convention of the Baptist Denomination in the United States of America for Foreign Missions was founded as Armstrong and Armstrong assert, "Distance and expense of travel by stagecoach or horseback limited the number who assembled to thirty-three--seventeen of them from outside of Philadelphia. All together represented eleven states and the District of Columbia." *The Baptists in America: A Narrative of Their Role in the Shaping of America*, 144. Whereas William H. Brackney says of the meeting, "Based on the single purpose voluntary society model, this meeting of thirty-six delegates from eleven states and the district of Columbia laid the plans for overseas missions and new church development in the United States.", William H. Brackney, *The Baptists* (Westport: Praeger, 1994), 15. In this project, I defer to the original source material which is an article from *The Massachusetts Baptist Missionary Magazine*, 4 (1814): 1 entitled, "Organization of the General Missionary Convention, May 18-21, 1814" that states in its byline, "...a convention of thirty-three men met on May 18, 1814 to discuss organizing a Baptist foreign body."

States of America for Foreign Missions. The convention was comprised of Baptists from every region in the United States, who as a result of Rice and others, saw missions as an imperative. The convention decided to meet every three years thus adopting the name “the Triennial Convention.” Much to the satisfaction of Rice, a national Baptist denomination had been formed, and his next concern was the formation of a Foreign Mission Board capable of supporting the Judsons, whom he believed to have still been in India.⁷

Just six days after the formation of the Triennial Convention, the newly formed denomination held its first meeting in which a resolution was passed to form the Baptist Board of Foreign Missions of which Rice and the Judsons were named as missionaries under the care and direction of the board. Rice continued his fundraising efforts to support the Judsons accepting a salaried appointment as the General Agent of the Board. In this position, Rice served as an advocate for Baptist foreign missions as he convinced Baptist congregations to make financial contributions to the Triennial Convention. Quite notable is that the 1814 founding of the Triennial Convention was intended to support foreign Baptist missionaries while the enterprise of domestic mission was of no concern. Also of no concern was the training of Baptist ministers and missionaries, however, Rice would make the acquaintance of a Connecticut-born Baptist minister named John Mason Peck. Peck's vision of ministerial training and domestic mission would ultimately reshape the fundamental objectives of the Triennial Convention.

When the Triennial Convention met in May of 1817, Peck was commissioned to establish a church in St. Louis, Missouri. By December of 1817, Peck formed the Western Baptist Mission

⁷ The War of 1812 delayed correspondence between Rice and the Judsons as Britain restricted the delivery of mail from the United States to India. For this reason, Rice was unaware of exactly when the Judsons began their Burmese mission. Furthermore, the Judsons would learn of the formation of the Triennial Convention and its sponsorship of their mission nearly three years after the convention was formed.

Society, and raised a substantial sum of money in order to form a school with three distinct departments—one of those departments was the African Sunday School which became the first school to ever train men of African descent west of the Alleghenies.⁸

Peck's efforts were neither welcome by local authorities in St. Louis or slaveholding delegates within the Triennial Convention. A resolution was passed in 1820 that the Triennial Convention would only support foreign missions and that domestic missionary efforts, such as the establishment of churches in the Western frontier, would be discontinued. It was at this time that a set of political relationships Peck developed in Massachusetts between 1815 and 1816 proved advantageous as he sought to develop an institution for the theological training of Baptist ministers in his new home of Illinois. Illinois became the prime location for such a project as Peck had joined a successful campaign to prevent the legalization of slavery in the state. Even as the leadership of the Triennial Convention expressed disinterest in domestic mission, Peck was building a religious and political coalition that would soon overtake the convention's leadership.

Peck's mission to build a seminary in Illinois was jettisoned when his Massachusetts acquaintance, John Quincy Adams, was elected President of the United States in 1825. Furthermore, Luther Rice embraced Peck's vision and helped him assemble donors interested in the seminary's construction throughout 1826. With Presidential support and the assistance of Rice, Peck founded the Rock Spring Theological and High School on January 1, 1827. As Peck's missionary activity resulted in the founding of the first collegiate institution in the state of Illinois, it was Peck's political affiliations two years prior that would ultimately reshape the Triennial Convention from which he had become estranged.

⁸ Ibid., 160.

A vocal abolitionist, Peck was a spokesperson for the Society for the Prevention of Slavery in the State of Illinois. In addition to his duties as spokesperson, he published pamphlets, organized congregations and campaigned against the legalization of slavery in Illinois. Though greatly criticized for his political involvement, Peck asserted that slavery was a morally reprehensible practice that his denomination was required to denounce. Sharing this sentiment was Massachusetts Home Missionary Society president Jonathan Going who spent much of 1831 surveying the church growth of the Western Frontier and evaluating the growth of the Rock Spring Theological and High School later called the Rock Spring Theological Seminary. As Peck had expressed to Rice in 1815, he made known to Going the need for Baptist domestic missions with a focus on the training and education of ministers and missionaries.

The result of this productive meeting between Going and Peck was the 1831 agreement to form a Home Mission Society. Despite Peck and Going's agreement, when the Triennial Convention convened in 1832, the antimissionary sentiments that passed the 1820 resolution to prohibit domestic missions prevailed once more. Peck and Going responded by forming the American Baptist Home Mission Society in New York later that year. This newly formed Home Mission Society capitalized on a tidal political shift⁹ in the national attitude towards slavery

⁹ On the founding of the American Baptist Home Mission Society, J.B. Lawrence writes, "This society was Northern-minded, and in its failure to meet the needs of the South, caused the first rift in fellowship between Baptists." J.B. Lawrence, *History of the Home Mission Board* (Nashville, TN: Broadman Press, 1958), 9. Cf. W.W. Barnes, *The Southern Baptist Convention, 1845-1953* (Nashville, TN: Broadman Press, 1954), 13. Lawrence attempts to substantiate this premise by couriering the sentiments of W.W. Barnes. Lawrence and Barnes are less attentive to the fact that the Triennial Convention never existed in the harmony purported by their accounts. The lack of harmony amidst the Triennial delegates is evidenced in the previously referenced article from *The Massachusetts Baptist Missionary Magazine* 4 (1814):1. The prologue of the journal noted, "After a committee of fifteen had been unable to suggest a satisfactory constitution, a new committee of five was appointed." It should be noted that "the committee of five" consisted of Southern slaveholders. The Triennial Convention, though Northern-based, was primarily controlled by Southerners from 1814 to 1844. The ABHMS, led by John Mason Peck and Jonathan Going, dismantled Southern control of the Triennial Convention via the Rhode Island Resolution of 1845 hence the often critical reproach of the ABHMS in historical accounts detailing the formation of the Southern Baptist Convention.

particularly in the North. During the 1830s, an increasing number of Northern Baptists were being educated in newly formed seminaries while tempering their religious beliefs with their political convictions. Amidst this religiopolitical backdrop, Peck's founding of the Rock Spring Theological Seminary and his co-founding of the American Baptist Home Mission Society in 1832 laid the groundwork for a missionary strategy that would be emulated repeatedly. Peck's model would prove duplicative, and the formation of the American Baptist Home Mission Society would serve as the engineering force in facsimileing his model for domestic missions.

By 1840, the influence¹⁰ of the American Baptist Home Mission Society had extended into the South and the Western frontier. Furthermore, the membership of the society had been successful in electing new leadership to the Executive Board of the Foreign Mission Society within the Triennial Convention, and this new leadership also bolstered an abolitionist agenda. Since its founding in 1814, the Triennial Convention had undergone a cultural shift. The degree to which Southern Baptists resented the creation and aims of the American Baptist Home Mission Society cannot be understated as Brown University president Francis Wayland pseudonymously wrote in 1856 referencing such a domestic missionary society,

An attempt was made pretty early in the history of this organization, to give it the control over all our benevolent efforts. It was proposed to merge in it our Education Societies, Tract Societies, Home Mission Societies and our Foreign Mission Societies, so that one central board should have the management of all our churches, so far as their efforts to extend the kingdom of Christ were concerned. After a protracted debate, this measure was negatived by so decided a majority that the attempt was never repeated, and this danger was averted. We look back, at the present day, with astonishment that such an idea was ever entertained.¹¹

¹⁰ A number of other societies both religious and secular buffered the aims of the American Baptist Home Mission Society such as the American Anti-Slavery Society founded in 1833 and the American Anti-Slavery Baptist Society founded in 1839.

¹¹ Robert Andrew Baker, *Relations Between Northern and Southern Baptists* (Doctoral Dissertation: Yale University, 1947), 15-16. Baker draws this quotation from Francis Wayland's, *Notes on the Principles and Practices of Baptist Churches* written in 1857. Even Baker admits that Wayland later reversed his position as his use of the pseudonym "Backus" appears between 1823 and 1824. Wayland writes this tract after the third meeting of the

Further evidence of this cultural shift was reflected within the convention when R.E. Pattison, secretary of the Foreign Mission Society, refused to appoint slaveholding Baptists as foreign missionaries.¹² The Georgia Baptist State Convention petitioned the Foreign Mission Society in 1844 for the inclusion of slaveholders in its missionary efforts if Southern states were to continue financially contributing to foreign missionary efforts. The Foreign Mission Society was resolute in its decision, and in April of 1845, the American Baptist Home Mission Society in conjunction with the Executive Board of the Foreign Mission Society adopted a resolution which not only restricted slaveholding Baptists from serving as foreign missionaries but also restricted them from domestic evangelism.

The adoption of this resolution undoubtedly caused the inevitable split between Northern and Southern Baptists. Prior to 1845, the Triennial Convention had been under Southern leadership such as that of Richard Furman who believed slavery to be Biblically justifiable. However, Furman's death in 1825 combined with the dynamic shift in the national attitude towards slavery made the conflict of 1845 unavoidable. This division within the Triennial Convention resulted in the founding of the Southern Baptist Convention in May of 1845, however, there are disparate

Triennial Convention in which Peck's evangelizing of the Western frontier has been discontinued and prior to the formation of the American Baptist Home Mission Society in 1832. There are a number of events that occur between 1820 and 1832 that proved the viability of domestic missions. Wayland's later endorsement of the ABHMS was so significant that the first seminary founded by American Baptist Home Mission Society in Washington, D.C. was named in his honor in 1866. Also see Pegues, "Wayland Seminary," *Our Baptist Ministers and Schools*, 563.

¹² *The Baptists in America: A Narrative of Their Role in the Shaping of America*, 78-79. Cf. *Relation Between Northern and Southern Baptists*, 186-187. Four years prior to the Executive Board of the Triennial Convention its 1844 resolution which prevented slaveholders from serving as missionaries, Pattison made his thoughts known in an editorial published in *The Christian Reflector*. Most Southern Baptist accounts of the birth of the American Baptist Home Mission Society are connoted in the worse possible light. When, in fact, the division between Northern and Southern Baptists in 1845 resulted in the formation of the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board with objectives comparable to those of the American Baptist Home Mission Society.

accounts of how this founding precipitated. One assertion is that the Southern delegates were forcibly removed from the Triennial Convention and had no other recourse except that a Southern Baptist Convention be formed.¹³ The opposing argument holds that the terms of membership were set in accordance with the Executive Board's adoption of a resolution prohibiting slaveholders from performing in a missional role within the convention.¹⁴ This disparity is extremely important to examine as the founding eleven states of the Southern Baptist Convention would also be the same eleven states to officially secede from the Union between 1860 and 1861. This division between Baptists mirrored similar schisms amidst the Methodists

¹³ Brackney stresses the moral authority that Northern Baptists were able to garner between 1832 and 1845 in that Luther Rice strongly endorsed the Home Mission Society. Brackney writes, "Luther Rice had suggested that the state associations and churches within a given state should band together at least annually to promote fellowship and raise missionary funds. In New England, voluntary societies which had served this purpose were reorganized in the 1830s as state convention bodies." Brackney, 16. This reorganization would later be referred to by Southern Baptists as "decentralization." The decentralization of missionary efforts empowered Northern Baptists who felt disenfranchised by Southern control of the Triennial Convention until state associations had formed a coalition (led by Peck and Going) capable of increasing Northern presence within the Executive Board of the Triennial Convention. R.E. Pattison's appointment to the Executive Board was a result of the denominational evolution occurring within the Triennial Convention. This Northern presence ultimately forced the retirement of slave holding ministers such as John Bushyhead and denied slaveholder James E. Reeve from pursuing foreign missions as noted by Lawrence in *History of the Home Mission Board*, 11-12. Lawrence's claims of the forcible removal of Southern Baptists is largely unsubstantiated in that Southern delegates planned to convene in May of 1845 when ABHMS member John Sharp Maginnis, via the Rhode Island resolution of April 1845, strongly recommended that Southern delegates form either a separate society, state association or centralized convention if they wished to both own slaves and continue to serve as missionaries.

¹⁴ *History of the Home Mission Board*, 10-11. Cf. *The Baptists in America: A Narrative of Their Role in the Shaping of America*, 187. Lawrence, Armstrong and Armstrong utilize components of Pattison's editorial from *The Christian Reflector* in 1844 as a grounds of explaining the separation between Northern and Southern Baptists in which Pattison states, "Our duty at this crisis requires us to demand from the proper authorities in all those bodies, to whose funds we have contributed or with whom we have been connected, the distinct, explicit avowal that slaveholders are eligible an entitled equally with non-slaveholders to all privileges and immunities of their several unions, and especially receive any agency or mission, or other appointment which may run within the scope of their operation and duties." Lawrence also adds a notable detail from the preamble and resolution of the Rhode Island resolution which is interpreted as the divisive maneuver that forcibly removed Southerners from the Triennial Convention, "Resolved, That it is expedient that the members now forming the [American Baptist Home Mission] Society should hereafter act in separate organizations at the South and at the North in promoting the objects which were originally contemplated by the Society." The irony is that the Southern Baptist Convention, which was comprised of secessionists who invoked the sovereignty of State's Rights in 1860 and 1861, would prefer a denominational structure that minimized the autonomy of state associations in favor of a centralized governing body that legislated the missionary efforts of its constituent churches with complete uniformity.

who underwent a Northern-Southern divide in 1844 followed by the Presbyterians in 1861.

While ecclesial divisions over slavery reflected the larger national sentiment towards the “peculiar institution”, there remains to this present day a discussions amongst Baptists as to who initiated the division.

From the Southern perspective, the blame is placed on the American Baptist Home Mission Society in its staunch support of Pattison and its adoption of the Providence, Rhode Island resolution in April of 1845 requiring slaveholders within the Triennial Convention to evangelize via separately formed missionary societies. Southern Baptists argued that the Rhode Island resolution was adopted too hastily and provided little time for the Southern delegates to issue a response to Pattison’s refusal to appoint slaveholders as missionaries. The Southern delegates convened in May 1, 1845 and by May 12, 1845 formed the Southern Baptist Convention.

Fifteen years before South Carolina would secede from the Union, the first national Baptist denomination formed in the United States was bitterly divided. The Southern Baptist Convention would pursue its own missionary efforts that did not include the theological training of the enslaved population. The future of Baptist evangelism in the Southern states would ultimately be determined by the outcome of the American Civil War. Had the Confederacy been successful in its rebellion, the Republican takeover of the U.S. House of Representatives in 1866 and its passing of legislation favorable to abolitionists would have been of little consequence. However, the Southern rebellion was ultimately unsuccessful leaving the Baptist missionary strategy in the postbellum South to be greatly determined by the American Baptist Home Mission Society.

Congressional legislation passed in 1866 had an immediate impact on Southern life to include church life in rural areas such as eastern North Carolina. While the American Baptist Home

Mission Society sent their first three missionaries, S.T. Winton, Henry Martin Tupper and Sarah Baker Leonard Tupper, to North Carolina in 1865, newly emancipated men and women had begun founding their own churches, associations and conventions. Nowhere was this pioneering spirit more evident than in the founding of the General Baptist State Convention of North Carolina in 1865. The founding of the GBSC-NC also demanded that there exist constituent associations to compose this new state convention, which doctrinally and structurally, was a near-replica of the Southern Baptist Convention.

As eastern North Carolina was home to a significant population of freed persons in the aftermath of the war, the earliest of these constituent Baptist associations began appearing as early as 1867. There had existed a few black Baptist congregations prior to the war such as the First African Baptist Church of Savannah founded in 1785. In Raleigh, North Carolina, the Gospel Church was organized in 1812 in the same building that housed the North Carolina General Assembly with its congregation consisting of nine white men and fourteen enslaved persons. By 1859, the Gospel Church, then known as Raleigh Baptist Church, saw 200 of its black congregants leave the church to form the First Colored Baptist Church of Raleigh. While antebellum North Carolina was also home to Baptist churches of integrated membership, the postbellum era saw the rapid formation and expansion of not only predominantly black Baptist churches, but regional associations, state conventions and eventually national conventions.

A definitive example of how rapid these formations and expansions occurred was found in eastern North Carolina, where the Reverend Thomas Parker would come to exemplify the missionary zeal of newly emancipated Baptists eager to establish their own organizations. Born October 14, 1830 in Virginia, the Reverend Parker was ordained in the predominantly white First

Baptist Church of Wilmington, North Carolina. By October 1870, the Reverend Parker and the Reverend Daniel T. Best would call a meeting of delegates from five black Baptist churches throughout eastern North Carolina.¹⁵ Notable of this meeting was the fact that Reverend Parker served as an acting chairman of the proposed Baptist association whereas the acting moderator of was the Reverend A.B. Williams, who served as pastor the First African Baptist Church of Goldsboro, North Carolina. The Reverend Williams' moderating of the 1870 meeting was significant in that the First African Baptist Church of Goldsboro was the mother-church of the General Association of the Colored Baptist of North Carolina (later known as the General Baptist State Convention of North Carolina) founded in 1867. The Reverend Thomas Parker would become the first elected-moderator of what was called and remains the Kenansville Eastern Missionary Baptist Association in 1870.

The 1870 founding of KEMBA spurred the founding of numerous churches throughout the greater Duplin area, and within that same year in the southern-end of Duplin County, a small group of black Baptists would construct a small building simply known as “the meeting house,” where Sunday School, Bible Study and worship services would be conducted. This small group of believers would become the founders of Peter's Tabernacle Missionary Baptist Church. Unlike First Colored Baptist Church of Raleigh, which began with a wellspring of 200 members, the definitive number of founders, who erected “the meeting house” is unknown. However, a small group of believers, who doctrinally aligned themselves with a burgeoning group of other small congregations in the newly formed Association became the founders of Peter's Tabernacle

¹⁵ Delilah T. Gomes, Gloria W. Bowden, Nancy M. Jordan and Nettie C. McDaniel, eds. *Legacies Untold: Histories of Black Churches in the Greater Duplin County Area* (Warsaw, NC: Duplin County Historical Society, 2002) 1. The delegates of the churches represented at the meeting called by Reverends Parker and Best were members of First Missionary Baptist Church-Kenansville, Bear Swamp Missionary Baptist Church, Hill's Chapel Missionary Baptist Church, Six Runs Missionary Baptist Church and First Missionary Baptist Church-Clinton.

Missionary Baptist Church. Understanding the historical gravity of Peter's Tabernacle's denominational affiliation is integral to better assessing how and why the congregation must return to its evangelistic principles. What is clear is that Peter's Tabernacle was founded by a small group of believers, who drew new converts to their congregation by being of service to the surrounding community. In a number of ways, the Hybrid Model is a practical means of returning Peter's Tabernacle to its original model of ministry.

CHAPTER THREE

THE PAST AND UNCHANGED PRESENT OF PETER'S TABERNACLE

As postbellum eastern North Carolina proved to be fertile ground for the planting and nurturing of predominantly black Baptist churches, the necessity emerged for a denominational distinction to be made between Southern Baptist congregations and their burgeoning, predominantly black offshoots. As the progenitors of the Missionary Baptist movement such as the Reverend Thomas Parker, the Reverend Isaac M. Powers and the Reverend Daniel T. Best, considered their immediate communities to be the mission fields to which they were called, there increased the use of the term “missionary” Baptists to distinguish their congregations from their predominantly white mother-churches. Foundational to Missionary Baptist doctrine was (and remains) the Great Commission as the overarching Biblical principle that governs the affairs of every congregation.¹

Accompanying this new denominational distinction made by fledgling Missionary Baptist congregations was the heavy use of the term “African” in the name of particular churches. Flagship Missionary Baptist churches throughout a particular city or town were often distinguished from their Southern Baptist counterparts by use of the term “First African” (i.e., First African Baptist Church of Savannah, First African Baptist Church of Goldsboro and First African Baptist Church of Richmond). Furthering bolstering the rapid development and subsequent growth of nineteenth century Missionary Baptist churches was the founding of the Raleigh Theological Institute in Raleigh, North Carolina. This institute, founded as a school of

¹ *Preamble of the Constitution of the Kenansville Eastern Missionary Baptist Association*

religious and vocational training for emancipated men and women, was founded by American Baptist missionaries Henry Martin Tupper and Sarah Baker Leonard Tupper in 1865. The institute, which would later be renamed Shaw University after benefactor Elijah Shaw, received the full support of the federal government from 1867 to 1875 thus enabling a number of Missionary Baptist ministers to receive formal religious training.

However, the diminishing power of the federal Bureau of Refugees, Freedmen, and Abandoned Lands in 1869, along with the declining interest of the American Baptist Home Mission Society to further evangelize emancipated populations, would have permanent repercussions on the ecclesial, spiritual, intellectual and economic vibrancy of Missionary Baptist congregations. Yet, amidst the waning support of the federal government and the American Baptist Home Mission Society between 1869 and 1895 Missionary Baptists engaged in the development of new regional associations and conventions including the National Baptist Convention of the United States of America Incorporated.² The National Baptist Convention, USA, Inc. even made minor inroads toward reconciling Missionary Baptist congregations to the Southern Baptist Convention.

However, without a financial lifeline from the Bureau of Refugees, Freedmen, and Abandoned Lands, a larger predominantly white support-base such as the American Baptist Home Mission Society, there would emerge decades of theological, doctrinal, intellectual and organizational stagnancy within predominantly black Missionary Baptist congregations. This stagnancy would most adversely affect Missionary Baptist congregations in rural areas such as southeastern North Carolina. Missionary Baptist congregations in larger cities, such as Raleigh,

² NBC, USA, Inc. is in reference to the National Baptist Convention of the United States of America Inc., which is distinguished from the National Baptist Convention of America Incorporated (NBC of America, Inc).

North Carolina, Richmond, Virginia and Washington, D.C., have educational opportunities less afforded to Missionary Baptist congregations in more economically-depressed, rural areas such as Duplin, Wayne, Sampson, Pender, Brunswick and New Hanover counties despite there being smaller cities such as Kenansville and Wilmington in those areas.

The diminishing availability of employment opportunities in eastern North Carolina has resulted in the fiscal weakening of Missionary Baptist congregations throughout the entire region. As the efforts to remain economically viable often characterize Missionary Baptist churches seeking highly-qualified, seminary-trained clergy to assume pastoral leadership, the inability of many Missionary Baptist churches to offer a salary and support commensurate with the qualifications of pastoral candidates has further contributed to denominational stagnancy. A majority of pastors within KEMBA are bi-vocational or have some form of supplemental income such as retirement benefits from a secular occupation.

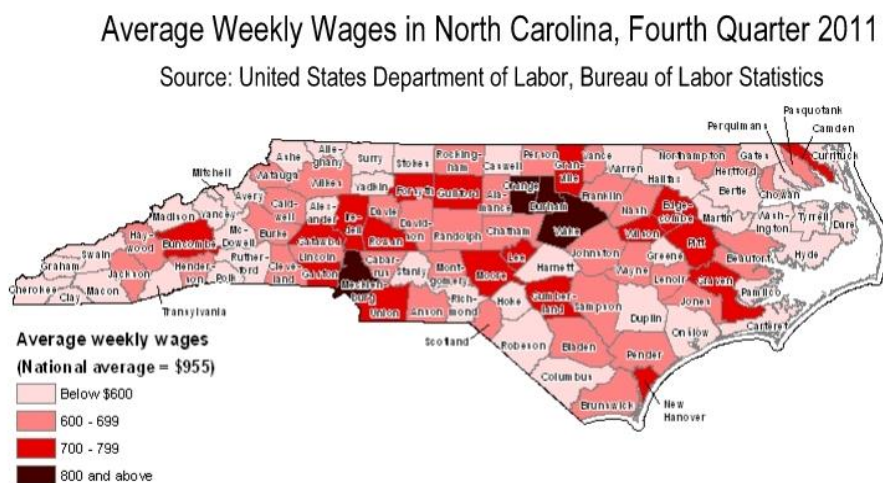


Figure 3.

The need for these pastors to be bi-vocational severely limits the time, opportunity and resources for graduate-level theological training. Even in more economically-viable counties³ such as Wake, Orange, Durham and Mecklenburg, smaller Missionary Baptist congregations with seminary-trained clergy often lose their pastors to larger Baptist congregations. While distance-education would be ideal for Missionary Baptist ministers, there is a dearth of information about the academic opportunities available to many working-pastors throughout southeastern North Carolina. Beyond the economic disparity between Duplin County and its surrounding counties, the recruitment and training of qualified leaders stands as the largest challenge facing modern Missionary Baptist congregations.

Peter's Tabernacle Missionary Baptist Church is emblematic of these manifold challenges as there has existed a steady and degenerative shift in resources and theological training from rural areas such as Duplin County to the larger and wealthier Wake, Durham, Orange and Mecklenburg counties which are hosts to Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary Shaw University Divinity School, Duke Divinity School and the Interdenominational Theological Center on the campus of Johnson C. Smith University respectively. The importance of technological advancement and graduate-level training was minimal at the time in which Peter's Tabernacle was founded as a meeting place for laborers, farmers and landowners in an otherwise agrarian social setting, but the social realities that characterize Duplin County at the dawn of the

³ County Employment and Wages in North Carolina-Fourth Quarter 2011, United States Department of Labor Bureau of Labor and Statistics, <http://www.bls.gov/ro4/qcewnc.htm>. Internet accessed; 5 April 2012. While chart 1 lists the average weekly wages in Duplin County as below \$600.00, these figures are considered by the BLS to be "covered" meaning persons covered by Unemployment Insurance are also calculated as wage earners. This also means that percentages reported as employment increases would also denote persons covered by Unemployment Insurance under the Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages (QCEW) program of the Bureau of Labor and Statics.

twentieth century are, in large part, irrelevant in a socioeconomic climate that has only worsened in eastern North Carolina in the past century. This worsening situation has only been exacerbated by an economy that has been deteriorating nationally for the past decade thus impacting rural areas such as Duplin County more adversely as seen below.

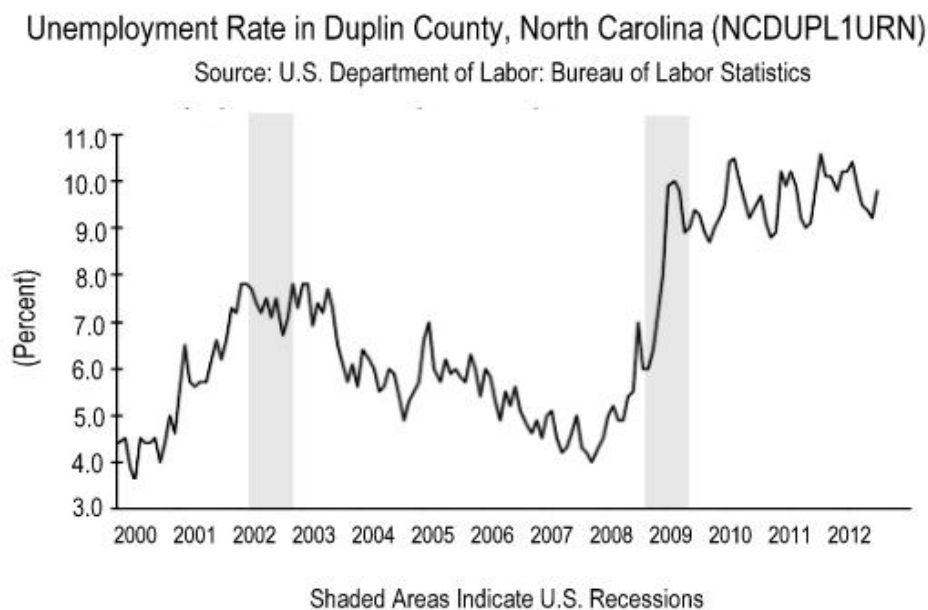


Table 1.

Per capita, the average annual income in Duplin County for 2011 was \$16,693.00 compared to the statewide average of \$24,745.00. This figure is made all the more important by the fact that only 10.1% of Duplin County residents hold an undergraduate degree in comparison to 26.1% of North Carolina residents with only 69.7% of Duplin County residents having finished high school versus 83.6% of residents statewide.⁴ The greatest concern to the future of Missionary Baptists in eastern North Carolina is the steadily decreasing black population below

⁴ United States Department of Commerce – United States Census Bureau
<http://quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/states/37/37061.html>; Internet accessed; 21 March 2012.

the age of 18 throughout the county as the percentage of black youth in Duplin County below the age of 18 dropped from 26.2% to 22.0% between 2010 and 2011.⁵ Where the sobering economic reality of the region is most apparent in Missionary Baptist life is found both in lowered contributions to associations such as KEMBA and the overall decline in new converts.

**Church Statistics from the One Hundred and Thirty-Fifth
Annual Session of the Kenansville Eastern Missionary
Baptist Association - October 10-16, 2004**

CHURCH	BAPTIZED	RECEIVED BY LETTER	DISMISSED BY LETTER	DIED	MEMBERSHIP
*PETER'S TABERNACLE-WALLACE	0	0	0	2	60
PILGRIM REST-HARRELLS	0	0	0	0	189
POPLAR GROVE-FAISON	0	2	0	1	193
RAINBOW-WARSAW	0	0	3	2	132
ROSEVILLE-WILLARD	0	0	0	0	253
*SAINT JOHN-ROCKY POINT	0	0	0	0	25
*SAINT JOHN-WALLACE	0	0	0	2	100
SAINT LUKE-MOUNT OLIVE	4	1	0	0	51
*SHILOH-MASONBORO-SOUND	1	4	1	4	40
SMITH CHAPEL-WARSAW	6	1	0	0	58
*STEVENS CHAPEL-GRANTHAM	0	0	0	0	5
UNION CHAPEL-CURRIE	1	0	1	2	84
*WATHA CHAPEL-WATHA	0	0	0	0	41
WILLARD CHAPEL-WILLARD	1	0	0	4	107
WILLIAM LOVE GROVE-HAMPSTEAD	0	0	0	0	30
WILSON CHAPEL-TURKEY	0	0	0	7	409

Table 2.

*The Minutes of the One Hundred and Thirty-Fifth Session Annual Session of the Kenansville Eastern Missionary Baptist Association*⁶ revealed no new additions to Peter's Tabernacle by

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ James A. Davis and Alease B. Davis, ed. (2004) "Minutes of the One Hundred Thirty-Fifth Annual Session of the Kenansville Eastern Missionary Baptist Association, Held at KEMBA Headquarters, October 10-16,

baptism, letter from a previous membership or on the basis of a perspective member's Christian experience. The *Minutes of the One Hundred and Forty-First Session Annual Session of the Kenansville Eastern Missionary Baptist Association*⁷ reflect an increase of two new members with a dismissal of one member by letter.

**Church Statistics from the One Hundred and Forty-First
Annual Session of the Kenansville Eastern Missionary
Baptist Association - October 10-16, 2010**

CHURCH	BAPTIZED	RECEIVED BY LETTER	DISMISSED BY LETTER	DIED	CHRISTIAN EXPERIENCE	MEMBERSHIP
*PETER'S TABERNACLE-WALLACE	0	2	1	0		62
PILGRIM REST-HARRELLS	4	0	0	4		45
POPLAR GROVE-FAISON	2	0	0	3		192
RAINBOW-WARSAW	2	0	0	6		112
ROSEVILLE-WILLARD	4	4	4	8		216
*SAINT JOHN-ROCKY POINT	0	0	0	0		25
*SAINT JOHN-WALLACE	0	0	0	0		100
SAINT LUKE-MOUNT OLIVE	0	1	0	0		48
*SHILOH-MASONBORO-SOUND	0	0	0	0		40
SMITH CHAPEL-WARSAW	1	0	0	4		37
*STEVENS CHAPEL-GRANTHAM	0	0	0	0		5
UNION CHAPEL-CURRIE	4	0	0	1		93
*WATHA CHAPEL-WATHA	0	0	0	6		92
WILLARD CHAPEL-WILLARD	6	0	1	3		101
WILLIAM LOVE GROVE-HAMPSTEAD	0	0	0	0		36
WILSON CHAPEL-TURKEY	3	0	0	4		409

Table 3.

This author's reason for synthesizing data from 2004 and 2010 is two-fold. The previous pastor, who served Peter's Tabernacle from 1994 to 2010, was diagnosed with colon cancer in February 2004. From February 2004 to August 2004, this author assumed pastoral leadership of

2004," 59.

⁷ James A. Davis and Joan M. Malloy, ed. (2010) "Minutes of the One Hundred Forty-First Annual Session of the Kenansville Eastern Missionary Baptist Association, Held at KEMBA Headquarters, October 10-16, 2010," 56.

the congregation. Though not yet ordained through KEMBA, an arrangement was made between the Board of Deacons and KEMBA allowing this author to carry out all pastoral duties at Peter's Tabernacle except for administration of the ordinances, which was carried out by the deacons. The pastor resumed his duties after his recovery in September 2004 and continued to serve the congregation until submitting his resignation in June 2010. That there would be no claims of a nepotistic passing of the baton from father to son, this author did not formally candidate⁸ for the position of senior pastor. In July 2010 this author was selected as interim pastor while a pulpit search committee was formed to begin interviewing pastoral candidates. However, no pastoral candidates were reviewed by the pulpit search committee. During the December quarterly conference of 2010, a motion to elect this author senior pastor of Peter's Tabernacle was made by a member of the pulpit search committee. The motion was suspended on the grounds that a pastor can only be elected in a meeting called specifically for that purpose according to the church's Bylaws. The formal election process convened one month later with this author accepting the position on March 19, 2011.

Critical during this period was this author's entrance into the Doctor of Ministry program at Liberty University Baptist Theological Seminary. One of the strongest improvements in this author's ministry, and in the history of Peter's Tabernacle, was the implementation of pastoral leadership strategies taught at Liberty University Baptist Theological Seminary. Having led the congregation in 2004 as an assistant pastor and as an interim pastor in 2010, this author's studies at Liberty University marked a paradigmatic shift in ministry at Peter's Tabernacle. The DMIN seminar DSMN 876: Creative Ministry Uses for the Computer with Professor Frank Schmitt and

⁸ The process of formally applying for the position of pastor in the Missionary Baptist tradition is called "candidating" as "campaigning" is generally thought to be too contrived a term for a minister seeking the position of pastor. However, as in my case, some ministers choose not to candidate for a church.

Professor David Brown enabled this author to finance, develop and maintain an official website for the church, www.PetersTabernacleBaptistChurch.com, which the Church Council subsequently continued financing.⁹ This gradual technological push also included having the church phone lines reactivated (as the phones had remained disconnected between 2007 and 2010) the digitization of the church's Constitution and Bylaws and the modernizing of equipment and instruments in the music department. Also established was a Saturday Bible Study, a Personnel Committee for hiring church staff, reestablished was the Minister of Music position in accordance with the church's Bylaws as the trustees and deacons saw to both the physical upkeep and upgrading of the edifice to include the paving of the church grounds, a new furnace and new roofs for the sanctuary and fellowship hall. In addition to the physical refurbishment of the edifice, this author led the congregation in renewing its involvement in KEMBA through the paying of annual assessments to the regional headquarters, regular support of association events and reengaging the congregation into the ministries of the association. Between 2010 and 2012, the congregation has renewed its involvement in the ministries of the General Baptist State Convention of North Carolina by way of supporting the Annual Youth Oratorical Contest of the GBSC-NC sponsored by the GBSC-NC Congress of Christian Education and the National Baptist Congress of Christian Education.

Not since the founding of Peter's Tabernacle has the congregation's approach to ministry been so innovative. This not to say that the previous pastor's tenure was ineffectual, as the overall

⁹ During the Spring 2011 semester of academic school year 2011-2012 at Liberty University Baptist Theological Seminary, this author enrolled in Doctor of Ministry intensive DSMN 876-392: Creative Ministry Uses for the Computer, where Dr. Frank Schmitt served as professor and Dr. David Brown as guest lecturer. The development of Peter's Tabernacle's website and efforts to begin a more web-based approach to the church's record keeping was a direct result of my having taken this intensive. While DSMN 876 has since become an intensive dedicated to the development of the Doctor of Ministry thesis, during January of 2011, the course primarily focused on methods for utilizing technology in a ministerial context.

square-footage and financial holdings of the church increased during his pastorate. However, his desire was that the momentum he helped build could be increased by his successor whether that successor had been this author or another pastor. The most significant change that has occurred within the last year has not been the administrative streamlining of church business or even the increased focus on Christian Education. It has been the congregation's willingness to reach beyond itself to do ministry. As a congregation that formerly held worship services only on first and third Sundays of the month, Peter's Tabernacle has now added a fifth Sunday and uses the second and fourth Sundays of the month as opportunities to travel and fellowship with its sister-churches and churches of other denominations. The congregation itself chose to become more active having a clearer understanding of the Great Commission. It is in this sense that the greatest work of Peter's Tabernacle has yet to begin. For as much as the past year has reawakened the congregation in a sense, there is still much work to do in making Peter's Tabernacle a missional community ready to facilitate growth through intentional evangelism.

Many of the standing committees that existed in 1910 still exist within the congregation while other ministries such as Children's Sunday School had dwindled until 2011. As a majority of the newest members of the congregation are between the ages of 7 and 17, Children's Sunday School has restarted. Also formed in 2011 has been the Peter's Tabernacle Young Adult Ministry, but in a county where the population¹⁰ has increased from an estimated 58,505 residents to 59,542 between 2010 and 2011, there remains a plethora of untapped and unexhausted models of ministry that will transform Peter's Tabernacle Missionary Baptist Church into a truly missional community. This transformation can only occur with a Scriptural grounding in New Testament

¹⁰ United States Department of Commerce – United States Census Bureau
<http://quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/states/37/37061.html> ; Internet accessed; 21 March 2012.

precepts for small group formation and evangelism that will not only benefit the membership of PTMBC but its surrounding communities. Examining the necessary transformations that the congregation of Peter's Tabernacle must undergo, in order to reengage its Biblical and denominational duties, no aspect of the church should be left unexplored. This exploration includes the significance of the church's name itself.

The only written account of how the church was named states that in 1910, a Southern Baptist minister by the name of the Reverend Richard Keathern was invited to deliver the evening message at the church's dedication service. The Reverend Keathern served in leadership at Well's Chapel Baptist Church, a Southern Baptist congregation located four miles from Peter's Tabernacle on Highway 41 West. As the Southern Baptist congregations in the Iron Mine community shared loose-affiliations¹¹ with one another in the early twentieth century, the Reverend Keathern would also have a Missionary Baptist church named in his honor—Keathern Chapel Missionary Baptist Church. Preaching from the Matthean account of Peter's confession, Reverend Keathern was given the honor of naming the church based on Matt.16:18 reading, And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. Matt. 16:18¹²

¹¹ Though little documentation exists explaining how the current separation between Southern Baptist and Missionary Baptist congregations occurred within the Iron Mine Community, there remains one predominantly white Missionary Baptist church in the Iron Mine Community called Mount Vernon Missionary Baptist Church. For this reason, throughout this project, I have only referred to the Missionary Baptist denomination as being “predominantly” black and not completely black as there are a small number of predominantly white congregations that still denote themselves as “Missionary” Baptists.

¹² Gomes, Delilah T., Gloria W. Bowden, Nancy M. Jordan and Nettie C. McDaniel, eds., *Legacies Untold: Histories of Black Churches in the Greater Duplin County Area*, 34. The anthology assembled by Gomes, Bowden, Jordan and McDaniel stands as the only surviving written account of the founding of Peter's Tabernacle with information provided by Deacon Richard H. Thompson. Deacon Thompson remains on the Board of Deacons and is one of the oldest members of Peter's Tabernacle.

The most prevalent oral tradition within the congregation¹³ holds that the word “Tabernacle” was added to the name of the church based on the Matthean account of the Transfiguration in Matt. 17:4 reading,

Then answered Peter, and said unto Jesus, Lord, it is good for us to be here: if thou wilt, let us make here three tabernacles; one for thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elias. Matt. 17:4

Even amongst the accepted explanations of how Peter's Tabernacle was named, little discussion and no existing documentation explains the name itself. While naming a church after Peter is Biblically and theologically viable, nowhere in Scripture did Peter ever have a tabernacle constructed despite his suggestion that three tabernacles be built to honor Jesus, Moses and Elijah. The Markan account makes it a point to mention that Peter was fearful when making this suggestion as Mk. 9:5-6 states,

And Peter answered and said to Jesus, Master, it is good for us to be here: and let us make three tabernacles; one for thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elias. For he wist not what to say; for they were sore afraid. Mk. 9:5-6

The Lukan account of this exchange reads,

And it came to pass, as they departed from him, Peter said unto Jesus, Master, it is good for us to be here: and let us make three tabernacles; one for thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elias: not knowing what he said. Lk. 9:33

Again, nowhere in the synoptic accounts, or in Scripture for that matter, does Peter have a tabernacle constructed. As there is a variance of explanations for how Peter's Tabernacle was named, and the meaning of the name itself, such a lack of clarity is indicative of the congregational situation that has defined Peter's Tabernacle for nearly a century. Peter's Tabernacle existed from 1870 to 1910 without a name, and did not have electricity installed in

¹³ During a presentation made by Deacon Richard H. Thompson on August 21, 2011 during the One Hundred and Forty-Fourth Homecoming celebration of Peter's Tabernacle gave an explanation of how the word “Tabernacle” came to be a part of the church's name.

the edifice until 1939,¹⁴ and until the previous pastor's tenure, hosted visiting churches for meals in an education annex that doubled as a fellowship hall. I say none of this out of disparagement, but these are facts. The intent of the pastor emeritus to have a new fellowship hall constructed was met with resistance and a decline in membership resulting in contention amongst the remaining members. Such contentious disagreements have contributed to a dampening of evangelistic efforts resulting into generations of stagnancy at Peter's Tabernacle.

To place this stagnancy in its proper perspective, Duplin County had a population of 15,784 people in 1860¹⁵ ten years before Peter's Tabernacle was founded. By 1910, Peter's Tabernacle's membership consisted of 65 members.¹⁶ Peter's Tabernacle reported¹⁷ 62 members to the Kenansville Eastern Missionary Baptist Association in 2010 when the population of Duplin County had grown to 58,505 residents.¹⁸ Despite the recent growth from 62 members to 77 members between 2011 and 2012 at Peter's Tabernacle, the population of Duplin County has since increased to 59,542 residents making the growth of the congregation inconsistent with the growth of the surrounding population.

Absent from Peter's Tabernacle, whose size has not increased in relationship to the community where it is located, is the Biblical principle of multiplication. There has not existed, until the past

¹⁴ Gomes, Delilah T., Gloria W. Bowden, Nancy M. Jordan and Nettie C. McDaniel, eds., *Legacies Untold: Histories of Black Churches in the Greater Duplin County Area*, 34.

¹⁵ Levi Branson, ed. *Branson's North Carolina Business Directory for 1867-1868* (Raleigh, NC: Branson and Jones, 1868), 40.

¹⁶ Gomes, Delilah T., Gloria W. Bowden, Nancy M. Jordan and Nettie C. McDaniel, eds., *Legacies Untold: Histories of Black Churches in the Greater Duplin County Area*, 34.

¹⁷ James A. Davis and Joan M. Malloy, ed. (2010) "Minutes of the One Hundred Forty-First Annual Session of the Kenansville Eastern Missionary Baptist Association, Held at KEMBA Headquarters, October 10-16, 2010," 56.

¹⁸ United States Department of Commerce – United States Census Bureau <http://quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/states/37/37061.html> ; Internet accessed; 21 March 2012.

two years, an intentional effort to pursue conversion-growth within the congregation. As the Biblical principle of multiplication has been a principle with which this author was unfamiliar before enrolling into Liberty University Baptist Theological Seminary, Peter's Tabernacle is benefiting from the best strategies for growth based on coursework offered in the DMIN seminars taught at Liberty University. While there are a vast number of implementable strategies and approaches to developing disciples, there exists no better foundation for refocusing the ministries of Peter's Tabernacle toward servanthood evangelism and small group discipleship than those strategies found in the New Testament.

CHAPTER FOUR

TOWARD A NEW FUTURE BASED ON THE NEW TESTAMENT

Two distinguishing characteristics of the first century church were its evangelistic focus and its appropriation of small groups that carried out the Great Commission. Absent from the first century church, in great part, was the rigid structuralism and hierarchical form of governance that often shifts the focus of congregants from evangelizing the lost to maintaining structures and hierarchies. It is within the maintenance of various polities and unbiblical doctrines that the spreading the Gospel is impeded. Perhaps no greater impediment exists to the spreading of the Gospel than internecine church conflict. The autonomy of Baptist polity makes Baptist congregations particularly subject to such church conflict. The Missionary Baptist tradition, like so many mainline denominations, is often characterized by intransigent church officers and members, who engage in hidden or open defiance of Scripture by giving ascent to tradition rather than instructions given by Jesus Christ.

At Peter's Tabernacle, this author's predecessor infamously encountered congregational resistance to his initiatives most visible in efforts made to remove him from office on an annual basis through quarterly business conferences.¹ Such resistance is made more troubling when Article IV. Section 2 entitled "Doctrine" of *The Constitution and Bylaws of Peter's Tabernacle Missionary Baptist Church* holds that,

¹ It should be noted here that nowhere in *The Constitution and Bylaws of Peter's Tabernacle Missionary Baptist Church* can the pastor's resignation be called for during a business quarterly conference or on the basis of leadership-based disagreements. Beyond immoral and/or illegal behavior, an elected pastor cannot be asked to resign from Peter's Tabernacle as there exists no article detailing how a pastor is to be dismissed within the Bylaws. During my pastorate, this has been brought to the attention of the Church Council in which it was agreed that the Bylaws should remain as they are the resignation of a pastor should never be called for during a business quarterly meeting or any arbitrary basis.

This church receives the Scriptures as its authority in matters of faith and practice. Its understanding of Christian truth as contained therein is in essential accord with the belief of other General Baptist State Churches.²

Furthermore Article VI. Section 1 states of the pastor's responsibilities and authority,

The Pastor is responsible for leading the church in functioning as a New Testament church. The pastor will lead the congregation, the organizations, and the church staff in performing their tasks. A major concern of the pastor is to perform pastoral responsibilities. The pastor is the leader of worship, proclamation, education, and pastoral ministries. A pastor shall be chosen and called by the church whenever a vacancy occurs. His election shall take place at a meeting called for that purpose, of which at least one week's public notice shall be given.³

Section 3 under the same article declares that,

In accordance with the meaning of the work and the practice of the New Testament, deacons are to be servants of the church. The task of the deacon is to serve with the pastor in performing pastoral ministries tasks: proclaim the gospel to believers, care for the church members and other persons in the community; lead the church to engage in a fellowship of worship, witness, education, ministry, and application; and lead the church in performing its tasks.⁴

Despite such a declarative statement outlining the role of Scripture, the authority of the pastor and the function of the Board of Deacons in relationship to the congregation and the pastor, these Bylaws had fallen into disuse during my predecessor's tenure, whereas this author became the first ever pastor to lead the congregation in ratifying⁵ these Bylaws. While the pertinent issue that required ratification involved the steadily declining contributions to the church, the basis on which this ratification was proposed was found in 2 Cor. 8:1-24. While the Institutional model of ministry within Peter's Tabernacle thrives on regulations such as bylaws more so than Scripture

² Article IV. Section 2, *The Constitution and Bylaws of Peter's Tabernacle Missionary Baptist Church.*

³ Article VI. Section 1, *The Constitution and Bylaws of Peter's Tabernacle Missionary Baptist Church.*

⁴ Article VI. Section 3, *The Constitution and Bylaws of Peter's Tabernacle Missionary Baptist Church.*

⁵ Article V. Section 3. was proposed on December 17, 2011 in a document entitled, "A Proposal for a Fifth Clause in Article V, Section 3 of the Bylaws of Peter's Tabernacle Missionary Baptist Church for the Consideration of the Officers and Members of Peter's Tabernacle Missionary Baptist Church." The proposed amendment to the bylaws was passed on December 17, 2011.

itself, the bylaws of Peter's Tabernacle provide ample opportunity to import the primacy of Scripture into congregational life.

As the Missionary Baptist denomination was founded on the very notion of domestic evangelism, what made the pioneers of this denomination so successful in bringing about conversion growth in the mid-nineteenth century was its fidelity to Scripture, mainly the Great Commission, and the intentionality of its church planting. One of the most significant evangelistic accomplishments of these Baptist pioneers came in the formation of the National Baptist Convention of America (later the National Baptist Convention, USA, Inc.) in 1886.⁶ Evangelism and missions served as the original driving force behind all other ministerial endeavors whether pursued by the regional associations, state conventions or the newly formed national parent-body. Direct appeals to unsaved persons both domestically and abroad resulted in the steady growth of Missionary Baptist congregations throughout the world between 1867 and 1895.

The nineteenth century Missionary Baptists of eastern North Carolina, despite being novice church planters, were characterized by a reinforced teaching, study and use of Scripture in converting the lost thus maintaining a vitality unparalleled at any other time in the denomination's history. Though Peter's Tabernacle's membership never exceeded 65 during the nineteenth century, considering that the overall population of Duplin County was four times smaller than its current population, Peter's Tabernacle's membership was impressive for the time.

⁶ *National Baptist Convention, USA, Inc. Revised Constitution, Approved by the Body of the 122nd Annual Session on September 3, 2002.* The founding date of August 25, 1886 is found in the Preamble of the Revised Constitution reading, "WHEREAS, the Foreign Missions Convention (organized in 1880), the Baptist Foreign Mission Convention (hitherto engaged in missionary work on the west coast of Africa), and the National Education Convention convened at the First Baptist Church, St. Louis, Missouri, on August 25, 1886, ten o'clock a.m., for the purpose of contemplating merger into one body originally known as the National Baptist Convention.."

Recapturing that congregational vitality will not only require Peter's Tabernacle and its sister congregations reengaging the primacy of Scripture in the daily affairs of congregational life, but also reengaging with its earlier history of intentional evangelism and servanthood evangelism. The Iron Mine community sought intentional conversions, and every new convert remained equally as active within the larger setting of the congregation as he or she remained in the wider community. Although nineteenth century, rural North Carolina was far less transient than twenty-first century eastern North Carolina, emphasis on developing new disciples has all but dissipated over the past 142 years. Revitalizing Peter's Tabernacle requires applying to its disciple-making efforts a New Testament model that closely resembles Peter's Tabernacle's earliest form of evangelism and missions—as families within the congregation worked as self-sustaining small groups, who in turn brought other families to Christ. Since the missional and communal aspects of Peter's Tabernacle have always been interconnected, the model of community life described by Luke in Acts 2:42-47 is helpful where we find,

42 They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers. 43 Awe came upon everyone, because many wonders and signs were being done by the apostles. 44 All who believed were together and had all things in common; 45 they would sell their possessions and goods and distribute the proceeds to all, as any had need. 46 Day by day, as they spent much time together in the temple, they broke bread at home and ate their food with glad and generous hearts, 47 praising God and having the goodwill of all the people. And day by day the Lord added to their number those who were being saved. Acts 2:42-47 NRSV

New Testament scholar T.C. Smith offers the following insight into the role of community within the early church writing,

They devoted themselves. Those who believed were baptized did not go their separate ways. They felt a need for further instruction. The apostles were able to tell them all that they knew about the life, deeds, and teachings of Jesus. They also continued in fellowship. This did not mean simply associating with the apostles and other disciples. This word had a peculiar meaning in early Christianity. It included having goods in common (*koina*, cf. 2:44; 4:32). Fellowship (*koinōnia*) later was understood by the believers to mean the breaking down of barriers between Jews and Gentiles, for in God's sight no person was common

(*koinon*).⁷

There must be a renewed attentiveness to the primacy of Scripture in the life of Peter's Tabernacle that congregational archetypes as described in the Acts of the Apostles are given ascent rather than social traditions and Biblical texts merely glossed over in a perfunctory fashion during worship services and meetings. This renewed attentiveness will make realizable, a much-needed reconciliation between numerous mother-churches and sister-churches within the Southern Baptist Convention. Both Southern Baptists and Missionary Baptists share a rich heritage and very similar doctrinal approach to Scripture despite surface-level appearances to the contrary. Nowhere is this doctrinal kinship more evident than in the very articles of faith of both the Southern Baptist Convention and the National Baptist Convention, USA, Inc. The clearest example of how similarly Southern Baptists and Missionary Baptists view the Christian faith is seen in their articles of faith regarding Scripture. To demonstrate what this author defines as a denominational "kinship" between Southern Baptists and National Baptists, the identical phraseology between the two articles has been underlined below. Under the *Articles of Faith* of the National Baptist Convention, USA, Inc. is Article I: The Scriptures, which states,

We believe that the Holy Bible was written by men divinely inspired, and is a perfect treasure of heavenly instruction; that it has God for its author, salvation for its end, and truth without any mixture of error for its matter; that it reveals the principles by which God will judge us, and therefore is, and shall remain to the end of the world, the true center of Christian union, and the supreme standard by which all human conduct, creeds, and opinions shall be tried.⁸

⁷ Clifton J. Allen, ed., *The Broadman Bible Commentary, Volume 10 Acts – 1 Corinthians* (Nashville, TN: Broadman Press, 1970), 31. Smith further elaborates on the nature of communal life amongst early believers noting, "The Jewish Community had a strong sense of togetherness. They were bound to a common Lord. They shared a common experience. Prompted by the commonality of this intimate relationship, they shared what they had. The believers sold their possessions and contributed the proceeds to a common fund. Distribution to those in need was administered at first by the apostles but later by the seven (6:1 ff.)." 31.

⁸ *The New National Baptist Hymnal: 21st Century ed* (Nashville, TN: Triad Publishing, 2001), 648.

The Baptist Faith and Message adopted by the Southern Baptist Convention on June 14, 2000

similarly has for its first article, Article I: The Scriptures, which states,

The Holy Bible was written by men divinely inspired and is God's revelation of Himself to man. It is a perfect treasure of divine instruction. It has God for its author, salvation for its end, and truth, without any mixture of error, for its matter. Therefore, all Scripture is totally true and trustworthy. It reveals the principles by which God judges us, and therefore is, and will remain to the end of the world, the true center of Christian union, and the supreme standard by which all human conduct, creeds, and religious opinions should be tried. All Scripture is a testimony to Christ, who is Himself the focus of divine revelation.⁹

When comparing both the Southern Baptist and Missionary Baptist articles of faith regarding Scripture with that of the American Baptist Churches in the USA, the kindred nature of the SBC and the Missionary Baptist tradition becomes even more apparent. From *An Expression of Christian Faith Representative of American Baptists* adopted by the General Board of the American Baptist Churches in the USA on November 2005 under the subheading “A Biblical People,” is the following,

We affirm that God through Jesus Christ calls us to be a:

A Biblical People: who affirm the centrality of Scripture in our lives; who pursue the study of God’s inspired Word as a mandate for faith and practice; and who seek the guidance of the Holy Spirit for the understanding of Scripture, while respecting the common interpretation of Scripture within the community of believers. Who submit to the teaching of Scripture that God's design for sexual intimacy places it within the context of marriage between one man and one woman, and acknowledges that the practice of homosexuality is incompatible with Biblical teaching.¹⁰

The difference between how the NBC, USA, Inc. and ABC, USA appropriate their language regarding Scripture is stark. This difference is made all the more significant, when it was the nineteenth century American Baptist Home Mission Society which was formerly aligned with

⁹ *Article I, The Baptist Faith and Message*, adopted by the Southern Baptist Convention on June 14, 2000 in Atlanta, GA.

¹⁰ *An Expression of Christian Faith Representative of American Baptists*, adopted by the General Board of the American Baptist Churches in the U.S.A, November 2005.

black Missionary Baptists in the South.

There is precedent for reconciliation and alliances between Southern and Missionary Baptists seen in the joint formation and operation of what was formerly the American Baptist Theological Seminary responsible for training generations of black ministers.¹¹ What this author is proposing here is a radical departure from the sociopolitical tradition and expectations of both denominations—which is an intentional renewing of fellowship between neighboring Southern Baptist and Missionary Baptist churches throughout eastern North Carolina. As Peter's Tabernacle itself was birthed in part by an SBC congregation and was named by an SBC minister, there exists mutuality and kindred amongst the two traditions. What is being proposed is a movement towards fellowship, partnerships and arrangements that benefit both denominations and their respective communities.

As Biblical authority¹² and the keeping of the Great Commission is embedded¹³ into the doctrine of the National Baptist tradition, and therefore the Missionary Baptist tradition, any effort to revitalize Peter's Tabernacle must take seriously what the New Testament says regarding community to include the issue of race. Peter's Tabernacle must reappraise its approach to ministry. Such a reappraisal of how ministry is done at Peter's Tabernacle means transcending the

¹¹ It should be noted that although the SBC discontinued its support of American Baptist College, which began as the American Baptist Theological Seminary, the partnership lasted for 71 years. Dr. L.K. Williams, former president of NBC, USA, Inc. helped begin the working relationship with the SBC in 1925. In 1940, Dr. Williams was the victim of a plane crash, yet the institution endured for another 55 years.

¹² Preamble of the *National Baptist Convention, USA, Inc. Revised Constitution*, "THEREFORE, we hereby adopt this revised constitution for the National Baptist Convention, USA, Inc., and declare that all other constitutions, laws, or parts of constitutions and laws, including amendments, drafts, or other governance documents deemed controlling on our fellowship, are hereby declared null and void except for the *Holy Bible*."

¹³ *National Baptist Convention, USA, Inc. Revised Constitution, Article III: Section 1. Objectives and Corporate Purposes* "To unite National Baptist churches, district associations, and state conventions in Christian evangelism so as to fulfill the Great Commission for our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ through preaching, teaching, and healing . . ."

congregation's history, traditions, racial composition, denominational-affiliations, means of fellowship and approaches to evangelism. To introduce such a radical departure from 142 years of tradition might have been tantamount to heresy or even blasphemy within predominantly black congregational settings at one point in history.

However, this is precisely why a reengagement with the New Testament, and more specifically how the Great Commission, can be actualized by the PTMBC family for the purpose of creating a nurturing community faith as seen in the Acts of the Apostles. Dr. Elmer L. Towns, during a DMIN lecture at Liberty University¹⁴ performed an exegesis of Matt. 28:19-20 placing considerable emphasis on the word ἔθνη (*ethnē*) most often translated as “nations.” Dr. Towns went on to explain the importance of both Thomas Road Baptist Church and Liberty University being places where race would not be a barrier to cultivating a community of believers. Solidifying his point, Dr. Towns relayed to the class a conversation he had with the late Dr. Jerry Falwell. When approached by Dr. Falwell to become the cofounder of what would eventually grow into Liberty University, Dr. Towns voiced his position on accepting students of different ethnicities and nationalities to Dr. Falwell saying, “I’m not going to build another Bob Jones.”¹⁵

Through a direct application of the Gospel of Jesus Christ to both an academic and ecclesial setting, Dr. Towns implicitly began reshaping the Missionary Baptist denomination as the current 3rd Vice President of the General Baptist State Convention of North Carolina, the Reverend Ricky L. Banks is a graduate of what was then Liberty Baptist Theological Seminary (now

¹⁴ Dr. Towns delivered this lecture in EVAN 851-394: 21st Century Methods for the Revitalization of the Church on the campus of Liberty University. This Doctor of Ministry intensive was held from August 1, 2011 to August 5, 2011.

¹⁵ Ibid. Dr. Towns' comments here were into reference to Bob Jones University and its former admissions policy, which prohibited the admission of married black students until 1971 and unmarried black students until 1975.

Liberty University Baptist Theological Seminary). Dr. Falwell and Dr. Towns' adherence to the Great Commission has had and will have an enduring impact on how ministry is done within the Missionary Baptist tradition. Increasingly, there is an openness amongst the leadership of KEMBA and the GBSC-NC as to how the educational opportunities offered through the School of Religion and Liberty University Baptist Theological Seminary can benefit Missionary Baptists throughout North Carolina but especially in the southeastern region, where access to theological education is often limited. Reengineering a denomination born in the postbellum South for effective twenty-first century evangelism will require faith and an unyielding commitment from leaders and parishioners, yet the potential exists for KEMBA and its sister associations to become de facto missionary agencies for sending evangelists throughout various communities within eastern North Carolina.

Furthermore, as Dr. Falwell and Dr. Towns exemplified in the founding of Liberty University, there must exist a clear and Biblical intentionality in the goals of the associations and their constituent churches. This intentionality includes reconciling traditions with the current needs of lost persons in the twenty-first century. The Missionary Baptists of eastern North Carolina cannot be so weighed down by the forces of its history that tradition takes precedent over the spreading of God's Word. Rather than increasing church buildings by their square-footage, there must return to the forefront of Missionary Baptist doctrine, a committed effort to increase the Church by way of converted souls. This intentional form of evangelism also requires a strategy that decentralizes church-related operations from sanctuaries and various headquarters to embedding small groups of a Biblically-grounded, faithful men and women in the midst of everyday life. There must exist a decentralization and dissemination of believers beyond the Iron Mine

community, Luke records the precedent for this type of decentralization in Acts 1:8 where he writes,

But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth. Acts 1:8

Peter's Tabernacle must achieve what Dr. Falwell achieved in the founding and successive growth of Thomas Road Baptist Church and what he along with Dr. Towns achieved in the founding and expansion of Liberty University—the establishment of a ministry and service to humankind that transcends the forces of history and takes precedent over social dictates while remaining grounded in Scripture. This achievement requires that three fundamental things occur. First, there must be a shift from autocracy to group leadership and accountability. The black church tradition writ large hinges upon the charisma of the senior pastor. This type of autocracy during more turbulent times in the history of the United States had its purpose. However, this type of top-down leadership is problematic on the basis that Jesus Himself appointed His disciples to take on various tasks as seen in Lk. 10:1 and elsewhere throughout the New Testament.

An institutionalized approach to ministry, in which all courses of action must be micro-managed by the senior pastor, is unbiblical. It is also important to mention here that such over-dependence on the senior pastor also weakens and slows the spiritual growth of parishioners causing the charisma of the pastor to substitute the commitment of followers. The tendency for such leaders to be overworked is a reality seen both within and beyond the walls of the church as Robert M. Franklin notes,

Charisma tends to *concentrate power* in a single leader who becomes vulnerable to outsiders and susceptible to the usual human frailties that compromise so many leaders (money, sex, power, or drugs). Even more dangerous, charisma often undermines and *devalues other styles* of leadership such as more bureaucratic, grassroots, and collaborative styles.¹⁶

There is a tragically prevailing sense throughout much of the black church tradition that the senior pastor is to serve as a dictatorial *de facto* “messiah” versus a skilled enabler, who develops the gifts and leadership qualities of the congregants. By shifting away from an autocratic, institutionalized form of ministry, in which the senior pastor serves as the engine for every initiative, to a group-based model that encourages the development of new leaders, Peter's Tabernacle would have taken its most significant step toward revitalization. Secondly, there must be commitment to developing group-based ministries at Peter's Tabernacle. It is impractical to shift duties from the senior pastor to parishioners without training those parishioners to carry out those responsibilities.

So often, the senior pastor is viewed as *the* person responsible for bringing souls to Christ, and unless there is a reappraisal of the senior pastor's responsibilities that includes educating, training and equipping believers to carry out the Great Commission then any effort to shift Peter's Tabernacle away from an Institutional model of ministry to an Incarnational model of ministry will be met with confusion and viewed as an attempt for the senior pastor to do less work. Unofficially, Peter's Tabernacle is already comprised of various small groups, but what is being discussed here is the *intentional* formation of small groups capable of carrying out acts of ministry and service more traditionally assigned to the senior pastor or deacons.

Finally, there must be a visible component of service associated with every evangelistic effort that Peter's Tabernacle makes to reach lost persons. While the proclamation of the Good News is

¹⁶ Robert M. Franklin, *Crisis in the Village: Restoring African American Communities*. Minneapolis, MN: Fortress, 2007), 136.

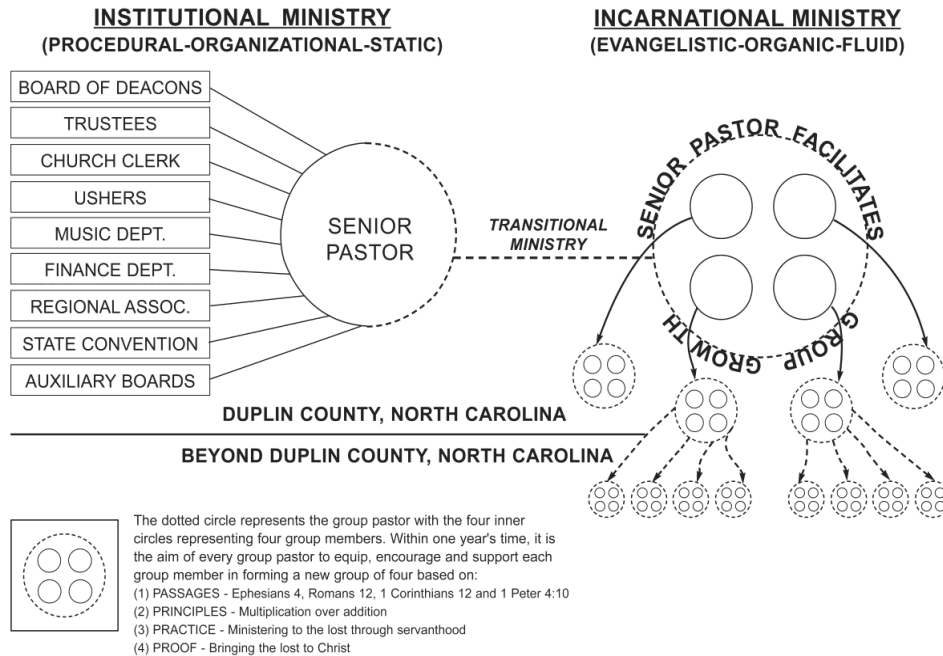
what distinguishes evangelistic from mere uplifting or insightful rhetoric, accompanying the preaching of the Gospel must be the actualization of the Gospel in a tangible and organic fashion. Persons beyond the walls of Peter's Tabernacle should be able to *touch* the people and works of Peter's Tabernacle, which in turn *grows* the congregation beyond its edifice on Highway 41 West. A shift from autocracy to congregational democracy and the development of proactive group-based ministries are needed to return to Peter's Tabernacle Missionary Baptist Church to its missional vitality and equip the congregation for ministry in the twenty-first century. It is unlikely that within the foreseeable future such a tectonic shift can occur within congregational life at Peter's Tabernacle. However, there exists a method by which elements from which Peter's Tabernacle's Institutional, and stagnate, model of ministry can be marginally-adjoined to an Incarnational model of ministry.

CHAPTER FIVE

FROM DELICATE MERGER TO BOLD REEMERGENCE

Many of Peter's Tabernacle's traditions are so deeply embedded into the life of the congregation that any model of ministry, no matter how beneficial, that does not maintain some semblance of the congregation's original structure (that has so long governed the church) will have a lessened impact if any impact at all. This author proposes that the skeletal framework of the standing committees and auxiliaries of Peter's Tabernacle be left intact as the senior pastor leads the initial small group and maintains that framework. This Hybrid Model of ministry could simultaneously rejuvenate Peter's Tabernacle evangelistically and missionally without upsetting the administrative *status quo*.

Figure 4.



The Hybrid Model for revitalizing and restructuring Peter's Tabernacle depicts how a hybrid of a traditional church model and a small group model *could* operate within Peter's Tabernacle. Pictured on the left side of the figure above is the Institutional model of ministry comprised of the Board of Deacons, Trustees, Church Clerk, Ushers, Music Department, Finance Department with recognition of delegates to KEMBA and the GBSC-NC. At any given time, there are a number of auxiliaries that plan programs and other church events, who are also represented in the model. These offices are referred to as the Church Council. The functions of the Church Council are procedural, organizational and static. While many of the offices depicted in this model are referred to as “departments,” most of these departments consist of one person with the exception of the Board of Trustees of which Peter's Tabernacle reportedly has six. At any given time, many of these offices and duties are undertaken by various persons with some degree of fluidity and undefined job descriptions. In the figure, the role of senior pastor is depicted in the form of a circle that is solid where the Institutional Ministry of Peter's Tabernacle is governed by pastoral leadership and dotted to depict the senior pastor as facilitator of the Transitional Ministry.

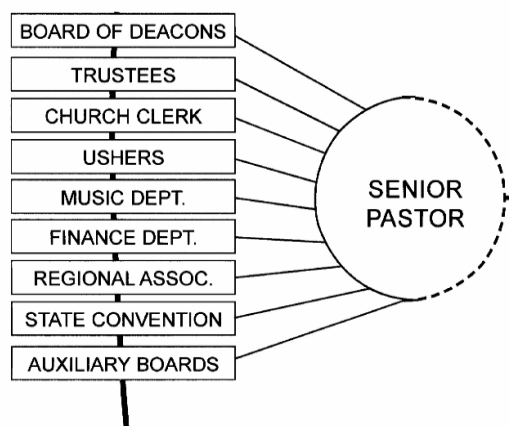


Figure 5.

This Institutional model of ministry is rife with impediments to doing effective ministry. Noticeably, the words “department,” “association,” “board,” and “convention” describe nearly every component of the leadership at Peter's Tabernacle. Words such as “ministry” may informally be used in meetings (mainly by the senior pastor) but administration not ministry is the operative focus of the Church Council. There obviously must be attention paid to the administrative demands of Peter's Tabernacle, but this overemphasis on programmatic traditions and ceremonial duties contributed to a decline in enthusiasm amongst our children and young adults until the past two years. What changed was a return to the essential elements of sharing the Gospel as found in the New Testament. However, before evangelizing youth populations in the Iron Mine community, for instance, this author had to engage the social context in which these young persons lived.

If Peter's Tabernacle Missionary Baptist Church is going to be *truly* missional and not just *rhetorically* missional, there must be an intentional reengagement with the wider community surrounding the edifice. The same especially goes for KEMBA as there has been, since its inception, a far greater emphasis on building structures than on developing disciple-making disciples. While fiscal soundness and square-footage is not unimportant, Jesus Christ calls us to make disciples of men, women and children rather than make money and construct buildings. It is indeed true that ministries have to be financed and owning facilities simplifies the logistics of maintaining a ministry, but when corporatism shifts the focus of pastors, deacons, teachers, evangelists and missionaries *away* from carrying out the Great Commission *to* building a corporation in the name of Jesus Christ, then congregational stagnancy and a decline in spiritual growth will be the direct result. Critics of this shift in focus often fail to see that if a

congregation, or any body of believers such as an association or convention, would invest in reaching beyond its physical structures, there would eventually be more people to fill and support those physical structures.

Also within jeopardy within the predominantly black Missionary Baptist context is the nuclear family, which has traditionally served as the primary arbiter for moral development and Christian teaching. The social context in which so many young black Americans find themselves is one where the absenteeism of fathers, access to a quality education and opportunities for economic advancement often distract from any other realities being of great importance—to include salvation. Within much of the rural black community, church attendance is often conflated with a Christian discipleship. This misnomer is rarely challenged, yet any model of ministry that will effectively revitalize congregational life in a predominantly black context such as Peter's Tabernacle must reinstitute a *type* of family to cultivate the sense of community as described in Acts. There are vibrant growing families within many Missionary Baptist congregations as well. However, even this can be a problem as in Peter's Tabernacle where the congregation is visibly divided into family factions, departments and boards. Such a rigid, congregational structure sends a clear message to lost persons, who may visit or inquire of how they might join Peter's Tabernacle that the church is for “insiders only.”

A Transitional Ministry must be developed that meets lost persons in their own context, introducing them to the Gospel and not an administration and ultimately places new believers in a community-setting that fosters growth. This type of ministry also begins the much needed process of weaning believers off of the autocratic form of pastoral leadership that characterizes so many churches—black Baptist churches in particular.

The Transitional Ministry led by the senior pastor in his formation of the initial small group is critical in developing a community-setting. As opposed to simply engaging in what is typically defined as “outreach ministry,” which is often a programmatic and evasive form of missions, the Transitional Ministry requires the senior pastor to engage in a multi-dimensional approach to evangelism with mission work to be done by the newly-formed group. To more clearly define this multi-dimensional approach to evangelism, Dr. David A. Wheeler in *Evangelism Is . . .* provides an operative understanding, where he writes:

1. Evangelism is a lifestyle not merely an event. It takes time.
2. Evangelism that is effective with secularized people comes from a result of Christians, who are willing to *be* witnesses, not merely *do* witnessing.
3. Lifestyle evangelism intentionally combines both proclamation and affirmation over a period of time through a friendship.
4. Evangelism is more than merely reaping. It is the result of plowing, planting, watering and reaping.¹

To distinguish evangelism from missions here, it is equally critical to note that Dr. Wheeler defines missions as, “...the process of contextualizing the gospel message into culture.”² From this very important distinction, it is clear as to why the senior pastor, in developing the initial small group within this Hybrid Model, will have to engage the Iron Mine community and the wider community by intentionally and sincerely sharing the gospel through *deeds* and *words*. The goal of this intentional evangelism is to select four individuals, who convert to the faith as a result of intentional, personal evangelism. It is critical that this initial small group consist of

¹ Dave Earley and David Wheeler, *Evangelism Is...How to Share Jesus With Passion and Confidence* (Nashville, TN: Broadman and Holman Academic, 2010), 186.

² David Wheeler, Chapter 8: “Outreach: Back to Basics in Strategic Planning,” Jonathan Falwell, ed. *Innovate Church: Innovative Leadership for the Next Generation Church* (Nashville, TN: Broadman and Holman, 2008), 121.

converts to the faith and not “transfers” from other congregations, as the four individuals in the initial small group represent a complete break from the Institutional Model. Although, these four converts would be baptized into membership at Peter's Tabernacle for the purpose of having a church home, by design, the development of this initial small group would occur primarily under the auspices and guidance of the senior pastor. This places an immense amount of responsibility upon the senior pastor in the formation and nurturing of this initial small group for a number of reasons.

First, the balance of maintaining the administrative functions of Peter's Tabernacle would continue to fall under the purview of the senior pastor, while the demands of leading Bible discussions, facilitating group meetings and organizing evangelistic projects would also rest with the senior pastor. Secondly, as the projected time for developing and training this initial group is one year, this means for approximately three to six months, the senior pastor is essentially leading *two* congregations—one congregation a traditional, autocracy and the other congregation an organic, fluid small group of converts being nurtured and prepared to draw others into the faith. While leadership of the Institutional Ministry pictured in the Hybrid Model mainly consists of top-down, autocratic leadership, the facilitation of the Incarnational Ministry to which the senior pastor transitions is based on four³ things:

- (1) PASSAGES: Eph. 4:23-32, Rom. 12:5-21, 1 Cor. 12:1-12 and 1 Pet. 4:10
- (2) PRINCIPLES: Multiplication over addition
- (3) PRACTICE: Ministering to the lost through servanthood
- (4) PROOF: Bringing the lost to Christ

³ During a lecture in EVAN 851: 21st Century Methods for the Revitalization of the Church delivered on August 2, 2011 on the campus of Liberty University, Dr. Rodney W. Dempsey explained that, “The organism must reproduce leaders, disciples and churches,” and that “passages, principles, practices and proof” result in disciples being able to reproduce other disciples. These four tenets, which serve as the guiding focus of how the senior pastor in the initial small group within the Hybrid Model, and the pastors of the subsequent groups, are adapted from Professor Dempsey's insights detailed during this lecture.

As bringing lost persons to Jesus Christ demands inculcating within nonbelievers a sense of renewal made possible only by the death, burial and Resurrection of Jesus Christ, critical to developing new disciples is providing them with the Biblical basis on which their renewed lives are made evident to the greater community. Admonishment for living a committed and forthright life is found in Eph. 4:23-32, which reads,

23And be renewed in the spirit of your mind; 24And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness.25 Wherefore putting away lying, speak every man truth with his neighbour: for we are members one of another.26 Be ye angry, and sin not: let not the sun go down upon your wrath:27Neither give place to the devil.28Let him that stole steal no more: but rather let him labour, working with his hands the thing which is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth. 29Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers . 30And grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption.31Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice:32And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you. Eph. 4:23-32

While the entire Epistle to the Ephesians would serve as a centerpiece of group discussion throughout the earliest stages of developing the initial small group, the fourth chapter of this epistle would remain a clarion call to these young disciples that a Christian rhetoric will never supplant Christian living as a means of drawing new converts. Next, these four converts will begin their journey to discover their own unique gifts, abilities and means of contributing to the Kingdom. Again, that members of the initial small group will always keep their commitment to Christ before them, the twelfth chapter of Paul's Epistle to the Romans serves as a focal point for the development of spiritual gifts. This chapter is especially applicable to the development of spiritual gifts in the Hybrid Model reading,

5 So we, being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another.6 Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, whether prophecy, let us prophesy according to the proportion of faith;7Or ministry, let us wait on our ministering: or he that teacheth, on teaching;8 Or he that exhorteth , on exhortation: he that giveth, let him do it with simplicity; he that ruleth , with diligence; he that sheweth mercy, with cheerfulness.9 Let love be without dissimulation. Abhor that which is evil; cleave to that which is good.10 Be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love; in honour preferring one another;11 Not slothful in business; fervent in spirit; serving the Lord;12 Rejoicing in

hope; patient in tribulation; continuing instant in prayer;13 Distributing to the necessity of saints; given to hospitality.14 Bless them which persecute you: bless , and curse not.15 Rejoice with them that do rejoice , and weep with them that weep. 16 Be of the same mind one toward another. Mind not high things, but condescend to men of low estate. Be not wise in your own conceits.17Recompense to no man evil for evil. Provide things honest in the sight of all men.18If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men.19 Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord. 20Therefore if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink : for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head.21 Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good. Rom. 12:5-21

As reinforcement to the emphasis placed on developing both a spiritual gifts, Paul makes evident in 1 Cor. 12:1-12 where Paul writes,

1Now concerning spiritual gifts, brethren, I would not have you ignorant. 2 Ye know that ye were Gentiles, carried away unto these dumb idols, even as ye were led. 3Wherefore I give you to understand, that no man speaking by the Spirit of God calleth Jesus accursed: and that no man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost.4Now there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit.5And there are differences of administrations, but the same Lord.6And there are diversities of operations, but it is the same God which worketh all in all.7But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal. 8For to one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom; to another the word of knowledge by the same Spirit; 9 To another faith by the same Spirit; to another the gifts of healing by the same Spirit; 10 To another the working of miracles ; to another prophecy ; to another discerning of spirits ; to another divers kinds of tongues ; to another the interpretation of tongues:11But all these worketh that one and the selfsame Spirit, dividing to every man severally as he will . 12For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body: so also is Christ. 1Cor. 12:1-12

This Scriptural importance placed on the development of spiritual gifts is punctuated in the First Epistle of Peter, where we find,

10 As every man hath received the gift, even so minister the same one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God. 1 Pet. 4:10

The reason that such a strong emphasis would be placed on the development of spiritual gifts and individual abilities within the initial small group facilitated by senior pastor is manifold. So often, new converts and longtime believers become over dependent on the senior pastor to initiate and facilitate nearly every aspect of ministry within a congregation unaware and unconcerned for the spiritual gifts that God has placed within every believer. By immediately shifting focus away from himself to the members of the initial small group by way of

establishing the Biblical basis on which the Holy Spirit endows all believers with gifts and abilities, new converts become Biblically-grounded, dependent upon God rather than their senior pastor/facilitator and are disassociated from the entrapment of administrative procedures and historical traditions that fail to win souls to Jesus Christ. None of this, however, occurs until every group member has been baptized into faith. Dr. Rodney W. Dempsey states the supreme importance of carrying out the Great Commission in this manner writing,

. . . when a person makes a decision to follow Christ, he or she should be baptized in water. Now different people have different beliefs on how baptism should take place. Some believe the person should be immersed, while others believe water should be sprinkled or poured over a person's head as a demonstration of one's new faith in Christ. Whatever you believe, it is important that you help that new believer in Christ take a stand and identify with the death, burial and resurrection of Christ.⁴

As problematic as the Institutional model of ministry is within the Missionary Baptist, there remains the necessary compliance with Christ that we baptize new believers into the faith. Again, what makes this proposed Hybrid Model for revitalizing and restructuring Peter's Tabernacle an actual hybrid is that new converts, who comprise the initial small group are in no way isolated from a larger congregational body—these converts are simply being equipped and trained to carry out the Great Commission in a manner unpracticed throughout most Missionary Baptist congregations. Members of the initial small group may even find themselves called to another

⁴ Dave Earley and Rod Dempsey, *The Pocket Guide to Leading a Small Group: 52 Ways to Help You and Small Group Grow* (Houston, TX: Touch, 2007), 18. Dr. Dempsey is joined here in describing the importance of Baptism and a convert's new birth in Jesus Christ by Peter Scazzero and Warren Bird in *The Emotionally Healthy Church: A Strategy for Discipleship That Actually Changes Lives* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2003), 100-101. Citing Jesus' conversation with Nicodemus concerning being born again, Scazzero and Bird write, "Jesus declares only by a direct intervention of God can you or I be changed. We require a complete change at the root or base of who we are. The new birth can be described as the action of God whereby his very life and power are implanted in the base of your heart so the root is transformed," 100-101. Scazzero and Bird then offer a Pauline example of how new converts are adopted into God's family when they note, "Paul illustrates the gospel by using the profound truth of Roman adoption when a child was taken out of his previous status and placed in a new, permanent relationship with his new father. Old debts were canceled. The child was given absolute stability, assurance, security, and authority with his sonship. He or she could now use the term "Abba" ("Daddy"), a strong but intimate word used by children with their father...We are given a new name (Christian), a new inheritance (freedom, glory, hope, resources a hundredfold), and new power (the Holy Spirit) to live in this new life," 101-102.

community of faith, and the Hybrid Model actually thrives on transience. After one year's time, every member of the group will begin the work of evangelizing the lost for the purpose of facilitating four new groups. The primary role of the senior pastor is to catalyze the initial small group and prepare these new converts to reproduce the model which nurtured them in the faith. The regular meeting and evangelistic work of the initial small group and successive groups is not meant to replace the all-important act of fellowshiping with other believers. However, the priority of every group facilitator developing disciples in the faith capable of evangelizing, which exemplifies the Biblical principle of *multiplication* as opposed to addition. As the facilitation of the initial small group relies upon Biblical passages, the principles of multiplication, servanthood evangelism, congregational fellowship are maintained.

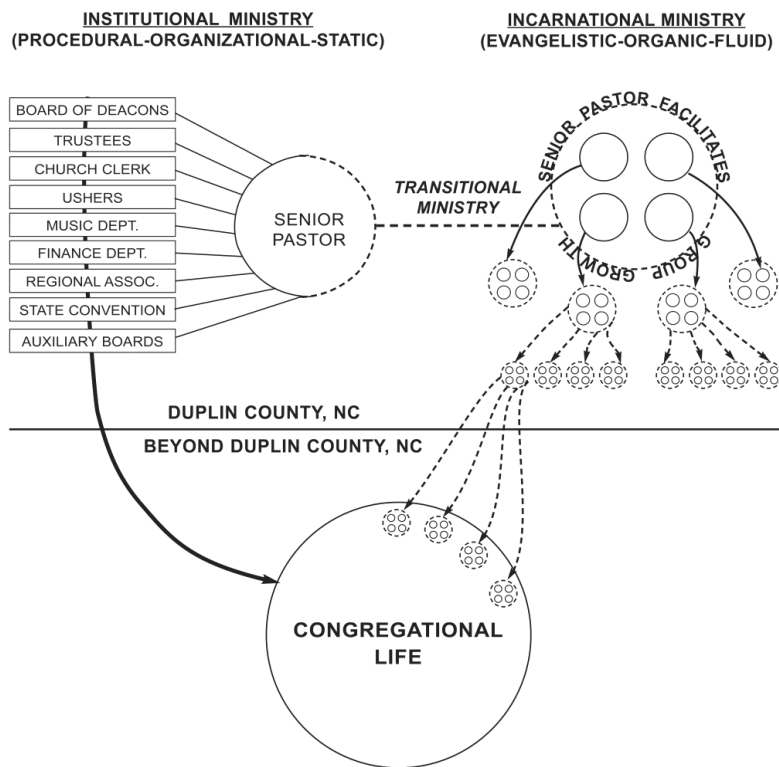


Figure 6.

In this way, once the senior pastor has *sent* all four members of the initial small group to begin evangelizing the lost, there remains a reality of connectedness to other believers. Along with Passages and Principles comes the actual Practice of ministering to the lost through servanthood evangelism, where Scriptural-grounding, spiritual development and the Biblical principle of multiplication cultivated by the initial small group members is carried out in each group member's context. Even before the senior pastor relinquishes his role as group facilitator, the initial small group members would have steadily been developing evangelistic strategies for reaching the lost without direct supervision by the senior pastor. Steve Sjogren writes in

Conspiracy of Kindness:

If you are a leader, give your group permission to minister. Leaders of small groups need to *regularly* give people permission to go out into the community and do ministry. They also need to keep explaining that such involvement is perfectly fine for laypeople. Most Christians have to unlearn centuries-old mentality of waiting for the clergy or trained professionals to lead the way. Martin Luther wanted to see each believer view himself or herself as a priest or minister, but sadly that aspect of the Reformation has never taken hold. Few pastors would object to having their people doing ministry in the community.⁵

While trained clergy lend a certain gravitas and validity to ministry in general, there is an expectation for clergy to be skilled evangelists and expositors of God's Word, yet there is an entirely different type of legitimacy that converts are able to convey by virtue of their renewed lives. Throughout the New Testament, it was the change in the way people lived their lives after having come into contact with Jesus that drew more people to be saved. The four members of the initial small group, having been baptized into the Christian faith, mentored by their senior pastor, furthered developed as evangelists within their own contexts for ministry and equipped with practical guides such as Dr. David Earley and Dr. Rodney W. Dempsey's *Leading a Small Group* and Dr. Bill Search's *Simple Small Groups*, can effectively bring the lost to Christ. As Passages,

⁵ Steve, Sjogren. *Conspiracy of Kindness: A Unique Approach to Sharing the Love of Jesus*, rev. ed. (Ventura, CA: Regal, 2003), 214.

Principles and Practice have been discussed, the Proof of effective evangelism is that each group member is capable of reproducing the Incarnational model of ministry catalyzed by the senior pastor. In an area as economically depressed as Duplin County, both servanthood evangelism and viral evangelism would be ideal approaches to reaching nonbelievers. Servanthood evangelism (unlike programmatic church outreach efforts and limited personal interaction) demands that a believer become acquainted with the context of another person's life and be led by the Holy Spirit to say and do those things, which actualize the love of God in the lives of those, who do not yet know God. According to Dr. David A. Wheeler, "Servanthood evangelism is a combination of simple acts of kindness and intentional personal evangelism."⁶ Whereas viral evangelism is the exponential reproduction of the same principles upon which servanthood evangelism and personal evangelism are based. Dr. Wheeler writes of viral evangelism:

True evangelism does not require cumbersome programs. On the contrary, evangelism should be a natural (organic) expression of every believer. Genuine Christians should be infected by the evangelism virus. It does not start at the church building; rather it organically initiates from the heart and soul of dedicated believers who are on mission with God to impact the unsaved world with the message of Christ. It is not something you try to do as an expression of your duty to Christ. It is who you are in Him. Just as Christ lives in us as Christians, He should also freely minister through us as His disciples.⁷

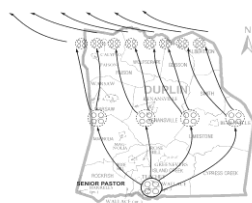


Figure 7.

⁶ David Wheeler, Chapter 8: "Outreach: Back to Basics in Strategic Planning," Jonathan Falwell, ed. *Innovate Church: Innovative Leadership for the Next Generation Church*, 139.

⁷ Dave Earley and David Wheeler, *Evangelism Is...How to Share Jesus With Passion and Confidence*, 115.

While the Hybrid Model to restructure and revitalize Peter's Tabernacle initially begins with the senior pastor maintaining a dual presence as the leader of an organizational structure and the centerpiece of an incarnational small group, the small group eventually “goes viral.” The initial small group becomes a viral-evangelistic entity when every member of the initial small group begins duplicating the Incarnational Model themselves which results in conversions that transcend locality. As opposed to the senior pastor serving as a type of “missionary-in-chief” or even “evangelist-in-chief,” the second generation of small groups, are comprised of what Dr. Rodney W. Dempsey calls “reproducible-producers.”⁸ Within this exponential growth is also an opportunity to address the gravity of Missionary Baptist history and make applicable, in a very real sense, the sociocultural implications of the Great Commission—this means engaging the issue of race and ethnicity within the context of Christian life.

The issue of race and ethnicity has been and remains both a sensitive and often unapproachable topic within many American churches despite the New Testament, particularly in Acts 2:5-11, openly attesting to the various races, ethnicities and cultures represented on Pentecost. The sensitivity and unapproachable nature of this topic has been further complicated by the sometimes tumultuous sociopolitical leanings of predominantly white congregations versus those of predominantly black congregations. Dr. David A. Wheeler details how this schism, between conservatives and liberals, has direct reverberations within evangelistic circles stating,

⁸ During a lecture in EVAN 851: 21st Century Methods for the Revitalization of the Church delivered on August 2, 2011 on the campus of Liberty University, Dr. Rodney W. Dempsey used this term describe disciples, who are capable of making new disciples.

Over the years, one of the raging battles in conservative evangelical circles has been the constant tension in evangelism between building relationships (incarnational) and simply sharing the message (informational). The perception has been that liberals served the people's needs without ever sharing the message. On the contrary, in many cases conservatives would aggressively share the message without ever considering the needs of the recipients. The truth is, evangelism is not an either/or proposition, rather it requires both dimensions to be effective.⁹

This “raging battle,” between conservative evangelicals and liberals as described by Professor Wheeler is further exacerbated when the gravity of American history and the issue of race becomes a factor in congregational life. In order for the Hybrid Model to be truly successful, the real possibility of transcending racial, ethnic and cultural barriers must be discussed in light of the New Testament. This author mentioned earlier how the exegesis of Matt. 28:19-20 performed by Dr. Elmer L. Towns drew particular attention to the word *ἕθνη* and how that hermeneutic resulted in both Thomas Road Baptist Church and Liberty University becoming paragons of not only racial reconciliation but racial transcendence. Furthermore, the June 19, 2012 election of the Reverend Fred Luter as president of the Southern Baptist Convention allows for a significant dialogue to begin amongst Missionary Baptists and Southern Baptists, whose churches are within close proximity to one another throughout southeastern North Carolina.

Before the lost can be evangelized, it is critical that members of the Body, particularly members sharing a common doctrinal bond, be capable of discussing our oneness in Christ. These “raging battles,” rather between conservatives or liberals within the Church or members of different races, are at their core, unbiblical. One of the strongest pronouncements to make this point was issued in 1995 by the Southern Baptist Convention in its “Resolution on Racial Reconciliation,” which stated in part,

Be it finally RESOLVED, That we pledge our commitment to the Great Commission task of making

⁹ David Wheeler, Chapter 8: “Outreach: Back to Basics in Strategic Planning,” Jonathan Falwell, ed. *Innovate Church*, 138.

disciples of all people (Matthew 28:19), confessing that in the church God is calling together one people from every tribe and nation (Revelation 5:9), and proclaiming that the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ is the only certain and sufficient ground upon which redeemed persons will stand together in restored family union as joint-heirs with Christ (Romans 8:17).¹⁰

Despite an ecclesial history, at times, characterized by distrust or even resentment, it is possible for Missionary Baptists, and black Americans in general, to reach beyond the boundaries of tradition and conventional wisdom as the ultimate demonstration of Christian love. The very heart of the Great Commission demands that followers of Jesus transcend these boundaries. Giving a broader context for how this transcendence can be lived out in everyday life, Dr. Tony Perkins and Bishop Harry R. Jackson, Jr. write,

Ethnicity and race are often an integral part of a local church's assignment, and very often a church's racial mix is driven by location. Therefore, the fact that one church is integrated while another is monoracial does not tell the whole story. Rather, we maintain that church services are like the huddles in football games between plays. A racially diverse huddle means nothing if we cannot run successful plays and win the game. The game the church is involved in is not a game at all; it is a battle for the heart and soul of our nation. As we—all of us—pursue social involvement and policy change, we will simultaneously solve our own internal issues of pride, division, and prejudice along with major community issues.¹¹

Dr. Perkins and Bishop Jackson are a microcosmic representation of the explosive potential for fellowship that can exist within every small group that forms within this Hybrid Model. There must be sound Biblical doctrine and community support in the birthing of each small group that sets the tone for the successive small groups. To this point, this author stands in a unique position to facilitate both a healthy dialogue between Southern Baptists and Missionary Baptists and the formation of a racially inclusive small group. Prior to being elected senior pastor of Peter's Tabernacle, this author was one of four candidates seeking the Republican nomination

¹⁰ *Resolution on Racial Reconciliation on the 150th Anniversary of the Southern Baptist Convention*, adopted at the Sesquicentennial meeting of the Southern Baptist Convention assembled in Atlanta, Georgia, June 20 22, 1995.

¹¹ Harry R. Jackson, Jr. and Tony Perkins, *Personal Faith, Public Policy* (Lake Mary, FL: Front Line, 2008), 140.

in North Carolina's First Congressional District during the congressional primary season of 2010.¹² While there are differing perspectives as to the extent to which Christians should be involved in public policy, Bishop Harry R. Jackson, Jr. and Dr. Tony Perkins argue that,

Someone's values will always be reflected in public policy. Almost every government policy decision is a value judgment. In this postmodern world, where moral relativism is the philosophy of choice, these value judgments are often based on the conditions of the moment rather than the objective, transcendent, biblical truth. This is where the two sides diverge. As Bible-believing Christians we believe that there is absolute truth, a view, incidentally, that was held by all Christians and many Americans until the turn of the twentieth century.¹³

Along similar lines, Dean of Faculty at Midwestern Theological Seminary, Dr. Jerry Sutton asserts that pastors should, “preach on the relevant issues,”¹⁴ as “Christians need to be involved in public policy.”¹⁵ However, Dr. Sutton advises pastors to, “Remain aware of the culture but preach a transcendent gospel as the gospel is transcendent.”¹⁶ The experience of running, managing and serving as treasurer of a congressional campaign, while challenging, ultimately afforded this author the opportunity to hear-from and speak-to a theologically, socially, racially and culturally polarized electorate towards the end of ministering with far less inhibitions. That experience especially equips me to birth a small group that defies the socio-racial norms of congregational life throughout Duplin, Wayne, Sampson, Pender, Brunswick and New Hanover counties. By birthing a small group reflective of the cultural inclusivity as described by Luke in Acts and appropriating (within the context of southeastern North Carolina) the same approach to

¹² Matthew Whittle, “Grimes to Challenge Butterfield for U.S. House,” *Goldsboro News-Argus* 284 (2010): 1-3.

¹³ Harry R. Jackson, Jr. and Tony Perkins, *Personal Faith, Public Policy* (Lake Mary, FL: Front Line, 2008), 223.

¹⁴ These comments are taken from guest lecturer Dr. Jerry Sutton delivered in the Doctor of Ministry seminar EVAN 997: “Building a Dynamic Evangelism Strategy” instructed by Dr. David A. Wheeler on the campus of Liberty University in Lynchburg, Virginia on Wednesday, May 25, 2011.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Ibid.

the Great Commission as appropriated by Dr. Falwell and Dr. Towns in Lynchburg, the Incarnational Model of ministry implemented by Peter's Tabernacle would develop as seen below.

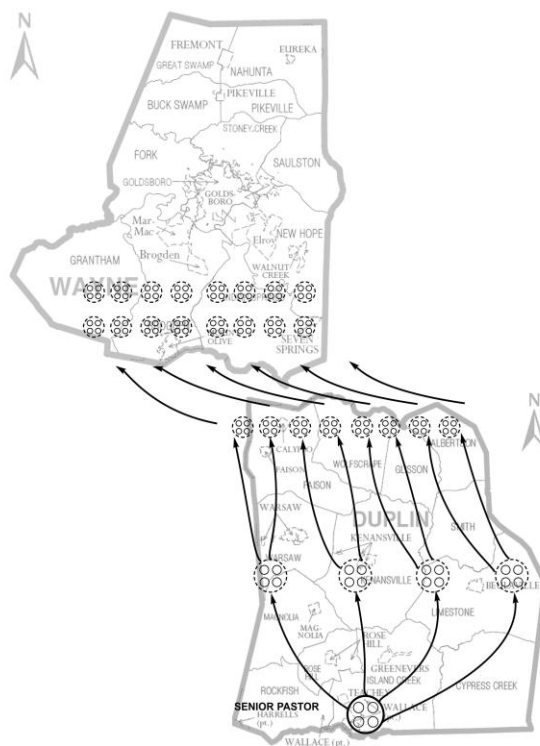


Figure 8.

Professor Dempsey would describe the small group growth pictured above as *exponential* growth and speaks to the challenges of cultivating such growth by noting,

People in small groups often feel an emotional uneasiness as leadership discusses birthing a new group. The motivation for starting new groups is simple. The world is growing at an exponential rate and any system or structure that is not based upon an exponential strategy is destined to fail. That is why we must design and develop disciples and churches that multiply! However, small group multiplication goes against the grain of most people's desire to keep their fellowship in tact. I call this the 'us four and no more' factor.¹⁷

¹⁷ Dave Earley and Rod Dempsey, *The Pocket Guide to Leading a Small Group: 52 Ways to Help You and Small Group Grow* (Houston, TX: Touch, 2007), 117.

The 'us four no more' phenomenon which Dr. Dempsey describes is especially applicable to the formation of the initial small group formed by the senior pastor in the Hybrid Model. However, the presence of a brick and mortar edifice and an administrative structure serves a helpful purpose here, as members of the initial small group would understand, from the outset, they are members of a much larger congregational body. The development of the members of the initial small group is, in actuality, the development of four group leaders. While this task is tremendous, through prayer and foundational New Testament teaching, each group leader will understand that,

One of our most difficult challenges as Great Commission leaders is to keep the focus on the lost in a disciple making structure. Helping people to lift their eyes (off themselves) and to focus on others is a challenge, but it is a worthwhile goal.¹⁸

Dr. Dempsey elaborates noting,

When a disciple is fully trained, he or she will be involved somehow and somewhere in the process of making disciples who develop into leaders who make disciples. In a group setting this is difficult, but if you keep the focus on the harvest fields and on intimacy with God and on developing disciples who produce leaders, it will become a reality.¹⁹

As developing leaders capable of evangelizing the harvest fields of Duplin County and beyond is itself a rewarding challenge, the Hybrid Model also requires that the administrative structure of Peter's Tabernacle remain intact and not disrupted by the senior pastor's development of the initial small group. While the senior pastor's energies will at times be divided between the administrative demands of Peter's Tabernacle and the evangelistic demands of the initial small group, these divided energies will motivate the four disciples, in the initial small group, to take a greater leadership role in the group. Increasingly, members of the initial small group will lead

¹⁸ Ibid., 118.

¹⁹ Ibid.

weekly Bible discussions, organize prayer calls, plan servant evangelism and assume those duties first carried out by the senior pastor. Simply put, the Transitional Ministry dimension of the Hybrid Model involves the senior pastor developing four converts to Christ, who themselves become capable of leading others to Christ and developing new converts in the faith.

Unlike the Institutional structure which requires the senior pastor to serve as a type of overseer of programs and procedures, the Incarnational dimension of the Hybrid Model allows the senior pastor to put the initial small group on “auto-pilot” in which each member of the group is capable of actualizing an evangelistic agenda. The ultimate goal is that the initial small group, in its formation of four new groups, will serve as evidence to members of the Institutional structure as to the validity of the Biblical principle of multiplication. The challenge becomes for the senior pastor, whose former small group members have become small group leaders, to maintain some level of connectedness between the increased number of converts who belong to small groups and the traditional members of Peter's Tabernacle.

The eventual hope of this Incarnational Model is that each group would eventually become its own congregation that itself replicates the Hybrid Model by establishing some semblance of an institutional framework while serving as a parent congregation to other congregations. In this sense, Peter's Tabernacle would ultimately become a type of mother-church rather than the nerve center of numerous small groups. As Peter's Tabernacle stands, there are members of the congregation, who reside in Tennessee, New Jersey, New York, Georgia, Florida, Maryland, the District of Columbia, California and throughout the 100 counties of North Carolina. The traditional leadership of Peter's Tabernacle, KEMBA or the GBSC-NC is without a clearly articulated vision of evangelism that empowers members to lead efforts to convert the lost.

However, by mentoring, training and cultivating traditional members and new converts to be evangelistic disciples, a century and half tradition of top-down leadership can be revitalized for twenty-first century church growth.

CHAPTER SIX

CONCLUSION

As stated at the outset, this project details a model of ministry toward the end of revitalizing Peter's Tabernacle Missionary Baptist Church as its major challenges to vitality have been stagnate membership, diminishing evangelistic efforts and a declining spiritual impact. As this model has yet to be fully implemented, initial efforts to address these challenges, using methodologies detailed throughout this project, have been underway for the past year. The development of the initial small group has begun while the teaching of Biblical principles (focusing on evangelism and the multiplication of believers) has positively impacted the administrative structure within Peter's Tabernacle. The more familiar the Church Council and traditional congregants become with the Biblical principle of multiplication, Servant Evangelism, and small group formation, the more successful the Hybrid Model within Peter's Tabernacle will ultimately be. Particularly helpful has been the intentional grouping of like-minded parishioners into servanthood groups. While these groups are still referred to as "committees" for the sake of familiarity with more traditional members, these new groups identify communal needs beyond the walls of the sanctuary and tend to those needs.

Over the past year, Peter's Tabernacle has seen the baptisms of fourteen new members, who were drawn to the congregation by the new emphasis placed on servanthood evangelism and small group discipleship. In addition to conversion growth, there has also been transfer growth with three new members joining the congregation via a letter (from a previous membership), one member joining on the basis of that member's Christian experience and two former members,

who sought and received a reinstatement of their membership to Peter's Tabernacle. This incremental, yet steady growth is bolstered via the revitalization of the more antiquated administrative practices within the Institutional model. By modernizing the methods for recordkeeping, bookkeeping and strategy sessions, this author has established further credibility for the purposes of fully implementing the Hybrid Model within the coming year.

**COMPARISON OF ANNUAL CHURCH STATISTICS AT
PETER'S TABERNACLE MISSIONARY BAPTIST CHURCH
OCTOBER 2004 – OCTOBER 2010 – OCTOBER 2011**

OCTOBER 2004						
CHURCH	BAPTIZED	RECEIVED BY LETTER	DISMISSED BY LETTER	DIED	CHRISTIAN EXPERIENCE	MEMBERSHIP
PTMBC	0	0	0	2	0	60
OCTOBER 2010						
CHURCH	BAPTIZED	RECEIVED BY LETTER	DISMISSED BY LETTER	DIED	CHRISTIAN EXPERIENCE	MEMBERSHIP
PTMBC	0	2	1	0	0	62
OCTOBER 2011						
CHURCH	BAPTIZED	RECEIVED BY LETTER	DISMISSED BY LETTER	DIED	CHRISTIAN EXPERIENCE	MEMBERSHIP
PTMBC	14	3	0	5	3	77

Table 4.

The administrative structure was also revitalized by way of developing an official church insignia subsequently used for stationary and letterhead, followed by the financing, development and maintenance of an official website through which the Google+ interface for the initial small group is embedded. Also initiated have been a series of Bible discussions called “Saturday Bible Study at Peter's Tabernacle” replacing the more common Wednesday night Bible study. The attendees of the Saturday Bible Study engage in a style of Bible discussion modeled from the “Edification” stage of the E.E.E.E disciple-making process. The convergence of Online

approaches to ministry and a redesigned Bible study are also helping to transform the more traditional membership of Peter's Tabernacle into a “discipling culture.”¹

Recently reestablished was the Minister of Music position in accordance with the Constitution and Bylaws of Peter's Tabernacle as the music department had deteriorated in past years only having a “musician” rather than a “Minister of Music” as required by the church's Bylaws. Subsequently, the Constitution, Bylaws and numerous documents were digitized gradually moving the congregation towards paperless communication. Established, in the past year, was a Personnel Committee for hiring and maintaining church staff also in accordance with the Constitution and Bylaws of Peter's Tabernacle. The reestablishing of the music department (later reorganized as the music ministry) demanded a greater accountability in the way personnel were hired at Peter's Tabernacle as rural churches typically find themselves with neither a hiring manager nor human resources department. This author sat as an *ex officio* member of the Building Committee which saw both the physical upkeep and upgrading of the edifice to include the paving of the church grounds, painting of the previous fellowship hall, installation of a new furnace and new roofs for the sanctuary and new fellowship hall. The previous fellowship hall is in the process of becoming an education annex, and is currently where Saturday Bible Study, and the newly restarted Children's Sunday School, is conducted. To be included in the education

¹ The term “discipling culture” is taken from a chart developed by Dr. Rodney W. Dempsey entitled, *5 Steps to Create a Discipling Culture*. The five steps consist of, “1. Determine Key Passages (Vision) 2. Distill Core Principles (Values) 3. Define Your Terms (Views) a. Church b. Pastor c. Saints d Gospel e. Evangelism f. Disciple/Discipleship g. Leader/Leadership 4. Decide on Your Structure (Vehicles) a. Church Structure (Traditional/Attractional/ Hybrid/Organic) b. Group System (A church...”with groups” or “is groups”) 5. Describe What Success Looks Like (Verifiers) a. Discipleship Groups (Healthy Groups) b. Great Commission Leaders (Servants Leaders) c. New Works (Multiplying Churches).” Within Dr. Dempsey's model for creating a discipling culture, these five steps occurs through the matrices of either new churches or existing churches. As Peter's Tabernacle is an existing church, the model requires a pastor to, “1. Recruit Core Team 2. Train Team a. Initial Agreement b. Ongoing Accountability 3. Change the language 4. Lead by example 5. Begin new missional groups 6. Gather the groups (Teach) 7. Stop doing things or DNR 8. Handle Criticism 9. Be Patient 10. Continue 1-6 11. Make change or be the change or be changed (compromise).”

annex will be computers loaded with Bible software and a Christian Education library with books and various teaching resources.

As the regional association has also been striving to bolster its Christian Education efforts, this author has sought (and is seeking) to develop working relationships between the association and local colleges. This working relationship required Peter's Tabernacle taking a renewed interest in the ministries of the association. Renewing Peter's Tabernacle's involvement in the Kenansville Eastern Missionary Baptist Association was accomplished through the paying of annual assessments to the regional headquarters, regular support of association events and reengaging the congregation in the ministries and activities of the association. Appointed to the Executive Board of the Kenansville Eastern Missionary Baptist Association in November 2011, this author was also appointed chairperson of the Constitution and Bylaws Committee of KEMBA by request of the Moderator and Executive Board. This appointment resulted in the ratification of the association's constitution, which is now archived with the General Baptist State Convention of North Carolina. Notable in the ratified Constitution of KEMBA is the phrase “evangelize the lost” with Article II reading:

The purpose of this Association, in strict accordance with the New Testament, shall be the furtherance of the Kingdom of God by equipping the disciples of Jesus Christ. This Association shall foster harmony amongst its constituent churches, and the wider community, evangelize the lost, administer Christian education and support missions both home and foreign.²

This author also reasserted Peter's Tabernacle's involvement in the ministries of the General Baptist State Convention of North Carolina by way of participating in the Annual Youth Oratorical Contest of the General Baptist State Convention of North Carolina sponsored by the Congress of Christian Education of the GBSC-NC. By strengthening the Institutional elements of

² *Article II of the The Constitution of the Kenansville Eastern Missionary Baptist Association*

Peter's Tabernacle and coordinating with the regional association and state convention, the burgeoning Incarnational aspects of ministry at Peter's Tabernacle are receiving far more attention than they might normally receive. Evidence of this attention occurred in October 2011, when all 49 churches of the Kenansville Eastern Missionary Baptist Association voted to invest \$193,422.00 into having an education annex be attached to the association headquarters. As stated in the *Minutes of the 142nd Annual Session of the Kenansville Eastern Missionary Baptist Association*, one of the primary hopes in constructing this new annex is to partner with Liberty University Baptist Theological Seminary³ whose instructors and program directors could facilitate seminars or training sessions that would benefit the ministry of the association.

While the model presented in this project is specific to the context of Peter's Tabernacle, with adjustments, this model can be applied to other communities of faith facing similar challenges. Some of those communities of faith are constituent churches within KEMBA while there are numerous churches of different denominations and contexts, who can modify this Hybrid Model and make this model applicable to their specific needs. The most common element of this model is the gradual decentralizing of ministry from the senior pastor to reproducible-producers, who are best equipped to evangelize beyond the limits of administrative demands. The initial small group essentially becomes its own, self-supporting congregation though retaining membership within its home congregation. This type of small group autonomy also frees the senior pastor of the awesome responsibility of maintaining two separate ministries.

As the initial small group once facilitated, by the senior pastor, exponentially grows into its second, third, fourth and continuing generations, the leadership of the administrative structure of

³ James A. Davis and Joan M. Malloy, ed. (2011) "Minutes of the One Hundred Forty-Second Annual Session of the Kenansville Eastern Missionary Baptist Association, Held at KEMBA Headquarters, October 9-15, 2011," 96.

Peter's Tabernacle remains the duty of the senior pastor. However, the senior pastor will continue to encourage and rejuvenate new converts by providing a traditional congregational setting in which new converts within the successive generations of small groups can fellowship with other believers. The hope of such interactions is that the Church Council and traditional members will view the steady influx of new converts as the fruit of evangelism and the type of growth in Christ that can only occur in the context of a small group. The hope is that such visible and steady growth would encourage Peter's Tabernacle to take more radical departures from many of its practices, which while well-meaning, do not result in growth. As unanimity in a voting congregation is rare in any instance, a majority vote during a quarterly conference to form small groups within the existing congregation would steadily move Peter's Tabernacle toward an Incarnational Model of ministry.

While it is unlikely that Peter's Tabernacle would ever transform into a church completely composed of evangelistic small groups, the successful exponential growth of the initial small group would legitimate the need for Peter's Tabernacle to reengage its missional roots. A church with the word “missionary” in its name should, at the least, be missional if not evangelistic *and* missional. What would have to be established is a negotiable tension⁴ between the exponentially growing small groups, whose members may share in worship or other aspects of congregational life at Peter's Tabernacle and portions of the membership resistant to change—even if those changes are consistent with Scripture and are beneficial to the Kingdom. As Sue Mallory writes

⁴ Norma Cook Everist, *Church Conflict: From Contention to Collaboration* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2004), 126ff. Concerning the resolution of internal conflict within a congregation, Dr. Everist stressed the role of the Holy Spirit in resolving all matters writing, “The power of God's grace challenges and empowers human beings toward reconciliation. No matter how deep the conflict, the Holy Spirit creates new ways for us to be the church together, always calling us to open our doors to those for whom we would have no room,” 126.

in *Equipping Church*, “Significant changes sometimes produce shocks.”⁵ The major change that must occur at Peter's Tabernacle Missionary Baptist Church is that ministry must be understood as something that springs *from* the Iron Mine community and not something measured by what is necessarily drawn *into* the community.

There will always be a practical need for Peter's Tabernacle to remain financially viable, but the outward growth and impact of the ministries of Peter's Tabernacle would assure financial security of the Institutional structure, if for no other reason, more people would know that Peter's Tabernacle exists. The overemphasis on size has destroyed the vision of many churches, but what Peter's Tabernacle has the opportunity to do is redefine size by way of conversions rather than the square-footage of the edifice on Highway 41 West. Ed Stetzer and David Putnam say of the congregational tendency to overemphasize structural size,

“Big” was almost always better in the age of church growth. In the age of the missional church, the impact of kingdom growth is more important. Church leaders who break the [missional] code have decided that the most important thing is to empower and release their church family for kingdom impact. These churches give themselves away rather than serve their own needs. This is a big paradigm shift for most churches. For too long, we have spoken of “every member a minister,” which was a positive step away from the professionalized ministry concept of the past. But for the church to truly break the code, it needs to move from “every member a minister” to “every member a missionary.”⁶

As far as congregational size is concerned, every new convert would still be baptized at Peter's Tabernacle even if that new member resides in the neighboring county or state. This is where the role of small group leaders becomes critical, as the small group leaders become the *de facto* pastors of each new group. This also means that Peter's Tabernacle would grow by *multiplication* rather than *addition* and by actual *conversions* to Christ rather than receiving

⁵ Sue Mallory, *Equipping the Church: Serving Together to Transform Lives* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2001), 41.

⁶ Ed Stetzer and David Putnam, *Breaking the Missional Code: Your Church Can Become a Missionary in Your Community* (Nashville, TN: Broadman and Holman, 2006), 67.

transfers from other communities of faith.

The role of technology in the form of social media becomes of great importance as well. While Facebook and Twitter remain two of the most popular and widely used social media sites since their inceptions, the June 28, 2011 launching of Google Plus (or Google+) has given the Web its third largest social media site with an estimated 400 million users. Google+ allows for the grouping of friends, relatives, coworkers *et cetera* by interfaces called “Circles.”⁷ These Circles enable a Google+ user to interface strictly with the members of his or her Circle without interference (i.e. spam, instant messaging, online advertisements). Circles also allow for the creation of what are called “Hangouts” in which as many as eight members of a particular Circle can interact via webcam.

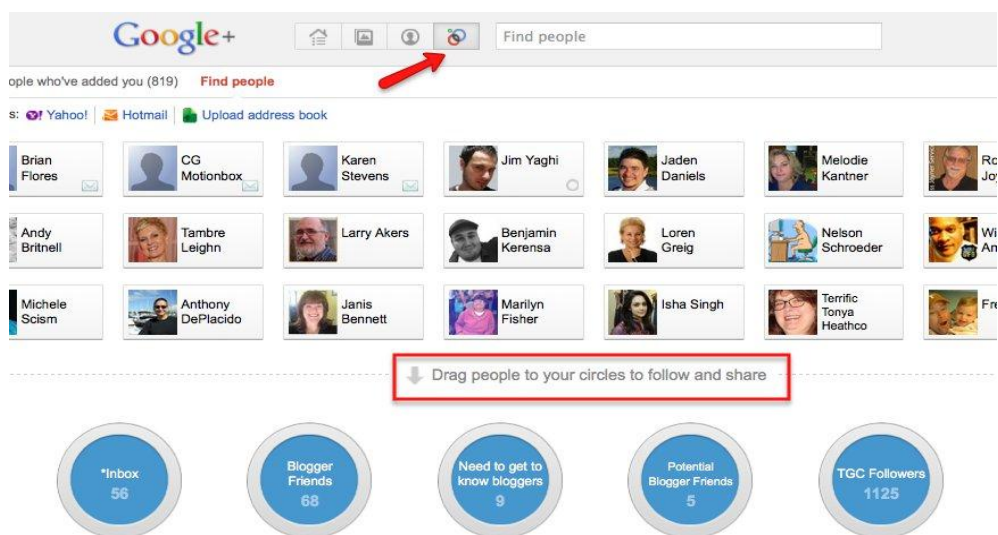


Figure 9.

⁷Akash Shrestha, “Google+ (Google Plus), The New Google Social Network: See What's New,” <http://techbend.com/2011/07/01/google-plus-new-google-social-network-whats-new-google-black-bar-google-products-page/>; Internet accessed; 30 July 2012.

Every small group leader would develop a Peter's Tabernacle Circle with the URL for each Circle being listed on the official Peter's Tabernacle website. As a nod to the challenge of overcoming the 'us four and no more' phenomena of which Dr. Dempsey described, the concept for building a small evangelistic group using Google+ would be “g+4+pastor” indicating that each small group consists of four new converts and a small group leader (which serves as the group’s pastor). The logo seen below would be used to communicate this concept.



Figure 10.

A much-needed addition to the ministry of Peter's Tabernacle is a church campus that offers wireless Internet as members from every single small group could communicate with members of their Google+ circle from the edifice allowing for a streaming, interactive Bible study and eventually streaming services. This type of connectivity⁸ also provides a way for the traditional

⁸ Dwight J. Friesen, *Thy Kingdom Connected: What the Church Can Learn from Facebook, the Internet and Other Networks* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2009) 81-82. Google itself possesses what Dwight J. Friesen calls “connective authority” saying of Google's expansive networking capabilities, “Google's linking “authority” is not derived from a position or a title and has no intrinsic authority; instead its authority is earned through consistently serving its users by giving away the very connections it has. Google has no authority in our lives other than the authority we freely give it. The more effectively Google links us today with what we seek, the more we trust it to be faithful hub tomorrow. Google's present authority is rooted as much in our past experience of its faithful linking as it is to the quality of the links it provides, and it is with that history of effective connecting in mind that we will return to Google the next time we need to perform a Web search,” 81. Cf. “The present authority given to Google, which is rooted in our past experience, has a future orientation that goes beyond Google. This future orientation is rooted in the person seeking connection for the sake of a lived life,” 82.

members of Peter's Tabernacle to understand the exponential growth that is occurring beyond the walls of the sanctuary. While each small group can thrive as a self-contained community, the connectivity provided by Google+ prevents each small group from transforming into a self-involved clique. In no way is this author naïve to the shock that this paradigmatic shift in ministry would deliver to the *status quo* of Peter's Tabernacle and the constituent churches of KEMBA as a decentralized church that focuses less on structures and more on evangelism is extremely far removed from the Missionary Baptist tradition. Greg Ogden writes in light of this reality,

Any time there is a shift in ministry model, there will be a commensurate shift in role expectations, which will all lead to role confusion as the paradigms of the church are changing.⁹

This is where the vision of the senior pastor must be cast in accordance with the New Testament view of the Church in order to encourage officers and members, more comfortable with the Institutional Model, to understand, if not embrace, the Incarnational Model. One of the most declarative distinctions drawn between “the Church” and “a church” was made by Dr. Falwell, who explained,

God is not primarily interested in buildings, but on the people in a building. The church is not the building in which Christians meet, even though we call the building a church. A church is people. A home is not primarily a house; it's the people in that house and the way they love one another and serve others. God loves people; He sent His Son to die for people, and now Jesus indwells the heart of His people. The building is just a location where Christians gather for singing, preaching, teaching, and fellowship. What goes on in the building is many times more important than the building itself.¹⁰

The notion of the people of God, and not the edifice, being the Church will be the most significant shift that must occur within Peter's Tabernacle and the surrounding congregations.

⁹ Greg Ogden. *The New Reformation: Unfinished Business: Returning the Ministry to the People of God* rev ed (Grand Rapids, MI: Ministry Resources, 1990), 123.

¹⁰ Jerry Falwell, *Building Dynamic Faith* (Nashville, TN: Nelson, 2005), 187.

The second most significant shift is a move away from pastoral autocracy to shared responsibilities in every aspect of ministry. This second point is critical to the senior pastor not succumbing to fatigue and what is referred to as “management fragmentation.”¹¹ Autocratic leadership models lend themselves to a top-heavy administration with executives forced to micro-manage even the least significant aspects of day-to-day operations. Dr. Ken D. Duft, Extension Marketing Economist emeritus at Washington State University, identifies this overexertion as “management fragmentation” as points to Jethro and Aaron's decentralization of Moses' leadership in Exodus where Scripture explains,

17 And Moses' father in law said unto him, The thing that thou doest is not good. 18 Thou wilt surely wear away, both thou, and this people that is with thee: for this thing is too heavy for thee; thou art not able to perform it thyself alone. 19 Hearken now unto my voice, I will give thee counsel, and God shall be with thee: Be thou for the people to God-ward, that thou mayest bring the causes unto God: 20 And thou shalt teach them ordinances and laws, and shalt shew them the way wherein they must walk, and the work that they must do. 21 Moreover thou shalt provide out of all the people able men, such as fear God, men of truth, hating covetousness; and place such over them, to be rulers of thousands, and rulers of hundreds, rulers of fifties, and rulers of tens: 22 And let them judge the people at all seasons: and it shall be, that every great matter they shall bring unto thee, but every small matter they shall judge: so shall it be easier for thyself, and they shall bear the burden with thee. 23 If thou shalt do this thing, and God command thee so, then thou shalt be able to endure, and all this people shall also go to their place in peace. Ex. 18:17-23

Dr. Duft says of Moses' delegation of his responsibilities,

Due to Jethro's wise advice, Moses discovered that the solution to management fragmentation was two-fold: 1) an increased emphasis on structural and operational organization, and 2) a determined willingness by the manager to delegate authority to others.¹²

Critical to the delegation of responsibilities that would afford the senior pastor the necessary time to properly train the initial small group in the Hybrid Model for evangelism is the re-training of church officers, whose duties are first and foremost ministerial and administrative. Pastors Jeff Jones and Bruce Miller of Fellowship Bible Church speak to the importance of

¹¹ Ken D. Duft, “The Wisdom of Jethro,” *Agribusiness Management*, <http://www.agribusiness-mgmt.wsu.edu/ExtensionNewsletters/mgmt/jethro.pdf>; Internet accessed; 11 August 2012.

¹² Ibid.

prayer in developing leaders having observed the ecclesial short-sightedness elders within their congregation writing,

At Fellowship we began to recognize that our elders were not as effective as they needed to be. Their duties were essentially limited to evaluating and approving proposals from the pastoral staff. They were paying attention mainly to the administrative details of such matters as staff facilities and staff benefits. They were not devoted to prayer and God's Word in any meaningful way. We addressed the situation by creating a management team that would focus on the administrative aspects of our church, which freed the elders to concentrate on more important tasks.¹³

Pastor Jones and Pastor Miller offer a criterion in the form of a question that is particularly helpful in the context of Peter's Tabernacle's Church Council as they state, "We designed an ongoing training process shaped by the question, "What do all church board members need to know, be and do in order to fulfill their responsibilities?"¹⁴ Without a similar question being posed at Peter's Tabernacle, the administrative aspects of managing Peter's Tabernacle will continue to lend themselves to micro-management and ultimately ministry burnout unless a clear delineation between the roles of one office and another are established. The more effectively the senior pastor can define those roles, the more manageable the mentoring of the initial small group becomes. The senior pastor will essentially be pastoring two congregations until the initial small group has been prepared to multiply itself. However, it is possible to gradually wean the Institutional Model off its need for an autocratic leader by utilizing Greg Ogden's "first-among-equals" approach explained as,

The first-among-equals approach places the head of staff in a servant mode with a stress on *equal* rather than on *first*. The head of staff then becomes a servant to fellow servants on a ministry team. Instead of the staff being a leader's alter ego, the head of staff gives his life away to see that those with whom ministry is shared are encouraged to be all they are meant to be. This will require a considerable investment of time by the head of staff in order to know the passion or call of each individual and the gifts

¹³ Rowland Forman, Jeff Jones and Bruce Miller, *The Leadership Baton: An Intentional Strategy for Developing Leaders in Your Church* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2004), 134.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 135.

God has given as the means to carry out the call.¹⁵

By having deacons take a more active role in worship, and creating ministry teams devoted to various aspects of ministry which traditionally are led or carried out by the senior pastor, there exists more time and opportunity to prepare the initial small group for evangelistic multiplication. As to that preparation, Dr. Dempsey offers a framework that removes a tremendous amount of frustration from the process of developing a working system for maintaining and growing a small group. Dr. Dempsey, "...identified eight regular practices that seemed to make the difference between effectiveness and ineffectiveness,¹⁶ and found that "...gifts, personality, and experience were not as important as the commitment to the eight habits."¹⁷ Those eight habits are:

- (1) Dream of leading a healthy, growing, multiplying group.
- (2) Pray for your group members daily.
- (3) Invite new people to visit your group weekly.
- (4) Contact your group members regularly.
- (5) Prepare for your group meeting.
- (6) Mentor an apprentice leader.
- (7) Plan group fellowship activities.
- (8) Be committed to your own personal growth.

Designing a framework influenced by these eight practices, this author developed a framework called, "E.E.E.E" which stands for "**E**dification, **E**xchange, **E**xtension and **E**levation." These four principles for the development of the initial small group are more of a process than a program. These principles lend themselves to a greater fluidity than the rigidity characteristic of a Missionary Baptist board or council and serve as the Transitional Ministry

¹⁵ Greg Ogden. *The New Reformation: Unfinished Business: Returning the Ministry to the People of God*, 228.

¹⁶ These eight practices are found in, Dave and Earley and Rod Dempsey, *The Pocket Guide to Leading a Small Group: 52 Ways to Help You and Small Group Grow*, 128.

¹⁷ Ibid, 129.

component of the Hybrid Model. The four phases of the E.E.E.E process are:

Edification

The first three months of the Transitional Ministry consists of a regular fellowship called “Edification.” This phase of the process consists of weekly Bible discussions,¹⁸ sharing of testimonies and personal experiences, daily prayer calls, web chats and worship. The focus during this three month period is the introduction and discussion of foundational Christian principles and doctrines that heresies and unbiblical doctrines would not become a part of the lexicon of the new converts. As this three month period nears an end, each group member will begin leading this fellowship as the primary focus of the Transitional Ministry is the training of disciple-making disciples. The use of new media such as Google+ is helpful throughout every phase of this process but particularly in the Edification phase as connectivity afforded by the Web allows greater flexibility for Bible discussions, prayer times and schedule coordination.

Exchange

The next three months are dedicated to identifying geographical locations within and around Duplin County, where servant evangelism projects can be carried out. Because these new disciples have been introduced to and are increasingly becoming rooted in Biblical truth, they are now equipped to share the Good News both clearly and effectively throughout the wider community.

Extension

After six months of weekly Bible discussions, rotating group leadership and servant evangelism, each member of the group is prepared to begin identifying a specific geographical, spiritual and communal area that he/she is called to evangelize for the purpose of bringing four people into the Body of Christ. While the senior pastor is supportive in this effort, these disciples have been studying Scripture, mentored by their senior pastor and ministered amidst people in “real time,” and are now prepared to begin reproducing the model that facilitated their entrance in the Body. Along with the guidance of the Holy Spirit, what is critical for these reproducible-producers to exemplify is that, “People have to get beyond their fear. People have to engage face-to-face.”¹⁹

¹⁸ Bill Search, *Simple Small Groups: A User-Friendly Guide for Small Group Leaders* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2008), 96-97. The reason that the initial small group will have a weekly Bible “discussion” as opposed to a “study” is inspired by the insight of Bill Search, who says, “The term “study” might not be the most helpful. But when a healthy group discusses the Scriptures, the members explore what the text meant thousands of years ago to the original audience and what it means to us today. It does not require a degree in theology to be able to discuss the Scriptures. A good discussion requires two components. The first is an exploration of the author’s intended message. This is determined by looking at the context around the passage and by inquiring who the original audience was. The second key component for the discussion is applying it to life. This should be personal, not just theoretical. If it was a mathematical equation, it might look like this: meaning of passage (context + original audience) + personal application = good discussion. I’m not a stickler for for terms, so if you really like “study,” use that instead of “discussion.” I would simply recommend that whatever term you find most comfortable, you digest biblical truth together and encourage one another to apply it tom life.”

¹⁹ Dr. David A. Wheeler made this statement in the Doctor of Ministry seminar EVAN 997: “Building a Dynamic Evangelism Strategy” instructed by Dr. David A. Wheeler on the campus of Liberty University in Lynchburg, Virginia on Thursday, May 26, 2011. Cf. David Wheeler, Chapter 31: “Sharing Jesus Without Fear,” in Dave Earley and David Wheeler, *Evangelism Is...How to Share Jesus With Passion and Confidence*, 252-259.

Elevation

The final quarter of this year-long process of cultivating disciple-making disciples involves the four new group leaders becoming logistically situated for the purpose of beginning the process anew. Ideal circumstances would find the four members of the initial small group having become four new group leaders; each with four new converts to the faith in their respective groups. The senior pastor is only involved in the new generation of small groups by proxy, where the administering of the ordinances and other functions requiring ordained clergy are needed.

While the E.E.E.E approach is designed to develop disciple-making disciples over the course of one year, there exists the flexibility to contract or expand this timeframe as needed—again E.E.E.E is a *process* and a *program*. Should members of the initial small group require additional time to attract and form their new groups, the senior pastor will remain as involved as needed, but it is the responsibility of each group member to take the lead in evangelizing a particular community and forming a new group of disciples. The guidance of the Holy Spirit, the utilization of Dr. Dempsey's eight characteristics of successful small groups and E.E.E.E are structured yet fluid in ways that allow for these processes to be *reproduced*. Each new group leader will reproduce and modify E.E.E.E as this process is applicable within a given context, but what is most important is that a modifiable process be in place. Audrey Malphurs says of reproducible paradigms,

We hold firmly to the assumption that you can teach what you know, but you can reproduce only what you are. Nowhere is this more applicable than in training people to be evangelistically intentional. When people see their leaders sharing the faith, rather than just hearing that they should be more active in sharing their faith, they are much more inclined to do evangelism. As a leader, you must ask yourself: *Am I spending time with unchurched people? Am I engaging the lost through service evangelism? Am I praying for people on my “most-wanted” list?* If the top leaders in the church are not pursuing these goals, how will a contagious outward focus trickle its way down through all levels of leadership?²⁰

²⁰ Audrey Malphurs and William F. Mancini, *Building Leaders: Blueprints for Developing Leadership at Every Level of Your Church* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2004), 93.

The “contagious outward focus” of which Malphurs speaks is reminiscent of Dr. Wheeler's notion of “viral evangelism” in that viral evangelism decentralizes authority from one figure-head (whether a senior pastor or another type of church leader) to parishioners. Furthermore, the decentralization of authority does not simply shift responsibilities from congregational leaders to the congregation but instead empowers the congregation to take an active role in ministry. For the purpose of the Hybrid Model, this is most clearly exhibited in the successful establishment of four new groups led by the former members of the initial small group. Vital to the establishment of the first generation of small groups, and successive groups, will be new converts coming to view their individual group leaders as their de facto pastors truly differentiating the Institutional Model from the Incarnational Model.

While maintaining the Institutional Model comprised of the Church Council, committees, auxiliaries and Missionary Baptist traditions germane to Peter's Tabernacle, the initial small group engages in intentional evangelism capable of transcending the limitations inherent within an administratively rigid polity. While each new convert has the support of a traditional community of faith and access to a brick and mortar edifice for pastoral functions (i.e. baptisms, Communion, weddings, funerals, etc.) membership to Peter's Tabernacle will no longer be defined by locality. Again, this is where the g+4+pastor formula is incredibly helpful in maintaining connectivity between the small groups and the Iron Mine-based congregation. In this sense, Google+ serves a function similar to that of the correspondence maintained between Paul and his churches. Furthermore, the Web serves as a type of “help line” between the senior pastor and group leaders as the E.E.E.E process is being carried out in different locations.



Figure 11.

The *Edification* phase of this process is currently being implemented in a test-run scenario using current diaconate trainees and members of the music ministry at Peter’s Tabernacle as an “initial small group.” To facilitate this test, a Small Group Discipleship portal available via <http://peterstabernaclebaptistchurch.com/id8.html> has been designed to receive input from members of the congregation as to how the tools, applications and features available through Google+ can be used to innovatively share the Gospel. By sharing the proposed strategies for developing new disciples with the members of congregation, there will emerge a gradual acceptance of how technology and new strategies can be used to do ministry. Over the course of the past two years, Peter’s Tabernacle has transitioned from a community of faith whose phone lines were disconnected into a congregation with an official website, digitized records and social media mortal. While these gains are gradual and leave a significant amount of work to do in the future, a concerted effort to be a missional is being made on the part of the congregation. This effort is reflected in the increased membership, gradual embrace of technology and greater

dedication to the study of Biblical principles. Many of the strategies and tools for developing disciples are new to the members of Peter's Tabernacle, and overly insisting that the membership adapt to these strategies and tools would prove unproductive. The congregation must be patiently taught how to appropriate new tools and strategies for making disciples.

Restructuring congregational traditions takes time and must be done carefully as not to alienate older members of Peter's Tabernacle while developing new generations of disciples. Revitalization is neither a simple nor swift process and also takes considerable time as not to destabilize the very congregation being restructured. The Hybrid Model allows members of Peter's Tabernacle to keep the Great Commission while maintaining those traditions relevant to the Iron Mine community. It is possible to maintain a tolerable harmony between Scripture and tradition as long as such tradition does not stand in opposition to Scripture. Where tradition opposes Scripture, with love and compassion, followers of Jesus Christ are to be corrected and retaught foundational Biblical principles. In this sense, Christianity is itself a "hybrid" having restructured (and even discontinued) certain traditions that preceded it thus revitalizing the relationship between God and humankind in the Person of Jesus Christ, the Savior of the world. Conveying the message and the reality of salvation made possible through Him is the duty of every Christian, and Peter's Tabernacle Missionary Baptist Church has the potential to carry out this duty in a more powerful way once restructured and revitalized.

APPENDIX A

THE CONSTITUTION OF THE KENANSVILLE EASTERN MISSIONARY BAPTIST ASSOCIATION

PREAMBLE

The Kenansville Eastern Missionary Baptist Association is an association of Missionary Baptist churches that shall maintain a Scripturally-based and Christ-like relationship amongst its constituent churches enabling every member, ministry, auxiliary and officer to keep the Great Commission as commanded by our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

ARTICLE I. NAME

Established in 1867, the name of this association shall be the Kenansville Eastern Missionary Baptist Association (Here after designated in this constitution as “Association”). The acronym shall be KEMBA.

ARTICLE II . PURPOSE

The purpose of this Association, in strict accordance with the New Testament, shall be the furtherance of the Kingdom of God by equipping the disciples of Jesus Christ. This Association shall foster harmony amongst its constituent churches and the wider community, evangelize the lost, administer Christian education and support missions both home and foreign.

ARTICLE III. POLITY

Recognizing Jesus Christ as the only Head of the church, this Association seeks to adhere completely to the will of our Lord and Savior in all matters of faith and practice. Authority to govern all spiritual and temporal affairs of the constituent churches of this Association is hereby vested in the membership of each individual congregation and not in the Association thus assuring each constituent church complete autonomy. That the wider ministry of Christ for which each church is responsible may be carried out, constituent churches and those churches seeking to join this Association agree to cooperate with the larger Christian fellowship, ministries and purpose of this Association.

ARTICLE IV. DOCTRINE

This Association accepts the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments as the inspired witness to God's revelatory actions in human history and as the authoritative basis for its doctrine and practice. This Association has also adopted the following covenant and articles of faith as a means by which the constituent churches express their intent to accept the lordship of Jesus Christ in the life of the church and in the affairs of daily life.

- A. Church Covenant**
- B. Articles of Faith**

Having been led, as we believe by the Spirit of God, to receive the Lord Jesus Christ as our Savior and, on the profession of our faith, having been baptized in the name of the Father, and of

the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, we do now, in the presence of God, and this assembly, most solemnly and joyfully enter into covenant with one another as one body in Christ.

We engage, therefore, by the aid of the Holy Spirit to walk together in Christian love; to strive for the advancement of this church, in knowledge, holiness, and comfort; to promote its prosperity and spirituality and to sustain its worship, ordinances, discipline, and doctrines; to contribute cheerfully and regularly to the support of the ministry, the expenses of the church, the relief of the poor, and the spread of the gospel through all nations.

We also engage to maintain family and secret devotions; to religiously educate our children; to seek the salvation of our kindred and acquaintances; to walk circumspectly in the world; to be just in our dealings, faithful in our engagements, and exemplary in our deportment; to avoid all tattling, backbiting, and excessive anger; to abstain from the sale of, and use of, intoxicating drinks as a beverage; to be zealous in our efforts to advance the kingdom of our Savior.

We further engage to watch over one another in brotherly love; to remember one another in prayer; to aid one another in sickness and distress; to cultivate Christian sympathy in feeling and Christian courtesy in speech; to be slow to take offense, but always ready for reconciliation and mindful of the rules of our Savior to secure it without delay.

We moreover engage that when we remove from this place we will, as soon as possible, unite with some other church where we can carry out the spirit of this covenant and the principles of God's Word.

B. Articles of Faith

This Association also accepts the following Articles of Faith in addition to the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments as a statement of doctrine.

I. THE SCRIPTURES

We believe that the Holy Bible was written by men divinely inspired, and is a perfect treasure of heavenly instruction; that it has God for its author, salvation for its end, and truth without any mixture for error for its matter; that it reveals the principles by which God will judge us, and therefore is, and shall remain to the end of the world, the true center of Christian union, and the supreme standard by which all human conduct, creeds, and opinions shall be tried.

II. THE TRUE GOD

We believe that the Scriptures teach that there is one, and only one, living and true God, an infinite, intelligent Spirit, whose name is Jehovah, the Maker and Supreme Ruler of heaven and earth, inexpressibly glorious in holiness, and worthy of all possible honor confidence and love; that in the unity of the Godhead there are three persons, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost; equal in every divine perfection, and executing distinct but harmonious offices in the great work of redemption.

III. THE FALL OF MAN

We believe the Scriptures teach that man was created in holiness, under the law of his Maker; but by voluntary transgressions fell from that holy and happy state; in consequence of which all mankind are now sinners, not by constraint but choice; being by nature utterly void of that holiness required by the law of God, positively inclined to evil; and therefore just condemnation to eternal ruin, without defense or excuse.

IV. THE WAY OF SALVATION

We believe that the Scriptures teach that the salvation of sinners is wholly of grace; through the mediatorial offices of the Son of God; who by the appointment of the Father, freely took upon him our nature, yet without sin; honored by the divine law by his personal obedience, and by his death made a full atonement for our sins; that having risen from the dead, he is now enthroned in heaven; and uniting in his wonderful person the tenderest sympathies with divine perfections, he is in every way qualified to be a suitable, a compassionate, and an all-sufficient Savior.

V. JUSTIFICATION

We believe the Scriptures teach that the great Gospel blessing which Christ secures to such as believe in him is justification; that justification includes the pardon of sin, and the promise of eternal life on principles of righteousness, that it is bestowed, noting consideration of any works which we have done, but solely through faith in the Redeemer's blood; by virtue of which faith his perfect righteousness is freely imputed to us of God; that it brings us into a state of most blessed peace and favor with God, and secures every other blessing needful for time and eternity.

VI. THE FREENESS OF SALVATION

We believe that the Scriptures teach that the blessings of salvation are made free to all by the Gospel; that it is the immediate duty of all to accept them by cordial, penitent and obedient faith; and that nothing prevents the salvation of the greatest sinner on earth, but his own determined depravity and voluntary rejection of the Gospel; which rejection involves him in an aggravated condemnation.

VII. REGENERATION

We believe that the Scriptures teach that in order to be saved, sinners must be regenerated, or born again; that regeneration consists in giving a holy disposition to the mind that it is effected in a manner above our comprehension by the power of the Holy Spirit in connection with divine truth, so as to secure our voluntary obedience to the Gospel; and that its proper evidence appears in the holy fruits of repentance and faith, and newness of life.

VIII. REPENTANCE AND FAITH

We believe that the Scriptures teach that repentance and faith are sacred duties, and inseparable graces, wrought in our souls by the regenerating Spirit of God; whereby being deeply convinced of our guilt, danger and helplessness and of the way of salvation by Christ, we turn to God with unfeigned contrition, confession, and supplication for mercy; at the same time heartily receiving the Lord Jesus Christ as our prophet, priest and king, and relying on him alone as the only and all-sufficient Savior.

IX. GOD'S PURPOSE OF GRACE

We believe that the Scriptures teach that election is the eternal purpose of God, according to which he graciously regenerates, sanctifies and saves sinners; that being perfectly consistent with the free agency of man, it comprehends all the means in connection with the end; that it is a most glorious display of God's sovereign goodness, being infinitely free, wise, holy and unchangeable; that it utterly excludes boasting and promotes humility, love, prayer, praise, trust in God, and active imitation of his free mercy; that it encourages the use of means in the highest degree; that it may be ascertained by its effects in all who truly believe the Gospel; that it is the foundation of Christian assurance; and that to ascertain it with regard to ourselves demands and deserves the utmost diligence.

X. SANCTIFICATION

We believe the Scriptures teach that Sanctification is the process by which, according to the will of God, we are made partakers of his holiness; that it is a progressive work; that it is begun in regeneration; and that it is carried on in the hearts of believers by the presence and power of the Holy Spirit, The Sealer and Comforter, in the continual use of the appointed means especially the word of God, self-examination, self-denial, watchfulness, and prayer.

XI. PRESEVERANCE OF SAINTS

We believe the Scriptures teach that such are only real believers as endure to the end; that their preserving attachment to Christ is the grand mark which distinguishes them from superficial professors; that a special Providence watches over their welfare; and they are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation.

XII. THE LAW AND GOSPEL

We believe the Scriptures teach that the Law of God is the eternal and unchangeable rule of the moral government; that it is holy, just and good; and that the inability which the Scriptures ascribe to fallen men to fulfill its precepts, arise entirely from their love of sin; to deliver them from which, and to restore them through a Mediator to unfeigned obedience to the holy Law, is one great end of the Gospel, and the Means of Grace connected with the establishment of the visible church.

XIII. A GOSPEL CHURCH

We believe the Scriptures teach that a visible church of Christ is a congregation of baptized believers, associated by covenant in the faith and fellowship of the Gospel; observing the ordinances of Christ; governed by his laws; and exercising the gifts, rights, and privileges invested in them by His Word; that its only Scriptural officers are Bishops or Pastors, and Deacons whose qualifications, claims and duties are defined in the Epistles to Timothy and Titus.

XIV. BAPTISM AND THE LORD'S SUPPER

We believe the Scriptures teach that Christian baptism is the immersed in water of a believer, into the name of the Father, and Son, and Holy Ghost; to show forth in a solemn and beautiful emblem, our faith in the crucified, buried, and risen Savior, with its effect, in our death to sin and resurrection to a new life; that it is prerequisite to the privileges of a church relation; and to the Lord's Supper, in which the members of the church, by the sacred use of bread and wine, are to commemorate together the dying life of Christ; preceded only by solemn self-examination.

XV. THE CHRISTIAN SABBATH

We believe the Scriptures teach that the first day of the week is the Lord's Day, or Christian Sabbath, and is to keep sacred to religious purposes, by abstaining from all secular labor and sinful recreations, by the devout observance of all the means of grace, both private and public, and by preparation for that rest that remain for the people of God.

XVI. CIVIL GOVERNMENT

We believe the Scriptures that civil government is of divine appointment, for the interest and good order of human society; and that magistrates are to be prayed for, conscientiously honored and obeyed; except only in things opposed to the will of our Lord Jesus Christ, who is the only Lord of the conscience, and the Prince of the Kings of the earth.

XVII. RIGHTEOUS AND WICKED

We believe that the Scriptures teach that there is a radical and essential difference between the righteous and the wicked; that such only as through faith are justified in the name of the Lord

Jesus, and sanctified by the Spirit of our God, are truly righteous in his esteem; while all such as continue in impenitence and unbelief are in his sight wicked, and under the curse; and this distinction holds among men both in and after death.

XVIII. THE WORLD TO COME

We believe the Scriptures teach that the end of the world is approaching; that at the last day, Christ will descend from heaven, and raise the dead from the grave for final retribution; that a solemn separation will then take place; that the wicked will be adjudged to endless punishment, and the righteous to endless joy; and that this judgement will fix forever the final state of men in heaven or hell, on principles of righteousness.

Ratified – April 12, 2012

CONSTITUTION AND BY-LAWS COMMITTEE

The Reverend Jerry M. Grimes II, Chairperson	The Honorable Carol Jones Wilson, J.D.
Sister Brenda Dobson	The Reverend Dr. John O. Veasey Jr.
Sister Shirley Moore	Moderator James A. Davis, <i>ex officio</i>

APPENDIX B

**The CONSTITUTION and BYLAWS
of
PETER'S TABERNACLE MISSIONARY BAPTIST CHURCH**

Drafted By:

**The Constitution and Bylaws Committee of
Peter's Tabernacle Missionary Baptist Church**

Committee Chairman:

Deacon Richard H. Thompson,
Chairman of the Board of Deacons

Committee Members:

Deacon James Arthur Hayes
Sister Edna Morse
Sister Edna Evelyn Murphy

PETER'S TABERNACLE BAPTIST CHURCH CONSTITUTION AND BYLAWS

INTRODUCTION

A church is a fellowship of people who have accepted Christ as Saviour and are united by their common relation to the Holy Spirit. A church, like a community or an individual, is always changing. Fundamental doctrines remain the same, but methods of teaching these doctrines and of moving objectives must change if the mission of the church is to be accomplished. A church constitution and bylaws document helps a church preserve democratic procedures. This instrument serves as the guide for members to follow in carrying out the work of the church.

Basic theology, organizational structure, and church policies are contained in a constitution. Bylaws, on the other hand, state the methods for carrying out these principles and policies. Bylaws will usually be changed more often than the constitution. It should be emphasized, however, that both constitution and bylaws should be reviewed annually by a special committee, the church council, and/or deacons. As the program of a church changes, so must its rules of governmental procedure be brought up to date.

The basic advantages of a constitution and bylaws are that they:

1. Furnish members a written statement of their church organization, fundamental guidelines, and theological beliefs.
2. Aid in preserving democracy and harmony since predetermined guidelines have already been established by the members.
3. Provide orderly procedures for guiding the transaction of church business, and
4. Serve as basis for solving problems before problems arise.

CONSTITUTION

Preamble

We declare and establish this constitution for the preservation and security of the principles of our faith, and that this body may be governed in an orderly manner. This constitution will preserve the liberties of each individual member of this church and the freedom of action of this body in its relation to other churches.

I. Name

This body shall be known as Peter's Tabernacle Baptist Church, Wallace, North Carolina.

II. Statement of Faith

The Holy Bible is in the inspired Word of God and is the basis for any statement of faith. The church subscribes to the doctrinal statement of the “Baptist Faith and Message” as adopted by the General Baptist State Convention. We band ourselves together as a body of baptized believers in Jesus Christ personally committed to sharing the good news of salvation to lost mankind. The ordinances of the church are baptism and the Lord's Supper.

III. Church Covenant

Having been led, as we believe by the Spirit of God, to receive the Lord Jesus Christ as our Saviour and Lord and, on the profession of our faith, having been baptized in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, we do now, in the presence of God, and this assembly, most solemnly and joyfully enter into covenant with one another as one body in Christ.

IV. Character----Section 1. Polity

The government of this church is vested in the body of believers who compose it. It is subject to the control of no other ecclesiastical body, but it recognizes and sustains the obligations of mutual counsel and cooperation which are common among Baptist churches. Insofar as is practical, this church will cooperate with and support the association and state convention affiliated with the General Baptist State Convention.

Section 2. Doctrine

This church receives the Scriptures as its authority in matters of faith and practice. Its understanding of Christian truth as contained therein is in essential accord with the belief of other General Baptist State Churches.

BYLAWS

V. Membership---Section 1. General

This is a sovereign and democratic Baptist church under the Lordship of Jesus Christ. The membership retains unto itself the right of exclusive self-government in all phases of the spiritual and temporal life of this church. The membership reserves the exclusive right to determine who shall be members of this church and the conditions of such membership.

Section 2. Candidacy

Any person may offer himself as a candidate for membership in this church. All such candidates shall be presented to the church at any regular worship service for membership in any form of the following ways.

1. By profession of faith and for baptism according to the policies of this church.
2. By promise of a letter from another Baptist church
3. By restoration upon a statement of prior conversion experience and baptism in a Baptist church
when no letter obtainable.

Should there be any dissent as to any candidate, such dissent shall be referred to the pastor and the deacons for investigation and the making of a recommendation to the church within thirty (30) days. A three-fourths of those members present and voting shall be required to elect such candidates to membership. However, voting shall be our last resort to resolve this matter.

Section 3. Termination of Membership

Membership shall be terminated in the following ways:

1. Death
2. Dismission to another Baptist church
3. Exclusion by action of this church
4. Affiliation with a church of another faith or denomination
5. Pursuant to the eighth chapter of Second Corinthians, Article III of the constitution of Peter's Tabernacle Baptist Church, herein known as the Church Covenant, Article V. Section 1, Article V. Section 3 Clause 3, Article V. Section 3 Clause 4 and Article VI. Section 7 of the Bylaws of Peter's Tabernacle Baptist Church, members who have not contributed assessments set forth by established committees of the church shall refrain from the privilege of voting until said assessments have been received, adjusted or waived by the officers of the church.

Should a member become an offense to the church and to its good name by reason of immoral or unchristian conduct, or by persistent breach of his covenant vows, or nonsupport of the church, the church may terminate his membership by a three-fourths vote, but only after due notice and hearing, and after faithful efforts have been made to bring such member to repentance and amendment.

VI. Church Officers

All Church officers must be members of the church. The officers of this church shall be as follows.

Section 1. Pastor

A. The Pastor is responsible for leading the church in functioning as a New Testament church. The pastor will lead the congregation, the organizations, and the church staff in performing their tasks.

A major concern of the pastor is to perform pastoral responsibilities. The pastor is the leader of worship, proclamation, education, and pastoral ministries.

B. A pastor shall be chosen and called by the church whenever a vacancy occurs. His election shall take place at a meeting called for that purpose, of which at least one week's public notice shall be given.

Section 2. Pulpit Committee

A pulpit committee shall be appointed by the church to present candidates to the congregation whenever a pastoral vacancy occurs. The committee shall bring to the consideration of the church only one man at a time. Election shall be by ballot, an affirmative vote of three fourths of those present being necessary for a choice. The pastor, thus elected, shall serve until the relationship is terminated by his request or the church's request. He shall preside at meetings of the church. The pastor shall give at least two weeks notice at the time of resignation before terminating his responsibilities as pastor.

Section 2. Church Staff

This church shall call or employ such staff members as the church shall need. A job description shall be written when the need for staff members is determined. Vocational staff members other than the pastor shall be recommended to the church by the personnel committee and employed by church action.

The secretaries and custodians shall likewise be recommended to the church by the personnel committee and employed by church.

Section 3. Deacons

1. There may be one deacon for every fifty members whose names are on the church roll until a maximum of forty deacons is reached. Deacons shall be elected at regular business meetings of the church by secret ballot.

The deacons shall serve on a rotation basis. Every three years the term of office of one third of the number of deacons shall expire, and election shall be held to fill the vacancies. In case of death or removal or incapacity to serve, the church may elect to fill the unexpired term. There is no obligation to constitute as an active deacon a person who comes to the church from another church where he had served as deacon.

2. In accordance with the meaning of the work and the practice of the New Testament, deacons are to be servants of the church. The task of the deacon is to serve with the pastor in performing pastoral ministries tasks: proclaim the gospel to believers, care for the church members and other persons in the community; lead the church to engage in a fellowship of worship, witness, education, ministry, and application; and lead the church in performing its tasks.

Section 4. Moderator

The moderator shall be the pastor. In the absence of the pastor, the chairmen of deacons shall preside; or in the absence of both, the clerk shall call the church to order and an acting moderator shall be elected.

Section 5. Clerk

The church-elected clerk of the church shall keep in a suitable book a record of all the actions of the church, except as otherwise herein provided. He is responsible for keeping a register of the names of members, with dates of admission, dismissal, or death, together with a record of baptisms. He shall issue letters of dismissal voted by the church, preserve on file all communications and written official reports, and give legal notices of all meetings where such notice is necessary is necessary, as indicated in these bylaws. The church may delegate some of the clerical responsibilities to a church secretary. All church records are church property and should be filed in the church office when one is maintained.

Section 6. Treasurer

The church shall elect annually a church treasurer. It shall be the duty of the treasurer to preserve, and pay out, upon receipt of vouchers approved and signed by authorized personnel, all money, or things of value paid or given to the church, keeping at all times an itemized report of the receipts and disbursements for the preceding month. The treasurer's report shall be audited annually by an auditing committee or public accountant.

Upon rendering the annual account at the end of each fiscal year, and its acceptance and approval by the church, the records shall be delivered by the treasurer to the church clerk, who shall keep and preserve the account as a part of the permanent records of the church.

Section 7. Financial Secretary

The financial secretary shall be employed by the church. She shall receive the empty collection envelopes after the money has been removed and counted by the proper persons selected by the church to serve in turn; and from these she shall give donors individual credit. She shall keep the envelopes for two years. She will fill out the sheet for the monthly balance, which will indicate receipts from envelopes, plate, or loose, and miscellaneous or special offerings, and she shall be responsible for preparing and mailing quarterly or semiannually records of contributions to all contributing members.

Section 8. Church Ushers

Every regular church usher shall be selected by the nominating committee and elected by the church. The usher shall be led by a head usher also selected by the nominating committee and elected by the church. The ushers are to greet people as they enter and leave the church, seat people at the proper time, provide bulletin and/or other materials at the time of the meeting. The ushers shall be attentive to the needs of the congregation and the pastor.

Section 9. Church Council

1. The primary function of the church council shall be to recommend to the congregation suggested objectives and church goals; to review and coordinate program plans recommended by the church officers, organizations, and committees; to recommend to the congregation the use of leadership, calendar time, and other resources according to program priorities; and to evaluate program achievements in terms of church goals and objectives.

-6-

2. The church council, unless otherwise determined by vote of the church, shall have as regular members the pastor, minister of education, minister of music, Sunday School Superintendent, Training Union Director, and Woman's Missionary Union director. Also, Brotherhood director and chairman of deacons. Committee chairman church-elected officers shall serve as *ex officio* members.

3. All matters agreed upon by the council, calling for action not already authorized, shall be referred to the church for approval or disapproval.

Section 10. Trustees

Three trustees elected by the church will hold in trust the church property. They shall no power to buy, sell, mortgage, lease, or transfer any property without a specific vote of the church authorizing each action. It shall be the function of the Trustees to affix their signatures to legal documents involving the sale, mortgaging, or purchase or rental of property or other legal documents where the signatures of trustees are required. Trustees shall serve on a rotating basis, with one new trustee being elected every three years.

APPENDIX C



Peter's Tabernacle Missionary Baptist Church

"The Church Where Everybody is Somebody and Every Visitor a Welcome Guest"

**A Proposal for a Fifth Clause in Article V, Section 3 of the By-Laws of
Peter's Tabernacle Missionary Baptist Church for the Consideration
of the Officers and Members of Peter's Tabernacle Missionary Baptist Church**

Drafted and Submitted By:

The Reverend Jerry M. Grimes II, Senior Pastor

December 18, 2010

PURPOSE

As there has existed both questions and discussions for some time regarding the matter of contributions made to our church and how those contributions, or the lack thereof, constitute the rights and privileges of membership at Peter's Tabernacle Missionary Baptist Church, this proposal will clarify the **already-established position** regarding support of the ministry and the expenses of the church. The following proposal offers nothing new to our Constitution or By-Laws nor does it nullify any portion of our Constitution, By-Laws or any other organizing principle of our church body. What this proposal does, in fact, is clarify that which The Apostle Paul calls the “equality” or “fair balance” of giving between churches, what our Church Covenant clearly states concerning giving and what our Constitution and By-Laws state concerning support of the church. This proposal, in actuality, is a summation of the aforementioned principles, which have been longstanding traditions in our church, and every Baptist church from the founding of our denomination and from the founding of the Church itself when the Holy Spirit descended upon those gathered in Jerusalem fifty days after the Ascension of our Lord known as the Day of Pentecost as described in Acts 2.

Therefore, the proposal is presented for the review and consideration of the officers and members of Peter's Tabernacle Missionary Baptist Church followed by a line-by-line explanation that there will exist no confusion as to the meaning of a single word or phrase as found in this proposed clause. The proposed clause would be called “Clause 5” under Article V of our By-Laws found under the heading, “Termination of Membership” on Page 3. With that stated, the purpose of this proposed clause **is not to define any new conditions for terminating the membership of a brother or sister in our congregation but to reiterate the New Testament principles, Covenantal principles found in our doctrine and organizational policies already existing in our By-Laws regarding support of the church.**

PROPOSAL

Clause 5 of Article V, Section 3 of the By-Laws of Peter's Tabernacle Missionary Baptist Church would read as following:

5. Pursuant to the eighth chapter of Second Corinthians, Article III of the Constitution of Peter's Tabernacle Missionary Baptist Church, herein known as the Church Covenant, Article V. Section 1, Article V. Section 3 Clause 3, Article V. Section 3 Clause 4 and Article VI. Section 7 of the By-Laws of Peter's Tabernacle Missionary Baptist Church, members who have not contributed assessments set forth by established committees of the church shall refrain from the privilege of voting until said assessments have been received, adjusted or waived by the officers of the church.

The word “pursuant” makes clear that this clause is in reference to the Scripture passage and portions of our Constitution and By-Laws enumerated. Pursuant essentially means “because of what is stated in this Scripture and/or By-Law then this applies as well.” “Pursuant to the eighth chapter of Second Corinthians,” means that 2 Corinthians 8:1-24 addresses a condition that existed between the church in Macedonia and the church in Corinth regarding an “equality” or “fair balance” of giving amongst the churches addressing the matter of the Macedonians, who gave from their poverty while the Corinthians were more reluctant to contribute to the expense of the ministry even as Titus was being commended to them by the Apostle Paul. The King James Version of 2 Corinthians 8:1-24 is found on the following page.

2 CORINTHIANS 8:1-24 [KJV]

1 Moreover, brethren, we do you to wit of the grace of God bestowed on the churches of Macedonia;

2 How that in a great trial of affliction the abundance of their joy and their deep poverty abounded unto the riches of their liberality.

3 For to their power, I bear record, yea, and beyond their power they were willing of themselves;

4 Praying us with much entreaty that we would receive the gift, and take upon us the fellowship of the ministering to the saints.

5 And this they did, not as we hoped, but first gave their own selves to the Lord, and unto us by the will of God.

6 Insomuch that we desired Titus, that as he had begun, so he would also finish in you the same grace also.

7 Therefore, as ye abound in every thing, in faith, and utterance, and knowledge, and in all diligence, and in your love to us, see that ye abound in this grace also.

8 I speak not by commandment, but by occasion of the forwardness of others, and to prove the sincerity of your love.

9 For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich.

10 And herein I give my advice: for this is expedient for you, who have begun before, not only to do, but also to be forward a year ago.

11 Now therefore perform the doing of it; that as there was a readiness to will, so there may be a performance also out of that which ye have.

12 For if there be first a willing mind, it is accepted according to that a man hath, and not according to that he hath not.

13 For I mean not that other men be eased, and ye burdened:

14 But by an equality, that now at this time your abundance may be a supply for their want, that their abundance also may be a supply for your want: that there may be equality:

15 As it is written, He that had gathered much had nothing over; and he that had gathered little had no lack.

16 But thanks be to God, which put the same earnest care into the heart of Titus for you.

17 For indeed he accepted the exhortation; but being more forward, of his own accord he went unto you.

18 And we have sent with him the brother, whose praise is in the gospel throughout all the churches;

19 And not that only, but who was also chosen of the churches to travel with us with this grace, which is administered by us to the glory of the same Lord, and declaration of your ready mind:

20 Avoiding this, that no man should blame us in this abundance which is administered by us:

21 Providing for honest things, not only in the sight of the Lord, but also in the sight of men.

22 And we have sent with them our brother, whom we have oftentimes proved diligent in many things, but now much more diligent, upon the great confidence which I have in you.

23 Whether any do inquire of Titus, he is my partner and fellowhelper concerning you: or our brethren be inquired of, they are the messengers of the churches, and the glory of Christ.

24 Wherefore show ye to them, and before the churches, the proof of your love, and of our boasting on your behalf.

The reason that this passage is pertinent to the proposed Clause 5 is because the Apostle Paul specifically discusses the contributions of churches to the expense of the ministry as we are discussing assessments for our special services such as Men's Day, Women's Day, Family and Friends Day, Homecoming and Revival whereas Matthew 6:2-4 would be pertinent if we were discussing the giving of alms, which we in the Missionary Baptist tradition refer to as "tithes and offerings," but the proposed clause is not addressing what we refer to as the Worship Through the Giving of Tithes and Offerings, therefore, 2 Corinthians 8:1-24 and not Matthew 6:2-4 is relevant for our purpose here. The matter being discussed 2 Corinthians 8:1-24 involves two distinct sets of believers giving unequally yet benefiting from the same rights and privileges of membership in a congregation. Though in two different congregations, one in Macedonia and one in Corinth, the Apostle Paul urges that there be fairness regarding giving writing to the Corinthians:

13 For I mean not that other men be eased, and ye burdened: 14 But by an equality, that now at this time your abundance may be a supply for their want, that their abundance also may be a supply for your want: that there may be equality: 15 As it is written, He that had gathered much had nothing over; and he that had gathered little had no lack. [KJV]

13 For [I say] not [this] that others may be eased [and] ye distressed; 14 but by equality: your abundance [being a supply] at this present time for their want, that their abundance also may become [a supply] for your want; that there may be equality: 15 as it is written, He that [gathered] much had nothing over; and he that [gathered] little had no lack. [ASV]

13 I do not mean that there should be relief for others and pressure on you, but it is a question of a fair balance between 14 your present abundance and their need, so that their abundance may be for your need, in order that there may be a fair balance. 15 As it is written, "the one who had much did not have too much, and the one who had little did not have too little." [NRSV]

It is also important to note here that it is not uncommon for by-laws, covenants or doctrinal statements to contain a direct reference to a particular passage of Scripture as found in the 1977 edition of *The National Baptist Hymnal* where our Church Covenant found in the opening pages contains the phrase, "...being mindful of the rules of our Saviour in the eighteenth chapter of Matthew, to secure it without delay..." [See: The Church Covenant of the National Baptist Convention, USA, Inc., *The New National Baptist Hymnal* (Triad Publishing, 1977) which contains the phrase, "...being mindful of the rules of our Saviour in the eighteenth chapter of Matthew, to secure it without delay..." as compared to The Church Covenant of the National Baptist Convention, USA, Inc., *The New National Baptist Hymnal 21st Century Edition 4d* (Triad Publishing, 1977, 2001). in which this phrase no longer appears].

Thus far we have covered the phrase, "**Pursuant to the eighth chapter of Second Corinthians**". Next we have, "**Article III of the Constitution of Peter's Tabernacle Missionary Baptist Church, herein known as the Church Covenant**".

What is meant here is that in addition to Clause 5 being pursuant to 2 Corinthians 8, Clause 5 is also pursuant to Article III of our Constitution, which is our Church Covenant. Regarding the matter of giving, as our Church Covenant plainly states we will, "...contribute cheerfully and regularly to the support of the ministry, the expenses of the church, and the relief of the poor, and the spread of the Gospel through all nations." While "the relief of the poor, and the spread of the Gospel through all nations," are direct references to Matthew 6:2-4 (the giving of alms) and Matthew 28:19-20 (the Great Commission) to "contribute cheerfully and regularly to the support of the ministry, the expenses of the church," is language taken from 2 Corinthians 9:7 following the Apostle's admonishment for the church in Corinth to be as generous as the church in Macedonia. What Clause 5 would make clear is that both the New Testament and our Church Covenant inform us that the contribution of members to the church is both Biblical and doctrinal.

Next we have references to our by-laws that, in addition to 2 Corinthian 8 and our Church Covenant, give credence and authority to the enactment of this clause reading, **"Pursuant to...Article V. Section 1, Article V. Section 3 Clause 3, Article V. Section 3 Clause 4 and Article VI. Section 7 of the By-Laws of Peter's Tabernacle Missionary Baptist Church..."**

Below are excerpts and brief explanations of how each Article, Section and/or clause is pertinent to the proposed clause, and it is beneficial and advisable to have with us a copy of our Constitution and By-Laws when reading the following.

Article V. Section 1

Article V. Section 1. holds that, "The membership reserves the exclusive right to determine who shall be members of this church and the conditions of membership." I restate what was made clear at the outset of this proposal: The purpose of this proposed clause is not to define any new conditions for terminating the membership of a brother or sister in our congregation but to reiterate the New Testament principles, Covenantal principles found in our doctrine and organizational policies already existing in our By-Laws regarding support of the church. The phrase, "conditions of membership" is most important here.

Article V. Section 3 Clause 3

Article V. Section 3. Clause 3. holds that, "Membership shall be terminated in the following ways: exclusion by action of this church." Again, the purpose here is to demonstrate how our by-laws empower each member of the congregation to determine *what* constitutes membership.

Article V. Section 3 Clause 4

Article V. Section 3. Clause 4. states, "Should a member become an offense to the church and to its good name by reason of immoral or unchristian conduct, or by persistent breach of his covenant vows, or nonsupport of the church, the church may terminate his membership by a three-fourths vote, but only after due notice and hearing, and after faithful efforts have been made to bring such member to repentance and amendment." Here, we should note that "nonsupport of the church" along with a breaching of "covenant vows" is considered an "offense."

Article VI. Section 7

Article VI. Section 7. enumerates the responsibilities of the Financial Secretary which include,

"...receive the empty collection envelopes after the money has been removed and counted by the proper persons selected by the church to serve in turn; and from these she shall give donors individual credit. She shall keep the envelopes for a period of two years." It is the responsibility of the finance committee to establish a means of tracking the contribution of assessments if it is as simple as a 9 X 12 envelope on which the names, dates and contributions of members are written.

What these Articles, sections and clauses simply state is (1) Members determine conditions of membership based upon our compliance with our Church Covenant. (2) Only the repeated breaking of our Church Covenant without amends is a grounds for a 3/4 vote to be taken to remove a member. (3) Support of our church is a requirement of membership both stated in our Church Covenant and the By-Laws of Peter's Tabernacle Missionary Baptist Church (4) Records should be filed and maintained for two years of every member's contribution preferably in an envelope or folder dedicated to that purpose.

The final portion of the proposed Clause 5 is, **"members who have not contributed assessments set forth by established committees of the church shall refrain from the privilege of voting until said assessments have been received, adjusted or waived by the officers of the church."**

For example, if the required assessment for Men's Day, Women's Day and Family and Friends Day is \$35.00 for each service then an amount of \$105.00 would have been contributed prior to the June quarterly business conference that a member's voting rights are instated for that quarterly meeting. The same for Homecoming and Revival as they relate to the September and December quarterly conferences. This provides members from January until the third Saturday in June to have rendered to the chairperson of a particular committee any amount remaining to be contributed and recorded. That is a matter of contributing \$105.00 over the course of six months (\$17.50 a month) to the church, which we belong in order to vote on church matters including the election of officers, which occurs every June.

Should a member cast a vote and there exist a question as to whether or not that particular vote is to be counted or discounted then after the meeting, the officers with knowledge of both the senior pastor and Chairman of the Board of Deacons will confer with the envelope or folder that keeps the record of contributions. Members, who attend conference and have not rendered to officers any outstanding assessment will have their votes counted as "present" or an "abstention." Should a member wish to vote on a matter and has rendered all assessments but is unable to attend conference the senior pastor and the Chairman of the Board of Deacons or an officer is to be notified and to receive in writing, dated and signed a ballot (in the form of a note or email) to be sealed and kept on file in the business office.

No member is to openly have a vote challenged in conference or any other meeting on the basis of assessments as to avoid contention, and more importantly, to be obedient to Matthew 18:15-20, but the record is to be reviewed by the Deacons, Trustees and Officers should a question arise about a vote or votes to be counted or discounted. Should the overall tally of a vote change then the entire church will be notified but at no time is any member to be openly confronted or singled-out as to do so is a breach of our Church Covenant and Matthew 18:15-20.

You will notice that this proposed clause reiterates what is already expected of us as members but further empowers the officers to privately address members, who either choose not to contribute or have not made redress to the Church Council regarding why no such assessments have been made, though continuing to enjoy the full-rights of membership including the privilege to vote on how the contributions of members, who have not broken Covenant, will be used for the ministry of the church.

It is Biblically unfair, as seen in 2 Corinthians 8, that some members carry a heavier financial burden than other members while those, who either have chosen not to or cannot contribute, are empowered to out-vote and overrule those members, who have done what is commanded by our Savior, required by Scripture, demanded by our Covenant and expected of a Christian, who is a member of a congregation.

It is unbiblical, out-of-order, a breach of the Church Covenant and uncharacteristic of a Christian to not only neglect to support the church but not to address the committee chairpersons entrusted with collecting assessments to offer an explanation as to why no contribution has been made, yet enjoying the full-rights, benefits, privileges, amenities and immunities of Peter's Tabernacle Missionary Baptist Church to include voting privileges.

Every member of a Missionary Baptist church has a vote and a voice, but a breach of our Church Covenant by the irregular support of the ministry and expenses of the church, without explanation or redress, is not the way of the Church. This is not a case of legalism, this is simply a case of being true to Scripture, our doctrine and our by-laws as written.

This proposed amendment contains the qualifying statement, "**have been received, adjusted or waived by the officers of the church,**" that the main concern not be specific amount but that one's membership be taken seriously and that we as members contribute according to how we have been blessed. For instance, if every current assessment were cut in half but paid monthly (equaling \$13.12 a month) Peter's Tabernacle would have \$7,875.00 in its annual operating budget in addition to Sunday School collection, the Worship of Tithes and Offerings, mission offering, and the celebration of birthdays. Just fifty members paying \$13.12 a month equals \$7,875.00 annually.

As committee chairpersons can "receive, adjust or waive" assessments. Let us consider this: our youth members (Ages 5-17) might contribute just 10% of the regular assessment, and our Young Adult members, (Ages 18-39) 50% of the annual amount of the assessments in addition to just twenty adult members contributing \$13.12 per service toward his or her annual assessment then we there would exist upwards \$5,000.00 annually that the church could have on hand for ministries such as additional funds for our standing committees, more resources to develop our Youth Ministry and Young Adult Ministry, small scholarships or book assistance to help our members who are currently in school honorariums to bring in nationally-recognized speakers, campus visits or statewide conference attendance for our young adults,

radio advertising, or even the development of a higher-end interactive website that allows us to raise contributions online as many churches do, etc. These are only examples of possibilities—nothing more.

If we take for instance, \$35.00 for Men's Day, Women's Day, Family and Friends Day, \$150.00 for Homecoming and \$60.00 for Revival the annual assessment amount would equal \$315.00. If fifty members simply contributed \$26.25 a month equaling \$315.00 per member then our annual collection of assessments would equal \$15,750.00 in addition to the contributions of visitors. If just twenty adult members contributed \$13.12 per service (\$26.25 a month), if five youth contributed \$1.31 per service (\$2.62 a month) and five young adults contributed \$6.56 per service (\$13.12 a month) there would exist \$7,245.00 in the operating budget of the church for a fiscal year, but without regular, reliable contributions, it would be imprudent of the church to make certain expenditures.

The details of the numbers here are unimportant as each officer and each committee will determine what is best for each program, but this proposal puts to rest any question of the role that contributions to the expense of the Church plays in our lives as believers whether in the time of the Apostle Paul, within the foundation of our denomination and within the organizing principles of Peter's Tabernacle Missionary Baptist Church.

What this proposal does is reaffirms our Biblical, Covenantal, doctrinal and constitutional duty to support our church for the uplifting of the Kingdom and the cause of Christ. I humbly submit this proposal for review by the Officers and Members of my beloved church family.

To His Glory and in His Name,

The Reverend Jerry Michael Grimes II, Senior Pastor
Peter's Tabernacle Missionary Baptist Church

APPENDIX D

Grimes to challenge Butterfield for U.S. House

■ Goldsboro resident says his philosophy centers on people — not politics.

By **MATTHEW WHITTLE**
Assistant News Editor

Jerry Michael Grimes II takes pride in his unusual route to politics.

"One voter complimented me, 'You're an anti-politician.' I'm certainly anti-establishment," he said.

Grimes, who lives in Goldsboro, is running for the opportunity to represent the Republican Party in November against the U.S. District 1 incumbent, Democrat Rep. G.K. Butterfield.

Grimes, 32, said he made his decision to run for the nomination after a long examination of the core Republican Party principles — and the discovery that his grandfather, the Rev. Jerry Michael Grimes of Mount Olive, was a lifelong Republican.

"Over the past decade, it has become apparent that the size of our government has been increasing, and yet the basic services and basic provisions for people in our district have been dwindling. But more important than services, has been the dwindling of employment and opportunity for small business owners," he said.

In addition, he also lays the deterioration of families, particularly those in minority communities, at the feet of a

federal government that he said encourages dependence through welfare and other programs.

The solution, he believes, is a return to the original, core Jeffersonian Republican Party principles of decentralized government.

"When the federal government allows people to keep more of their money for local uses, it gives them more power," Grimes said. "In Washington, we have a government, which

See GRIMES, Page 3A



Grimes

Grimes

Continued from 1A
serves a powerful few.

"What I want to do is embrace the original vision of what our founders intended."

But to Grimes — a 1996 Goldsboro High School graduate who has three master's degrees, spent a year working as a full-time English and writing tutor in Wayne County Public Schools, two years as an adjunct professor at Shaw University, and is currently an assistant pastor with Peter's Tabernacle Missionary Baptist Church in Wallace while pursuing his doctorate in theology and ethics at Union Presbyterian Seminary in Richmond, Va. — returning to that original vision means getting closer to the district's constituents.

"I'm probably the only candidate in this race with no health insurance," he said. "I drive myself around in a 1996 Toyota Camry with 310,000 miles. I'm living the experiences of people who are suffering the most. I'd like for every candidate to take a walk around the district at night. That's when you really see how people live."

That means that so far, he's spent much of his time walking neighborhoods, sitting in barbershops and visiting Wal-Marts and truck stops at 2 a.m. talking to voters about the issues in Washington, D.C.

"I know that's when North Carolina works," the former Coca-Cola merchandiser said. "A man in my church once told me, 'Preach it so that a 7-year-old and a 70-year-old can both say 'Amen' at the same time.'"

"I'm on the ground level talking to people, and what I'm finding throughout the district is that most people don't know who their representative is, or even what district they're in."

And that is his primary goal — being a "constituent caseworker and champion."

"My greatest concern is

not whether I'm elected," he said. "My greatest concern is that whoever is elected, that he or she take the great problems of the district to heart, and is a person in the district that nobody has to question who their representative is or whether or not they're in the First District."

And, so far, he said, that's a concern that is crossing party lines.

"There's a misconception that the Republican Party is somehow racist. I can only speak from my experiences, but from Wayne to Lenoir to Bertie counties, I have been embraced both as a person and as a candidate," Grimes said. "And there have been people of color who have voted in the Democrat party, and people in the Tea Party who have seen in my campaign an opportunity to let Washington know that we in eastern North Carolina are bearing the brunt of their bad decisions."

"A general election, if I'm nominated, wouldn't be an election between a Democrat and a Republican. It would be an election of two different philosophies and two different ideas."

Specifically, he continued, if elected, his first action would be to sign onto a bill currently sponsored by Republican Reps. Virginia Foxx and Walter Jones to freeze unfunded mandates. He also said he would work to improve revenue sharing between the federal and state governments, as well as to increase education and training opportunities for high school students interested in going into medical fields.

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CURRICULUM VITA

Jerry Michael Grimes II

PERSONAL

Born: October 19, 1977.

Engaged: Tracy D. Moore, May 12, 2011.

Children: None.

EDUCATIONAL

B.A., Saint Augustine's University, 2000.

M.Div., Virginia Union University, 2005.

M.A., Fuller Theological Seminary, 2006.

Th.M., Union Presbyterian Seminary, 2008.

ADDITIONAL EDUCATION

University of North Carolina School of the Arts, 2000-2002.

Shaw University Divinity School, 2006-2007.

MINISTERIAL

Licensed Through the Bear Creek Missionary Baptist Association

April 6, 2003, First African Baptist Church,

Goldsboro, North Carolina.

Ordained Through the Kenansville Eastern Missionary Baptist Association

August 14, 2005, Peter's Tabernacle Missionary Baptist Church,

Wallace, North Carolina.

PROFESSIONAL

Product Merchandiser, Coca-Cola Bottling Company, 1999-2004.

English and Writing Tutor, Brogden Middle School, 2005.

Adjunct Instructor of Religion and Philosophy, Shaw University, 2006-2008.

Republican Candidate, U.S. Congress, North Carolina's First District, 2010.

Assistant Pastor, Peter's Tabernacle Missionary Baptist Church, 2005-2010.

Senior Pastor, Peter's Tabernacle Missionary Baptist Church, 2010-present.

PROFESSIONAL SOCIETIES

Member, Phi Beta Sigma Fraternity, Inc. 1999-present.

Kern Graduate Fellow, 2002-2005.

Baptist Minister's Convention of Richmond and Vicinity, 2009-2010.

Member, North Carolina Republican Party, 2010.

Executive Board, Kenansville Eastern Missionary Baptist Association, 2011-present.